

Transfiguration

by SS Lupin

Why didn't Viktor Krum use the Bubble-Head Charm in the second task of the Triwizard Tournament, and how did he overcome his shyness concerning Hermione?
My response to laurel_tx's Krumione Challenge.

One-shot.

Chapter 1 of 1

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Author's Note: This story is set between the first and second tasks of the Triwizard Tournament in GoF.

Krum ambled through the high bookshelves in the library, enjoying the quiet that was mixed in with words whispered, pages turned, and quills scratched. He gently ran a finger along the spine of a book and watched dust motes float off the old leather and rise to the high ceiling. He enjoyed the semi-silence of the library, so different and comforting from the screaming and shouting from fans and athletes in a Quidditch match.

Then he sneezed from the dust entering his nose.

His weak Disillusionment Charm gone, Krum tried to hide himself further into the bookshelves. But a young girl with a yellow-striped tie spotted him and called over more girls.

Screaming, squealing girls, all headed his way with quills and photos of him.

As Krum quickly walked out of the library, he spotted a pretty girl he had seen before, always hunched over a book or some parchment. Now her thick brown hair obscured her face as she hunted for something in her over-filled schoolbag.

Pulling out a quill, the girl looked at her surroundings. Her eyes met Krum's, and his breath caught in his chest.

She frowned at him, glaring then at the girls that were edging closer to him.

Sighing, Krum lowered his head and began the walk back to the ship.

The only other place besides the ship that granted Krum sanctuary from the zealous fangirls was the lake. Sure, they would stand guard against other female competition along the shoreline, but thankfully, none of them would try to join him for fear of the various creatures that made their home in the watery depths.

Taking a deep breath, Krum dove underwater, taking in the feeling of the cold water streaming past him, all around him. It was almost as if the lake was a part of him, Krum thought as he extended a fin to swim through the water.

Krum's eyes widened at the fin, and he let out a scream. He panicked at the rush of water entering his nose and mouth, fearing that he would drown in the lake. But he found himself breathing normally underwater, bubbles trailing out of his mouth every time he exhaled.

Krum stared at his arms outstretched in front of him and found nothing amiss, save for his right arm – which was now a good-sized fin. He gave it a shake, and his fin slid easily through the water.

He laughed then, a hiccup of bubbles escaping his lips, before swimming back to the surface. Worry began to set in as his fin sliced through the water and his breathing remained normal – as normal as a man swimming for minutes underwater without a Bubble-Head Charm could breathe. How was he going to explain the fin to Professor Karkaroff? Could he catch a Snitch left-handed or participate in the Triwizard Tournament when his wand arm was a fin? There had to be a way to reverse whatever had happened to him...

Krum's head emerged from the water, and his ears adjusted to the sound of screaming girls. He turned his head toward them, seeing looks of terror instead of their usual faces of adoration.

Relieved that they wouldn't be chasing him back to the lake again, Krum scanned the shore for the copse of trees where he hid his towel and wand. He swam to the shore quickly, wondering if there was a spell to transfigure animal appendages to human ones. When he reached the shore and his hiding place, he wrapped the towel clumsily around himself. Closing his fingers around his wand, he headed for the ship until he heard a gasp from behind him.

Krum walked faster to avoid a fangirl who wasn't put off by the fin but stopped when he heard her voice.

"Wait! I think I can help you." Turning around, Krum saw the girl from the library. She looked as she always did – her wild hair fanning out in every direction, her hands clutching a book. Only now her eyes held concern in them instead of the scorn he usually saw.

"You can?" Now he felt aware even more of the fin jutting out past his shoulder.

"I'm not positively sure," she said with a sniff. "But I've read a book about how accidental Transfigurations can occur to wizards attempting to become Animagi—"

"But I wasn't trying to—" Viktor started.

"Don't interrupt. I wasn't finished yet." Her cheeks pinked as she continued. "Another way they can occur is when a wizard is under great emotional stress."

"How will I get back to normal?" He didn't want to think too much about emotional stress, whether it was about his fame, the Tournament, or...

"You need to focus on the Transfigured area. In this case, your... fin." She looked at it then, seeming almost mesmerized by the grey, rubbery skin. "Can I touch it?"

Raising his eyebrows, Krum nodded. He wasn't expecting to feel anything through the strange skin, but was surprised at the light weight and warmth coming from her hand. If only his hand could be in the fin's place, he could use it to wrap his fingers around hers.

"Just concentrate," she said, running her palm up and down his fin.

Krum closed his eyes, thinking about using his hand to grab the Snitch as he dove to the ground at breakneck speed. He skimmed over memories and nightmares of obsessed fans, took his mind away from the burning breath of the Chinese Fireball. Instead he thought about using his wand, gripping it in his hand as he Summoned a special item from his trunk to give to the girl who held on to his arm.

"Look, Viktor, it's back!" she exclaimed, placing her hands on his.

He gazed down on it, a pale, thin arm with some muscle in it. He followed the dark hairs on his arm until he came down his wrist and her smaller hands.

His own hand was revealed when she pulled hers back. Krum felt colder then and grabbed his wand to cast a Warming Charm.

"I must be off now – got to return to the library." She set a bag on her shoulder and busied herself by putting a book in it.

"Thank you. I am in your debt." Krum stood and wondered if she wouldn't be cold to him anymore. If he could talk to her again.

She smiled, but she looked sad despite it. "Don't think of it. Besides, you probably don't even know my name."

"I do know it, Hermion-own."

Her smile became real. "It's a start," she said.

Viktor straightened, then stood and kicked the trunk closed. In his hands he held a small wooden box.

Hoping Hermione would like it, he walked purposefully out of his room and down the wooden stairs leading out of the ship and to the shore of the lake. He found her leaning back against a tree by the ship as he had asked, her gloved hands holding open a book.

"Sorry I was taking so long," Viktor said in apology at the sight of her nose, red from the cold air.

"It's fine. I can sit for awhile in this weather if you can swim in the lake." She stood, a smile spreading from wind-chapped lips.

Viktor took her hands in his own, noticing that she was warmer than he. "Warming Charm," she answered at his puzzled frown.

"Oh. This is for you," he said in a rush, pulling one hand back to reach into his pocket and give her the box.

"What is it?"

"Open it."

Viktor watched her pull out a shark's tooth, white and gleaming. She grinned, slipping the tooth back in the box before hugging him.

"Viktor, it's beautiful! Where'd you get this?"

"My uncle, he says he did dental surgery on shark in Australian zoo. But he changes story every time he tells it."

"I think you had a shark fin, that day on the lake."

"Why?"

"Too big for a regular fish, and you weren't a mammal. You had gills."

"Gills?"

"Yes. Here, and here." Hermione placed fingers on either side of Viktor's neck, then moved them down his arms and held onto his hands.

Viktor leaned in, smelled the sweet shampoo Hermione had used in her hair. "May I kiss you?" he asked, wary of the girls that could be around.

"You may. I put up Repelling Charms, too."

Viktor smiled, squeezed her hands, and kissed her.

- end.