

# The time that is given us

## How love can change lives

Von Gepo

### Kapitel 22: Twenty-second chapter

"Jonathan?" He stopped the other man after dinner. "Would you like a night-cap?"

"That's sounds like a very nice invitation to telling me what I did wrong." The blond man sighed. "Lead the way."

"There's actually nothing wrong." Going up the stairs, Harry put a hand on Jonathan's shoulder. "You don't need to expect the worst. I just wanted a drink and some adult conversation."

"So I'm not getting scolded?" Like the last ... three, four ... actually, he had a point.

"Only if there is something I should know about."

"Not at all." Jonathan grinned impishly.

Harry just raised an eyebrow. "I'll find out sooner or later, you know?"

"Oh, I hope not." He actually blushed. "Albus cast a lot of anti-Muggle spells, you know?"

"In that case, I don't want to know."

"Right." He grinned in delight. "I never thought sneaking around could be fun."

"Please tell me it was outside the house at least."

"Well, there is this nice bathhouse in town-"

"Right, know what? I really don't want to know."

Jonathan pouted. Harry held the door open for him, shaking his head about the other man's antics. "So, aside from your adventurous sexual escapades, is there something I should know?"

"I don't think so. I may have written a letter to that horrible teacher Brea, Loretta and Dorothea have, correcting some of what he taught but I stated that I were a private supplementary teacher you hired for your wife."

"That ... is a great cover. I'd still like for you to talk to me before you do that." Did Jonathan expect him to say no? Why did he only get to know about such things afterwards?

"The man is useless. I can't stand useless teachers." Jonathan used the opportunity to summon the bottle and glasses by magic, serving Harry a perfectly made drink. "Why do you send them to school? I am sure you could teach them yourself."

"I did. I want them to socialize with kids their age."

"What for?"

"Social and emotional development."

"With how backwards the kids here are? Isn't that dangerous? It's like they are living in two different worlds. One with your ideals and ... the one out there."

"It's the world out there they will have to navigate in. You only learn courage from having to stand up against other people's opinions. It's easy to be an idealist in this house. The challenge is to go out there and stay true to yourself."

"It's easy to like and accept everyone here." There was a long pause. "Standing in front a pureblood society and defending Muggles ... that's something else. Especially after how I was before. With this cover, everyone will believe Albus found this abandoned Dark wizard and forced him to live with Muggles to give him Light magic ideals. They'll pity me for saying that Muggles are nice. Poor waylaid child. You don't know better. You don't know how bad they really are. Some may be nice but in mass, they are a threat. If they knew what you were, they would call for your blood. Albus only showed you the nice ones. You were blended. I can't even argue with that ... if you were to proclaim me a wizard in the middle of town, they would call for my blood."

"It's mass psychology. Wizards on their own are nice as well but in a crowd, they will call for Muggle life. Masses fear differences, anything foreign is a threat. They need single voices to sway them from becoming bloodthirsty. They need leaders that won't give into their baser urges. It's a problem when leaders offer opinions that should be restricted to extremists of a group. You can shun fanatics. You can't shun your leaders."

"So I'll be a poor misguided little lamb. Albus's new pet project, his first openly acknowledged lover. Some dark wizard seduced from the right way. Dumbledore's not so secret dirty secret."

"I can't imagine you filling that role." Gellert Grindelwald would never accept being a sheep.

"In some of my darker days, I imagined myself in that role. I behaved as if that were truth." A painful expression crossed his features. "It's not who I want to be."

"Who do you want to be?"

"Someone unafraid and unashamed. I am a dark wizard, yes. I don't have to be bad but neither do I have to pretend to be good. I brought the most powerful wizard since Merlin to heel. I own the pieces of my cousin's empire, one of the worst mass murderers ever seen. I don't care if one is Muggle or not, Muggle-born, half-blood or pureblood, the blood status does not define one's worth. I respect integrity and strength of character. Like every pureblood, I believe in magical might. But raw power is not the same as knowledge, so I shall not disregard Muggle-borns. Though knowledge is important too, wisdom is what I respect. It's why a Muggle scholar can be worth just as much as a wizard one. Effort, talent, the integrity to question oneself and one's ideals – those will be what I shall value. I shall fall in line with only one of Albus's ideals: love. I will not be his dirty secret. I will stand proudly at his side."

"Even though you were hidden all this time? Your story states that you were a shameful secret all of your life."

"I won't stand to be that for one more day."

"So you won't flinch from being called murderer scum for being Gellert's cousin? You won't flinch from being called a whore for securing your place in society by sleeping with one of it's leaders? You will stoically face their accusations about being a blood traitor?"

"No matter what I do, I won't be able to change their opinions anyway. I can only decide to weather them by covering in on myself. I don't think I can allow myself that."

"Seeing you with him, they will begin to speculate about Albus's history with Gellert

Grindelwald. Albus never denied his feelings. It will be public that your late cousin was your lover's ex-boyfriend."

"Good riddance then. I don't like sharing."

"That will hurt Albus. He may know you say that for your cover but in his heart, it's Gellert that he loves. With you disregarding him ... you'll make him sad."

Jonathan looked at him for a long moment. "Then what could be my stance?"

"You did not know your cousin. There must have been a good side to him for Albus to love him. On the other hand, Albus killed him. Mass murderers don't get second chances, so you won't mourn him."

"No good word for the wicked?" Something in Jonathan's countenance shattered.

"Not from you. Never from you. Gellert died by Albus's hand and you will always admire him for his strength in character to let someone go for the best of all."

Jonathan looked shattered. Disbelieving. His hands trembled, so he put down his drink.

"You are Jonathan Bagshot. You may have been a shameful secret but you had a loving mother. Gellert Grindelwald wasn't as fortunate. He died for his mistakes. There is no need to hero-worship or villainize him. He was simply a misguided soul that was laid to rest."

A tear ran down Jonathan's cheek.

"There is no legacy, no empire. Just like most other Dark Lords of history, he rose, he was defeated and forgotten over time."

"Not all of them ... some weren't forgotten."

"But Gellert Grindelwald will be. Because between you and Albus, he will not have a place. He will not be a ghost accompanying you forever. He is gone."

Jonathan held back a sob by pressing a hand to his lips. "I can't believe I ... why am I even crying?"

"He was your identity for a long time." Just like Harry Potter. By now, he was a ghost that would never come about. He was Grenmore Horten, Muggle general of the British troops. "Your memories that say otherwise are that of another life. One that will be locked far away. It's okay to mourn a life that is ... gone."

"How do you deal with it?" Jonathan looked lost, his cheeks wet with tears, his eyes widened in a mixture of disbelief and sadness.

"I look at the life that I have, the people in it ... there will always be new dreams, new goals. It's good to remember where you came from but you should never linger. We don't live for our past. Our future is ever changing. We have nothing but the present and that is what we live for."

"But there is nothing to miss about my old life ... is there?" Jonathan angrily wiped the tears from his face. "There is nothing to cry about. Gellert Grindelwald was a failed existence."

"He was proud. He was dark. He was mighty and feared."

"He lost himself in love, in dreams of might and finally in blood. He succumbed to the black magic pull and afterwards, there was nothing left to him. Those years in seclusion ... I was no one. I had no identity. I was a lost soul, that much was true." Fresh tears marred his expression.

Harry decided to give him time to put his thoughts in order.

"I dabbled in potions. It was fun at first. But it's only fun when you can share your theories, get new input. Albus could only do so much. When you give yourself your own challenges ..."

"It's not candy you made, I guess." Enough prodding.

There was a long pause, Jonathan's face drawn in pain. "Can you keep a secret from Albus?"

"As long as you aren't planning death and annihilation."

The man shook his head and closed his eyes. "I did not want to be left and forgotten about."

There was a theme in there, yes. Gellert Grindelwald strove for recognition and Jonathan would not be different.

"I tried to ... if I couldn't leave, I wanted a part of me to leave there. I wanted a child. Someone that could change the world in my stead. A typical case of having a child for purely selfish reasons."

"How?" How indeed without a woman. Did he try to summon a specter?

"I tried to find a potion that would give me the possibility to become pregnant."

"I guess that failed." Number two of the five principal exceptions to Gamp's law of elemental transfiguration – you could not summon what wasn't there. You could regrow a womb, could refertilize a woman after procedures similar to chemotherapy but magic would never make a man pregnant.

"I wrecked my body with those experiments ... after I gave up, I spent years mending the damage. I poisoned myself over and over again."

"And you did not think that Albus should have a say in that? You planned for him to be the father, right?"

"I ... hm." Jonathan looked pensive. "I don't think I ever really thought it through. Emotionally."

"You simply wanted a child? Never thinking about what it would mean for Albus to unknowingly become a father, for yourself to become a mother and having to care for a baby?"

"It's what house-elves are for, I guess. Purebloods don't really raise their children. They have them and then someone else has to care for them. First an elf or a wet nurse, then a nanny, later tutors. Parents don't actually care for their children. They just ... produce them."

"What a sad kind of parenthood."

"It's the only one I knew. It's not hard to see life in as much worth as cattle when that is how you are brought up. You don't form attachments. There are these strange adults that sometimes come by and evaluate you. You try to meet their expectations because they are the only constant in your life. If you do bad, they kill whoever you might call your mother at the time. House-elves are just slaves after all."

Harry just shook his head in sadness.

"Familial bonds ... it is such a strange concept."

"Just stick close to Margret's side and ask her your questions. It's okay to come off as shy. Just don't embarrass her. She is the one most whole in this household."

"More than you?"

"Certainly more than me." Harry scoffed. "That's not hard. I learned later. It's hard work learning empathy for a baby. Much harder than for your fellow adult humans. Children take a lot more patience and only few people can be guides in this."

"So you had someone like that? Someone that guided you?"

"My mother in law. She was a wonderful woman, very loving, very warm. Children were her world. She was one of the poorest people I ever saw but she was happy. She had a family that she loved and that loved her. She taught me that you do not need much to be happy."

"My family had a lot and they were far from happy. No money in the world is worth

the unhappiness those people gave me.”

“Does that make you angry? Does it make you sad?”

“It leaves me ... hollow.”

“There will probably be resentment at some point. You may ask yourself why you were the unfortunate one to be born into that family. It will bring about a deep sadness and hopefully the adult Jonathan will be there for that lost boy that still lives in you.”

“I want to roll my eyes at you for sprouting such mushy nonsense.” Jonathan sighed.

“Which most likely means that you hit a sore spot in me.”

“It sounds like you have the tools for recognizing and working with your emotions.” Harry smiled proudly. “Don’t forget to rely on Albus. He may not exactly be good with emotions but he tries his best. Above all, he loves you. If there is one thing he is very good at, it’s being devoted and giving his all.”

“It seems I got myself a good man.” The other man scoffed into his drink. “At least one thing I did right.”

“Sometimes, a reliable partner makes all the difference in the world.” Like Ginny. Who would he have become without Ginny? A failure most likely. A washed up human, unable to continue on after his great quest was done. Like Frodo in the Lord of the Rings. He would not even have written his memoirs, only faded away into nothingness. “Still, he is no help if you don’t see a problem.”

“So my denial keeps me from advancing. Great.” Jonathan sighed and pushed back his blond locks with one hand. “All this time you wanted to tell me that there is a hurt child inside that needs my attention. While at the same time, you tell me that I am basically unable to care for children due to my history.”

“It’s a learning process.” How he had hated his own therapist for that damn sentence.

“You need to learn self-care.”

“Learning all of this, will I be some kind of child-expert at the end of it all?”

“At least for those similar to yourself.” James and Lily had been easy. Albus on the other hand ... god, his youngest son had taken the cake. He had nearly gone back to therapy. At least it had prepared him for Tom and the likes of Gellert Grindelwald.

“Like Slytherins?”

“Like severely abused children with projected hatred.” So basically most Slytherins.

“Can I go back to murdering people? That was a lot easier.”

Harry just scoffed and took a sip of his drink.

Jonathan smiled bashfully. “Is it okay to joke about that? That was most likely very insensitive.”

“You might want to keep those jokes to Albus and me. I don’t want those around Tom. Edgar would definitely not appreciate them.”

“You are right.” The other man looked into space. “I really don’t know how to ever make this right.”

“Honestly, there is no way to ever make it right. You killed people. You can’t bring them back. They will forever be on your conscience. But you can keep others from making the same mistake and that can be your redemption.”

He slowly nodded his head. “To help others, I first need to be able to help myself. I need to learn to care for that hurt child inside me.” He focused again. “How do I do that?”

“You learn to relax. You learn to forgive, not only others but yourself. You learn to accept praise and to be proud of yourself. You learn to accept love and give it. You learn to care for others, help them and accept help. You reflect on your prejudices

against others and stop unjust discrimination in yourself as well as others. You learn to stand up for yourself and others."

Jonathan blinked. "That's what I've been doing all this time!"

"Surprise. That's why you are here."

"I thought I was here so that you could gain trust in me and see that I really changed."

"That's a part of it too. But if that were the only goal, I would not have risked my family. I wanted to give you a chance, Jonathan. Living in a family is the best way to learn about family."

"Oh." The man smiled cautiously. "All of that for Albus?"

"My main reason for being here is Tom and I need Albus strong and emphatic for this to work. Him hating Slytherins because of you is a problem for me."

"That makes a lot of sense ... will he bring about the end of wizardkind or something like that?"

"Just imagine a world with Gellert Grindelwald followed by World War II followed by Dark Lord Tom Riddle."

"Mass destruction and unfiltered killings of all things Muggle, followed by breaking the Statute of Secrecy and all-out-war between magical and non-magical beings."

"And between magical beings. Trolls, werewolves and vampires make great additions in an all-out-war."

"Merlin." Jonathan shook his head. "Involving them in anything is madness."

"Not when the goal is mass destruction." Harry unclenched his fingers, noting that the memories still weren't easy after all these years. "He ripped his soul into pieces and went mad."

"A Horcrux?" Of course Jonathan would have read about it.

"Seven Horcruxes."

"That's madness."

"That's Tom without any help, mistreated by Albus for years."

Jonathan blinked for a moment before understanding filled his gaze. "My redemption is freeing Albus of his discrimination against dark wizards, working against anti-Muggle prejudice and helping Slytherin children."

"If you ever try to work against hatred, you'll only sow hatred. It's exactly where Albus went wrong. If you want to teach acceptance, you work with hatred, not against hatred. You don't tell people that discrimination is wrong, you teach them to work with their discrimination. Albus is right that a lot of Slytherins are self-serving assholes that feel mighty because they discriminate others. Shunning them is not the way to teach them acceptance and love."

"So I need to get Albus to understand where most Slytherins are coming from and how to teach them ... to feel good about themselves without discrimination?"

"And that Muggles and Muggle-borns are actually damn useful and knowledgeable and acceptance is the key to further development."

"Sure, easy thing." Jonathan raised an eyebrow. "I'll do that in my sleep."

"Well, you got an impressive number of wizards and witches to start killing Muggles. Use your powers of seduction and conviction."

"I worked with their prejudices for that!"

"Exactly." Harry put down his glass. "That's exactly it: You work with them, not against them."

"How?" It wasn't exactly a whimper but it certainly wasn't Jonathan's normal pattern of speech.

"Find your way." He leaned back against the coach and rested both arms on it. "I teach

them about genetics. All purebloods want smart, magical powerful children. They will need Muggle-borns for that."

Jonathan blinked owlily. "I remember you telling me about political ways to work with the Muggle technological progress. Partial integration into Muggle society to uphold the Statute of Secrecy."

"For that, you need their fear of Muggles."

"Use their fear to force integration?"

"The right amount of cultural knowledge not to make it daunting while keeping their fear of extinction to keep them from balking at integration."

"School trips to the Muggle world?"

"Actual Muggle-borns as teachers for Muggle studies and making it a mandatory course."

"A political taskforce that work with Muggle technology, discussing the risks as well as the possibilities."

"Taking a plane instead of an international portkey."

"A plane?" Jonathan looked confused. "You mean those small things that will throw the bombs?"

"Those can be build for mass transportation and get you from London to Germany in two hours without any discomfort."

His lips formed a surprised O.

"You took a ship to America, right? Imagine a plane getting you there in nine hours time."

"Are you kidding?"

"I saw Muggles on the moon."

"Now you are kidding me."

"I'm not." Harry smiled. "Let's take a ride in my car tomorrow. I'll show you what Muggles can do right now. In a few decades, cars will go thrice the speed. Eventually, they will learn to drive by themselves."

"By now, I got that you came from the future, but how far?"

Harry just put an index finger to his lips.

"Well, a time where you learned time jumps, apparently." Jonathan shook his head.

"Damn, I'm envious."

"You're only fifty. That's nothing for a wizard."

"Will I see that?" There was fascination sparkling in his eyes.

"If you stay on the right side of the law, you'll see a time where you can legally marry your boyfriend."

With a shimmer washing away the fascination in his eyes, Jonathan took a deep breath. It was barely more than a whisper: "I really want to do that."

"Without war and other catastrophes, humans can learn amazing life values. Love and acceptance are something we strive towards, once we don't have to fear for our lives all the time."

"So wizards need integration to develop as a society? Because without integration, the fear of Muggles keeps wizards from developing further?"

"You are starting to get it, yes." Harry smiled proudly. "A society that fears is a society that discriminates. It's what you used as a Dark Lord to rally people up against Muggles. You fanned their fear. That's mass psychology."

"So I need to address fears ... not fanning them but working with them."

"It's what Albus is unable to do because of his irrational hatred against those that are similar to you."

"I did a lot of damage, did I not?"

Harry just nodded. In the end, he was sure that Jonathan still did not fully get the impact of Gellert Grindelwald's crimes but it was better than before.

"Somehow, I am amazed that there aren't more of me. I mean, more people like Gellert Grindelwald."

"There are a lot. Most just don't break the law. Without it, there would be a lot more crime."

"I never feared the law. I got punished and people never cared if I was the one that did wrong or if I was just the victim. So I learned not to care about rules – they never protected me anyway. I got dirt on my teachers, so they left me alone. I made my own laws."

"As I said, your environment did not provide a learning curve for becoming a law-abiding citizen."

"What about Howard?", Jonathan asked suddenly.

"What about him?"

"The law does not protect him from his dad. It's really unfair. Will he become a criminal?"

"It ups his chance of becoming one, yes. Criminals often have a history of abuse. Happy people normally don't commit crimes."

"Then why doesn't the law stop the abuse?"

"People change gradually. They just made a law that you can't hit your wife or child with a cane thicker than your thumb. Stopping violence against your family entirely is still in the future."

"But why?" Jonathan shook his head. "It makes so much sense, why shouldn't abuse be punished?"

"What do you do instead?" This went a bit further than the discussions he had with Tom or Edgar. "How do you raise a child if you can't use violence as punishment? In your case, no Cruciatus, no curses, no hexes, no jinxes?"

Jonathan just blinked.

"Some people came up with the idea of not punishing children at all or just reinforcing good behavior and ignoring bad things. Neither of those are good parenting techniques. Only a small percentage of children come out of that with the skills needed to be happy and successful, they need to be highly sensitive and not prone to anxiety at the same time. It's not a common combination."

"Well ... then how do you punish children, if not with violence?"

"Most parents in this age choose screaming, insulting and crying. It makes children feel guilty, sometimes even ashamed of themselves. Another method is leaving, ignoring their child and rebuffing their need for physical contact. Both ways are worse than violence in my opinion. So if you change the laws too fast, the children are worse off, even though their parents aren't violent anymore."

"I see. What are healthy ways of punishing your child?"

"Securely bonded children react to your moods. Displeasing you is punishment enough. So the better your connection with your child, the less punishments you need. If you have to use punishments, the first thing to do is to take privileges away. Things like candy, their favorite plaything, time with friends, time with you that is reserved only for them. You never take away the basics – they keep their room, they aren't locked away, they get food and water, they have free use of the bathroom and a baseline of time with their parents, siblings and friends. But everything that goes further than that is a privilege. Like visiting special places, the beach or a candy store



or wherever your child loves to go.”

Jonathan just looked at him for nearly a minute without saying anything. Harry let him. He most likely had to work through something very emotional. Sometimes, that needed time. “You bring candy for everyone when you go to London. We make trips to the beach. The children read your books and perform plays. Everyone has free time in the evenings. Tom goes through a sugar loaf a week. I knew that you were nice and very patient but somehow, I never made the connection that all of that are privileges that can be taken away if you are angered.”

“Normally, I don’t need to take any of that away. The kids seldom anger me. We have a system where small infractions are handled by Margret. She gives the others extra chores. Even Tom has to do chores if he behaves badly. I only handle the big stuff and ... to be honest, that’s only Tom. The others wouldn’t dare.”

Jonathan shook his head in something like amazement. “I haven’t seen a punishment yet, I just imagine you taking away the sugar for baking his cookies. Kid Gellert would have laughed at that.”

“When you are used to the Cruciatus or something similar, small punishments don’t mean much. For someone that is used to luxury and privileges, someone that feels secure in his way of life, taking away cookies is a big thing. Especially when you have a bond to the one taking the cookies. In that case, it’s not about cookies anymore. It’s about knowing that you angered the one that loves you and believes in you. Parenting shouldn’t be about fear, it should be about love and respect. In that case, disappointment becomes a leading factor. It’s more than cookies.”

“I ... guess. Disappointing Albus was scary. I am used to him loving me. So children should be used to their parents loving them ... I see how that is a big step for a lot of parents.”

“They never learned that themselves. Or they may have learned love, but neither acceptance of, interest in and respect for their children. You can’t just decide to be such a parent, you need role models. So simply forbidding violence per law doesn’t cut it.”

“I see. You need to offer alternatives.”

“That’s the crux.”

Jonathan nodded in silence. It took another minute for him to continue speaking: “That was an example for my current problem, right? I want people to deal with their fear of Muggles differently but they simply have no alternative to killing them.”

Harry blinked. Well, yes, that made total sense. It hadn’t been his conscious idea behind talking about parenting but yes, that was actually a pretty good drift. It was nice talking to a genius for once. It reminded him of Hermione, she often made connections he hadn’t even thought about. “That’s exactly it, they need alternatives. While most wizards look down on Muggles, most also don’t want to kill but they will scream for blood if they have no idea that there are other good solutions.”

“I suggested enslaving them, not killing them.”

“You killed a lot of them, so those plans sounded like the nice wrapping for people with a conscience.”

“Well ... it was. Mostly.” Jonathan sighed. “Okay, I need to make other solutions popular and feasible.”

Harry just nodded.

“Gah!” The blond man threw his arms into the air and sank against his backrest. “Talking to you is really great as well as damn exasperating. I always feel like I got something, understood more about something and when I try to answer what that is, I

only end up with more questions.”

“Philosophy and politics, the great mysteries of life.” Harry smirked.

“Are you making fun of me?”

“I would never.”

Jonathan just threw him a dirty look.

“Come on, you were the one who loved the topic at only sixteen years old. Your whole life since then has been about politics in one way or another. It’s not my fault you liked to discuss things at wand-point and only now have to learn to use words for it.”

The angry glare with a pout turned into slow blinking. “Did you just make a joke about killing thousands of people because I was a stubborn idiot?”

“It’s not a joke but it’s done. By now, it’s what happened. No one can change it.”

“What, no time-jump to save poor little Gellert?” Jonathan tried to make it sound like a joke but his voice cracked.

“It already happened.” Harry tried his best to speak slow and not hurt the other man further. “Even magic has limits. I am sorry, Jonathan.”

The other man just stood and fled the room. It seemed like sorrow had finally reached him.