

The time that is given us

How love can change lives

Von Gepo

Kapitel 26: Twenty-sixth chapter

Harry slapped the Daily Prophet onto the table and let out a deep sigh.

"Bad news?," Edgar suspected.

"We are done for. Dumbledore and Jonathan outed themselves, now they are social pariahs and the knowledge about genetics will die before it even hatched." He put his head in his hands. "The only good thing is that they kept Tom's name out of this. They only mentioned mine. We can change his before he goes to school."

"It's beyond me how they ever thought that this was a good idea."

"I guess they knew." Harry smiled sadly. "Both of them will lose their jobs. On the other hand, they'll be able to move in with each other and live a quiet life somewhere out of the spotlight. I just wish they would not have dragged us down with them."

Edgar read the article while Harry fixed himself a drink. It was only morning but he felt like erasing this day from his mind.

"At least they aren't connected with our government and our press. If your name were to be associated with homosexuality again, this could have turned really ugly."

Edgar sat down next to him. "Is this dangerous to them? Will there be people going after them? Are there laws against ... unnatural copulation?"

"It's only the social discrimination. It's also possible that Dumbledore will lose his ... it's like a badge of honor. It's given to war heroes. He got it for killing Grindelwald."

"I am sure he will not be sad about losing an award for supposedly killing his lover."

"But he will be sad about losing his position as headmaster." Harry clenched his hands.

"Worse than that ... I changed history in a way that I never foresaw, in a dangerous way. Dumbledore being in a position of power kept the magical world from turning against Muggles for years. What if I made the worst come true? What if the wizarding world will declare war on Muggles?"

Edgar hugged him from the side. "Don't take everything onto your own shoulders."

"But I did this, Edgar ... I am responsible. What if I ruined the future?"

"What will you answer Jonathan when he asks you the very same question?"

Harry looked up and blinked in confusion.

"What will Jonathan do when he reads this article?"

"Murder Ruby Sinclair? What should I know?" Harry scoffed but still sank into Edgar's embrace. "I don't know, mate. Why did he have to bait her like that?"

"Did he really?"

"No, he expertly manipulated her, so that the consequences would be as slim as possible. He was a genius in that meeting." A deep sigh left his lips. "Dumbledore

dropped too many bombs at the same time. He alienated too many people. I understand why he wanted to be done with the lies but this was about more than him."

"So just like you, Jonathan tried to protect him but Dumbledore was too forward and now, both of you will suffer for it." Edgar smiled at Harry's suffering groan. "He'll feel responsible too, you know? He supported Dumbledore in coming out and it completely backfired. You know how I would have felt if I'd outed Gren and he would have lost his position as general?"

"I need to get to him before he does something stupid."

"Trust in him, would you?" Edgar chuckled. "I can't believe I'm saying this. But I know Jonathan. He won't endanger Dumbledore further."

Edgar was right, of course. Three hours later, Tom came back from school, Jonathan's hand securely in his own tiny one. God, the man looked so down. Down enough that Edgar hugged him without even a greeting. Tom went up to Harry.

"Dad? Jonathan says that he lost his job. Can he stay here?"

"Of course." Harry ruffled the ink black hair. He went over where Jonathan was passed into his arms. "Welcome back."

"You're not angry?"

"Well ... I told you both my opinion beforehand. You decided not to listen and I understand that decision. Now, you have to live with the consequences."

"We destroyed your work."

Harry just sighed. "Most likely. But maybe not. We'll see."

"I am sorry, Gren."

"I am sorry too." He stepped away from the other man. "Maybe I should have been sterner telling you the possible consequences of your plan."

"Have you seen Albus? Has he written?"

Harry shook his head.

"I want to see him."

"I ... would not advise on that right now. He will be busy trying to save his reputation. You would not help by showing up. Why don't you write him a letter?" He smiled sadly. "Then Albus can decide when it is possible for him to show up. This is a safe place and will always be."

Jonathan simply looked lost and his eyes shimmered with unshed tears. What would be good for him? A divergence, right? He looked at Tom who got the hint.

"Hey, Jonathan. We're low on candles. Should we make some to pass the time?" Such a good boy!

The older man just nodded slowly and took a deep breath. "I'll ... just write that letter, okay? Then we can make some candles. We could use some winter flavors like pine."

"Let's do that." Tom took Harry's hand while Edgar brought Jonathan to the study.

"What went wrong, dad?"

"Their coming out as a couple, that ... seemed to have been a bit much. Longbottom and Sinclair started a personal vendetta. For them, that was worse than him supporting Grindelwald in the beginning."

"So being gay is worse than mass-murder?" Tom rolled his eyes. "I don't understand these people."

"Well ... I'd wager that Sinclair was in love with Grindelwald and hearing that he was completely uninterested in her, that was just ..."

"What will it mean for them?"

"Both will lose their jobs." Harry sighed. "They won't get new ones. Society will discount our whole theory as insane ramblings of perverted man and both of their names will be tarnished. History books will be changed, Dumbledore will go from hero to public enemy."

"For being gay?" Tom squinted his eyes. "A women being jealous?"

Harry nodded gravely.

"That's so dumb."

"I know."

"Why is the world this way?" The little boy balled his fists. "I mean ... why destroy someone out of jealousy? If she loved him, shouldn't she want the best for him? What kind of love is that? Why does being gay ostracize someone? Why is having mixed blood a bad thing? How come that Howard's father can hit his children and wife and that is somehow okay, but Edgar, Jonathan and Albus should be locked away for loving someone? All of that makes no sense!"

"Those are good questions, Tom. Change is needed. But change is a slow thing, it's like a snail wandering a labyrinth, sometimes taking the right, sometimes the wrong turn. Oftentimes, you don't know if the turn will be right or wrong. Albus and Jonathan wanted to come out and I warned them but I did not protest. Now ... they lost everything. Maybe someday in the future, we'll look back and decide it was a great thing that this happened. Maybe we'll regret it for years. No one can really say."

"I hate this."

He drew the boy into a hug and admitted: "Me too."

"I don't understand what those people think."

"Try to. Then help them to see your point of view. Share what you know. Just remember to protect yourself, don't maneuver yourself into the position of a pariah."

"Like Albus did?"

With a sigh, Harry closed his eyes. Had he been too hard on Dumbledore? Had he asked too much of him? Had he steered him into this position? He had worked with Jonathan on his guilt, should he have worked with Dumbledore instead?

My relationship with Gellert had always been an open secret

by Edward Macintosh

In yesterday's interview, Ruby Sinclair and Desmelda Longbottom revealed Albus Dumbledore's former relationship with Gellert Grindelwald, a Dark Lord killed by none other than Albus Dumbledore himself in 1918. It sparked an outcry of rage in the magical community, many witches and wizards wrote letters to the Daily Prophet where they described their feelings of being betrayed by one of their supposed leaders. Albus Dumbledore was awarded an Order of Merlin First Class for helping end the war with Gellert Grindelwald in 1918. He was also chosen as Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in 1931.

"I have never lied about myself", stated Dumbledore in an interview with us. "The Daily Prophet published an interview with Gellert and myself in 1903 in which we openly talked about our relationship. This has always been an open secret. I was approached by our government since 1908 with requests to contain my – at that time – former lover. I refused them, not wanting to take sides, until 1917. At that time, it was clear to me that Gellert had lost himself to the Black Pull. I knew that containing him was only an euphemism for killing him. It is why I hesitated for so long, hoping that he would stop in

his madness."

We also asked about him co-authoring the Technology Theory. He answered: "That is true, Gellert Grindelwald and I developed that theory. We presented it to the Wizengamot in 1902 together. Later, people thought I had opposed the theory because I had opposed Gellert but it was the other way round. Gellert's actions convinced me that our theory had to be wrong but in the beginning, I thought it to be true. By now, I know better." He continued to specify that he had indeed presented the Genetic Theory to various members of the Sacred Twenty-eight, asking for input before he presented another theory to the Wizengamot, seeing as the last one brought about horrible consequences. "In part, I feel responsible for Gellert's actions. Would he have started killing, would he have lost himself to the Black pull if not for me? I shall never know. It is too late for me to ask."

As for the last of the accusations leveled against him, we asked Albus Dumbledore about his current relationship. "Miss Sinclair and Misses Longbottom seem to think that courting a cousin of your late lover is a scandal. I guess it may be when your late lover was a mass-murderer. Thankfully, Jonathan and Gellert are different people. If we were to accuse every family member of someone lost to the Black Pull, our society would not function as well as it does today."

Some parents of Hogwarts students aired their concern about an openly homosexual headmaster. Regarding those, Dumbledore answered: "I have been openly homosexual since before I ever became a teacher. I joined Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in 1904 when I was still in a relationship with Gellert Grindelwald. I taught for nearly thirty years before becoming headmaster. If parents are concerned, most of them can think back on their own school career with me as their Transfiguration teacher. I never had any complaints about untoward behavior. I had to kill my own lover – if there has been one thing I was completely uninterested in for the last decades, it was romance." Now, that had apparently changed. For more information on Jonathan Bagshot, please go to page 7 for an interview with his mother, the renowned Bathilda Bagshot.

Dear Albus,

how much did you bribe that reporter with?

Dear Gren,

some sacrifices are worth it.

Yours truly, Albus

"Mister Horten! Mister Horten!," Helen cried in fright.

Harry stormed down the stairs, expecting to see blood or a fire. Instead, he was confronted with a face in the flames of his fireplace that was unknown to him.

"Whoever you are: Begone and sent an obliuator."

"Mister Horten, my name is--"

"I don't care! Send an obliuator right away!" He took a bit of floo powder to throw into the flames, a sure-fire way to disconnect a floo call.

Helen shook like a rabbit. He went to her and hugged her carefully.

"Don't worry, it's gone now."

Her voice shook: "What was that?"

"Some ghost, I guess. Salt is good against ghosts."

"Salt, okay, salt." She shook her head, seeming to come back to herself. "What did you tell him? He should sent something?"

"A priest is also good for exorcising ghosts. The rift between us and the netherworld should always be closed. I told him to have someone close the rift from his side." Textbook procedure for talking to Muggles after experiencing magic.

"You really know a lot of things, Mister Horten."

"It comes with age, Helen. During your lifetime, a lot of strange things will occur and you will learn to deal with them one by one."

"Alright." She smiled shakily. "I see a ghost, I throw salt at it."

"It's why I keep that special purifying salt over the fireplace and tell everyone not to touch it."

Her gaze turned to the floo powder. "That makes sen--"

She was interrupted by a popping sound that made her scream. Or most likely, it wasn't the sound but the wizard emerging from thin air. It was followed by more popping sounds, three men suddenly appearing in his sitting room. Helen and Harry where hit by a Petrificus Totalus.

Harry concentrated on his mental barriers. Hopefully, these Aurors knew what they were doing. One of them appeared in his field of vision, pointing a wand at him and cast an Oblivatus. Great, so they barged in first, asked questions later. Hopefully, his shields would hold.

"No, no, not that one! That's Mister Horten, don't oblivate him!" One of the man – the one that had been in the flames – screamed.

"Already done," the Auror answered, apparently not noticing that Harry did not react at all to his cast.

"No ... no. What did you do?" The man stepped next to them, also looking down at Harry.

"Erased all knowledge of magic, standard procedure."

"But that man is the father of a magical child!"

"Oh." The Auror looked a bit sheepish. "Well, that's bad. Why didn't you say so?"

"When should I have said so?"

"Dad?" Tom's voice quivered, a voice coming from above. "Who are you?"

"Petrifi--"

"Stop it!" The unknown man grabbed the Auror's arm. "He'll fall down those stairs if you petrify him! Are you out of your mind?"

"Yeah, Rob, chill." The other Auror came over. "I secured the girl, she only witnessed a floo call. That's erased. Didn't you use Legilimency on this man?"

"Forgot about that." Well, Harry would have had his ass for that if that had been his own man. "Hey, kid, this your dad?"

"Yes?" Tom approached with hesitancy.

"That is Tom Horten, heir to the Gaunt line. Right, boy?" The man was most likely a reporter.

"What do you want with me and my father? What did you do to him?" His gaze changed between Harry and the Auror, unsure if he should approach.

"Ah, well ... err, Charles, what does the protocol say?"

The second Auror – Charles, apparently – shook his head and looked at Harry. "First of all, let me see how much you mucked this up. Legilimens!" Good luck with that. It was a tiny probe against Harry's shields, immediately bouncing back. Charles groaned in pain and held a hand to his head.

"What? What is it?" Rob turned to his partner.

"My father is an Occlumens. Stop trying to break into his mind, that's against the law."

Tom tried to sound brave. "Leave or I will call the Aurors."

"We are the Aurors, kid!" Rob barked at him while giving Charles a potion. "Why is a Muggle an Occlumens? Is he even a Muggle?"

The reporter interrupted: "Mister Horten is a very important community member–"

"Why don't you tell us this stuff?," Auror Rob screamed at him.

"Why don't you stop and listen for a second?"

Auror Charles just groaned in pain.

"Dad?" Tom had knelt down next to him. "Can you hear me?"

Even his gaze was frozen, so he couldn't react.

"Why isn't he moving?" The boy looked up at the three adults. "What did you do to him?"

"Why do I always have to deal with this shit?" Auror Rob shook his head. "I petrified your dad, kid. I also obliterated him because I was told that he had witnessed magic which is forbidden for a Muggle–"

The reporter interrupted: "I told you to obliterate the girl, not him."

"You never specified!" The man screamed again, clearly a choleric guy.

His partner groaned in pain, even more miserable than before.

"Is Helen okay?" Tom spared her a glance. She was most likely sitting somewhere, just looking into space.

"Yeah, she'll come to in a moment." Auror Rob looked down at Harry. "We should get your father out of the way. Are there other Muggles living here?"

"A few maids. They are out." They weren't but Tom clearly wanted them out of danger. Smart boy.

"Lead us to your father's room." Auror Rob levitated Harry.

Tom seemed reluctant but finally led them up the stairs. Instead of the bedroom, he knocked on the door leading to the study. "Edgar, are you in?"

Sadly, there was no answer. Most likely, Tom hoped for some support. They put Harry down on the couch but still did not release the spell.

"Charles, are you better now?"

"Yeah, sorry ... just a minute." The other Auror sat down in one of the chairs. "That's one hell of an Occlumens."

"Oh. Do you think my spell even took?"

"Most likely not. Release him."

"Finite incantatem."

First of all, Harry took a deep gulp of air. One of the main rules of petrification: Never keep it up for more than thirty seconds. It was possible but it was hell on the body. So Harry simply breathed for a moment while Tom squeezed his hand.

"Thanks ... Tom." He slowly stood with his son helping him. "Now ... may I know your names, first and all?"

"Auror Robard Leeves, fourteenth division. This is my partner Charles Burlap."

The supposed reporter also introduced himself: "Larrey Barren from Witch's Weekly." "Excuse me for not expressing my pleasure in meeting you all. I am General Grenmore Horten, one of the leaders of the British troops. In lieu of my position, I have been aware of the magical population for quite a few years now. Auror Leeves, Auror Burlap!"

Both sprang to attention as if he were their boss.

He was using his Head Auror voice after all when he continued: "On the conduct of dealing with No-Mags, chapter seven, line thirty-six!"

Auror Charles answered: "Before casting at a Muggle, one needs to be in a situation of immediate danger or mass panic."

"So how did an adult male standing with his back to you and a screaming fifteen-year-old look like a situation of immediate danger or mass panic?"

Auror Rob looked at his partner who stoically looked at Harry.

"Right. You attacked me unprovoked, you tried to obliviate me without using Legilimency first and worst of all, you kept me petrified for over two minutes. Auror Leeves, do you have any idea what that means for your career?"

"Uh ... sorry?" The man looked to his partner. "Charles?"

"You'll be suspended."

"At the minimum." Harry glared at him. "If I was Head Auror, you would be fired. Your conduct makes you a liability to the force. I will put in a formal request for your demotion."

"Wait a minute, calm down for a sec ... Charles, tell him. That wasn't so bad, right?"

The other Auror looked conflicted, clearly wanting to help his partner.

"Auror Leeves." Harry lowered his voice. "If I weren't an Occlumens as good as I am, your little spell would have erased at least five years from my life. That would have shredded my mental integrity and might have left me a living vegetable. You also nearly suffocated me because Muggles have no magical power that can let petrification spells run out before they die. In essence, you nearly killed me twice in the span of the last five minutes."

Auror Charles just closed his eyes while Auror Rob stared at Harry in shock.

"And I hope you won't try to wriggle out of this while standing next to a reporter, Leeves."

"Oh! Right." Barren pulled a notepad and a quick-quotes quill from his jacket. "Mister Horten, I have some questions for you."

"If you want an article, you can write about this." Harry glared at him. "Now kindly leave my estate, none of you are welcome here."

"Just a few regarding the theory you presented--"

"Out!" He pointed at the door. "Or do I need to employ these gentlemen for a case of breaking and entering? You hijacked a Muggle fireplace and apparated into someone's house without permission."

"Now, Mister Horten, don't be like that--" He could not finish the sentence because Auror Charles grabbed his arm and side-along apparated him out of the house.

Harry just groaned due to his massive headache after being without oxygen and having his mental barriers repeatedly attacked. This was not what he had expected from this day.

"Dad?" Tom's voice shook.

"Just a moment." Harry leaned back. "I just need to breath for a bit." Which he did – deeply and slowly. "Can you get me a glass of water, please?"

A minute of simple breathing and a full glass of water later, he turned his gaze onto

Tom. "You did well. That was a horrible situation, huh?"

"What did they want with us?" Tom stood right in front of him, too excited still to sit down.

"That reporter showed up in the floo. Helen saw and it spooked her. I calmed her down while I sent the man to get obliviators. Apparently, they had a lot of miscommunication."

"They nearly killed you."

Well ... yes. Instead of answering, Harry offered his son a hug. Thankfully, he himself had been in enough life-threatening situations to not even tremble when the adrenaline left. For Tom though, this was ... it was true, Harry had nearly died. Tom would have lost his home and his main parent. He wasn't surprised when the boy started to cry.

He needed to get a letter to Dumbledore. Jonathan was at the school, both of them discussing their options. Edgar was still at the factory, going over the books with Brea. Were they safe? They needed to secure the fireplace. He had never expected anyone other than Dumbledore to contact it. How had he not expected paparazzi to show up? "I want to be stronger," Tom mumbled into his shoulder. "I want to be able to protect you."

"Strength always lies in numbers, Tom. We need our allies." Harry reached into his breast pocket and pulled out a handkerchief. "Make yourself presentable. We'll bar the sitting room and contact Dumbledore about this."

The boy nodded and clumsily wiped his cheeks. They went down and found Helen cleaning the sitting room again. She smiled at seeing them, clearly not remembering what had happened.

"Helen, dear, we need the room for a bit. Could you continue somewhere else?"

"Oh, sure, Mister Horten. Do you need anything?"

"Just a bit of quiet. I'll lock the room. Please tell the others not to disturb us."

"Of course, sir." She curtsied, send the clearly disheveled Tom a smile of sympathy and took her cleaning supplies with her.

Tom followed to lock the door behind her. Harry locked the other doors. "There was no one upstairs, right?"

"Edgar is still out."

"Right." He threw a bit of floo powder into the hearth. "Dumbledore's office, Hogwarts." He pushed Tom in front of him. "Please put your head in the flames. I promise that it won't hurt."

"You sure?" There was anxiety in his eyes but he still complied. "You're right, it doesn't hurt."

"Your magic protects you. Just like with floo travel." Harry sat down beside him. "Is Dumbledore in? Please call for him."

"Albus? Mister Dumbledore?" He moved his head. "There is only a strange bird."

"His name is Fawkes. Please ask him to get Dumbledore immediately."

"Okay ... birdie? Fawkes? Could you please help us? My father was attacked by Aurors. I need help from Albu- woah! Dad, the bird burst into flames!"

"It's a phoenix. It's an immortal, very intelligent creature."

"That's so cool. So he travels through flames? That's neat." He looked around some more. "Hello there. Are you a ghost? Oh, she went away. Maybe she'll help us too?"

"There is one nasty male ghost in the castle, the others are mostly nice. Some are very shy though."

"Right, okay. Oh, Albus! Down here!" He was silent for a moment. "Dad is okay, I think."

But we're scared. Can you come here?" A moment later, he pulled his head from the flames and took a step back. "That was weird."

A moment later, the flames went higher and Dumbledore stepped out of them. "Gren? How are you?"

"A bit out of breath." He stood and shook the other man's hand. "I was petrified for about two minutes."

"Heavens! What happened?" Dumbledore ran a few diagnostic spells.

"A reporter was in the floo, Helen saw, so I sent him to get obliviators. They petrified us and the one with me obliterated without using Legilimency first. The second one then tried Legilimency but failed. That led to a lot of confusion, so it took quite a bit for them to decide to let me go."

"Dad gave them a scolding!" Tom grinned with pride, obviously over the fact that this had been really dangerous.

"Thankfully, I got the auror code of conduct memorised." He grinned.

"Your head is a gold-mine, Gren." Dumbledore shook his head fondly. "On the downside, they nearly destroyed that. I'll send Jonathan back here to protect you until this had died down."

"Please ward the fireplace as well."

"I shall." He sighed deeply. "Gren, I am sorry-"

He stopped him with a hand gesture. "What's done is done. I only care about the fact that you stay on as headmaster. We can reintroduce that theory on a later date."

The lines on Dumbledore's face deepened. "Or we could use the current press."

"And divert from your love-life?"

"That would be appreciated."

"It would also paint an even bigger target on my back." Harry looked at Tom.

"Whatever happens, Tom comes first, is that clear?"

"Of course." It was not reassuring that Dumbledore looked away while saying so.

"Who was the reporter?"

"Someone called Barren from Witches Weekly."

"Never heard of him. We should get you an interview with the Daily Prophet."

"I also need to write a formal complaint against the Aurors just now."

"Jonathan will take you to the Ministry. I'll arrange the interview, alright?" The man had already turned to the fireplace and begun to cast wards.

Tom took Harry's hand and asked: "Can I come?"

"I ..." Harry knelt down. "I don't want to part from you either. I want you, Edgar and the others safe. But I can only keep you safe when the focus shifts from you. People should not see you with me right now. If this backfires, it could get you in danger."

"But I can help! I don't want you to- Dad, what if you are attacked again?"

"Trust Jonathan, Tom." He hugged the boy. "He'll keep me safe. I am a lot more worried about you here. Albus, is there anyone that can look after my family?"

"I, err ... there is a friend I could ask."

"As long as it is not Mundungus Fletcher."

"How do you ... right, yes ... err, Elias Dodge?"

"Yeah, that's alright."

"I forgot that you know me better than I know myself." The man smiled crookedly.

"Elias is a good fellow, he'll keep you safe, Tom."

"And ... you'll come back? Both Jonathan and you?"

"Yes, Tom, don't worry."

"Should you take Brea?", the boy suggested.

"Brea? Why would I do that?"

"Well ... coming out as gay seems to be dangerous, so having only Jonathan as your bodyguard could ... well, you have her as security in that regard, right?"

"That is actually a great idea, Tom." He pondered the thought. "I just never told her about magic."

"But she is supposedly the one raising me, Dad. No one knows that Edgar and you are caring for me." What a smart boy!

"You have a point there." Harry exchanged a gaze with Dumbledore. "What do you think?"

"It wouldn't hurt to have a beautiful young woman with you. She also knows how to keep secrets, as far as I know."

"Right." Harry nodded to himself. "Tom, would you please run to the factory and fetch her and Edgar?"

"Sure, Dad!" Off he went.

"Right ... please let this turn out well." Harry stood and turned to Dumbledore. "Don't antagonize more people, please."

"I am sorry." The man hung his head.

"As I said, it's done now. Would you get Elias and Jonathan, please?"

"Of course." He grabbed a handful of floo powder. "Just ... I really mean it. Gren, I am sorry."

He nodded. What else was there to do? If time took a completely different path now, the error lay with Harry and would forever do so. It was just another cross to bear.