

The time that is given us

How love can change lives

Von Gepo

Prolog: Awakening

Harry rolled to his left, a smile gracing his lips. But instead of a warm body he found only cold sheets. He scrunched up his nose, sat up and looked around. Huh, okay ... where exactly was he? The room was done up in an inviting brown, all kinds of woods with no paint on them. Even the bedding was brown. The only color came from the striped yellow-and-red curtain which looked like it came right out of a movie from a time where movies weren't even invented yet.

„Ginny?“, he called into the room, even though he didn't really expect an answer. It was years since he had last smashed his brain with alcohol, so that couldn't be it. Also, as head auror he did not go on active missions anymore, so a stray curse was unlikely as well. He must have been struck with an obliviation charm. But by whom? And why had he been left here, seemingly in perfect condition except for his memory loss?

Harry sighed deeply. Well, he would not find out by lying in bed. Time to gather his belongings and leave. He went into the bathroom and found it stocked with a toothbrush, toothpaste and a shaver but nothing else. Oh, yeah, some shower gel and shampoo. Remarkably empty. Maybe it was a hotel room? He looked into the mirror and recoiled.

Okay, who the heck was that? This wasn't his body, he would never look this ... well ... actually, he looked pretty ordinary. Not fat, not thin, not muscled, not a beanpole. He had brown, slightly thinning hair, and morning stubble. He was in the body of a quite average-looking guy. A middle-aged white male with no distinguishing features. Maybe not even middle-aged, rather more a guy in his thirties. At least he had not liked being called middle-aged when he was this old.

„Well, well, who am I?“ Harry stepped out of the bathroom and looked for accessories like a wallet, a phone or a passport. „Bingo“ He found a wallet and some keys lying on a sideboard next to the door. The door of the bedroom, so it was most likely a hotel in which he was staying. The keyring only held three keys; one an antique looking car key and two normal door keys. He opened the wallet, which held twenty pounds and some small change as well as some papers. He stared at the papers for a second, dreading to open them.

That curtain, the car key, identification papers ... it couldn't be, could it? He opened the paper that said personal identification on top. Grenmore Horten, born April 23th 1894. Harry took a deep breath. 1894. And he was in his thirties. Coupled with those horrific curtains he must be somewhere in the 1920's or 1930's, trapped inside the body of a muggle. How did he get here?

More importantly, how would he get back? He had to find the Ministry. The Unspeakables would know what to do. Or maybe ... wait, thirties, that meant Dumbledore was alive and in his forties or fifties or something like that. He would be a teacher at Hogwarts or maybe he was already headmaster, and McGonagall would still be a student and-

Harry froze in place.

And right now, Tom Riddle was a small boy.

He sat back on the bed. Maybe that was it. Maybe they had found a way to time travel him here, so that he could stop Voldemort before he ever became a dark lord. He must have agreed to that, and the time travel must have cost him some of his memories.

So what was his mission? To kill Tom Riddle? Most likely not; he would never have consented to killing a child. He had three of his own, no one would ask such a thing of him. Bloody hell, couldn't they have sent some instructions through time as well? They had most likely told him how to get back too, but he had simply forgotten. Harry sighed again. No use crying over spilled milk. He would have to contact the Ministry anyway, and maybe the Unspeakables had a device for talking to people in the future. But first of all, he had to find out who and where and when he was. He opened his drawer and found some underwear, two pairs of trousers and a few shirts. On a clothes hanger there was exactly one jacket, but not a single coat. Either he had left England and was somewhere unusually warm or this wasn't his primary residence – hopefully. Seeing as there were no personal items anywhere, it was most likely the latter. His personal identification stated that he lived in Bath, an English city in the Southwest. He opened the door and found that none of his keys fit it. Well, where did people put their room keys? He looked on the bedside table and grabbed a pair of trousers hung over the back of a chair. He found the key in one of the pockets. He also found a notebook which revealed itself to be a calendar. The marking strap was on 21st of July. A day with two appointments, one with a barber, the one afterwards with an Officer Standen at an address in London. He looked at the days leading up to and following this day. He had had a few meetings with military officials these last few days if today was July 21. But he would have to find that out for certain by buying a newspaper.

So he was most likely in London. That made things easier. He put on the jacket – having to acknowledge that it was quite a fine suit jacket – and took the wallet, calendar, keys, and papers with him.

Taking the staircase, he counted three floors to ground level. He seemed to be in a nice hotel with carpeted floors and clerks in black suits. The lounge even had a newspaper rack, so he could read one without leaving the hotel.

July 21st 1932. Oh well, he had guessed correctly. Thirties then, just a few years before the Second World War. And he was somehow in contact with high ministry officials, even owned a car ... that did not bode well. At this point he was surprised not to have found a uniform in his room. Did he remember a Grenmore Horten from school? No, they hadn't exactly been taught about WWII in elementary school. He looked at the clock and checked the time while consulting his calendar. He had about an hour until his appointment with the barber. For now he should most likely stick to the schedule so kindly provided to him. He went up to the clerk who seemed pretty impressed with Harry – or rather Grenmore Horten – and asked for directions. The barber seemed to be just down the street while the officer on his list wasn't so near. The clerk showed him a map which he asked to take with him. When the clerk told him

that it cost three shillings, Harry froze for a second. Of course, this was 1932. Everything had a completely different price. Wow, twenty pounds, that must be ... he must be quite rich. Well, he owned a car, so of course he was rich.

„Can you tell me where I parked my car? I seem not to remember.“

„But of course, Sir, your Ford is parked right in front of the hotel. It is the only car, you can't miss it.“

Oh well, easy. A Ford. Most certainly not an automatic. Hopefully he would not have to manually start it. He should have a look at his car before seeing the barber. He took the map after paying – which wasn't easy, the money looked completely different – and stepped out. For once it was not raining, for which he was instantly thankful. Finding his car was abnormally easy since it was the only car on the whole street. A cobblestone street- at least it wasn't mud. Driving without any kind of suspension on these streets would be a horror. Well, at least he had a car. Even if it looked like the first one ever build. It had a roof at least. Ford Model A. Huh, that most likely meant it was the first Ford ever built.

What had he gotten himself into? Oh well, nothing to do about it. He should head to the barber first.

A shave, a haircut and a face massage was five shillings in total. The money in his wallet must have been more than an average labourer got in a whole month. He would have to be on his watch not to get robbed. Of course he had no credit card, so the cash was about the only means he had to survive, seeing as Mr. Horten had not written down which bank he frequented. While getting his hair trimmed Harry had read through the whole calendar. He seemed to have been in the military up to now, so he was most likely a World War One veteran. That did not exactly sit well with him; he had no inclination to fight in the second one. He would have to see what his meeting with Officer Standen would lead to. Maybe he could quit before the second war? Even though he hoped he would not have to stay that long anyway.

He took his car- which was surprisingly intuitive to drive- even though driving manually was a hassle after all these years. Reading the map was also easier than he expected. Central London was a lot smaller than in his time and no one had a problem with him stopping in the middle of a street. There weren't too many cars on the roads anyway and carriages took a wide circle around him. Damages to a car would be a life-changing cost in these times. He finally found the Office of Internal Military Affairs in which this Officer Standen was waiting for him. He went in and asked at the desk where to find the man. The friendly young women receptionist brought him to the right door. Harry was surprised how nice everyone was but, well, that might have to do with having all that money. Did they expect tips?

„Major-General Horten“ The young officer saluted. „It is an honor to meet you.“

„I am pleased to meet you too, young man. At ease.“ Hopefully all those military movies James liked to watch had something to do with reality.

„Thank you, Sir“ Standen moved back behind his working table. „We were all sad to hear about your leaving us.“

„Life always has more in store for us“ Harry replied blandly. And where would he be leaving to?

„I prepared all the papers for your retirement“ Standen looked up to him like some of his trainees would from time to time. „Are you sure you want to end your career? With all your honors, you could be Field-Marshal in the next war.“

„That is too high an honor“ Actually he had no clue about military ranks. „But one

great war was enough for me. It is time for young souls like you to take up my work“ Thank God for all the speeches he had had to deliver as head auror. Such patronizing nonsense easily came forth from his lips by now.

„I am so glad I was able to meet you, Sir“ The hero worship glowed in Standen's eyes. „Yes, so, about the papers ...“ Good thing this Mr. Horten had already initiated his retirement. The next war would most likely have killed him. Come to think of it, Bath wasn't the safest place either. Maybe he should move his host's body to thank him for lending it.

He read and signed some papers which released him from the military to begin a whole new life. Harry didn't know what Horten had planned for himself but following the schedule, he would most likely find out.

But first of all, he should find the Ministry and try to contact his future self.

Shit. Double shit. Triple shit.

In his present form he was without a doubt a muggle. A non-magical creature – and therefore unable to get access to the Ministry. So what were his options? He could go to the Leaky Cauldron, and risk obliviation again. But really, what else could he do? There were no other options. He could only write himself a note to remind his future self of what he knew and what he was planning to do before going there.

Nodding to himself, he did just that before setting off to the shady parts of London. He parked his car well short of his destination because it would create rumors in that part of town and walked the rest of the way. Horten must have taken a bullet to the hip in the war, since it began to ache after he had walked for a short while.

He entered the Leaky Cauldron and saw someone who looked a lot like Tom behind the counter. He went over and was roughly greeted before he could say a word: „Not exactly yer part of town, isn't it, Mister?“

„More like exactly my part of town“ He sat down and leaned a bit over the counter.

„Are there muggles in earshot?“

The bartender nodded in the affirmative, then gestured towards the door leading to the kitchen while whispering: „Follow me.“

Wow, this was even shadier than in his own time. Right at this moment he direly missed his magic. But his inability to locate the Ministry only confirmed what he had suspected: In the body of a muggle he was a squib.

„Who are ya?“, asked the bartender as soon as they were out of sight.

„First, cast a silencio on the door.“

The man cocked an eyebrow but did as he was asked.

„Right now I am a squib, as you can see. I am a wizard who was transferred into the body of this muggle. I need to reverse this, but for that I need to get in touch with the Ministry. But as I am right now, I obviously can't.“

„Sucks to be ya, doesn't it?“ The bartender crossed his arms. „What's in it for me to get ya there?“

„A pound for your time“ Which was a lot more than it was worth but he did not exactly want to have to go around town repeating this story. „And also for your silence on the matter.“

„Done“ The bartender's eyes were as large as platters. „I'll get Daisy to tend the bar, just a sec.“

Nice. A fast-working man. Harry used the time to spare a thought for Ginny. Did she know where he was? Did she know there was a chance he might not come back? Had he properly said goodbye to her and the children? He sighed and rested his eyes for a

moment. Lily was still so small. Not exactly a kid anymore but also not a teenager. Would he miss seeing her grow up? Would he not be there to be snarky to her future boyfriend? He had to get back. He had to discover his mission, complete it, and return to his own time.

„There is no device invented yet which can sent messages into the future.“

Harry groaned. Hours of explanations so he could finally meet an Unspeakable and then this? He argued: „Can't we simply write a message which will still be there in the future?“

„Mr. Auror“ He had not given them his name. „Everything you do, everything you say creates a time warp which changes the future. Every second you breath you create another future. By now the future from which you were sent back in time might not even exist anymore.“

Harry froze. James, Albus, Lily ... he might already have killed them all by going back in time. Had he already changed history? He said: „But ... when you use a time turner, whatever you do also already happened in the time you came from. There is only one timeline.“

„Yes, time turners have a special magic on them which holds the timeline together. You cannot change history with a time turner. But you did not come here with a time turner. You came here specifically to change history. So whatever you do will change history. You must expect that your timeline does not exist anymore.“

„That can't be what I wanted“ Harry shook his head. „I never would have willingly consented to that.“

„It might have been a magical accident“ The Unspeakable laid a hand on Harry's shoulder. „From what you told me to prove your story, you were one of the highest ranking men outside of the Minister of Magic himself. You know more about our department than our current Minister of Magic. You might have been testing something which threw you into a magical time loop. As you know, most of the devices we use down here are unstable.“

„In my time, we accidently destroyed your time room. There were no time devices left“ Harry mumbled.

„Which should convince you that your presence here among us was most likely not planned“ The Unspeakable sighed. „I am sorry for your loss. It is hard to tell you this, but you will most likely never see your own time again.“

He felt dizzy all of the sudden. He looked for something to grab onto to keep himself standing, and settled for the hand on his shoulder which had been there for the last bit of the conversation. He had never found Unspeakables particularly emotional but this one, at least, had a heart. He offered a handkerchief when Harry laid a hand over his eyes.

„Would you tell me about your future?“, he asked after giving Harry a minute to compose himself.

„No“ Harry gave back the handkerchief he hadn't even used. He would not cry. Not now at least. „If there is any chance of it still happening, I would ruin it by telling you. Maybe when I am sure it never will.“

„As you wish“ The Unspeakable nodded. „Wait a moment, I want to give you something.“

Harry waited even though he knew the Unspeakable might throw a curse at him to make him talk any second. Some of them were like that. Curiosity over common sense. But what good would running away do? They would find him anyway. Right now, he

was a threat to his own existence but he was unable to do anything about it.

The Unspeakable returned with some kind of pendant and said: „This won't give you back your magic but it will restore your status as a wizard. You will feel magical to other creatures and objects, so that you can enter magical areas like the Ministry.“

„Thank you, that is most helpful“ Harry replied in all honesty. It really was. How thoughtful of the other.

„I want you to remember me with kindness, so that you will tell me everything the next time you come here“ Oh ... well, at least he was being honest.

„What is your name?“

„Henry Potter“ Oh God ... then this man would be his great-grandfather or something along those lines. His great-grandfather had been an Unspeakable? „What is yours?“

„I might tell you next time. But if I tell you now I'll change history“ Harry sighed. „For now I will have to be Grenmore Horten.“

For now and forever.

„Farewell, Mr. Horten. Until then.“