## Tomfoolery

by Amita

A brief moment of history best forgotten.

Chapter 1 of 1

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No one will ever suspect this, he thought.

Dig. Dig. Dig.

Clever. Even if I have to say so myself.

Of course, there were disadvantages in tunneling from the basement of a candy shop into the school. The ground was harder than anticipated, and he couldn't use extreme methods for fear of discovery. His provisions had run out, and he had been forced to subsist on the store's supply. He was certain milk chocolate and lemon drops would supply him with protein and vitamins, but he couldn't be certain in his current light-headed state. He considered a thick tree-root obstruction and unwrapped a lollipop.

Two nights later, he eased from behind the statue for which he had aimed. Trigomancy had always been a strong point. He patted the stone image of Apeshit Barty on the head and thought of the wave of political correctness that was sweeping through wizard-kind. It was amusing to think of the statue renamed as something as insipid as Bartholomew the Barmy. He stepped into the deserted hall and sneered about the persistent rumors that the school would protect itself. Apeshit's mace descended upon his head.

Two girls sneaking back into the castle spotted the form stretched out on the floor.

"We'd better take him to our common room," said Molly.

"He looks Slytherinish," said Eve.

"What do we do, drag him down to the dungeon, bang on the Slytherin door, yell 'Trick or Treat,' and run?" asked Molly.

"That's ridiculous," said Eve. The next night she snuck down to the dungeon, banged on the Slytherin door, and whispered, "Trick or Treat." The door swung open. She ran.

"What will our door say about a strange boy?" asked Eve.

"We haul him up the stairs but keep him out of sight while one of gives the password. When the door swings open, it's blind, and we can take boys in," said Molly.

Eve looked at Molly.

"At least, that's what some older girls told me," said Molly.

"How do you feel?" one asked.

"It's the bump on your head," explained Eve. "You're confusing your current physical malaise with the guilt you'd experience if you actually contemplated doing something untoward."

I must be in the Gryffindor common room, he thought. He was glad that some of his faculties were intact although it would be even better if he could remember who he was.

His eyes opened to the dim winter dawn to see two girls looking at him anxiously.

He struggled mightily to remember anything, and a coherent thought formed, "I feel like doing evil."

## "What evil?" asked Molly, a light in her eyes.

He thought fast. "A practical joke. Doesn't your Headmaster take walks on the astronomy tower? We could rig a trapdoor."

"You might hurt someone," said Eve.

Molly handed him another mug of herbal tea and turned to Eve. "See, it's a joke. It should be easy to scare someone but put safeguards in place. It'll be fun."

"That's exactly what I was thinking," he said.

"Be that as it may," sniffed Eve. "We can hardly work on it in full daylight, and it's Saturday, and we can go to the village."

"There's a great candy store," exclaimed Molly. "We can stock up on milk chocolate and lemon drops."

"That's your fourth hardboiled egg," said Eve.

"Mmphf," he said, reaching for a mug of tea, unsweetened.

There was a wail of anguish from across the square.

"Something's up. We should check it out," said Molly.

He looked contemplative. "Perhaps a pastrami on rye next."

Molly looked stern. "We have to see if anyone's in trouble."

He followed Eve and Molly across the square to a distraught girl.

"What's wrong, Amelia?" asked Molly.

"My kitty ran off, and I can't find it anywhere."

Synapses fired inside his head. Kitty ... oldest sister ... pussy ... alley cat at heart. He said, "I'm an expert on wild pussy, the wilder the better."

"Who's he?" asked Amelia.

He waved his wand at what he knew was the natural habitat of what he missed the most. In the alley, the lids of several dustbins flew off, and a ball of snarling fur leaped into the air. That's exactly how I remember what's her name, he thought as he levitated the squalling animal toward them.

"Eww," went Amelia. "My pussy doesn't have curly hair, and it never smelled like that."

Yeah, right, he thought.

"Look," said Molly, grabbing him and pulling him back to the castle, "we have things to do, and here comes a bunch of boys who'll be glad to find your pussy."

He had secretly put in another trap. If anyone ran to the rescue of the first victim, they too would find themselves hurtling toward the unfriendly ground. The back of his mind had fretted about the second trick. It had been telling him that he overdid things and that was his downfall.

"Oh, wow, that's so clever," said Molly. "Can I try it out? Your safeguards are really subtle. I didn't even see you put them in."

Her path would take her over the second trap.

"No," he shouted, running to stop her.

The trapdoor opened beneath him.

She watched him fall for a few seconds before she concluded that his safeguards were not yet in place.

"I can save you," she said, pulling out her wand to stop his fall.

She screamed as she fell through the second, secret trap.

Everything is working splendidly, he thought.

He saw that she had saved herself by grabbing the railing with both hands. Well, okay, no design is perfect.

He saw that she wasn't going to save herself. She was hanging on with one hand and waving her wand to arrest his fall with the other. Don't be foolish, he thought as his descent slowed enough to just bounce once. He looked up in time to see her hurtling toward him. He got his wand out and slowed her fall enough that he received only a minor concussion from her impact.

He stood. He knew who he was; he knew he had done something clever, but he couldn't remember what. There was a witch lying on the ground, but she wasn't hurt, and a crowd was approaching. He vanished.

He reflected. What mission? Perhaps someday he would remember what had happened. He said, "My mission was my own."

"Of course, my lord, of course," said the minion.

Prompt by sempra: By some weird twist of fate, some Death Eaters find themselves in one of the Hogwarts dorms, in the clutches of a group of Hogwarts students.

In the twilight's last gleaming, he stepped back to admire his trapdoor on the astronomy tower catwalk. It was undetectable. It had even impressed Molly. Why do I care?he wondered.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Was the mission successful, my lord?"