

Breaking the Ice

by Rose of the West

Is not talking at all a form of conversation? Fleur/Hermione/Angelina

Becoming Sisters

Chapter 1 of 1

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Written for the "I never" challenge at the Teacher's Lounge forum: Adult Hermione, Angelina and Fleur are having a conversation in the Burrow sitting room. They do not talk about their husbands or any other men. They do not talk about their children, either.

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After three extinguishing spells, a cleaning spell, and a failed Reparo, Bill suggested that they should be put into each others' company until they could be in the same room without hexes being thrown in every direction. When Angelina pointed out that it had been Ginny's idea and that she should do it too, George shrugged. He said that he wasn't going to tell the boy-who-lived how to handle his wife. A wide-eyed Ron nodded in agreement. The three witches narrowed their eyes and shared their first look of perfect understanding ever. All the Weasley men were scared of their little sister.

They didn't have to do it. They were wives, not slaves, and they could easily get out of it. Yet they all felt a bit of guilt for having inadvertently destroyed the wireless during Molly's favorite program and decided they could stand to give up an hour of their lives.

So it was that they assembled in the Weasley sitting room one Thursday afternoon. "There you are, all set!" Molly left the tea tray on the coffee table and shut the door behind her. A few minutes later, they heard the kitchen door slam as Molly left. The pop of Apparition told them that she had gone as planned to Diagon Alley for some shopping and dinner out with Arthur.

Angelina's tightly folded arms started to ache. She looked at the shiny new wireless set that Harry and Ginny had bought Molly. The Potters had got off easy, she thought to herself. She looked over at Fleur. She had nothing in common with the beautiful witch. She looked over at Hermione. She had very little in common with her, either. She relaxed a little bit and started running Quidditch plays in her head. If Ginny were here, she'd at least have someone to talk to.

Hermione looked over at the clock. She only had to do this for an hour, then it was back to the office to put the finishing touches on that report. Suddenly she couldn't remember if she had included the Troll Agreement of 1568 or not. It was most important that she remember to include it. Her whole argument would be much clearer with that in the report. She looked up at the clock. Exactly two minutes had passed. She was tempted to leave anyway, but she refused to be the first to go.

Fleur calmly poured, expecting that since they were here for tea, they would all at least have what Molly had laid out. When neither reached for a cup, she put her own down and looked out the window. Why was it that they always united against her, even in little things? Well, if they would not take anything, neither would she.

The quarter hour passed. Hermione suddenly remembered that she had devoted two whole paragraphs to the 1568 Agreement and relaxed. All she really needed to do was add a paragraph to the end summarizing why the various treaties and agreements she cited meant that House-elves should be freed. She started writing it in her head.

Five minutes later, Angelina, having sorted out the best play ever, looked at her companions again. Fleur looked as though she desperately wanted to ask a question, but

Angelina wouldn't encourage her to speak. Unfortunately, she'd run out of things to think about. She could plan that new shop display as she thought it should be, but George was probably rearranging it in her absence.

Why won't they talk? Fleur was starting to feel desperate when the clock tolled the half hour. She was supposed to be at work, negotiating a transfer between London and Brussels. She should just about be able to do it when she got back to Gringott's.

Suddenly, there was a lot of noise in the kitchen. Seeing that the other two weren't moving, Fleur sighed and went out. She came back in, white with rage.

"Ees wrong!"

Hermione stood up, worried. "What is it?"

"That woman! Do-Dolorous..."

"Dolores Umbridge?" Hermione and Angelina exchanged looks.

"Femme horrible!"

"Is she here?" asked Hermione.

"Non. Just her *tête*—head—and zhen she leaves to trouble someone else. She wishes me to change a transaction that was completed yesterday. It cannot be changed, yet she wishes me to change it."

Hermione was interested in spite of herself. "What will you do?"

"I must feex it or risk an international incident."

The two Hogwarts-trained witches looked at each other. For the second time ever, the two shared a look of agreement.

"We have experience working with her," said Angelina slowly.

"Yes, we do," agreed Hermione. "She was at Hogwarts for a whole year, right after the Tri-wizard Tournament, actually."

"We'd like to help you figure out what to do. Somehow we should do it so that she's gone from the Ministry for good. How did she manage not to get arrested after the Battle of Hogwarts, anyway?"

Hermione sighed. "She's the consummate middle manager. She always manages to hide behind her bosses, who she claims make all the decisions, and her underlings, who she claims are clumsy and act without her permission or knowledge."

"Such a person should not work at the Ministry," observed Fleur, who was regaining her composure.

"And yet she still does."

Angelina looked thoughtful. "She does have some weaknesses. Those nifflers upset the cats on her plates, the fireworks almost burned her alive, and remember the centaurs?"

"Do I ever," smiled Hermione. "It's still said around the Ministry that if you make that clopping noise in her presence, she starts twitching."

"There must be something we can use..." Angelina and Hermione suddenly realized that they were smiling at each other.

"You have ideas? You would help me?" asked Fleur. Her two sisters-in-law turned and smiled at her.

"It could be fun. We're not married to Weasleys for nothing," said Angelina.

Hermione rifled through her knowledge of international banking law, and considered some reference books she'd recently seen in the Ministry archives. "I have some thoughts..."

It was the first of many plans the three would set in motion together.