

Lust, War and... Love?

by linkar

A saga of a Death Eater and Dumbledore's Army gal which unfolds unseen by Harry Potter in Book 6, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. A cauldron full of hot, strong lust... or could it be love? Canon-compliant. Revised version, as of 2012.

Twelfth Night after Christmas

Chapter 1 of 1

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Author's Note

Disclaimer: The Harry Potter characters and places belong to JK Rowling. I make no money from writing this story. The idea of an incident, involving a near-fatal potion, over-the-top prank and super-rare antidote, is inspired by *Adamo Fidelitas* by Pixiezombie. I visualized such an episode happening in Book 6, and my story evolved from there.

Chapter 1 - Twelfth Night after Christmas

Chapter note: In Book 5, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, three brave Dumbledore's Army girls gather for a night of fortune-telling. Harry is not present and never learns about the event.

In the dark room, two tall candles cast golden light on the girls' faces. Hermione held her wand at the ready over a large bowl filled with water as Parvati peered into an ornate mirror on a desk. Across from her, Padma squinted at a tattered paperback book. Desks, stacked high against a wall, loomed behind her. The abandoned classroom in the farthest end of the third floor corridor was cold and draughty, and the girls wrapped their robes tight around their bodies.

"What's your governing sign, my Promised One?" Parvati whispered to the mirror.

Hermione waved her wand in circles over the bowl. A blob of white wax melted and spread in the dark water. The pale swirls gathered into a form, vague at first but gradually more defined.

"A snake!" Padma dropped her book on the desk. "It's a snake again, Parvati. First the skull, now it's a snake like I had."

"Looks like you both are going to date Slytherins. Under the Sign of Death as your book professes it," Hermione snorted. "Crabbe, Goyle or both?"

"Neither!" Parvati giggled. "It's..."

"You aren't supposed to tell us the name until you're done!" Padma interrupted. "You'll disturb the innocence of our divination. Let's try the other two!"

Innocence of divination...that was quite a term to coin Hermione already regretted being sucked into a séance with a mirror, melted wax and book aptly titled *The Divine Almanac of Heavenly Maidens*. It was the Twelfth Night after Christmas, when every young witch eager to know her suitors this year or, furthermore, her prospective husband, employed the ancient practices of predicting her Promised One.

Lavender Brown had come down with the flu in the morning and dropped out of the ritual. The twins, desperate for a third person, persuaded Hermione to join them.

Padma was the first to sit down in front of the enchanted mirror flanked by the two flickering candles. Her future suitors were supposed to appear in the mirror, and they did. As she asked her would-be boyfriends cryptic questions, Hermione melted the wax in the bowl with her wand. Parvati deciphered the forming shapes with the help of *The Divine Almanac* and prodded her sister about the boys' identities, but the Ravenclaw Prefect remained tight-lipped. After Padma finished her session, Parvati replaced her in front of the mirror.

"The Other One, I wish to talk to you," Parvati implored the mirror. "No, he isn't coming clear. He's more like a blur."

"Then he's going to be only a fling," Padma said. "Did you say he resembled Anthony Goldstein?"

"I'm dumping Goldstein anyway. Even if he is in Dumbledore's Army," Parvati said. "The third was a blur too. Could be from Dumbledore's Army as well. They sort of came out together."

Padma chuckled and closed her book.

"To listen to you, Dumbledore's Army is a dating club and dumping ground altogether." Hermione was already grouchy in the dark and chilly room.

"We've got such cool boys in the Army, haven't we?" Padma said. "Except that our Promised Slytherins aren't there."

"Who knows, they might want to join the Army," Parvati said. "All right, I'm done. Your turn, Hermione."

"They'll join us when hell freezes over." Hermione stowed her wand in her pocket. "I'm sure I'll get no one this year, so why bother with this divining? First of all, we need to build the Army."

"You're sneaky, Hermione!" Parvati got up from her chair. "I know who you'll see. Harry and Ron, right, Padma?"

"The big question: which of them will be your Promised One?" Padma giggled and prodded Hermione in her side. "Let's find out who'll marry you!"

"How about Krum?" Parvati twiddled her wand over the bowl. "A long-term forecast!"

There was no way to wiggle out of it. Hermione sat down in front of the mirror. Parvati handed her the cheat sheet with the questions.

A long, gloomy tunnel appeared in the dark depths of the mirror. Hermione read aloud an incantation from the Patils' parchment to invoke an image of her Promised One.

Three tiny whitish forms appeared in the end of the tunnel. As they floated towards Hermione, the shapes grew in size. At the sight of the first one, Hermione's heart fluttered. It was Ron. His face was blurry and confused-looking, but she would recognize him in any state.

The other two figures hovered in the back, still unclear. Harry? Krum? Her heartbeat even more rapid, Hermione clutched the parchment.

"Ask questions!" Padma whispered, holding her book in mid-air. "How many?"

"Three." Hermione gazed at the cheat sheet. "What is your governing sign?"

Parvati swished her wand over the bowl and hit one of the candlesticks. The candle swayed, but Hermione's quick spell steadied it.

"Looks like a lion's head," Padma said. "Gryffindor!"

"Show me our path. What's it going to be like?" Hermione asked the mirror.

The twins put their heads together over the bowl. Padma's slender fingers flipped through the book pages.

"Always close but never joined," she announced. Hermione stared at her, not sure what to make out of it.

"There are two really long snaky lines, very close to each other. But they don't merge," Parvati explained. "Doesn't look like you'll marry this one."

"Ask more," Padma pressed on.

Hermione drew a deep breath and read from the list, "What's the breaking stone in our path?"

"I long for you but kiss another," was the book quote.

A faint shape resembling a woman appeared by Ron's side, her features too fluid for Hermione to recognize her.

"There's a female form by his side but it keeps changing," Hermione muttered.

Padma had the verdict at her fingertips, "Which tells us there are going to be a few."

Hermione pulled away from the mirror. It wasn't like girls chased Ron, but the way the female form clung to his image unnerved her.

"I'd rather talk to the others," she said. "The next One, come forth!"

Ron's figure slid into the back and one of the other boys came to the front. Hermione's first impulse was to scream but she kept herself in check. The cold eyes and malicious grin were unmistakable. Clear and sharp, Draco Malfoy's features jumped at her out of the mirror.

"Are you all right?" the sisters wondered in unison. "You've got such a look..."

"I'm okay... It...it's just that I didn't expect this," Hermione mumbled.

"Questions!" Padma reminded her.

"Oh, yes. What's your governing sign?" In an instant, Hermione cursed herself for asking such a stupid question.

Naturally, the wax morphed into a serpent.

"Show me our path. What's it going to be like?"

The twins leafed through the book and emitted a collective gasp.

"It's long, twisted and broken. You join together, then break up, and reunite and break up again, and so on. The Sign of Death marks each reconciliation and separation," Padma proclaimed in her most prophetic voice. "I...I can't believe it...I can see it so well now! The Dark Mark...that's what it was, Parvati!"

"Yes, it was too blurry for you, Padma, but it's so clear now!" Parvati exclaimed. "It's going to be a Death Eater! Who's the Slytherin boy in the mirror?"

"Wait, don't tell us yet," Padma said. "Go on, Hermione."

"What's our breaking stone?" Hermione asked weakly. Malfoy, the Dark Mark and the Sign of Death...it was too much to be taken seriously.

"He's bound to another but takes you." Padma could make a great substitute for Trelawney whenever the teacher went down with the flu.

"There's no other woman by his side," Hermione objected.

"That's because she isn't in his heart!" Parvati was well on her way to get an "Outstanding" in her Divination O.W.L.

"Let's find out when you'll get married!" Padma proposed in a bright tone.

"I doubt I'll ever marry this bloke." Hermione's eyes were fixed on the third boy.

She hadn't summoned him yet, but he was already a step behind Malfoy. It was Harry. Ron, on the contrary, receded farther into the tunnel. The female form hovered behind Harry and Draco.

"Any of them," Parvati pleaded.

"When will the bonds of marriage unite us?" Hermione asked no one in particular.

Parvati flicked her wand over the water. "Oi, look!"

"Yeah, it's just one big blob and a droplet on the side." Padma leaned over the bowl.

"In two years?" Hermione asked. Things were going too fast to her liking.

"In a little over a year, I guess," Parvati said in an expert tone. "Year and a half, at most."

"I think I've had enough Divination tonight." Hermione looked at the mirror. Malfoy's face grew brighter in the candlelight. "I'm sure I won't be marrying anyone before I sit for my N.E.W.T.s."

"How about a bun in the oven?" Padma mused. "You know, things happen."

"Who is the third boy?" Parvati asked. "A Slytherin too?"

Ignoring the questions, Hermione put the mirror face down on the desk. The thought of getting roped into a marriage with Malfoy made her ill.

"Looks like we are all going to end up with Slytherins. Who was yours, Hermione?" Parvati kept on. "Not Zabini?"

"It's a stranger," Hermione fibbed. She was in no mood to discuss the findings.

"Well, we all are going to date blokes who've got some relations with Death Eaters. I guess, yours is going to be a Death Eater, Hermione," Parvati said. "Wonder how it'll happen."

"Maybe Hermione will become a spy for Dumbledore's Army," Padma speculated. "And a Death Eater will fall for her!"

"What an adventure it will be!" Parvati exclaimed. "We could be secret agents too."

"I see nothing adventurous in a marriage to a criminal and murderer," Hermione said. "I'm no Mata Hari."

"We could recruit our boys for the Army," Padma said.

"Could you give it a rest?" Hermione sighed. "We can never trust Slytherins! Let's get back to the dorms before the Umbridge toad gives us detentions for wandering the corridors at night."

"What an epic saga of love and war it's going to be..." Parvati descended into a Trelawney-like trance. "Like Ramayana or Mahabharata!"

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