

ROADS TRAVELLED

Part 1 - Road of Innocence

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EPISODE RATING

PG-13 (T).

TIMELINE

Post BTVS season 2, and during the marauders last year at Hogwarts.

STORY SUMMARY

BTVS/HP crossover. Life had never been kind to Buffy Summers, and she thought she had earned a break. Boy, was she wrong. Stuck in another dimension, with no way back, Buffy must learn to leave her past behind her, and look to the future: New friends, new enemies and new relationships are just the beginning of what will prove to be the longest journey and perhaps the biggest trial of her life.

EPISODE SUMMARY

Graduation is upon the seventh years, and everyone is feeling rather nostalgic. James photo-album becomes a source of comfort, containing many precious memories. Yet they know their lives haven't come to an end – in fact, the road they are travelling on has only just begun...

CENTRAL PAIRING

Buffy/Remus

OTHER PAIRINGS

James/Lily, Sirius/OC, Peter/OC

THE CAST

STARRING

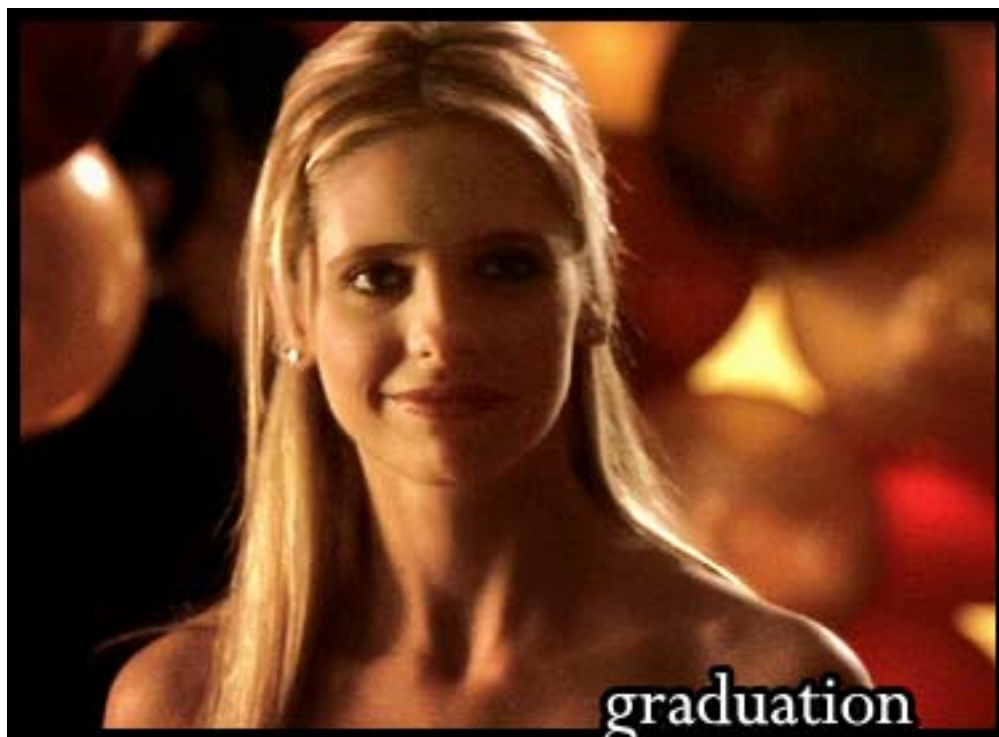
Sarah Michelle Gellar.....Buffy Summers
Bradley James.....Remus Lupin
Isla Fisher.....Lily Evans
Henry Cavill.....James Potter
Johnny Depp.....Sirius Black
Keira Knightley.....Mandy Walker
Sam Troughton.....Peter Pettigrew
Romola Garai.....Samantha Lowell

GUEST STARRING

Eleanor Tomlinson – Young Lily Evans
Zac Fox - Young Peter Pettigrew
Clem Tibber - Young James Potter
Harry Eden - Young Sirius Black
Barney Clark - Young Remus Lupin
with Jamie Campell Bower as Nick Vandom
and Gemma Arterton - Michaela Duncan

ALSO STARRING

Michael Gambon
Maggie Smith



Episode 30 – Graduation

16 June

James sighed from his bed, eyes taking in the now mostly empty dorm room where he'd lived for the past seven years.

The only things remaining were their night clothes and sheets on the beds, and their now full packed trunks, along with their formal ceremonial robes they'd wear to the graduation ceremony the next day. And, of course, their dress robes, to be worn tonight during the traditional graduation ball for all seventh years and their dates.

"I don't want to leave," the Head Boy admitted, resting his head in his hands.

"It does feel a bit strange," Sirius agreed, while taking down a moving poster of the band the *Wailing Wizards* from the wall. "Still, life at Hogwarts was getting a bit repetitive." His grey eyes shone. "Just think, Prongs! Adventure and freedom! No more homework! Ever!"

Remus snorted. "Maybe not homework, but *work* for sure, Pads. For you at least."

Sirius snorted. "Kill-joy."

"I'm being realistic!" The werewolf exclaimed indignantly.

"*Pessimistic*, you mean," Sirius said, while checking his clock absently. "We've still got a couple of hours to kill before the End of the Year Feast. We could play something?" He suggested.

"Yeah, good idea," James said, standing up and opening the lid to his trunk. "I'm sure my deck of Exploding Snap is at the top somewhere..." He muttered while rummaging around.

"Have you checked under the beds?" Remus asked dryly, knowing for certain both James and Sirius were bound to have forgotten to pack *something*.

"Of course I have!" James scoffed, before furrowing his brow. "Did I, Pads?"

Remus rolled his eyes, bending down to check underneath James' bed, which was right across from his. "Well, I can't see your deck of cards, but I'm pretty sure that's your photo-album."

James eyes brightened, dropping to his stomach and crawling under his bed to grab the album, a wave of dust flying up as he did so. "I knew I had forgotten something, Moony! Thanks!"

He coughed slightly, before settling down cross legged in the middle of the floor, chortling as he opened the album and was met with a picture of a much younger Peter, wearing a yellow floating duck around his chubby waist. The Peter in the picture was alternating between leaning down to pull up his bathing shorts which were constantly slipping down, and reaching up to scratch his nose. "I remember this summer!" He grinned as the rest of the Marauders sat down beside him, Peter groaning when he saw what James was laughing at. "It was summer before second year, and you were all over at my place."

"Yeah, I remember that too," Remus said. "It was so hot that day, and we were all by the pond to swim...but Peter had never learnt how. I still have no idea why your dad had that floating duck lying in storage..."

"Can we talk about something else?" Peter begged, face red as a tomato.

James shrugged, and flipped through the pages, until he landed on a picture of him and Lily – James was staring at his pants with his mortified expression, twitching, as though fighting the urge to itch something. Lily looked vindicated, her wand tapping against an arm smugly.

"Oh, wasn't this when you proposed to Lily for the first time, Prongs, and she hit you with that hex that made boils break out on your unmentionables?" Sirius laughed and it was James turn to blush.

"Next picture," he said loudly, but Sirius, Remus and Peter stopped him from changing the page.

"The expression on your face was hilarious," Remus remembered, chuckling. "And this was only one moment of several ending the same way – with you in the hospital wing."

"I've got to say, I am impressed with your tenacity. Anyone else would have given up," Sirius agreed.

"Yeah, well," James sniffed, messing up his hair, "it paid off, didn't it? I always knew she would fall for me, sooner or later."

"Much later, in your case," Peter sniggered.

"Lily's charm work is truly something to be envious of," Sirius grinned, sighing. "Those were the days."

Flashback

"I still can't believe you broke up with Evans," James said, glancing over at the redhead, sitting by herself in a corner, reading.

"It was a mutual decision," Remus said, for the tenth time that day, rolling his eyes in exasperation. "We're better off as friends."

"Hmm. Well, I'm going to marry her," James stated flippantly, as though talking about the weather.

Remus, Sirius and Peter exchanged looks, before they simultaneously burst out laughing.

"Hey!" James pouted.

"She hates you, Jamie," Sirius said, still chortling. "She's never going to marry you. Other than in your dreams."

"Well, well...I'll show you!" James said, standing up. "I'll ask her, right now!"

His friends' laughter grew even wilder and louder, earning themselves attention from the rest of the students.

"See if I invite you to the wedding," James huffed, before straightening his shoulders and walking over to Lily's table with determined steps amidst the laughter from his friends.

"Evans!" He said with a charming grin, and Lily looked up, startled. "Do you believe in love at first sight, or should I walk by again?"

Lily stared at him as though he was insane, but James didn't let that deter him. He pulled a hand through his hair, messing it up even further. With his other, he pulled a resisting Lily out of her seat, leading her to the middle of the common room.

"What do you think you're doing?" Lily hissed angrily, pulling her hand out of James' grip.

James grin grew even wider. "Lily Evans, the girl of my dreams, the redhead of my heart – you may fall off a broomstick, you may fall from a tree, but the best way to fall...is in love with me!"

"Are you high?" Lily asked incredulously, ignoring the laughter coming from practically everyone in the room.

"No, just lost...in your eyes!" James said. "Evans – marry me."

"WHAT?" Lily screeched.

"Marry me," repeated.

Lily was completely flabbergasted, and James turned to his friends beaming. "See? She's speechless with joy!"

Lily grew as red as her hair, and she pulled out her wand, pointing it at James' crotch. "Furnunculus!" She yelled, and every male in the room winced.

James froze, smile slipping of his face to be replaced by a horrified expression, and he was twitching slightly, both from the pain and from the itch currently covering his privates.

Lily crossed her arms, her wand tapping against an elbow. "Look who's speechless now," she said. "I wouldn't marry you even if you were the last male on Earth!" She spun around on her heel, and disappeared up to the girls' dormitories.

Sirius, Remus and Peter walked over, looking sympathetic, but unable to hide their amusement completely.

"Come on, Jamie," Sirius said. "Let's get you to the hospital wing, alright?"

Despite the itch, despite the pain, despite the rather public and humiliating dismissal, James looked starry eyed. "She's perfect!" He proclaimed breathlessly. "And I am going to marry her, I swear it!"

'Mental' Sirius mouthed to Remus who couldn't help but silently agree.

End flashback

"Hi, guys," Buffy said, waving the four boys over to the Gryffindor table in the Great Hall, a couple of hours later, waiting for the End of the Year Feast to begin. "You're late. You even missed Dumbledore's speech. We were just about to go see where you were."

"Sorry," Remus said, placing a kiss on her cheek. "We were busy reminiscing."

"Reminiscing?" Lily asked, an eyebrow raised in question.

"Yep," James agreed. "Graduation is making us all a bit nostalgic."

"It feels so strange," Lily mused, while serving herself a piece of shepherd's pie, "that we only have one more night left. Tomorrow, when we leave, we leave forever. No more Hogwarts...at least, we won't ever revisit her as students."

"I still remember the sorting as though it was yesterday," Remus said, lowering his voice slightly, so only those closest to him could hear his next few words: "I was completely terrified - I was sure that somehow, everyone would know what I was, just by looking at me."

"Yep. He was practically quaking in his boots," Sirius nodded with a smirk, earning himself an eye roll from Remus.

"Oh, remember the bet we made? About where he'd end up?" James asked everyone.

"Ravenclaw or Hufflepuff, right?" Buffy asked, remembering the conversation she'd had with Sirius almost a year ago. "Well, knowing Remus, not bad guesses, but he's a Gryffindor more than anything else."

"Though he's missing the 'shoot first, ask questions later' tendencies most Gryffindors are so fond of," Lily added with a grin.

"Do you include yourself in that faction, Lils?" Remus asked with a teasing smile.

Lily sniffed in mock superiority. "But of course not," she said. "I'm *special*."

"And so modest," Sirius sniggered.

Flashback

Sirius nudged James in the side, nodding towards the pale and sickly-looking boy in the seat diagonally across from them on the other side of the table. "So, Huffleclaw-boy ended up in Gryffindor," he noted.

"Seems that way," James said. "He looks as if one gush of wind would blow him over." He snickered, Sirius soon joining in.

"Umm...when do we get to eat?" A small voice asked, and both boys turned their heads to the right, staring at the small boy who sat there, with rather watery eyes and a runny nose. "I'm P-Peter Pettigrew! Peter said, voice overly bright and shaking and stuttering at the same time. "I-I'm really excited to be here - I was sure I'd end up in H-Hufflepuff - nothing wrong with Hufflepuff, of course, but G-Gryffindor is so much better, don't you th-think?"

Ignoring him, James and Sirius looked at each other with despair. "I thought Gryffindor was the home of the brave," Sirius whispered conspiratorially. "Not the m-m-m-mentally challenged," he stuttered, imitating Peter who still looked up at them with an expression of worship.

James choked on his laughter. "Sirius! That's not nice! Gryffindors stick together! Even if they look like death warmed over," he added, glancing at the sickly-looking boy again.

"I suppose you're right," Sirius said, grinning wickedly. "But you've got to admit some of them look like they need to be protected, not like the protectors themselves."

James grinned back. "Then it is up to us, the strong and ruggedly handsome to take care of them," James said, flexing his non-existent muscles.

A redhead that sat beside the sickly looking boy snorted, catching his attention as well. "Please," she said. "Ruggedly handsome? Allow me to laugh."

"What got your knickers in a twist?" James smirked, making the girl's green eyes narrow before she turned away in a huff, burying her nose in a giant book, which the messy haired boy saw was called Hogwarts, a History.

"Y-you never answered my question." The chubby boy, Peter, spoke up again.

Sirius and James blinked in confusion. "What question?"

"When does the food arrive?" Peter wondered again.

The sickly looking boy hesitated for awhile, and then opened his mouth to answer. "Well," he said, voice wavering slightly. "After the sorting, the Headmaster is supposed to say a few words, and then the food appears."

Peter blinked. "Oh." He then smiled at the boy. "Thanks. I'm Peter."

"Remus," Remus said, smiling back shyly, his fringe – which was far too long and in need of a good cut - falling down to cover his eyes.

"We're going to have to listen to a speech?" James asked incredulously, groaning.

Sirius nodded mournfully. "Apparently. I'm going to starve before that!" He exclaimed, making the red-headed girl roll her eyes at him.

"If a human is to die of starvation, he must first suffer from it for about one to two months, which causes permanent organ damage, and then you die. I highly doubt the Headmaster is going to keep talking for that long."

Sirius and James gawked at the girl, their mouths opening and closing, while Remus snickered. Peter just looked dazed at the redhead, blinking stupidly.

"What is she talking about?" James spluttered, giving Sirius and James highly confused looks. "Is she out of her bloody mind? And who is she, anyway?"

Lily rolled her eyes again. "Boys!" She huffed, shaking her head, and sticking her nose in the air, inwardly deciding to ignore them all in favour of learning and knowledge.

However...

"...That was really clever," a voice told her shyly, interfering her descent back into her book.

The redhead turned to look at the pale boy beside her, surprised. "Thanks," she then said, just as shyly, holding out her hand for him to take. "I'm Lily. Lily Evans."

"Remus Lupin," Remus introduced himself.

Lily grinned. "Yeah, I heard. Before, when you told...umm...Peter, I think," she added quickly, blushing.

"And I'm Black, Sirius Black," Sirius said, interrupting their conversation, grinning back widely, ignoring Lily's glare of death. "And that's Potter. James Potter. And now, that we've all been introduced, why don't we all engage in a group hug!"

Half of the Gryffindor table turned to stare at him strangely.

Sirius pouted. "It was just a suggestion."

End flashback

"I can't believe you made fun of Remus and I," Peter protested, frowning. "Mentally challenged? Honestly...that's so mean. And Remus can't help that he looks ill sometimes!"

"Well, we were idiots," James shrugged.

"No disagreement there," Lily muttered, though her lips twitched.

"Like you're one to talk," Buffy teased. *"If a human is to die of starvation, indeed! You were such a know-it-all, Lily! And, come to think of it, slightly macabre..."*

Lily blushed. "Well, it shut them up. And Remus thought it was clever!"

"Yes, well, we all know Moony is rather strange sometimes," Sirius sniggered. "And he's always been a nerd."

"Better a nerd than an arse," Remus countered, throwing a couple of peas at Sirius.

"Hey!" Sirius hollered, throwing a roll at Remus in retaliation, who ducked, which meant the roll instead hit the back of an unsuspecting Hufflepuff's head, who turned around to glare at the Gryffindors.

Sirius shrugged innocently, only to get smacked in the face with a handful of mashed potatoes, thrown by the Hufflepuff victim's friend.

Buffy grinned brightly. "Oh, you know what this means..." she began, eyes sparkling, as she grabbed a couple of tomatoes.

Lily groaned, having a feeling she knew what was coming next.

James sniggered, arming himself with an apple pie. "FOOD FIGHT!" He yelled, and in the next second, food was flying across the room, no one left untouched, the professors unable to stop the complete and utter pandemonium. Of course, it didn't help that the Headmaster had joined in.

Finally, McGonagall managed to put a stop to the chaos by firing off red sparks into the air, along with a deafening boom. The Transfiguration professor looked murderous, her hat askew, and robes splattered with gravy.

"BLACK! POTTER! LUPIN! PETTIGREW!" She yelled, as she stalked over towards the Gryffindor table, face redder than the lingonberry sauce currently smeared across her forehead.

"He started it!" Remus, James and Sirius chorused, all pointing at each other.

Professor McGonagall did not look amused.

"Having fun?" Buffy asked, walking up to Sirius and Mandy, arm in arm with Remus.

"Yeah!" The Ravenclaw enthused, looking around the Great Hall, which was covered in glittering decorations and filled with music and laughter. "I wish I was graduating with you. It's going to be so lonely here, next year."

"Well, look at it from the bright side," Lily said, walking up with James holding her hand. "You get to experience not just one, but two Graduation Balls."

"Hmm...true," Mandy nodded in agreement.

"But only one with this dashing knight as your date," Sirius said proudly, straightening his dress robes.

"More of a blessing than a loss if you ask me," Lily teased.

"Oi!"

The others laughed. "Well, we're off to the dance floor again," James said, and Lily sighed theatrically.

"What a chore with a man who actually *wants* to dance," she joked, grinning widely.

"Those two are so perfect together it's nauseating," Sirius remarked as the couple walked away.

"Who is?" Samantha asked, coming to stand beside Buffy and Remus.

"James and Lily," Remus answered. "Where's Peter?"

"By the refreshments," Samantha said, staring longingly at the dance floor. "Some men are apparently made with two left feet and no sense of coordination."

"Peter doesn't want to dance, huh?" Mandy said knowingly, giving Samantha a sympathetic look, though she also could understand why Peter avoided the dance floor, which would put him in the centre of attention: His dress robes were a hideous shade of turquoise and yellow, and the muggleborn felt extremely sorry for him.

The Hufflepuff sighed. "Nope. I'm heading out for a breath of fresh air – do you want to come with?"

"Yeah, sure!" Sirius agreed quickly – maybe a little too quickly, Mandy thought suspiciously but said nothing, heading out with Buffy and Samantha instead, Remus and Sirius following at a slightly more sedate pace.

"Anything to get me away from the dance floor," Sirius whispered conspiratorially in Remus' ear once he was sure they were out of earshot. From the roll of her eyes Buffy gave him, it was clear she'd hear the remark.

Outside, the air was cool and refreshing, and from the amount of seventh year students milling around the grounds, most of them gathered around the lake, it was clear the marauders hadn't been the only ones to escape the hall.

"Let's head towards the lake," Sirius' grey eyes gleamed. "There seems to be a commotion of some sorts."

"What did you do?" Mandy asked, and Samantha and Buffy looked at the two Gryffindor boys suspiciously.

"Us?" Remus said, blinking innocently. "Nothing."

"What are you talking about?" James asked, coming to join the group, Lily and Peter beside him.

"Got tired of dancing at last, Prongs?" Sirius asked.

"No," Lily answered in his stead, "the band is wrapping up, and Dumbledore announced the end of the ball. He also told everyone to head back to our common rooms."

"More of a suggestion, really," James shrugged. "I mean, I think he knows not many of us are going to obey anyway. It's our last night here."

"Let's end it by the lake then," Peter suggested hurriedly. "It was the place of the Marauders first official meeting, it should be the last as well." He sounded rather excited, and the girls exchanged looks, now absolutely certain the boys had done something by – or even to – the lake.

"The end of an era," James mused as the group began to walk.

"But not the end of the marauders," Sirius cut in.

As they neared the lake, it became apparent that the dark surface was covered with floating candles, burning brightly.

"Did you do this?" Michaela Duncan asked the Marauders, approaching with her date for the evening, Nick Vandom.

"Of course they did," Nick said, lips twitching. "They're the marauders, after all, and this is their last night at Hogwarts. Of course they couldn't leave without a last hurrah."

"We thought it appropriate," James said, staring out at the lights, which would rearrange themselves into shapes and words every few seconds. "And this isn't so much a prank as it is a show of homage."

"Paying our respects to what was and never will be again," Remus said quietly, a nostalgic expression on his face.

"Seven years of Hogwarts," Lily mused. "Now awaits the rest of our lives."

The candles on the lake rearranged themselves, forming the shape of a burning Phoenix, before all the lights went out, leaving the groups of students standing around in darkness.

17 June

"Nervous?" Sirius gave James a teasing smile, as the Head Boy ruffled up his hair for the eleventh time in the last minute.

"Not at all," James said, trying to keep his voice from cracking. Peter patted his back slightly, but rather than comforting James, it only made his robes more wrinkled.

"You could wait," Remus reminded him. "You don't have to do it."

James glared. "I'm doing it."

The doors opened, and the four Heads walked outside, each professor going to stand and speak to their respective House.

"Why are you not arranged in line?" McGonagall hissed at the boys. "All the other students are behaving – why can't you?"

Peter, Sirius, Remus and James exchanged amused looks, a witty retort already on their lips, when McGonagall spoke up again, apparently realizing exactly who it was she was speaking to. "Never mind. Just head back to your places in the line, in alphabetical order – after all these years of schooling, I am going to assume you know what that means."

Remus grinned, slipping in before Mary and Madeleine MacDonald.

"Alright, students," McGonagall said, addressing all of the Gryffindor seventh years. "It's time to go inside – in an *orderly* fashion," she reminded them, as they began to fidget, voices rising excitedly. "I will not have my House be the one behaving like buffoons. Not today, of all days." Her eyes looked strangely wet as she looked at the students she'd taught and mentored for seven years. "Make me proud."

She walked back inside the Hall, followed by the other Heads of House, leaving the doors open. From inside, Dumbledore's voice was heard: "And now, presenting Hogwarts Graduation class of 1978."

Hufflepuff walked inside first, followed by Slytherin, Ravenclaw, and lastly Gryffindor. All the tables in the Hall had been removed, only chairs adorning the large floor where family and friends to the students were seated. Even the Faculty Table was gone, and in its place was a large dais, on which all the professors stood, with the exception of Dumbledore, who stood behind a podium to the left on the stage.

After all the students had been seated in the chairs reserved for them, Dumbledore stood up, looking kindly upon the mass of bodies within the Great Hall, there to either partake in, or watch, the Graduation ceremony; student, mother, father, sibling and friends alike.

"Welcome. For the final time, I bid you welcome," the Headmaster began, looking at the four rows of seventh years sitting straight-backed in their chairs. "Seven years have come and gone. Seven years of reading and learning. Seven years of living together, laughing together and crying together. Seven years of being a family – together. Soon, you will be leaving Hogwarts, but you will always be a part of each other. The memories will remain, the friends you've made will also remain. No matter what the future brings remember this: This is the place where it all started. This is the foundation of your forever." A long pause followed, but nobody made a move; no one fidgeted, no one whispered. Everyone was just watching the Headmaster silently.

"When I call your name, please approach the stage and accept your diploma, handshake and honours from myself and your professors; Andersen, Theresa..."

Finally, every name had been called, and Dumbledore spoke up again. "Now, I leave the word to this year's Head Boy and Head Girl, James Potter and Lily Evans, both of Gryffindor House."

Lily and James stood up from their seats, walking up to the stage amongst much applause. James gulped. This was it.

Falling to his knees in front of Lily – in front of all of his fellow seventh years, his parents, and Lily's parents – he pulled out a small, velvet jewellery box from inside his robes.

Lily's hand flew up to her mouth and a gasp escaped. "James..." She whispered voice low, but still carrying clearly across the utterly silent Great Hall.

"Lily," James said. "There are so many things I want to say to you, but all the words in the world are not going to be able to convey the depth of my feelings for you. All I can say is that I love you. I love you more than anything and you're the one I want to spend eternity with. Lily Marie Evans, will you marry me?"

Lily was struck utterly speechless. James speech was short and to the point; nothing special, but Lily knew he meant it. The trembles in his hands, the sincerity she saw in his hazel eyes all spoke of the truth – James loved her.

And she loved him.

"Yes," She breathed. "Yes!" She said a little louder, throwing herself around James' neck as he stood up on slightly wobbly legs. "Of course I'll marry you!"

The Great Hall burst out into wild applause, and fireworks – set off by Sirius – exploded above their heads, spelling out the words 'SHE SAID YES!' before they blew up in a rain of red and gold confetti and the wedding march began to play.

Lily laughed, slightly embarrassed, but at the same time delighted at the extravagant show, of course due to the marauders. Holding out her hand, James shakily put the ring on Lily's finger, kissing her deeply, staring into her eyes, glistening with unshed tears of joy.

"Congratulations," Dumbledore said, eyes twinkling. "There can never be too much love in the world, after all. I wish you all the luck. Now, however, I do believe you have a speech to give? One *not* involving a proposal?"

James and Lily both blushed, nodding and turning to face the crowd, wide smiles on their faces. "Seven years," Lily began. "That's a lot of days, but not many at all when you think of the time we still have left. This has been the start of our lives, the 'foundation of our forever'. But our forever still awaits us. And just as it was frightening when we first entered the castle, it will be just as frightening leaving it."

"To all of us, Hogwarts has become a second home, a place of belonging," James continued, looking out over the assembled people. "A safe haven where we could grow, and mature into the people we are today. And now, we're walking into a life of uncertainty. We began Hogwarts as scared children, and we graduate Hogwarts as scared adults. But remember this; we are stronger united than we are apart. Together, we can do anything, face anything – even change the world. The future is ours."

"Congratulations, class of 1978 – we made it!" Lily said, throwing up her hat in the air, the students standing up and following her example to much cheer, James gathering Lily in his arms, swinging her around and kissing her deeply. Students ran up, throwing themselves on top of the Head boy and Head girl, screaming, laughing and crying at the same time.

"I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S OVER!" Buffy screamed, throwing herself in Remus' arms.

"Oh, it's not over," he said, grinning happily, as he watched his friends around them, celebrating for all they were worth. "It has only just begun."

I still remember that moment, as though it was yesterday: High on life, euphoria running through our veins. Filled with hope and idealism, looking at a bright future. Invincible. We were still innocent, back then. Undamaged. Naïve. I always thought my life would begin after Hogwarts: I was prepared for the responsibility, for adulthood, and even the war – the deaths of my mother and sister taught me that there would be casualties, that we would be facing carnage on a daily basis. But I wasn't prepared for the changes in the people around me, the lies, the doubt, and the fear.

I wasn't prepared for betrayal.

- Samantha Lowell

**To Be Continued
in
Road of Carnage**

A Note From the Author

This chapter was in many ways bittersweet for me to write, mostly because I know what's to come. Also, because it is the end of the beginning of a fabulous journey that began with *Out of the Blue*, so many years ago. Rewriting the story is one of the best decisions I could have made – both the flow of the story and my writing has improved so much. While I do have some regrets (for example, I know Buffy has sort of been pushed to the background a bit, which was not my intention at all), I feel that Road of Innocence gave my love of writing back.

I truly loved writing this story, and because it ended up so different from its original (indeed, the sequels will be a lot different as well), it didn't feel repetitive at all, and allowed me to fall in love with my characters all over again.

I want to thank everyone who has reviewed from the bottom of my heart, and hope you decide to read the continuation as well, because without you, this story wouldn't be what it is. Your encouragement, praise and advice have been much appreciated. This has been the beginning of what I'm sure will be an amazing journey, and I hope you decide to see it through to the end of the road.

*Much love,
Ida (ladyvisionary)*

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<http://www.tthfanfic.org/story.php?no=18061>
<http://www.fanfiction.net/s/4760022/30/>

The Rewrite Of The Rewrite and What Might Have Been

- The flashbacks were originally spread out over the entire story, and then removed completely because they didn't fit. And then, when it became time to write this chapter, I realized this was the perfect place for them, because in many ways, this chapter is rather nostalgic – or at least, it feels that way for me.
- I changed James and Lily's speech so many times: I could never get it quite right, and even now, I'm afraid it borders on cheesy. But I think it works for the moment they're in.