

Post Owl Harry

By pfeilspitze

The Marauders start Harry on the path
to membership. Nine years later...

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Contents

Prologue	Perilous Potions	1
Chapter 1	Flying the Coop	5
Chapter 2	Fluky Familiars	9

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Disclaimer:

This is obviously not canon. I'm the wrong gender to possibly be JKR, to whom Harry Potter belongs. I probably can't claim Hermione Jane either, despite JKR apparently forgetting about her...

Prologue

Perilous Potions

On a late summer afternoon, at the outskirts of an old country town, around a bend on a plain dirt road, was a most comforting view. A small cottage, well-kept but old enough to have character. A simple garden, pleasing without seeming artificial. Fairly normal, but nice.

On the other hand, almost nobody could actually *see* the view.

The young magical couple, whose son was being hunted by terrorists, were hidden away under a *Fidelus* charm. The only person not in the house that could have seen the view was the leader of their group fighting the terrorists, strangely enough the Headmaster of the school from which they had graduated but a few years ago.

So it wasn't really a normal situation at all.

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Lily Potter, *née* Evans, was trying to make the best of the situation. Alice, her best friend from school, had also gone into hiding with her husband, bringing along her son Neville. Neville had been born just a few hours before her Harry, over a year ago now. Not long after, Headmaster Dumbledore had come along, telling them both to go into hiding, though she couldn't come up with any way her boy and the Longbottom's were connected.

Her husband James, though, had his group from school around fairly often, as they were now. Remus, at least, was good company, being nearly as studious as she was. Sirius, however, was not. She had managed to get James to calm down over the years, or she would never have married the bullying stalker, but she was beginning to think that Sirius was a lost cause. Peter seemed harmless enough, though she never really noticed him, as he tended to be quiet and stuck to the back.

For now, they were upstairs playing with Harry, and she was downstairs getting dinner started. She soon started to worry, though. They were being quiet. Every year

the Firsties quickly learnt that danger sign, and she had a particularly refined sixth sense for when they were getting into trouble.

‘They’re probably trying to get him on a broom again,’ she thought, heading upstairs. Honestly, what was it with Boys and their Quidditch? She’d just have to find a better place to hide the brooms. ‘He can wait and learn at Hogwarts,’ she told herself, though she’d have rather he never got involved in falling off brooms and getting hit with big rocks.

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She was, unsurprisingly, quite correct that they were being mischievous, but her guess was rather off.

As soon as she had left, Sirius had turned to James with a question.

“I think your Pronglet should become the first of a the next generation of the Mauders, don’t you?”

“I don’t know, Padfoot, could he really manage it? It took...”

“Oh, don’t worry about it, Prongs, he’ll be fine. I’ve even brewed the potion already.”

James turned toward Remus.

“Moony? You’re the brains of the operation.”

“I never read the research for that little adventure. You well know I can’t become one.”

Peter piped up.

“We’ve done plenty of pranks with temporary transfiguring potions, before, Prongs, and everyone was always fine. This one’s just a bit more complicated.”

“I suppose that’s true, Wormtail, but this one’s much more complicated than just the transfiguration. It has to find something in you, and unlock an ability.”

“Sure, but that’s why they invented the potion,” Sirius interrupted, pulling out the vial. “Much easier than having to find it with meditation and all. Don’t you want to run in the woods with him?”

James sighed. “Well, yes... So long as it’s brewed correctly, Padfoot.”

“Of course!” he said, with a hurt look that fooled nobody.

He was just finishing giving Harry the potion when Lily stormed into the room.

“*Sirius Orion Black!*”

All four of them flinched at the full name.

“Calm down, Lily-flower, it was just...”

“Do you know nothing?” She turned to her husband. “How could you let him do that, Potter?”

He cringed, knowing that the last name was reserved for the most severe transgressions. “It’s just transfiguration, Dear, and the potion shouldn’t be harmful to children.”

‘Still as bad at research as ever,’ she mumbled. “I take it you never did the the extra credit for McGonnagol in sixth-year?”

He shook his head.

“Of course, that’s just like you. Hatch a hare-brained scheme that’d likely get yourselves arrested, and don’t even get marks for it. You have to know that you get some instincts to go with your animal. Think about it for a bit. You have to be aware enough to go back, and to know to where you’re going back.”

Sirius spoke up. “He had his first birthday a month ago, he crawls after us when we move, and he’s started walking sometimes. I don’t see the problem.”

“Does he know who he is? Does he have a sense of self? Of what makes him different and unique?” She glared at him. “There’s a reason it’s not *supposed* to be taken until you’re an adult.”

“So what do we do now?” asked James nervously.

Lily slumped a bit. “Just wait, I guess. There’s *Animas Revelio* if we have to, though it might leave some animal influences. I’d rather not try to get help, since we’re *supposed* to be hiding, and it *is* illegal, since he didn’t register intent.”

All five of them were rather surprised when all of a sudden Harry turned into a young Owl, flapped his wings, turned back, and fell asleep.

James recovered first. “Yes! A bird! He’ll make an even better seeker than...”

Lily’s glare was quite effective at killing his outward exuberance. She dragged him from the room, ranting the whole way. “And how often has he been on a broomstick that flying makes it into his animagus form? I told you not to take *my* child up, but you...”

The other three apparated away, rather glad for the reprieve.

* * *

Summer turned into Autumn, and Lily eventually forgave the boys. They’d never forget it, of course, and she made sure that Sirius, James, and Peter never ‘found’ any dogs, stags, or rats (respectively) for Harry to play with, but he seemed to have gotten through unscathed.

Indeed, he was progressing quite well. Over the months he formed his words better and played more and more attention to his surroundings. Wanting to stay hidden, Lily and James decided that there was no need to get Harry checked out by a healer. Dumbledore dropped by once, but he was in a hurry, so they didn’t bother him with it, and he didn’t notice anything.

Little did they know that his increased awareness was actually mostly due to his Owl correcting his eyesight, meaning he wouldn’t need the glasses he would have otherwise.

Chapter I

Flying the Coop

Nine years later, the view had changed.. Instead of a home, there was the monotonous conformity of a street full of people all desiring an image they're convinced their neighbours like, but that they themselves hate. Of all the houses on Privet Drive, #4 tried the hardest to be normal.

Of course, that was where Harry lived, so it wasn't normal at all.

He didn't know that, though. After Lily and James were killed and Harry's miraculous survival, Dumbledore, in his supposed wisdom, left him on Lily's sister's doorstep with only a letter, despite his Deputy's correct assessment of them as "the worst sort of muggles imaginable". Jealous of her sister, Petunia hated magic, and had been taking it out on Harry since he arrived.

As far as he knew, his parents had died in a car crash. He lived in the cupboard under the stairs with nothing of his own, just cast-offs from his obese cousin Dudley, along with constant abuse from him and Uncle Vernon. He had been doing poorly in school since he found out that Vernon would punish him for 'cheating' if he did better than Dudley, and had no friends since Dudley chased them all away. For some reason, the authorities never seemed to find out about his situation, so he felt stuck there.

Christmas came after another few months. As usual, Harry got no presents. He was let out of his cupboard for just long enough to prepare dinner before being locked in again while his relatives ate it.

Spring came, turned to summer, and in late June things finally changed.

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Dudley's birthday was always a big event in the Dursley household. Petunia loved to spoil 'her precious Dudders', so there were always huge piles of presents. Most were always broken or forgotten within a week, but nobody ever mentioned that.

This year, one of his presents was a weekend trip to the zoo. Normally the Dursleys would just leave Harry with a baby-sitter when they went out, if it were too long to just

keep him locked in the cupboard, but weather had delayed the trip by 2 weeks, pushing it into July. By then, Mrs Figg, the only person around willing to supervise their self-styled delinquent, had left on her annual visit to see her parents. Dudley refused to let his trip be delayed any further, so Harry got to come along—his first trip he could remember other than to carry groceries—under threats to behave that he knew all too well weren't bluffs. Still, they usually found a reason to punish him no matter what he did, so he let himself be cautiously optimistic that there might be some good without too much of an increase in the bad.

The trip went fairly peacefully, with Dudley being unappreciative and Harry trying to be invisible, until they came to a certain exhibit.

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The snakes were all in a large room with glass-fronted enclosures set back in the walls. Dudley was going past all the cages, shouting at them to move and banging on the glass, quickly tiring of such 'boring snakes'.

Harry stayed well clear, only approaching after Dudley had left. He was at the rattle snakes when he heard, "I hate it when they do that," in a rather exasperated tone.

"What?" he said, looking around. He had long been used to hearing voles and other small animals skittering around that nobody else ever seemed to—not that anyone ever talked to him unless necessary—but a voice was something new.

He didn't see anyone, so he looked back at the cage, only to see the snake shaking its tail towards the 'Don't bang on the glass' sign.

"You can talk?" he asked quietly, rather surprised.

"Obviously. I've just never had a human understand me before."

"This is my first conversation with a snake, too." Having no idea what snakes talk about, Harry asked, "Do you like it here?"

"It's alright. They bring prey often enough. Just rather boring, since there's nowhere to go."

"I can empathise with that last one. Where were you before?"

The snake flicked its tongue toward the part of the information placard that said 'Raised in captivity'. "I'd like to go to Spain, though."

"I wish I could take..."

Dudley ran over, yelling "Look what the snake's doing," and crashed into Harry, sending Harry sprawling on the ground. He looked up in time to see Dudley falling forward into the snake's pen, landing on its tail. Rather surprised, the snake reflexively bit Dudley's arm, then, after noticing that Dudley wasn't really trying to attack it, slithered away with a "Thanks, amigo" to Harry on the way by.

As soon as Vernon noticed Dudley in the pen—now stuck there, as the glass had mysteriously reappeared—he immediately started berating Harry for the 'freakishness' that was supposedly his fault. Luckily for Dudley, Petunia thought to summon the zoo's

emergency staff. The bite probably wouldn't have been fatal, but the anti-venom made things much safer and more comfortable.

Harry spent the drive home alternately being scared about what would happen once they arrived and thinking about the strange things that happen around him. He had turned a teacher's hair blue once, and had even somehow ended up on top of roof one day when running from bullies.

His musings were forcefully interrupted when Vernon threw him into the cupboard and he hit his head on the back wall. He stayed conscious just long enough to hear the lock snap shut.

* * *

The Dursleys spend the rest of the day coddling Dudley after his traumatic ordeal. The next morning they went to church, leaving Harry in the cupboard. On the ride home, though, Vernon decided that it was time to 'deal with the boy'. As soon as he got home he stormed in, not even bothering to close the front door, and yanked Harry out, dropping him to the ground.

Harry awoke lying on the floor in the hallway with Vernon slapping his cheeks. Squinting, as the midday sun was rather painful after the darkness of his cupboard, he only just managed to see, through the still-open door, a flying, feathered, brown and white shape. His brain, still not running normally, thanks to the concussion and a bit of sleep, found an old memory that it never would have otherwise.

Vernon stopped, shocked, at the sight of an approximately 40 cm owl where Harry used to be.

Harry would have been shocked too, but his flight instinct, well-honed by running from Dudley, had taken over, so his Owl was in control and was too busy beating his wings as hard as he could to get as far away as he could.

* * *

The tawny owl didn't find it anything unusual. Sure, the long-tailed one was going rather quickly, but that probably just meant he had an urgent letter. It didn't look like he was carrying anything, but the calmer owl knew that the wizards could do tricks like that.

In any case, he had his own letter to deliver to a Dean Thomas. This was always a good time of year. Less rain to have to fly through, more tasty frogs to find, and the old wizards at the castle always had plenty of letters to send.

Chapter II

Fluky Familiars

Most of those letters went out around the beginning of August. A few weeks was plenty enough time for the returning students to pick up their books, potion ingredients, and new robes. The new students with Wizard and Witch parents had all learnt about Hogwarts long before, so while they got their letters earlier than the rest of the school, it was more to keep them from getting to distressed at the wait than due to any real need for extra time.

The new students with Muggle parents, however, knew nothing of Hogwarts—or of the entire Wizarding World—so they got their letters earliest. They went out slowly, one each day, to allow Professor McGonagall, the Deputy Headmistress, to visit them and assure them that no, the letter wasn't a prank, to answer any questions that they may have, and to emphasize the importance of the statute of secrecy.

That meant that while Dean was just now getting his letter, a certain Hermione Granger had received hers a week earlier.

* * *

Roger and Emily Granger had always thought that their daughter was special, but then, just about all parents do. They were quite proud of how well she did in school, though they knew it had been more difficult for her, of late. They didn't really know what to do about that. Sure, they would have preferred that she enjoyed herself, but they knew that they had been in a similar situation at that age, but came out of it okay. And really, they were rather more comfortable dealing with their mini-adult than with a more average child. Besides, if anything it meant she was becoming more devoted to her studies, and they were loath to discourage that.

Never in their wildest dreams, however, would they have thought her a witch. They had always enjoyed their science courses, and considered themselves normal, rational people. But really, what can you say after you've seen a woman change herself into a cat? At least it finally explained those weird things that seemed to happen around their

daughter. And it was quite nice to know that they had both actually seen strange things. Apparently neither of them had bothered to mention them since they obviously couldn't have actually happened.

And that alley! After Hermione had pulled them into that pub they couldn't see—that would never have passed a Health and Safety inspection, so the owner was probably quite happy that normal people couldn't see it—it felt as though they had gone back in time. Honestly, you'd think that with magic they would have come up with something better than open flame for light.

At the bookstore, though, things had gone just as they usually did. Hermione hadn't wanted to leave, and had somehow managed to cajole them into getting far more books than they had planned. Luckily they had found the catalogue, and thus avoided her going through every book in the store. It had made her want an Owl, but at least that had been a discussion they could have on the way home.

* * *

Harry's owl finally settled down in a park a few parishes from #4. Sitting calmly at the top of a tree, Harry managed to get more in control of his thought processes. It sure wasn't normal yet, but it was much better than before. He experimented a bit, managing to move his feet and unfold his wings. Surprisingly his hearing and sight didn't seem much different, though being able to see his back was rather weird.

The strangest thing, though, was that he could sense something. There were many of them, too, all of which felt just a bit different. Barely any were close by, and most seemed to be in groups, with a particularly large one in the direction he thought was downtown London. It seemed like those further away generally felt fainter, so a few of them off to the north-west were probably very strong.

There was one not too far south of him that seemed relatively strong, and somehow clearer than most of them. He figured he might as well go see what it was. He certainly didn't want to go back to the Dursleys, and they were probably mad enough that more time wouldn't make a difference, if he had to later.

Flexing what his brain still thought of as his arm muscles, he managed to flap his wings. He jumped off and managed to go forward for a bit, but he was soon tumbling, quite out of control. As the ground approached, the owl took over again, soaring off towards the sun.

* * *

Hermione was having a great week. She had new books to read, long a favourite activity, and now she had spells to master, too. Why, just yesterday she'd managed to fix an old pair of her father's glasses with *Oculus Reparo*. Her parents were most impressed. Quite pleased too, as they were going sailing in Florida after their conference one evening, and it meant they wouldn't need to risk his good pair.

They'd left earlier that morning to catch their plane, leaving Hermione with her usual babysitter. Though she never needed close watching, Hermione was rather particular about who she stayed with, complaining heavily if she thought her minder wasn't mature enough. Luckily, a college student a few doors down was taking classes for her summer term, so both were happy to be alone in separate rooms, reading and working.

Hermione was rather glad for this usual routine, since it meant she didn't have to hide her magic books too actively. She realized just how important it was, though, when an odd-looking owl flew through her window.

* * *

Harry rather enjoyed the flight, despite being somewhat of a passenger. Fortunately his owl knew where he wanted to go, and had flown straight there. He was still rather surprised, though, when he flew right through the open window and into the house.

After landing on the desk, Harry had enough influence to look around a bit. The things he were sensing were people, if this one was any indication. He had apparently been sensing a young girl with remarkably bushy brown hair. Strangely, owls landing near by was apparently normal for her, as she started talking to him.

"Oh, do you have a letter for me?"

A letter? Why would an owl have a letter?

"I guess you don't. The others were quite eager to give them to me. At least you didn't land on my work."

Harry looked around a bit, and noticed just on what he was standing.

Wait, she's reading a book of spells and taking it seriously enough to take notes?

"Hmm, I don't have any letters to send, and don't really know anyone that'd want one from me, anyways. Did you come to see me?"

Well, I did, I suppose; Not that I knew what I was going to find.

Harry tried to nod, and it apparently worked, since she took it for an answer.

* * *

Hermione had not as surprised as Harry, being used to such things. That said, she was as curious as ever. She figured the deputy Headmistress would certainly have mentioned any letters to expect, and really, there was nobody else that knew her to be a witch.

And yet this Owl's here for me, she thought. I suppose my parents know too, but they're off at the airport. I don't get why they have to leave 3 hours before the flight, though. It can't take that long to drive to Heathrow. I doubt it would even take that long to go through London...

Harry cocked his head quizzically as Hermione jumped up and ran out of the room. She came back with a London road atlas. Laying it on the table, she flipped it open to a large-scale view, and started talking to herself.

“Let’s see... They were going to Heathrow, so that’s up the A24, then around the M25. The Leaky Cauldron is right in London, though, so they’d stay on the A24 and take the A4 back out. That’s... less than 10 miles further, so they’d have plenty of time.”

She turned back to the owl on her desk.

“Oh, this is brilliant! I was wanting an owl, and you’re just gorgeous.”

As she reached out her hand out towards him, Harry froze. When she proceeded to slowly run her hand along his feathers, though, he couldn’t help but let out a soft trill in happiness at the feeling.

* * *

Author’s Note:

Thanks to Vern for a bunch of fixes.

Yes, her parents can’t get into Diagon Alley themselves. Yes, they do need to be at the airport early. She’s wrong.

The Grangers’ names are from canoncansodoff’s *Movie Night at the Grangers*¹.

Snowy owls don’t *hoot*, as a number of writers like to point out. Harry’s species doesn’t either.

¹http://www.fanfiction.net/s/3410377/1/Movie_Night_at_the_Grangers

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