

The Redemption of Gilderoy

by Pennfana

Once the best-known author in the British wizarding community, Gilderoy Lockhart has been undergoing treatment for his Memory Charm gone awry at St. Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries for the past ten years. Why does he keep forgetting everything just when it seems that he's starting to remember who he is?

The Most Famous Patient at St. Mungo's

Chapter 1 of 2

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Chapter One: The Most Famous Patient at St. Mungo's

The Chamber of Secrets, June 1993

"Obliviate!"

The power gathered in the wand, bright and strong; he hadn't been merely boasting, for once, when he'd said that he was gifted with Memory Charms. In the next millionth of a second it prepared to erase the minds of the two boys in front of it, but it encountered a block.

Something was wrong.

It couldn't move forward. It was trapped inside the wand. Yet there *was* someplace it could go—there was a weakness just *there*...

The power flowed backward into the mind of the one who had called it, throwing him back with its impact.

St. Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries, July 2003

Miranda Wentworth, one of the hospital's best Healers, moved confidently down the ward with a clipped, efficient pace. Her goal was one particular bed at the far end; surrounded by toothily-grinning photographs, it was always covered in fresh flowers. Its occupant sat, as he always did in the morning, reading the numerous letters which he still received even after a decade away from the public eye. The letters were fewer these days, a fact which was a decided relief to the cleaning staff. In the first few years after Lockhart's accident, the sheer volume of his fan mail had generated more of a mess on its own than the rest of the whole hospital.

"Mr Lockhart," said Miranda with a cheerful smile. "Answering your fan mail again?"

"Oh, always," he returned, beaming. "It's gotten so much easier since I mastered joined-up writing. And you know, I think I'm beginning to remember why they send me these things. Was I a writer?"

Miranda stared in shock—and then her face broke into a radiant grin. “Why, Mr Lockhart!” she said, laughter in her voice. “That’s wonderful! Yes, you *were* an author—and a very famous one, too. Your books were always sold practically as soon as they were on the shelves.”

Lockhart was silent for a moment. “But Mandy”—she always insisted that her psychiatric patients call her “Mandy”—“I must have been dreadfully conceited. I remember camera flashes and I remember that I enjoyed them. I loved how they lit my face and set off the colour of my robes and my hair. And my smile... I was proud of my smile, wasn’t I? And I know I was fond of seeing my own face. What was I? What did I do that was so great?”

Miranda forced another smile. “You were a great writer, Mr Lockhart, and to most people that was enough. Now, you old flirt, come—take your medicine. You’re making good progress, and maybe you’ll be out of here in a couple of years.”

“Really?” he beamed. “Not that I don’t like you, Mandy, but it might be nice to get out again. I think I remember how I used to love to travel...”

It was night now, and the ward was quiet. None of its few occupants were truly awake; some were dozing and the rest slept deeply, thanks to the fresh Dreamless Sleep potion brewed no more than three days ago. Creeping among the snoring patients, a shadow moved in the dark. It made its way over to Gilderoy Lockhart’s bed and stood over him.

I hate doing this. And is it just me, or is it necessary to do it more often these days? He seems to be building up a resistance to it. I'm seeing that flash of his old arrogance in his eyes so much sooner these days. In a year, I'll probably have to cast this spell nightly. And after that, he could recognize me at last and I'll be found out.

Amanda Pringle shook her head, a stray lock of russet hair gleaming in the moonlight that poured in through the unbreakable windows. It was for the best. Really, it was. Lockhart had been a cocky bastard before his accident and it seemed that to keep him in his current state was to do him—and the wizarding world in general—a great service. It couldn’t last forever, of course; that much was certain. But she didn’t have to deal with that problem just yet; that bridge would be crossed at the appropriate time.

Amanda fingered her wand in its pocket for a moment before she finally drew it out between her thumb and forefinger, handling it as if it were an object of extreme distaste. “*Silencio*,” she murmured, creating a silent bubble around them.

Obliviate was out of the question; it was what he was being treated for, after all, and any reapplication of the spell would be almost immediately picked up by the detection charms placed routinely on every patient to ensure that what was now happening did not happen. However, the spell which would be used tonight was a much older one and very subtle, nearly undetectable. The effect would be the same, but nobody should be able to tell that it had been used. They hadn’t managed to do so up to this point, after all, and Grandmother’s training in the Dark Arts had been most effective.

“*Obliviosa* Gilderoy,” she murmured, and in a brief flash of yellow light, Gilderoy Lockhart lost his mind once again.

Author’s Notes: The plot bunny for this story first bit me about eight years ago, and I’ve been working on it on and off in various forms ever since. I’m almost surprised that I finally managed to finish it—and that it isn’t at least ten times longer than it actually is. In any case, this is the longest that I’ve taken to complete *anything* before, and I certainly hope that the results are worth it. :)

Setbacks

Chapter 2 of 2

Gilderoy’s condition is discovered, Miranda starts her search for a cure, and Amanda is not happy about the direction in which things are progressing.

Chapter 2: Setbacks

There was an annoying noise somewhere off to the right, and whatever was making it was repeatedly crashing into her shoulder, which seemed to be bruised...the spot that the clock was hitting was starting to hurt, and the clock was hitting her *hard*. She brushed it off and buried her head under the pillow. If only she’d known better than to get such an irritating flying alarm clock...

Flying alarm clock? And it was hitting her so hard she had a bruise? Bugger, she’d overslept. Madam Murdoch was *not* going to be pleased. She hurried into a plain brown dress and shrugged her sensible lime green Healer’s robes on over it, grabbed her emergency Portkey and hurried up to the Janus Thickey ward, barely pausing to sign in. She checked on the Longbottoms, who were having one of their better days, which she was glad to see; lately they’d both been suffering from an unusual amount of residual pain from Bellatrix Lestrange’s curses. Despite Miranda’s natural anger at the deranged witch whose *Cruciatus* had been strongly and repeatedly cast on these two poor brave souls, she couldn’t help but admire the fact that although Bellatrix had been dead for over a year now, her work lived on. If only she’d used her formidable powers for niceness instead of evil...

Shaking her head to get rid of the slightly silly thought, she looked at her clipboard and saw that there were no other patients to see to but Lockhart that morning. Mr Greaves had been released last night and on Madam Murdoch’s orders Miss Belfridge had been transferred to a hospital in Sweden where there were Healers who specialized in cases like hers. Miranda noticed this with some satisfaction; the Belfridge case had been particularly difficult for her and for Healer MacNamara (the only other Healer at St. Mungo’s who specialized in conditions of the mind) to deal with. Perhaps she’d have a chance to catch up on some of her paperwork this afternoon. Ah, paperwork, the bane of every non-bureaucratic mind in existence...

Smiling slightly, she made her way to Gilderoy Lockhart’s bed to check on him.

“Good morning, Mr Lockhart,” she smiled. “How are you on this fine day?”

“Er... pleased to meet you, Miss?” he said, obviously confused. “Ah... could you possibly tell me, Miss, please... er... who am I?”

She sighed. “Sir, your name is Gilderoy Lockhart. You are a patient in the Janus Thickey ward of St. Mungo’s Hospital. My name is Miranda Wentworth and I’m the Healer who’s been treating you for your memory loss. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I must speak with my supervisor for a moment.”

When Miranda had made her report, Madam Octavia Murdoch swore. "Are you certain, Wentworth?" she asked sharply. "He has lost his memories in their entirety?"

"I am quite certain, Madam Murdoch," said Miranda hesitantly. "He can speak, at least, which is an improvement over his last relapse, but when I spoke with him he could not even remember his name."

The elderly Healer swore again. "And he was making such good progress this time, too. Whatever could have happened to cause this?"

Miranda shrugged. "The only people present at the initial incident...besides our patient, of course...were two twelve-year-old boys who were, in my opinion, quite hysterical at the time, so I'm afraid that really it's anyone's guess. For all we know, there was so much power in the spell that it couldn't be used up all at once and therefore formed a sort of time-release in his mind, and he won't make a full recovery until it has wholly expended itself. After all, we have already ascertained that it was a very powerful spell that he was hit with, and in any mind there are only so many memories to forget."

Madam Murdoch nodded. "It is a possibility," she said slowly, drawing the words out until they were paper-thin. "I'll run some tests later myself. In the meantime, Wentworth, I believe that you know what to do, having dealt with him in this state before."

Miranda gave a slight bow. "Yes, Madam Murdoch."

Memory charms don't work as one might expect them to. Rather than erasing the memories that they are aimed at, they form a block between the conscious mind and the memories that are supposed to be forgotten. Over time, if the witch or wizard hit with an *Obliviate* wants badly enough to remember what they've forgotten, the block will eventually crumble; the time that this takes depends on the individual's stubbornness and his or her magical power. Muggles, because of their lack of magical talent, cannot recover from the spell for this reason; Obliviators only need do their job once, and the Wizarding World is saved once again from Muggle memory.

A witch or wizard who is repeatedly hit with a memory charm will eventually build up a resistance...or even an immunity...to it. Gilderoy Lockhart is aware of this on some level, and his subconscious waits for the day when the truth can be known. He...for it is him, even if he doesn't know it...is unsure of when the time will come, but he knows that it will and when it does, the one responsible for it will pay.

But his conscious mind, which has taken so many hits that it is no longer certain that it is in fact his own mind, wonders why.

Miranda stepped quietly into Madam Murdoch's office the next day, having received a summons there shortly after reporting for work. "You wanted to see me, Madam Murdoch?" she asked, giving her superior the customary bow.

"Come in, Wentworth," said Madam Murdoch absently. "I have some news for you concerning Mr Lockhart."

Miranda tried to clamp down on a sudden rise of panic. "Is he all right, Madam Murdoch? Has his condition deteriorated at all?"

The older witch raised an eyebrow. "Not all news is bad, Wentworth, and you would do well to remember that. In fact, I believe that I have discovered why he has been suffering all of these relapses."

Calming herself down slightly, Miranda schooled her features into something resembling her usual mask of professional composure. "That certainly is good news, Madam Murdoch. I hope that you don't mind if I ask, but what do you think it is?"

Madam Murdoch smiled. "Your idea of a time-release on his memory charm seems to have more than a little merit; when I examined the patient myself I saw that there was a considerable amount of power in the original Memory Charm. In addition, I have a contact at the medical library in Rouen; Madame Levasseur confirmed that there have been cases in which the victim of an unusually powerful curse experienced the effects of the curse several times in succession before it finally ran its course. Current research on the long-term effects of the Cruciatus Curse, particularly as applied to the Longbottom case, also appears to point to a possible time-release factor. Therefore, Wentworth, I have decided to grant you a most unique opportunity."

Miranda leaned forward, her heart pounding in anticipation. "What is it, Madam Murdoch?"

The Healer smiled. "You, Wentworth, are to investigate this rather unusual case. Mr Lockhart has been recovering in the care of this facility for nearly six years, and in that time he has been entrusted almost entirely to you. Therefore, I believe that you are uniquely suited to research his condition further. You are already familiar with his background, and furthermore, you...better than any other Healer in the employ of St. Mungo's...know how to get Mr Lockhart to trust you. I believe that this is especially important as I believe that you will need his help in the investigation of his case, particularly as his recovery progresses. Have you any questions?"

"None," she smiled. "Thank you, Madam Murdoch."

Late that night, Amanda, cloaked and hooded against the night's chill, paced back and forth outside of her cottage just outside of Hogsmeade. That Madam Murdoch had ordered a new investigation was bad news, very bad news indeed. There had been several advances in the care of magical mental patients of late; even the ill-fated Longbottoms were beginning to respond to some of the newer forms of therapy, though it would probably be years yet before anything truly effective could be developed for such cases as theirs. If Murdoch were to figure out what was truly wrong with Lockhart there'd be hell to pay. All her careful planning would go to waste. She *had* to figure out a way to keep him befuddled without it being obvious. He'd been given to the best Healer in the Janus Thickey ward save for old Murdoch herself; she knew that very soon they'd be seeing the results of their faith in her.

As she brushed a strand of dark red hair away from her eyes she took a deep breath and willed herself to stop panicking. *Calm down, Amanda. There's got to be a way out of this. Grandmother Pringle always said that there's always a crack that you can get through if you have eyes to see it. You just have to find it first.*

At least she would be able to keep an eye on things unobtrusively as Wentworth went about finding a cure for that golden-haired fop. It was fortunate that at least she'd be able to keep an eye on his condition...very fortunate indeed, for if there really was a crack that she could exploit, she'd be sure to find it very quickly.

Author's Notes: There's a nod to "Get Smart" in this chapter. See if you can figure out where it is. :)