

# The time that is given us

## How love can change lives

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### Kapitel 24: Twenty-forth chapter

*Dear Gren,*

*my dear old friend Rasmus tells me that Jonathan is the worst pupil he ever had. A genius at brewing, a horror at following rules. With every order, every rule put before him, Jonathan seems to want an explanation as to why he should follow it. Rasmus says that they have screaming matches at least four times a day. Jonathan himself tells me that it's mostly Rasmus screaming at him and Jonathan ignoring him. I fear Rasmus is reaching the end of his rope, so I advised Jonathan to lay low but he seems incapable of doing so. The only thing I hear is how incompetent Rasmus is. I don't want Jonathan to lose his apprenticeship, I know he would hate himself for it. Also, what would he do then? I can't have him live with me, can I? Gren, I really have no idea how to continue. Could you talk to him before the situation gets unsalvageable?*

*On the front of our project, Mrs. Avery has announced a pregnancy as well. All three women pregnant in less than half a year, that is an amazing result in itself. So I wasn't surprised to get a letter from Malfoy asking to meet another pureblood circle. It seems that other families began to ask questions, everyone sent them to the Malfoys and now we have a new audience. Less desperate, more prone to critical thinking as well as outright discrimination against you. I am sure you will want to see this through, I just want you to know that it could turn out to be a much more difficult meeting than the last one. I have to give it to Malfoy, at least he behaved himself. I do not expect the same from people like Cruella Black and Edward Westwood. Anyway, I'll try arrange a meeting somewhere in February, does that suit you?*

*Yours sincerely, Albus*

Jonathan got his Christmas leave without problem. Actually, he got the whole December off and was told to come back with another attitude. So Harry agreed to take him in again. At least Tom was ecstatic about it and claimed Jonathan for himself upon arrival. The older man didn't seem to mind at all. He actually told everyone at dinner that he was happy to be home again.

Home. Harry realized this was the first time Jonathan ever had something like that. His so called parents sent him to Russia at eleven years old, the school threw him out, his aunt took him in for half a year and then he became a public enemy at seventeen years old. The poor man was over fifty and had a home and friends for the first time in

his life. Emphasis on the fact that his only real friend was a nearly nine-year-old boy. Harry was not a friend at this point, more like a probation officer.

So if Jonathan actually lost his apprenticeship ... he would want to come back, wouldn't he? Albus could not let him live in the school. Buying him a house somewhere might also be dangerous, Jonathan needed company, not a new kind of imprisonment. Also, the man could not be kept to producing soap and perfume. Giving him a free pass to brew everything he wanted sounded dangerous as well though. Albus was right that Harry should do his best in convincing Jonathan to change his behavior.

His first idea was to ask Jonathan to practice necromancy – a dark art Harry was definitely incapable of – and summon the ghost of Severus Snape to ask how he managed to get his own potion's degree without killing off his master. Could one summon ghosts from the future? Now that the timeline was already altered, could Severus Snape's ghost actually be summoned? Most likely not, even if Harry had been serious about the necromancy stuff.

So, he needed another solution. Sadly, his next thought was resurrecting Salazar Slytherin. Seemed like all of this would not exactly be a walk in the park. Hm ... if Albus – his son, not the headmaster – had been old enough to finish school and then showed the same behavior in his apprenticeship ... well, Harry would have sent him to Hermione. Merlin, why was his answer to everything Hermione? Alright, what would Hermione have done? She would have tried to understand the problem first – obviously, it was the fact that Jonathan knew a lot more about potions than this Rasmus guy, so they got into a power struggle. The easiest way would be to explain to this Rasmus guy how to live authority instead of enforcing it. Most teachers had some kind of curriculum and their pupils either followed it or had to leave. It was actually hard for most teachers to adapt to individual needs. But once you could, there was no need to assert authority by rules and punishments.

Sadly, it did not seem like the guy wanted to change, he wanted Jonathan gone at this point and Dumbledore was the only thing stopping Rasmus from kicking his pupil out. So how to get Jonathan to follow a curriculum that was boring him to death? Telling him to suck it up wasn't going to cut it. It might have worked with Lily but James and Albus would have been too headstrong to stand three years of enduring a hellish apprenticeship.

How about summoning Remus's ghost and asking him how James Potter and Sirius Black kept themselves from being thrown out? On the other hand, that might have had to do with having filthy rich parents. Oh well, nothing for it. Summoning ghosts to one's help wasn't going to happen. How could he make this apprenticeship interesting in any way?

Hm ... there was one person alive that he could ask: "Tom?"

"Yes, dad?"

"Has Jonathan told you about his apprenticeship?"

"Yeah, he says it's boring as hell and his master is an incompetent idiot with an inflated ego."

"Lovely." How to save this? "See ... the problem is that he makes no secret of his opinion. He is antagonizing his master every which way. If he continues like that, he'll lose the apprenticeship and won't get another. He'll stay unemployed and will have to live off Dumbledore's money which ... is most likely not the best of solutions. He'll basically be homeless and poor."

"But he can live with us, can't he?"

"For a time, sure. Not forever." How much time would he give the guy? Another six months? Honestly, Harry didn't want to. Edgar and him had just reached equilibrium again.

"Oh ... can't he live with Albus?"

"If Albus gives up his job as headmaster, yes. Honestly, you're the only kid I trust him to be around."

"Why?" Tom's eyes widened. "He's not doing anything bad, isn't he?"

How to explain that one? "How many times was Mary your voice of reason? How many times were you unsure if you could tell Mary about your plans because you knew she would disapprove? Now imagine it wasn't Mary but me discussing those things with you." Was that enough of an explanation? Tom looked so unhappy. "Listen, I am not saying he is evil. He is trying his best. But changing is a slow process and even though he does his best, it takes time and opportunity. What he is doing with his master right now, that's not his old self, true. It's still far from optimal."

"Well, should he just smile and happily accept that he has to listen to someone has no clue what he is doing half of the time?"

Well, should he? Certainly not. Hermione might say yes but Harry was definitely no Hermione. "No, not at all. But correcting someone by being mean and condescending will only lead to anger and frustration. One can be smart about it."

Tom cocked his head. "So ... what can one do instead?"

"Well, what would you do if you wanted to correct me in front of a lot of important adults and would not want me to lose face?" Because Harry had an inkling but actually, Tom most likely had an answer.

"I ask questions, so you come up with the answer yourself."

Thank god for this boy. "Exactly right. Same with an adult that would never listen to you if you just presented him with the answer. If someone would never accept your opinion, you ask them questions and manipulate them into taking your position. That's how you get smart in dealing with difficult adults."

"Huh ... that makes sense. It's what I do with our French teacher."

"You're learning French?" When had that happened?

"Oui. I asked Jonathan to teach me German as well and I took French in school. Jonathan also got me a book on Latin. Once I master those languages, I want to learn Russian next. Languages are pretty cool."

Harry groaned. "I am so happy I sent you to school. You're not even nine and already too smart for me to handle."

"You have those people-smart skills I still have to learn."

Harry just picked the boy up and hugged him. Somehow, he was sure Tom already had most of those people-skills, he just did not use them consciously.

"Do you want me to talk to Jonathan about his apprenticeship?"

"That's an adult's job, Tom."

"Yeah, but it will be easier to accept for him if it comes from me."

Somehow, the boy was getting too heavy to carry for long, so Harry put him down again. "Still, it should not be on your shoulders. Let me be the bad guy and you can calm him down if my scolding goes sideways."

"Alright." Tom continued the hug anyway, just in a standing position. "Can you talk to him tomorrow though? We wanted to ... actually, I can't tell you, we'll be in the kitchen tonight for a surprise."

"Good surprise?"

"I would not tell you if it wasn't." Tom grinned impishly.

Harry scoffed, pat his son's head and said: "Love you, son. Don't do too many things I wouldn't do."

"Don't worry!" With that, Tom dashed off.

The older man just smiled and remembered how James had said the exact same ... before crashing a broom into the neighbor's living room. Oh well. At least his kids didn't kill off people at eleven years old. Seems like he did something right here.

They got pralines, the finest chocolate, for Christmas. They as in Edgar and Harry, both of them quite speechless over the treat. After all kinds of sweets, maybe they shouldn't have been as surprised but chocolate was not exactly a common ingredient for normal folks. Rich ones, sure – Jonathan must have paid for it.

With his own money. First paycheck and he used it to buy chocolate to make gifts for Harry and Edgar together with Tom. It might have been a while but Harry remembered how it was to earn money for the first time. He had also bought chocolate – though those had been ready-made – and gifted them to Ginny. Still, this was unexpected and due to his various talks with Tom, he knew that they had made them before Jonathan learned how to keep his apprenticeship. Including Edgar was even more thoughtful.

All in all, Harry decided that a hug was in order. So he got one stiff, emotionally overwhelmed human in his arms and an extra one wriggling in and grinning at them from the height slightly beneath their armpits. Kids really grew too fast.

Harry had gifted both of them a new potion's inventory with masses of ingredients. He still wanted Tom to use ready-made stuff instead of going out and catching frogs to slice them up on his own. Gellert didn't understand but at least he accepted the explanation that hurting animals diminished your emphatic response and made it harder to react to humans with kindness and understanding. Another rather secret gift was the toy-broom. Buying that one had been a bit nerve-wracking. Harry had crossed his fingers, hoping that the inherent magic would allow Muggles to ride a broom but no – he would have to teach Tom the theory and leave practice to Jonathan. He would try if he could command a broom if Tom sat on it too, but high chance was that flying was out for him. To have something under the Christmas tree, he had bought more books. French and German story books for children. Jonathan had helped him with that and spend the next hours reading fairy-tales. One of his caretakers had read stories to him as a child but for some kind of mishap, his parents had blasted her head off. He just remembered that he liked her and the stories, so Tom's gift had actually first went to him. Harry had asked him to translate a story for him and seriously debated not giving Tom the books afterwards. Who came up with such gruesome stories for children? They were all about death, blood and vengeance. No wonder that people turned to violence.

Anyway, Christmas was great. Dumbledore visited on Tom's birthday for lunch – the other meals were taken with all those kids in school that had no home or family. It was something new that he had established. Kids could stay even in the holiday time if they so wished. The staff had been overwhelmed though because a quarter of the kids decided to stay. Harry just pointed out that if a child would rather spend a festivity at school than at home, it might be a good idea to ask them why. Some might just be poor, some might not have a family, but high chance was that some of these kids were mistreated at home.

Not even a week later, Dumbledore dragged Jonathan and Edgar into Harry's study

with a grim expression and announced: "I need help."

Oh well. Maybe today was the day were he would run out of answers. They all took a seat of the couch and the lounge chairs.

"Now, how do I say this? So ... I took your advice. I started with Minerva. You know Professor McGonagall?" Dumbledore waited for a short nod. "Yes, so ... I told her that some of the kids might be staying because of unfortunate home situations and bade her to ask them about it. Some of those kids were quite forthcoming about it. They talked about violence due to bad grades, having to work around the house and being forbidden from meeting friends. None of it sounded too bad but still, I am not sure how to proceed."

"Well, first of all, be aware that only those talk that think that their parent's behavior is normal and allowed. Those that are heavily mistreated will lie about their home situations. They were drilled not to speak badly of their parents."

Dumbledore looked at Jonathan who shrugged his shoulders and said: "I am not a good example here, my parents behaved normally for kids going to Durmstrang. The teachers acted upon the principle action and reaction. If someone broke the rules, they were heavily punished."

Harry explained: "The better your relationship to your child is, the less severe punishment has to be. Durmstrang is known for housing a lot of unbonded, traumatized children. So what is normal in Durmstrang would most likely be frowned upon at Hogwarts. So the children coming from similar backgrounds as Jonathan will not talk about their home-situations at your school while they would feel free to do so at Durmstrang." Like Harry had done. Like Neville had done. Like Luna ... even today, Harry was still amazed how teachers were able to overlook how strange she had been and never wondered if it might have to do with trauma. Same with Neville. Harry's behavior might not have raised a red flag but his state of starvation every summer? But as Dumbledore had just stated, Minerva had been a teacher from this era. Violence, hunger and neglect had been normal in her day and age. She had never learned better.

"So those accounts that made me frown ... those are the ones that actually have still good home situations?"

Harry just nodded. "Not as good as those going back home – partly – but yes. Those with really bad home situations will only tell you about it if they trust you can help them without endangering them, their parents or their siblings. If being taken out of your family is the only option, most children will not talk about their home situation."

"What's that part about those going back home?" Jonathan asked when Dumbledore stayed silent.

"Kids are aware that staying in school is a tell-tale sign that something might be wrong at home. So especially kids like some of your Slytherins will go home to abusive situations to keep up the facade. Those are kids that neither trust you nor will they ever tell you how horrifyingly they are mistreated."

"But ... that would mean ... I mean ... it cannot be that many, can it?" Dumbledore's eyes seemed pained.

"Depends on your definition of mistreatment. Look at this house, look at my kids. How many of your students grow up without physical or sexual violence, without being called names, without being accused of things that aren't actually their fault? In my time, mistreatment often consisted of overworked parents that used emotional violence. They told their children that due to their actions, due to their not being obedient enough or good enough or smart enough, the parents suffered and the

family couldn't function. In reality, the parents were overwhelmed and the kids were just being kids, trying to fit their own desires into a place that could not cater to their emotional demands. In this day and age, people would scoff at such a problem because that's what happens to like ninety percent of the children at least. So my and your definition of mistreatment have to be vastly different. You can start with trying to stop sexual violence and diminishing physical violence. For me though, that's a given."

Edgar nodded, Jonathan seemed deep in thought and Dumbledore looked shattered. It took nearly a minute until he found his voice and asked: "How?"

"Well ... first of all, people need to be aware that it is actually a problem. I have no idea what the wizarding law on sexual violence is ... I know a bit about the Muggle one, let me see if I remember it correctly." He tried to recall some of Hermione's impassioned speeches on the subject. "So the Jewish community was – as far as we know – the first to pass laws against sexual violence. About two thousand years before Christ, they passed a law which made sleeping with a girl under two years of age illegal. That's because most girls were damaged by the act, so the perpetrator had to pay money to the girl's father. If she was above two years of age, the perpetrator had to marry her."

All three men listening looked at him with various expressions of horror.

"Somewhere around the time of Christ, it was upped to five years of age. Later, it became twelve. That's around the time of Merlin."

"Are people crazy?" Edgar stared at him in horror. "I knew that girls are married off against their will but only after they had their period. Who marries off girls as children?"

"If a girl is married, her husband has to pay for her living expenses. Marrying a girl off at a young age meant less costs. Also, the law was meant to instill the idea that sleeping with a young girl was wrong. Problem was that mostly it wasn't strangers raping a girl, it was their father or brother. So the marrying-off-law did not exactly help most of the time. If a father raped his daughter, he had to pay for her anyway. So in the twelfth century, they came up with an idea how to protect young girls."

"Good Lord." Edgar shook his head.

"Yes, that one. The bible stated that Mary was a young girl when she gave birth to Jesus Christ. So they changed the bible in the twelfth century to now state that Mary had been a virgin when she gave birth. It does not make sense, seeing as she was married, but it worked anyway. They used religion to tell families that girls needed to be virgins at the age of marriage which was twelve and later became fourteen. It was meant to protect girls. It backfired though because instead of instilling fear in men of godly retribution, it lead to blaming the girls that they had been unable to protect their purity. Similar things happened in African and some Arabic cultures where girl's genitals were sewn up in childhood and cut open by their husbands on the night of their marriage. If a girl with ruptured sutures was found, she was blamed, not her rapist."

Well, all three men listening looked ready to puke at this point. Harry remembered his own horror, hearing it all for the first time.

"So ... any idea what the wizarding community tried to do to protect their girls?" Most likely not, another thanks to his best friend for uncovering cryptic legislation. "No? Thought not. There was a ruling in 1478 when a girl killed her father with accidental magic when he tried to rape her. She was branded as a black witch and given to the inquisition who burned her at the stake. Again, her magic reacted to save her which

ended in a fire taking hundreds of lives, hers included. It led to a law that said that abused children had volatile magic and should be sent out as living missiles against enemies. After the Statute of Secrecy, that law was remade and said that they should be eliminated. That law was abolished in 1821 when a pureblood girl from the Abbott family was raped by a Muggle. No other cases of sexual abuse have ever been reported in wizarding history."

"Oh Lord," Edgar reiterated. "Please tell me that there are current laws against sexual abuse."

"Our great country invented that in 1828, yes." Only six years after they invented laws against mistreatment of animals – as Hermione liked to remind them. "Though you have to know that it is a general law against rape. The first law specifically targeting the rape and sexual exploit of children is forty years into the future."

"That's ... I don't even have words for that. How is that possible?"

"Have any of you ever heard about Siegmund Freud?" Hopefully, he hadn't mangled that name too much. "Austrian guy, a psychiatrist. One of the best psychotherapists in the world ... right now actually. I am not sure if he is dead or still dying. Anyway, he tried to tell other doctors and therapists that a lot of rape is happening in families and that they need to start seeing it. He himself had been raped by his mother, a fact he tried to keep hidden. He failed miserably to have people listen to him for years. So he changed the narrative and began to explain that patients had been thinking about sex with their parents as children and that was why they developed mental illnesses. Instant hit, he became a renowned man."

"What's so hard to believe? Men's base urges sometimes lead to rape. It happens in war, it happens in marriages, it happens in families." Edgar crossed his arms. "What's so hard to see?"

Harry's gaze rested on Jonathan though who had gone pale. Dumbledore had turned to him, his own gaze concerned.

"Have I triggered something?," Harry asked a bit sheepishly. Had Jonathan been raped as well? His boyfriend looked just as clueless. "Jonathan?"

"Gellert?," Dumbledore tried and shook his shoulder.

"Don't." Edgar knelt down next to the who stared into nothingness. "Jonathan, listen to my voice. This is Edgar. You are sitting next to your partner Albus. It's 1936, a day before New Years. You are safe here. Listen to my voice and follow it to come back to us. You are a grown man, a very powerful wizard. You are an adult. You are safe. Come back into this room and focus. Albus, move into his line of vision. Jonathan, your boyfriend is right in front of you. Focus on his face."

Jonathan's gaze shot down, his body still motionless but at least focusing.

"Very good, you're doing great. Now get back some feeling for your body. See if you can move your fingers or your toes. Great, that's good, very good. Now the arms. Excellent. Albus, help him up to stand and prepare to catch him, he might be wobbly. Yes, just like that, Jonathan. Make a few steps. Wonderful. Keep going until you can use your voice again. Gren, get him a glass of water."

Sure thing. Harry jumped up immediately and left for the kitchen. He remembered that George had had these ... dissociative states? Had that been the name? Angelina had got him out of one once, the only time Harry had ever seen one. Angelina had used a lot more yelling and shaking though. Edgar seemed like a professional right now.

Had the original Gren had PTSD? It seemed likely with how Edgar had immediately got what was going on and acted accordingly. When he returned with the water, Jonathan

was still standing and shaking out his muscles. He took the glass from Harry with a barely audible "Thanks" as if he was hoarse.

"Right ... so I did trigger him?," Harry asked Edgar.

"I only know triggers as in using a weapon but if the question is about evoking bad memories, then yes. Soldiers had those states all the time. I've seen those episodes happen after loud noises like popping a cork but it seems that words can be just as bad."

"Let's try not to talk about our last topic again." Rape. Which part about rape had been the trigger? Harry couldn't exactly remember when he had said what.

"Shouldn't we ask him about this?" Dumbledore looked from Edgar to Jonathan.

"No. If he wants to talk about it, okay, and even then, only once he is in a safe place."

"This is a safe place, isn't it?"

Harry looked at his study for a moment. "No ... I don't think so. Not this room at least. Let's change our location to the cellar." Where the brewing room was. A place he definitely felt safe in.

"Outside," Jonathan wheezed out.

"Yes, right, let's take a walk." Edgar seemed in his element. Well, he had been a commanding officer in the military during World War I, so ... this was what he knew. Harry was just amazed how gentle he had been with Jonathan. They walked in silence for half an hour, Jonathan getting steadily more sure of his feet. He also found his voice again at some point and said: "Thank you, Edgar."

"No problem, man." He punched Jonathan's shoulder. "I would advise on some good workout next."

"I am not sure I could get it up right now."

Edgar's mouth hang open for a second, disbelief clearly written on his face. "Sometimes you should get your mind out of the gutter. I was speaking about boxing."

"Oh, that ... actually, yes. Can we spar?" It had been seldom that Jonathan joined the boxing classes but he had the basics down.

"I'll give you a handicap." Most likely an arm tied behind his back or something. "Let's grab some mittens."

Harry offered: "I'll see that dinner is ready once you are finished."

"Good thinking." Edgar grinned at him.

Sometimes at least. Maybe he should have did a bit of that before talking about rape. How had using Cruciatus on your child and killing of their parental figures never translated to the idea that sexual abuse could be part of it as well? If it was. Maybe it had been something else. Maybe it had been a name or a word.

Maybe he would know one day.