

# Vita Nova

by JackieJLH

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## Vita Nova

Chapter 1 of 1

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**Author's Notes:** Written for the Gen HP Last Drabble Writer Standing competition. The rules required a drabble from the POV of the Sorting Hat between 100 and 500 words. Many thanks to verus\_janus for the wonderful advice and beta work. (And as a card-carrying member of Slytherin house, I feel I should point out that this story does not in any way resemble my personal views. Lol.)

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The school portraits have to answer to the headmistress. The suits of armour are compelled to obey. Even the ghosts, when they aren't feeling tetchy, generally do as they're asked.

The Sorting Hat is under no such obligation, and it has never before been as grateful for that fact as it is right now.

"Headmistress, I cannot do that," it says quietly, not without a hint of pleading in its words—it has been sitting in this office for long enough to have once heard rumours of ruined teenage faces and reporters locked in jars, and though some eighty years have passed since then, the Hat still believes a certain degree of caution is warranted. "Were you not one of the greatest proponents of House equality after the war against Tom Riddle?"

The headmistress's eyes widen. "The war against *Voldemort* was a long time ago," she replies, nearly hissing the name. If the Hat had a face, it'd wince; it's terrible at remembering the names people choose for themselves after their Sortings, but *this* particular slip-up tends to anger nearly everyone who hears it.

The headmistress visibly forces herself to calm, sinking into the chair behind the desk. "I'm no longer so naïve," she mutters. Her movements evince her weariness, but the Hat cannot quite bring itself to feel pity; after all, the last headmistress also fought in wars, and she'd never suggested anything so terrible.

"Professor," it says, "this will not stop evil from rising up among us. The strengths and weaknesses present in any child at eleven years old do not—"

"The leader of Vita Nova was a Slytherin," she interjects, anger behind her words. "His followers were predominantly Slytherin, just like Voldemort and his followers, and those that sided with Grindelwald."

"Perhaps," the Hat answers sensibly, "it is because the ambitious are Sorted there. It is not the house that attracts this sort of behaviour, but this sort of behaviour which is attracted to the house."

"Whatever the reason," she responds icily, "the fact is that they *network* in there. They find like-minded followers and supporters, and it is irresponsible of us to continue to not only allow, but *encourage*, such occurrences. If they were split up among the other three houses—"

"The school can only be strong as a unit!" the Hat interrupts. "The Founders—"

"The Founders didn't watch a third of wizarding Britain die inside of two years," she snaps, and the Hat falls silent.

"Sort them into Slytherin if you wish," the headmistress finally says, getting up and heading for the door. She pauses, looking back at the Hat. "The Board has already approved the change. The Slytherin-sorted will only be ostracised when made to join the other houses."

She glances up at the wall of portraits, and the Hat wonders if she notices, or cares, that none of the late headmasters or headmistresses will meet her eyes.

"The choice is yours," she finishes, closing the door behind her.