

It took me a couple minutes to wrap my head around the fact that I would be going to places I knew from stories I had read, watched, and played. Sally tried her best to assure me it was a good thing.

"Think of all the extra knowledge you will have about these realities!" She pointed out. "Knowing all the secrets will make many of your tasks much easier!"

"Yeah, but think of all the fucking horrifying things inside stories! I mean, what if I get sent to Warhammer 40k!"

"I assure you, nothing in any universe will be able to affect you, at least not permanently," She explained. "Any changes made to you are erased when your avatar is erased. Any memories you receive are stringently filtered for mimetic or cognitohazard threats. I can even bring you back early in case you are stuck in a torture loop! The worst thing they could do is kill you on their side, sending you back immediately."

"What happens then?"

"It will leave you weak and lethargic for up to seventy-two hours and unable to undertake missions for about a week. If it happens again, generally, those times are doubled. If it happens often, especially in close succession, you may lose the ability to jump anymore. For anyone working with you, that just means an early retirement. For you, this is a much bigger deal, as you are what I use as an anchor for sending people back and forth. If you cannot jump, no one can."

"So dying on the other side won't kill me, but eventually, it could mean the end of rewards," I said, trying to boil down what she was saying for my own sake.

"Correct," She confirmed. "I suggest you find a team, someone who understands the situation."

"Yeah..." I said, trailing off for a moment before shaking my head and focusing. "Okay, what are my choices?"

"Your first option is to make sure Harry Potter does not end up in the care of the Dursleys," She explained. "Your second option is... Well I'm not sure you're ready for a world like this. The task is for you to ensure Pyrrha Nikos survives forty-eight hours after you arrive."

"That name... is familiar. What is it from?"

"A show called RWBY. The people there have access to soul-based powers that grant enhanced strength, endurance, durability, and abilities in the form of semblances. Pyrrha is a formidable fighter, but... the person who kills her far outclasses her in power and, arguably, skill. This... I believe this is beyond you at the moment."

"I mean, Harry Potter is a bit out of my depth as well..."

"Perhaps, but you would enter at a specific moment, one without open combat, at least unless you change something," She explained. "The RWBY reality is in open conflict with monsters and with other humans."

"Will I lose access to the one I don't take?" I asked after thinking for a moment.

"Oh, no, you won't even lose access to the ones you take!" She explained. "The same reality, or a reality that is very similar, may come up multiple times."

"Right... In that case, let's give Harry Potter a try," I said. "It never sat right with me how the story glosses over that he is a victim of child abuse for so long."

"Fantastic!"

In a quick shift, we were inside Sally's heart, her genuine crystal bouncing in front of me. I barely managed to catch myself as I stumbled backward, having been sitting down when we moved.

"Oh... sorry," She apologized sheepishly. "Well... are you ready?"

"No!" I shouted suddenly, an idea flashing through my head. "Send me back to the kitchen."

As soon as I appeared in the kitchen, I looked around, walking around the decently sized countertop island in the center of the kitchen floor. I knelt down and grabbed one of the stools, tipping it on its side. With a smirk, I kicked out one of its legs.

"What are you doing?" Sally asked, sounding appalled. "I just made that!"

"I know, thank you!" I said happily, yanking something free. "You might have saved my life."

I held up a wooden dowel, one of the supports between the four legs of the stool. It was made from a reddish wood and stained to bring out the grain. It was about as thick as my pointer finger and maybe eight or nine inches long.

"It's a bit thick to pass as a wand, but in a pinch, I bet I can get someone to freeze up or pause," I explained, still smirking. "Now I'm ready."

Sally bounced back, seemingly surprised, before letting out a soft "huh." In a second, we were back in her heart.

"Now, are you ready?" She asked as I tucked my "Wand" in my back pocket, bouncing when I nodded. "Good! Commencing Avatar Reality Projection!"

For a moment, my whole world shifted, and for a split second, I was in two places at once. I could see Sally hovering in front of me, slightly bobbing in her pillar of light, while also seeing an empty street late at night. Slowly, my vision transferred completely, Sally fading until all I could see was the street.

Slowly, I turned around, looking at the houses around me until I saw one in the distance. An entire corner of its roof was blown open, and despite it looking like it had happened recently, no one was panicking. Whatever magic was in place was working because, as far as I could tell, no one had heard or seen the blast.

"Okay, okay, so what do I know..." I mumbled to myself, trying to puzzle together a plan. "Hagrid shows up... and Sirius and he talk... or argue?"

I kept an eye on the street, the broken down house clear as day, with no sign of the half-giant or Sirius. I knew inside was a scared, probably hurt child, with only his mother's corpse for comfort. Also, potentially Snape.

"Dammit..." I cursed to myself, making a beeline for the building. "This is not a good idea..."

I walked in through the front door of the cottage, noting that the door had been blasted open, a crack running through it from top to bottom. I stepped into the house, the entire room ransacked and torn apart, like a tornado had blown through and pushed everything all over the place. I could also see James Potter's corpse.

"Dammit," I repeated, before turning towards the stairs, climbing them two at a time.

Voldemort's path wasn't exactly difficult to follow, with blasted doors and knocked-down furniture leading me right to Harry's room. I stepped past another blasted door, stopping when I stepped into the room proper. Once again, there was a corpse on the floor. This time, it was Lily Potter.

The room was cold, not surprising considering how much of it had been blasted away. It was Halloween, so the nights got cold enough to be pretty uncomfortable, and while I wasn't sure at what point it became dangerous for a kid, I wasn't about to take a chance. Even if I knew someone would be by sooner rather than later.

I walked over to the crib and looked down at Harry Potter, unconscious and bleeding from his forehead, a bloody wound carved into it. I sighed and quickly tore a long strip off his pillowcase, wrapping it around his head to keep it clean before swaddling him in his blankets.

Once he was properly wrapped up and warm, I slowly made my way down and out of the building. I considered for a moment trying to do something with Harry's parents, but I wasn't sure how much time I had. Instead, I stepped outside and sat down on the front steps.

"Sorry, Kiddo," I murmured down to him, shaking my head. "You're gonna have a hard life ahead of you. You can handle it, though, and hopefully, with Sirius behind you, things will be a bit easier."

As I sat on this porch, orphaned Harry Potter in my arms, the reality of what I was doing really hit home. This poor kid had a prophecy on his head, and here I was, stirring the pot, hoping to make it a bit better. All for a reward when I got back to my own world.

"Maybe someday I'll come back and help you a bit more," I said, looking up at the sky. "With any luck, I'll be stronger by that point, maybe even have some friends with me."

I hung on to the idea that someday I would be back in this world to make up for leaving this poor kid to his fate. After about five minutes, I saw my first challenge of the night, Rubeus Hagrid. He walked closer, coming around to the front entrance, stopping when he spotted me, tensing immediately. He was massive. Not even the movies prepared me for how big he was.

"Hello? who are ya? wha' are yeh doin' here?" He called out, his hand on an umbrella, which I knew contained his wand.

"My name's Aiden Corlan," I said, meeting the massive man's eyes. "It's good to meet you, Hagrid."

"A Yank? Wha' are ya doing- is tha' Harry? Wha' are ya doin' with the boy!" He shouted, taking a step closer.

I had to fight the urge to run. I knew he was a gentle giant, but it was easy to forget the gentle part when he was upset.

"Yes, I'm from MACUSA," I answered. "I'm a Seer, a strong one. I saw this moment and... I couldn't let him sit upstairs in the cold, surrounded by..."

"A Seer? How... so they are dead then? Gods above, poor Lily an' James," He said, tears already falling on his face. "An' poor Harry too. Is he alright?"

"He has a nasty scar, but he should be okay," I assured him, standing up. "Now, I know Dumbledore sent you here to pick him up, but his godfather will be here shortly."

"Dumbledore said ter bring 'im ter Privet Drive, got directions an' everything," He responded, looking concerned. "Said ter not let anything stop me"

"Of course, of course," I said, careful not to agree or disagree. "But surely his godfather should see him?"

Hagrid looked deep in thought, most likely trying to figure out what Dumbledore would want him to do. Lucky for me, Hagrid thought Dumbledore was incapable of wrong and was god's gift to wizardkind, so he immediately assumed he would want to give Sirius a chance to see his godson.

"... Alright, I suppose a few minutes won't do any harm," Hagrid said, turnin' ter look at the surrounding houses. "I... I'll go inside an' tend to his parents."

He disappeared inside, ducking under the doorframe. I shook my head as he left me, a stranger, alone with poor little Harry.

I was barely waiting for a minute or two when the distant sound of a motorcycle's rumbling started getting louder and louder. Hagrid stepped back outside, his face damp with tears, probably called out by the sound. Before long, the sound was accompanied by the screech of a tire making contact with asphalt before the engine's rumble cut out. I spotted Sirius running to the house from around the corner, wand in hand. When he turned up to the front walkway, he froze, spotting both of us.

"I'm too late-" He said, shaking his head. "No! No NO NO!"

"Sirius, little Harry survived," Hagrid said, gesturing to me and young Harry.

"I know he did! I would be dead if he didn't," He said, tears falling down his face as he got closer. "I swore on my magic to protect him with my life when I became his godfather."

The wizard stepped closer, looking at Harry. He had long hair, which was a bit wild but much better tended to than it was in any of the movies. He was younger, healthier, and didn't have that deranged look that followed him after Azkaban. I held Harry out to him, passing the bundled-up child to him.

"What's this on his head?" He asked, fiddling with the temporary bandage.

"It's a bandage, covering a cursed scar," I explained before adding. "I didn't want to cast magic on him without getting it looked at first."

"Smart," He responded, shaking his head, his face still filled with sorrow.

He attempted to pass him back, but I refused to take him. After a moment, the fact that he didn't know me seemed to make its way through his grief, and he pulled Harry back.

"Who are you?" He asked accusingly. "Why are you here? That goes for you as well, Hagrid."

"My name is Aiden Corlan. I am a Seer," I explained. "From MACUSA. I saw I needed to come here, so I did."

"And you didn't stop-"

The clearly distressed man stopped himself, struggling through a deep breath to calm himself.

"Why are you here?"

"To stop a great crime from being committed," I explained, trying to sound dramatic. "To keep you from going off to hunt for Peter Pettigrew. I know this is his fault, but you need to focus on taking care of Harry right now. It's what Lily and James would have wanted. He needs to go with you. He needs a family, one that will love him and treat him as their own."

"Now hold on there just a minute!" Hagrid said, stepping closer. "Dumbledore said to bring Harry to him. I know-"

"So he could put him with the Dursleys," I said. "Where he would spend the next eleven years being treated no better than a house elf."

"Dumbledore wants to put Harry with the Dursleys?!" Sirius said, stepping back with the still unconscious child in his arms. "Absolutely not! Vernon is a devil hidden under a dozen layers of fat, and Petunia is a cold, horrible woman! They hate magic with a passion and despise anything they don't consider normal! They sent Lily away in tears when she tried to introduce them to Harry!"

"Now I'm sure Dumbledore knows wha' he is doin'," Hagrid said, looking to me for support but not finding any. "I need ta bring the lad to him, Dumbledore is expecting me."

"Well he will have to be disappointed," He said, with finality. "I'm... I'm taking Harry. Pettigrew will keep, I'll find the rat and make him pay..."

I put my hand on his shoulder, shaking my head.

"Harry is the most important thing right now. You need to focus on taking care of him," I said, shaking my head. "Listen, maybe drop a line to someone in charge that he is a rat Animagus, then put it out of your head. I'm sure he will turn up eventually."

He looked at me and narrowed his eyes as if debating whether or not to call me out on sticking my nose where it didn't belong. Eventually, after a moment, he just shook his head, focusing on Hagrid.

"Dumbledore can come talk to me at Andromeda's house, but tell him Harry is not living with the Dursleys under any circumstances," He said before turning to leave.

I gave a look to Hagrid, who looked troubled that someone would stand in the way of what Dumbledore wanted. I shook my head before following Sirius.