

# Dumbledore's Hubris

*by blue artemis*

Voldemort wins. Hermione helps set up an underground to take Britain back.

## After the Fall

*Chapter 1 of 3*

Voldemort wins. Hermione helps set up an underground to take Britain back.

A/N: This was written for the 2010 Bulgarian Big Bang. It is complete in three chapters, and there will be a sequel.

*After The Yule Ball--1994*

Hermione sat dejected on the steps of the front hall; Ron had just left her after she yelled at him, she wasn't sure where Viktor had gone, and Harry, well, Harry went after Ron as usual. She heard voices and looked up.

"Uncle, I think she is trustworthy. She never once commented on my fame. And her magic is truly powerful and our magic is very compatible."

Hermione was confused. It sounded like Viktor, but who was his Uncle, and why would he be speaking English?

"I know, Viktor, but the company she keeps--I just don't know."

Hermione almost fell over. That was Severus Snape. But she couldn't leave his comment unanswered. "What is wrong with the company I keep, sir?"

The two men turned quickly, pointing their wands at Hermione.

"Come with us, Miss Granger. Now."

Hermione got up and followed her Professor and her date quickly. That was his 'do it now or Gryffindor loses all of its House points' voice.

That was the beginning. Hermione found a new hero in her Potions professor. He championed her relationship with his nephew and helped her by being the go-between for their letters when it was more politically expedient for her to appear to be falling for the youngest Weasley son.

"Hermione."

"Yes, sir."

"We are going to have to plan for the worst. Albus has most certainly lost his mind. I do not know what his plans for Potter are, but I do not believe the boy will survive. Things are just not right."

"What sorts of plans, sir?"

"If we lose, we need the girls to be ready to be used, to be toys. They will be well-treated pets at best, and little more than whores at worst. The boys will become Death

Eaters or die."

Hermione looked horrified, then resigned. "I will see what I can do. I know I can get some of the DA to you for study. Not Ron or Harry, they will never be willing to learn from you. But people like Katie, Luna and Neville will be more than willing."

Professor Snape snorted. "Who would believe that Neville Longbottom of all people could be such a good actor."

"Who would believe that Severus Snape would be secretly tutoring said Neville Longbottom in Potions and showing him the best way to spectacularly blow up a cauldron?"

The two, who hoped to be family one day, smiled at each other. They went their separate ways, trying to stay calm, planning for the worst.

Over the next two years, many letters crossed between Hermione and her subset of conspirators, planning the best way to survive if the worst happened.

Even more letters crossed the Continent between her and Viktor. If they didn't have to destroy them after they were read for safety's sake, they would make a wonderful romance novel one day.

Hermione was the one who subtly pointed Harry in the direction of the doe Patronus while they were in the Forest of Dean. She primed Ginny for the worst. She kept many more secrets than Albus Dumbledore could ever believe from a girl. He would have choked on a lemon drop if he knew just how close she had gotten to many of the Slytherins, especially Draco.

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Hermione ran as fast as she could from the carnage in the Great Hall. Harry was truly dead. All that hogwash Dumbledore fed him that love would work and that he was the last Horcrux was just that, hogwash. *I hope they burn his portrait!* She headed for the Shrieking Shack. If she were to die, let it be near a man she admired. She knew what he had done in the name of the Light. She knew his Patronus was a doe and why.

"What are you doing here?" a familiar voice hissed from the darkness as she pushed her way into the rickety building.

"I came to see if I could get his body away. He-Who-Shall-Not-Be-Named has won. Harry is really dead. He may have had control of the Elder Wand, but he didn't know it and went to his death just the way the idiot headmaster wanted him to. A living being with a will could not be a Horcrux. If he had been, Harry would have been possessed ages ago. I wish I had known that was what the stupid old man based his whole 'Greater Good' on. If I ever get a chance, I'm going to torture his portrait with the knowledge. Harry died for nothing."

"My Uncle is not dead, my love."

"What do you mean, Viktor?"

"He's just in stasis. I've stopped the bleeding. If we get him out of here, I should be able to heal him.

"But you know what that means, Nin, right?"

"I have to be your slave, spoils of war. This is the worst that your Uncle trained us for, Viktor. Is your fake Dark Mark active?"

"Yes, I have used a drop of Uncle Severus's blood, and I have another vial of it here."

Viktor touched his wand to Severus' Dark Mark, and a few seconds later Lucius Malfoy appeared. "What do you need, Viktor?"

"I need a safe place to heal my Uncle and to 'capture' Hermione. Will you help?"

"Yes, but only if I get to 'claim' that I was working on the Dark Lord's behalf. I need my status back."

Hermione stared at the aristocrat with wide eyes. It seemed Draco was right. "Let me know what I can do to help, sir."

Lucius smiled at the startled Gryffindor. "You are as smart as they say you are, girl. Viktor may have to 'share' you. If that happens, we will plan carefully. If we do it well, you will become more like a courtesan than a whore. You will tell us what other girls we can set up that way, either blood traitors or Mudbloods."

"I will start thinking about that now."

"How is your Occlumency, girl?"

"Severus said it was good enough to block the Dark Lord. I could keep him out, and Dumbledore never suspected."

"Wonderful. I must leave you now. Here is a Portkey to a cottage in Wales. It will be a safe haven for you. There are many potions and a helpful elf. I must go and see if I can salvage anything with my idiot son."

"You will have to work on him, sir," Hermione ventured. "He and Ron Weasley are two sides of the same coin."

Lucius snarled at her as the Portkey took the three in the Shack whirling away. Unfortunately, he knew she was right.

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The three conspirators landed roughly in a lovely little cottage in the middle of nowhere. As soon as her feet were steady beneath her, Hermione ran for the medicine cabinet. She pulled out a wound healing potion, the antidote to Draught of the Living Death, Blood Replenishing potions, and knowing Severus as she did, a powerful sleeping draught.

She raced back to Viktor, who promptly began to wave his wand over his uncle and chant while Hermione poured the wound healing potion over his neck and got him to swallow the others. After a few minutes of treatment, Severus woke up slowly. Seeing who he was with, he swallowed heavily. "We lost, didn't we?"

"Yes, Uncle Severus. We most certainly did. We are hoping the Dark Lord is happy that you were saved and that he is willing to 'gift' Hermione to me."

"What is your take on the matter, child?"

"Albus was wrong. So very, very wrong. He got so caught up in his stupid 'Greater Good' that he didn't stop to think. Harry was not a Horcrux. The magic rebounding on Riddle when he tried to kill the baby caused the connection. Nevertheless, he never listened when I tried to tell him. Harry is dead. I'm certain the Weasleys are either dead or wishing they were. I don't know what we are going to do to salvage this."

Severus put his arms around his favorite student. "Shh, child. Don't worry so much. If the Dark Lord won't gift you to Viktor, I will have him gift you to me. We will figure it out. Considering how much of the so-called 'Dark' is more than willing to help kill this maniac, maybe we will have a better chance if we work toward this goal instead of depending on an underfed, poorly trained teenager."

"I hope so."

Hermione looked frightened when Severus and Viktor reached for their left forearms. "Quickly, rough her up a bit more, tear her clothing as though you were trying to rape her. Then Apparate."

Viktor quickly followed his uncle's directions, took a hold of Hermione's hair and Disapparated to the Dark Lord's side.

They found themselves in the ruins of the Great Hall, the dead piled up along the walls. There were a few captured prisoners; she saw Luna, Neville, Cho, Susan, Hannah, and Katie Bell being held by Inner Circle Death Eaters. Molly was suspended in mid-air, being spun around by the force of the hexes being cast by Rodolphus, apparently in revenge for the death of his wife. The rest of the surviving Weasleys seemed to be the amusements of choice.

Hermione's heart broke as she saw the look of anguish on Arthur's face when he saw her dragged in by her hair.

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"What have we here?" The frightening voice of the Dark Lord rang through the Great Hall, stopping all of the 'entertainment.'

Severus and Viktor bowed low, the latter tossing Hermione to the floor. "I rescued my uncle, my Lord. I thought you might want a potion-maker who knew what he was doing. When I went there, I found Potter's Mudblood. You called before I could make good use of her."

"You did well, Viktor. Do you wish the Mudblood as a boon? I know you have always been fascinated by her. You take after your uncle in that regard."

"Yes, my Lord. I would like her. Apparently someone told her of the reason pureblood witches stay virgin. I am looking forward to the power boost." he continued on, inspired. "You yourself told us of the value of holding on to a powerful virgin until she was impregnated. If it is your will, I would like to keep her to myself."

"Hm. Maybe I should reward someone else... No. Everyone was willing to surrender until I killed the boy. They say I am evil, but I only want what is best for the Wizarding world." The lack of the six-sevenths of his soul had left the Dark Lord supremely unstable. Somehow that final confrontation made him believe he had done everything to create some sort of wizarding utopia. Voldemort considered his next move carefully. "Dumbledore's greatest hubris was thinking he was always right. Look what happened to those who followed that delusional old man. You may keep her, Viktor. Maybe we can convert her to our cause; maybe we can find a way to truly break the so-called Light."

The snake-man lowered his gaze to the terrified girl on the floor. "So, girl. You have managed to surpass your blood and remain chaste. I am told you like to learn. Are you willing to apprentice yourself to my potions-maker? You will have lessons and be able to take your NEWTs in six months time. If you do well, I will allow you to marry." Hermione's startled but curious gaze made the Dark Lord laugh. "What do you say?"

Hermione took a deep breath, knowing she was sealing her fate as well as sending a message to the other girls in the room. "Thank you, my Lord. I appreciate the chance to learn."

"Hm. You do seem to be as smart as they say you are. Hold out your left wrist, girl." Hermione did so tentatively. "Viktor, hold out yours." Viktor held his wrist out proudly. "As the ruler of Britain, I declare you promised. This woman is yours under the old laws of magic, and if it pleases me at the end of the year, I will have your binding made permanent." A ribbon of magic sprang from the end of the Elder Wand and wound itself around Viktor and Hermione's wrists.

There were gasps all around, and some calculating looks from other Death Eaters who were hoping some of the other girls were also virgins and could also be claimed.

Lucius decided to take matters into his own hands. "My Lord, may I ask what makes this Mudblood special?"

"I have looked into her mind, Luciussss. She is ambitious and willing to set aside her Dumbledore taught 'morality' to succeed. She was honest about being willing to learn and appears to have accepted her place as chattel. That is why I was willing to elevate her. Too much inbreeding will ruin Magical Britain, but we need to be selective as to who we choose. Miss Granger here chose to preserve herself in the manner befitting a proud pureblood. You know she is powerful. Mr. Krum knows very well the value of the boon he was granted."

"I see, my Lord. You are wise, as always. Maybe we should check some of the prisoners to see if they are also worth keeping as prizes."

"It is good to see you being the lieutenant I remember you to be, Lucius. Cast the spell."

"*Illustro Insons Insonis*," intoned Lucius, waving his wand in a wide circle around the room.

Hannah, Katie, Luna, Daphne and Astoria Greengrass, Cho and Ginny all were shown to be virgins. There were others, but Hermione did not know them. Interestingly enough, when it was obvious that Pansy Parkinson was not, all eyes turned to Draco.

"Did you ruin this girl, young Master Malfoy?" asked the Dark Lord, danger in his tone.

"No, my Lord," answered Draco, looking at the ground.

"Look at me!" demanded Voldemort.

Lucius looked pained as he saw the vicious way the Dark Lord was rooting around in his son's head.

Voldemort dropped Draco to the ground, satisfied that he was telling the truth.

"Are you truly that stupid, girl?" asked the Dark Lord, advancing menacingly on Pansy.

"I-I-I'm sorry, my Lord." Pansy was terrified. She had thought that she would make Draco jealous by being a tease with Theodore Nott, but she couldn't stop him once he was unclothed. Not that she had wanted to at the time. She hadn't meant to lose her virginity like that, but she had underestimated the quiet Slytherin. "I couldn't stop him."

"He did not rape you, girl. You were unclothed and writhing against him. You are what comes of a world with no true traditions. You are no longer worthy of a marriage to one of mine. How shall I punish you?"

He turned to the room, "Who wishes a whore? Not a wife, or a consort, like Mr. Krum here, but just a hole to be used?" The Dark Lord looked around.

"I will take her, my Lord. I do not wish a wife at the moment since mine was taken from me so brutally, but I could use someone to warm my bed."

"As you wish, Rodolphus. She is yours."

Pansy cried as she was thrown to the ground in front of Rodolphus Lestrange. She began to struggle as he pulled her up by the hair. "Behave, whore. You can see why our Lord elevated the Mudblood. She holds herself as though she were born a lady. You most certainly do not."

The Greengrass sisters and the other girls in the hall saw how dignified Hermione looked standing next to Viktor Krum. She was certainly a shining example of how to behave herself.

Voldemort turned back to Draco, who had recovered himself. He was standing next to Hermione and Viktor, composed as only a well-trained young man could be. "Well, now, young Malfoy, do you have a preference as to any of the girls here?"

"I would prefer a blonde, my Lord. I do not know the youngest Greengrass girl, but she would be acceptable. The Lovegood girl would also be acceptable."

"I believe the Greengrasses had promised their youngest to Marcus Flint. Therefore, you may have the Lovegood girl."

Without being told, Luna got up quietly and moved to Draco's side. "My thanks, my Lord. I will do my best to be a good wife."

"Well done, girl. Do you think you will be able to complete your studies for your NEWTs within the next six months?"

"Yes, my Lord. Especially if I can study with Hermione and Draco. They help keep the Wrackspurts under control."

Frighteningly, the Dark Lord smiled. As he moved off to see what he could do to show those in the Great Hall what a wise and benevolent leader he was, Lucius sidled up to the small group.

## A Terrifying Peace

### *Chapter 2 of 3*

A benign Voldemort is a scary Voldemort.

"Very well done, Draco."

"I saw what Hermione did, Father. She truly is a lady in every sense of the word. Viktor thought so quickly on his feet, I could finally see the resemblance to Uncle Severus. Surviving and surviving well is going to be far more important than being an idiot about school rivalries."

Between his father's praise and the beaming smiles from Hermione and Luna, Draco resolved to work so that his friends would never have to fear for their lives because of the circumstance of their existence. He finally understood what it meant to stand for something. He was also glad to have been taught Occlumency, so Voldemort would never know his true loyalties.

Voldemort strolled toward the now gathered Weasleys. Fleur was taken and given to Walden MacNair. When Bill attempted to protest, he was given to Greyback, to be "taught his place." Waiting for the other shoe to drop, it was with surprise that Charlie agreed to start up a dragon reserve on the Hogwarts grounds. He was to be joined by various Death Eaters, of course, and for his oath of loyalty was given Cho Chang as a wife. The Dark Lord then offered George a boon for swearing an oath, and George asked to be killed quickly instead.

"I am offering you sanctuary, and you ask for death? Are you insane, boy?"

"Yes, my Lord. My twin was killed by a falling wall, and I am missing a part of myself."

"Ah, you were a twin soul, I see. I will grant your wish, then." Molly cried out as her son died before her eyes.

"You bastard! I don't know why these children are swearing oaths to you! They should be fighting to the death!"

Voldemort turned to Crabbe, Sr. "I believe your wife was killed, wasn't she? Are you willing to take this one?"

"Aye." The hulking man turned to Molly, cast a permanent silencing charm on her, then dragged her off. When her struggles got to be a bit wild, he cast a spell no one knew that made her docile. The man worked a farm and could tame animals; apparently he didn't find Molly much different.

"Anyone else wish to question my methods?"

"You fiend! You gave my Hermione to a Death Eater! You killed Harry! You gave my mum to that troll! You shouldn't exist! You are a perversion!"

Arthur tried to keep his youngest son quiet, as did Percy, but to no avail. Ron was very quickly strung up where his mother had been and was being used for target practice. No one in the hall could watch for very long; the boy should have just asked for a quick death the way his brother had done.

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"That is what you were trying to keep me from, Father, wasn't it?" Draco turned to his father with wide eyes.

"Yes, Draco. Hermione very astutely warned me that you and the unfortunate Mr. Weasley were two sides of the same coin. But I am very proud of you, son. You were able to read the situation and reacted like an adult. Any posturing on your part, especially with our Lord behaving in this manner, would have resulted in your becoming the entertainment."

"Well, I hope Little Red keeps her head about her. I would have thought she and Potter would have done the deed."

"She was his beard," replied Hermione. "Harry was in love with Ron. But Ron thought he was in love with me. It wasn't a particularly comfortable situation."

Everyone in the small group stared at Hermione except for Luna. "It makes sense. Harry tolerated far more bad behavior from Ron than a reasonable person would from a friend. It also explains the Nargles floating around both of them."

They all turned to look as Voldemort turned to Percy, Arthur and Ginny. "Do you wish a place in my new world?"

All three red-heads looked at each other. "Yes, my Lord."

He sent Arthur and Percy to the Ministry, along with Rodolphus Lestrange and Walden MacNair. They were to start rebuilding.

He reached out to Ginny and stroked her face with one scaly finger. "You surprise me, my dear. I would have thought you would have given in to Mr. Potter."

"He did not compare to you, my Lord. Not at that age. He did not even know that he could have called in the life debt to get that extra boost of power. He was certain to lose. I am at your mercy."

Voldemort laughed delightedly. "Rabastan, I know I promised you a pureblood wife. Are you willing to take this one?"

"I would be honored, my Lord. She will also be testing in six months?"

"Yes. She is intelligent enough to learn what she needs."

Katie Bell was given to Severus, who was thankful she was an adult. Hannah Abbott was given to Theodore Nott, after he apologized for his behavior with Pansy, but pointed out that she had crawled into his bed wearing nothing but a flimsy negligee, and he was but a man.

Surprisingly, Neville Longbottom was asked if he was willing to be another apprentice in the new regime, and taking his cue from Hermione, he said yes. To keep him in line and reward him as Hermione was rewarded, he was given Daphne Greengrass as a spouse-to-be. He won himself points with the Greengrasses and the Dark Lord by bowing low before his new lady and pledging himself to her, second only to his service to Voldemort.

Shortly after that unexpected event, Voldemort called for all to listen to him. He managed to get a hold of the radio waves on the Wizarding Wireless.

"To all of Wizarding Britain, those in the right have won. I claim my right as the Conqueror of Britain. I have already begun to make changes. All of those young women of marrying age need to present themselves to the Ministry within the week. If you have saved yourself as tradition demands, you will be rewarded with a proper six month engagement if you have not taken your NEWTs and a binding if you have. If not, well, my men have needs. Those who have behaved as badly as any Mudblood whore will be treated as one. We will not take blood status into consideration, as breeding stock is necessary. You will be trained how to behave properly, with deference. As for the young men, if you pledge your life to me, you shall be rewarded."

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After his speech, the Dark Lord turned to those in the Great Hall. To his pleasure, Hermione had asked Viktor to clean her up, and she stood with her fiancé, giving credence to the fact that she deserved to be elevated. All those girls in the hall who were smart enough to take their cues from her had done the same.

"My Lord," spoke Lucius quietly.

"Yes, Luciussss."

"Narcissa and I would like to sponsor Miss Granger and Miss Weasley along with Miss Lovegood to teach them wizarding traditions and history. Narcissa is also very good at Charms and Runes, and I can teach Arithmancy and Dark Arts. With Severus teaching Potions and Herbology, they will have a good foundation for their NEWTs."

Voldemort smiled. His smile broadened when the new Mrs. Snape chimed in. "My Lord, if it pleases you, I would like to sit in on the tradition and history class. I have passed my NEWTs, but I would like to fit into our new society better."

"So it shall be."

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Due to the Malfoys' sponsorship, Viktor, Hermione, Rabastan, Ginny, Katie and Severus joined Luna, Draco, Lucius and Narcissa at the Manor. Seeing as Voldemort had decided to take over the Minister's Mansion, this made the place ideal for the conspirators.

Once Lucius had reset the wards, they sat down in the parlor for tea.

"Well, Miss Granger, did that go as expected?" asked Severus.

"No, Uncle Sev. We got far more from the Dark Lord than we expected. What made him do that?"

The unusually grave voice of Rabastan Lestrange broke in. "You surprised him. When Viktor told him you had saved yourself as per tradition and asked to keep you, it gave him something to work with. He wanted to show he wasn't Dumbledore and is willing to give people a chance. But truly, how many girls will still be chaste, especially with a war going on? There will be full whorehouses very shortly."

Hermione responded, "So we are to be poster children, then?"

"I believe so, my dear," said Lucius, thinking he understood what she meant. "But it could be worse. At least we do not have to protect you girls from the more brutal Death Eaters."

"Poor Fleur. I wonder how she will survive MacNair?"

No one answered Ginny.

"My dear, did no one tell your family of the contingency plans?" Narcissa asked.

"Of course they did. But unfortunately my family liked to believe that Dumbledore was always right and that Harry couldn't lose. I lost my faith in Dumbledore after I realized the wards at Hogwarts should have told him there was a Dark Artifact there. Even more, when I realized he could have used it to find the other Horcruxes. But no, he had to let Harry play hero and make everything fit his stupid prophecy."

"I do apologize for that, child. I thought that item would be found; I never meant for anyone to be hurt," Lucius spoke to Ginny for the first time directly.

"I believe you. I heard what you did in the Great Hall. You made it so that we could be together."

Draco snickered. "I didn't know you cared so much, Little Red."

"Ferret, your company beats working in a warehouse anytime."

"I hope you did not mind my claiming you, Ginevra," Rabastan spoke again.

"No, I did not. Hermione told me how you were controlled by Bellatrix and how Professor Snape was helping you break free. My grandparents on my father's side were an arranged marriage, and they ended up in love. With you I feel I have a chance at happiness." The little red-head did not know just how much her declaration meant to a man who had lost most of his happiness to the Dementors of Azkaban.

Viktor saw Rabastan's face when Ginny spoke and turned to Hermione. "That is what will win the war. Those simple declarations of truth. Those from both sides who are willing to bend to make life better."

"Well, children, everyone to bed. Now, those of you that are just engaged, please wait for the Dark Lord to give his express permission to bed your spouse. He did not say it was all right for you to do that tonight. His generosity only goes so far, and he is still quite insane, even if he is showing more sense than Albus Dumbledore this evening. Also, please think of a boon you might wish if your restraint causes him to grant you one." Narcissa, pleased to have so many young people to mother, shooed them all off to bed.

She pulled Katie Snape aside. "He's a good man, dear. He just doesn't know how to express himself."

Katie smiled. "I've seen him with Hermione. He truly adores her and is quite thrilled that she will be family. I have no worries. As Ginny said, there are far worse things that could have happened. At least this way I can continue to work toward my original goals. Respect is a good way to start an arranged marriage."

"Even if you don't find me attractive, wife?"

Katie laughed. "I don't find you unattractive, and well, if you are half as good at using your hands as you are your voice, I will have no trouble with the rest."

Viktor was amused. "I believe innocence does not equate with virginity, Uncle Sev."

"I'm not the only one, Viktor. Your darling fiancée is also an avid reader. It is amazing what you can find in a book." Katie enjoyed the rapid rise of two sets of dark eyebrows.

Hermione rolled her eyes at Katie and turned toward the rooms the Malfoys had set aside for her and Viktor. "Let's go, Vitya. We should rest while we can."

## Destroying the Conqueror

### Chapter 3 of 3

Hermione and her conspirators find a way to defeat the Dark Lord.

Viktor followed his fiancée to the suite of bedrooms the Malfoys had assigned to them. He caught her hand as she walked in front of him, and she turned to look up at him. "Thank you for coming to find my uncle, love. Here we were hoping that you would be given to me as a concubine, and we are engaged to be married."

"I know, Viktor. It was so much more than we could have hoped for. I feel good about things for the first time since I overheard Dumbledore demanding your uncle kill him as part of his debt. How could a man who thought he could see so far, and see so well, fail to see the basic needs of human nature. People followed him because they thought he was such a hero. Looking back on it, he was just as sadistic and evil as the Dark Lord."

Viktor hugged her close to him. "You are angry, but there is a truth in what you say. Have you decided on a boon? It appears the Conqueror is trying to appear benevolent."

"Yes. I studied a spell in the Restricted Section of the library. It causes portraits to tell the truth. I want to question Dumbledore, then burn his portrait."

"Oh, Nin. That will make the Dark Lord believe that we are surely 'converting' you to our cause."

"Yes, Vitya. You've certainly converted me. He still hasn't figured out that he didn't brand you, has he?" Hermione smiled at her consort.

"Not me, nor Theo that we know of for certain, and we should be able to protect Neville when he is called. Your charm work is impeccable. Of course, that all depends on whether or not we have a chance to see him before he is called. If we cannot, he will be truly marked."

"Let's hope it doesn't come to that. Neville's magic would not deal well with being branded. What do you think you will be doing for him, Viktor?"

"I am going to offer to do intensive flight training for his front line forces. We can have a set of fliers who can fight from their brooms. I think he may like the idea. What do you think, Nin?"

"I think it is a wonderful idea. What will you ask as your boon?"

"I'm going to ask if he will perform our marriage ceremony. He is powerful enough, magically, to call the elements to bless the binding."

"I think he will be pleased. It should be an interesting morning."

The two snuggled into bed together, knowing they needed to be at their best to deal with the newly benevolent, yet even more frightening, Dark Lord.

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The next morning, shortly after breakfast, Lucius was Summoned to the Dark Lord's side. He returned soon after with news for everyone. "The Dark Lord requests that we all attend a debriefing meeting this morning. There will be a press conference there, and yes, we are certainly being held up as, what did you call us, Hermione? Poster children? He was ranting about how the registration of young women is not going to plan. He'd already Crucio'd about fifteen fathers for not making sure their pureblood daughters were chaste for marriage."

Luna chimed in, "Dumbledore certainly never let Madam Pomfrey tell us girls about what would happen if we had sex prior to marriage. I don't think he believed it." If she hadn't been so serious, most of the people there would have laughed. "I mean, it isn't as though this isn't a well-known phenomenon. You would think we were asking him to allow her to tell us about what a Crumple-Horned Snorkack uses its horn for."

One of the portraits from the wall cleared his throat. Narcissa turned quickly and fired off a hex. It appeared that Dumbledore had muscled his way into the portrait of Phineas Nigellus Black. "Well, Hermione my dear, you may just get your wish. Why don't you take our erstwhile Headmaster's portrait to the meeting with you?" Hermione smiled and cast a shrinking spell on the portrait and put it into her purse. She ignored the shrieking coming from the portrait.

"Are we all properly dressed?" Lucius looked around. "Good, let us go." All of the people in the house reached out to touch the Portkey in his hand.

They landed in the Atrium of the Ministry and looked around. A blue spell was cast, and the engaged girls glowed. Katie Snape did not, which made the ex-professor blush, if you knew what to look for.

"I am quite pleased with your group, Lucius. The girls who need to pass their exams are still chaste, and the new Mrs. Snape is not. Well done! I believe I shall grant you all boons." The Dark Lord never once realized that his new 'benevolence' was far more frightening than his more usual demeanor. The jovial extravagance was so unlike him, many of those watching the scene wondered what kind of potions he was taking.

Voldemort turned to Luna Lovegood and her fiancé first. "What would you ask of me, Miss Lovegood?"

"If it is at all possible, sir, I would like to get a new wand. Mine was broken, and a new one would make my studies easier."

"Well thought out, my dear. Granted. Ollivander shall be to see you shortly."

"Draco?" questioned the Dark Lord.

"I wonder, my Lord, if you recovered my wand from Potter's body? If not, or if you have another use for it, I would also like a new wand."

The Dark Lord reached into his pocket and handed Draco his wand. "Here you go, young Malfoy. You are as wise as your betrothed." The snake man then turned to Ginny. "What about you, my dear?"

"I would like to see my father, sir. He did not see what happened to me yesterday, and I would like to ease his mind, if I may."

"A dutiful daughter is a joy for any pureblood. Granted." Voldemort turned to MacNair and asked him to send for Arthur Weasley.

"What would you like, Rabastan? You have always served me faithfully."

"I would like a chance to speak to my father-in-law-to-be as well."

"Very good. Family should be close."

The Dark Lord then turned to those who were listening. "Do you all see why these people were granted such boons? They are truly worthy."

"Severus, do you wish anything?"

"No, my Lord. Katie has proven to be more than I hoped for in a wife. You are wise indeed."

"As you say, Severus. And you, Mrs. Snape?"

"Was my broom recovered, my Lord? It was a gift from my father when I graduated. If possible, I would like it back, even if it cannot fly."

The Dark Lord turned to Marcus Flint, who came forward with a broken broom. Katie looked at it and nodded.

The "Chosen Ones" were living up to the Dark Lord's expectations.

Out of the corner of her eye, Hermione could see Ginny's tearful reunion with her father as well as Rabastan trying his best to soothe the nerves of the man. Something in his stance made Hermione tuck a question into the back of her mind. Viktor touched her hand quietly to bring her attention back to the madman in charge.

"Miss Granger, I see you are living up to your reputation. What would you like as a boon?"

Hermione looked down, took a deep breath, then nodding to herself, reached into her bag and pulled out a small square.

"What do you have there, Miss Granger?"

"The portrait of Albus Dumbledore. He snuck out of the Headmaster's Tower through the portrait of Headmaster Black and was spying on us in Malfoy Manor. Mrs. Malfoy trapped him here, and I brought him along. I found a spell in the Restricted Section that works like Veritaserum on portraits. I would like to question him and then either give him to you to burn, or burn him myself."

"I will have to consider the best way to grant your wish, Miss Granger. It is truly devious. It will be the crowning spectacle for my news conference, I believe." Voldemort then looked at Viktor. "And you, Mr. Krum? What would you like as a boon?"

"My Lord Conqueror, when it comes time to finalize my binding to Hermione, I would like you to perform the binding."

"That is easily granted. Now, what have you to offer my troops?"

"I would like to teach them how to fight aerially. Give me those that are good on a broom, and I will make them a strike force," Viktor responded just as he had told Hermione he would.

"Excellent. I will have a group assembled for you tomorrow morning on the Hogwarts Quidditch pitch."

"Miss Granger, you will come with me to my office to explain your plans for Dumbledore. I wish to know what you want him to answer." In a parody of good manners, Voldemort held his elbow out to Hermione, who took it with a wary look at Viktor. She was a bit less wary when she realized Lucius would be accompanying them.

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That afternoon the press was gathered in the Atrium of the Ministry, ready for the conference that had been called by the Conqueror.

"Wizards and Witches of Britain, I am here to present to you the first of our true conquests: Miss Hermione Granger, a Mudblood who has surpassed her birth and become the betrothed of Viktor Krum, the trainer for our aerial fighters. She has continued to behave as a proper pureblood should and has remained chaste. Seeing as Mr. Krum has followed instructions and has been working to convince his bride-to-be that we are in the right, she requested a boon that makes me believe my vision for a united and pure Britain is achievable. We are here today to witness her questioning, under a truth spell, of the only wizarding portrait of the so-called great Albus Dumbledore. After that, we will witness his final destruction at the hands of Severus Snape, who asked for nothing."

The gathered assembly gasped as one as the portrait was unveiled.

"Hello, Miss Granger. Have you decided to set aside your childish grudge and come to me for advice?" The portrait of Albus Dumbledore was smug in his self-aggrandizement.

"Oh, no, sir. I have some questions for you. Now, first of all: *Vir Du Fabrica, Dico Verum!*"

The portrait of Albus flinched when the spell hit him. "Now, Miss Granger, anything you ask me could be vital to winning the war. Are you certain you want to do this in this sort of venue?"

Hermione laughed. "You mean no one has told you, Albus? The war is over. We lost."

The portrait looked stunned. "That isn't possible. The last was in Harry. My plan should have worked. Didn't he give himself up willingly?"

The Dark Lord laughed. "He most certainly did, Albus. Your sacrificial lamb was quite willing to be a martyr. But why would I pass up an opportunity to finally kill him? And yes, I now live! Britain is bowing to my will and I am reshaping society. It will be a paradise, Albus, and you will have nothing to do with it."

Albus's painted face looked pained. "I was not interested in shaping society, Tom."

Hermione interjected icily, "No, not society. You were only interested in playing chess with real people as your pieces." She turned to the Dark Lord. "May I begin the questioning, sir?"

"Most certainly, Miss Granger."

Hermione turned to the portrait. "Why did you turn your back on Slytherin?"

"I needed a scapegoat."

"Why did you hurt Severus so badly when he was a student? Why would you choose Sirius over him?"

"He wasn't valuable. At the time, I thought I could influence the Black heir to give me his money as the Potter heir did."

"Why did you turn on Sirius?"

"He would never raise a martyr. I needed someone who would worship me."

"Why did you abandon Harry to Petunia?"

"Do you have any idea of his power, girl? It is the same reason I wanted you to marry Ronald Weasley. Power. When the Potter heir married that Evans girl, the match of power was huge. I could not have another child loose in the world who would end up more powerful than I am. His poor nutrition and stunted growth was necessary to keep his magic under control."

"You wanted to match me up to Ronald Weasley because my power was going to be hindered by his?"

"Of course. If you married Mr. Krum, or Harry, your children would be very powerful. I have done my best to discourage powerful matches. In that matter, Tom did a lot of my work for me. He destroyed the powerful Muggle-borns or half-bloods, ensuring that the power was muted."

A growl emanated from the Dark Lord, who realized his whole blood-purification agenda fit right into the old chessmaster's plan.

"You are despicable." Hermione was so angry, her hair crackled.

"Yes, I am."

A hissing voice interjected. "I have heard enough! Severus, do you have anything to ask this old man before you destroy him?"

"Yes, my Lord." Severus bowed to the Conqueror, then turned to the portrait. "You wanted me to die, didn't you?"

"Yes. I can't even imagine the power of your children should you procreate."

"What do you think of Miss Bell, Albus?"

"I am very glad she is interested in Oliver Wood. As with Miss Granger, it is best to keep her from a truly powerful wizard."

"What would you say if I told her she was my wife?"

"I would have to find a way to manipulate someone into killing her. You cannot be allowed to have children together, Severus. That kind of power is hard to harness."

"I truly hate you, Albus." Severus looked to his wife, who nodded at him, then pointed his wand at the portrait. "*Fiendfyre!*"

After the portrait burned itself out, the Dark Lord swept out of the Atrium, followed by Lucius and Severus. Hermione was instructed to return to the Manor to study.

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Wizarding Britain was stunned to say the least. It appeared that the devastation of the last two wars was engineered by Albus Dumbledore to keep the reins of power in his hands. He had not wanted any children born who could surpass him in terms of power. The fact that the British press was nothing more than a set of gossip-mongers kept news from the rest of the world out of their hands. As the head of the International Wizarding Federation, he was able to censor any news of great power or new blood or even scientific studies out of the hands of those who might actually understand them.

Voldemort was left stunned. Here was a power far more evil than he was, and he had no idea what to do. A dictatorship cannot be run like a democracy. So more and more he turned to Lucius Malfoy and Severus Snape to help him run the government. As his magical construct of a body began to decompose, he ventured into the public less and less.

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Six months passed quickly. The Ministry held the NEWTs for those sixth and seventh years who had not taken the tests during the war. When the results were posted, Hermione was at the top of the list. Her scores rivaled those of Severus Snape himself.

She was contacted by the Department of Mysteries to begin work as an Unspeakable. When she arrived that morning, she was quite surprised to find Arthur Weasley was her boss.

"Arthur, you are the Head Unspeakable? I would have never guessed."

"No one is supposed to guess. Your assignment is to the Department of Magical Creatures, as a liaison to the goblins. Your work with charms, especially the false Dark Mark, has intrigued the goblin ward-makers, and they have offered you an apprenticeship. This is a great honor."

"So then you want me to appear to be the beleaguered Ministry drone trying haplessly to make changes, all the while I will be apprenticed to a goblin Ward-Master?"

A gravelly voice rang out from the shadows. "Exactly. My name is Roklag, and I will be your master. You show great promise, Miss Granger."

"Thank you, sir. I just need you to know that I am to be part of the state wedding celebration on Saturday. Will that affect anything?" Hermione worried. She had just grown more wary since Dumbledore's betrayal and Harry's death.

"Not at all. We understand your value to the new regime." There was a world of knowledge in that small statement.

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Hermione smiled. She thought back to the last six months of her life. After Dumbledore's portrait was burned, everything started to change. Lucius was made Minister, with Severus as his Chief Consultant. No one could buy Lucius, and Severus, well, it was amazing how much power the Headmaster of Hogwarts held.

Viktor made such headway with the aerial strike force that Voldemort demanded he be sent to Hogwarts to teach flying. His betrothed was required to go with him.

Muggle-borns and their parents were required to sign a contract stipulating not only their willingness to learn Magic, but that they understood their talents were required to stay in the Wizarding world. With Narcissa Malfoy and Augusta Longbottom teaching classes in deportment and traditions, as well as Percy Weasley teaching History, by his request of all things, Hogwarts was beginning to reflect its true existence as the best school of Wizardry and Witchcraft in Europe.

The not-so-Underground managed to clear the warehouses very quickly. A marriage law was passed, and most of those girls were paired off with Muggle-born or half-blood wizards. Voldemort took credit for the increase in powerful, magical babies born in Britain. In reality, Viktor had off-handedly mentioned a program like that in Russia to Severus at a meeting, and the rest was history.



NEWT and OWL scores were improving rapidly.

General contentment was also growing. Voldemort was more and more relegated to being a figurehead. But Lucius was a master of making The Dark Lord feel as though he were the instrument for change.

There were still a few stupid enough to voice their desire for a less regimented, Dumbledore-like Ministry, and they were used as examples. Dean Thomas lost his life that way, wishing he could play football out loud. He had gotten too comfortable.

Those that could never be part of Voldemort's world, those that married Muggles, were rescued by Viktor, who would go out to do "reconnaissance" and use charms that Hermione and Luna had developed to mask the magical signatures. Many of the new Muggle-borns were really half-bloods, but those numbers and records were kept in a special place in the Department of Mysteries.

It was discovered by Ginny Weasley that Harry was never a Horcrux. She had become a confessor of sorts to Voldemort, due to their connection through the diary Horcrux. He told her about the others, explaining that Nagini was the sixth. He could not have created her if Harry had been a Horcrux. He was mortal again, but since his body was a magical construct, once it was completely degenerated, he just needed a new one. No one thought his current body would last long past the weddings on Saturday, and that was when they had decided to put an end to him once and for all.

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The third Saturday in December dawned, a beautiful, cold, Winter Solstice day. All the chosen couples were dressed in their winter finery, fur-lined robes for all, and flowers in the hair of the young women. Ginny, Luna, Daphne and Hermione all looked like a child's version of winter princesses, ready to marry their princes.

They walked slowly to a clearing on the Hogwarts grounds that hosted a circle of standing stones. There, the Dark Lord awaited them, along with a ring of family and friends. Only the closest of family was allowed to be within the warded circle, as the closest witnesses to the binding. The rest were held back by the magic innate to the stones. There was a large outpouring of magic around Voldemort, which really added to the power of the day. Only those closest to the snake-man knew he was essentially holding his body together by sheer will and magical strength.

Once they arrived, they walked to the center stone. "Welcome, my chosen ones! You have proven that my vision for Britain was true. Pureblood, half-blood, Mudblood, you all share in the beauty of power and magic. I call upon Magic to finish the binding that began six months ago. You have fulfilled my requests and pleased me greatly." With a flourish of the Elder Wand, ribbons of magic wound themselves around each couple, resulting in beautiful marks on their left arms.

All of the couples began to chant, calling on the elements to help them bind their binder. Voldemort saw what they were doing and tried to send magic into the Dark Marks to stop his servants from harming him. He began to panic when he realized that nothing was happening.

Once he was bound up against the center stone, he asked, "How is it that you are not reacting to my Mark?"

"What mark, Tom?" Viktor asked, showing his arm, free of any Dark Mark. Neville, Draco and Rabastan did the same.

"How? Who did thissss?" The panic caused Voldemort to hiss markedly.

"I did," Hermione answered. "You killed an innocent boy for no reason. He was my family. I swore revenge on both you and Dumbledore when he died. I figured out how to remove the Dark Mark. Since you told Ginny this construct housed the last piece of your soul, we decided to destroy you today."

"Britain needs me! You will never find the peace and happiness you have now without me." The Dark Lord was desperate. He could feel his hold on the construct was loosening.

"No, my Lord. That is not true. Severus and I have set up the government to run the way we feel it should. No one will fear for their lives or sanity for expressing an opposing opinion." Lucius stepped up to the circle.

"You, Lucius? And you too, Severus? How could you betray me like this?" Voldemort wasn't expecting an answer, at least not a verbal one.

Out of the corner of his eye, the construct of magic that was once Tom Riddle saw Viktor Krum raise his wand and call to the heavens. He felt the chill of the single Dementor that was awaiting him. As he began to laugh at the irony of being done in by one of his most faithful servants, all of the Malfoys, the Krums, the Longbottoms, the Lestranges and the Snapes pointed their wands at Voldemort, and in honor of Harry, cast *Expelliarmus*. Under the force of so many simultaneous and powerful spells, the Elder Wand seemed to spontaneously combust. Once it was destroyed, so too was Voldemort's body. The Dementor swooped in and sucked up the soul, at which point Viktor cast his Patronus, followed by another spell in Bulgarian. The Dementor fell in a cloud of sparkly dust.

Viktor turned to his wife. "It is over, my love. We can finally live our lives as we wish." Hermione turned to him, and he swept her up into his arms, kissing her passionately and swinging her around in a circle.

They were in danger of forgetting they had an audience when a deep voice came from the shadows. "Not quite. You still have five years left on your teaching contract. I expect you back after the winter holidays." As those surrounding them laughed, one emotion filled the air, one not felt for many years: hope.

The Minister turned to the reporters who were clamoring for a statement. "We have been working to free Britain from tyranny since the days of Dumbledore. Those of us here in this circle have worked tirelessly to reach this point. You will find some new laws, or re-writing of old laws in the coming months. Now, please honor the fact that before we conquered the Conqueror, there was a wedding or four, and it is time to celebrate."

And so they did.

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A/N: This is the final chapter. I have written a sequel; it is currently with my beta, and I will get it up once it is ready.

Many thanks to sempra for the beta. I appreciate all she did. Kyria was my alpha reader and cheerleader, and I don't think anyone could have done that better.

This was loosely based on a prompt from La Muse Amusant who said that Viktor was somehow related to Snape, but it was a secret.

I just used a Latin translator, sorry if these aren't good:

*Illustro Insons Insonitis* (Illuminate Innocence)

*Vir Du Fabrica, Dico Verum!* (Painted Man, tell the truth!)