

# 24-Dec-98

*by Doomspark*

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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As Harry Potter completed his seventh year at Hogwarts, the wizarding world erupted into the chaos of war. Lines were drawn and the concept of neutrality became intellectual conceit. On one side, the Order of the Phoenix based at Hogwarts. On the other, the forces of Lord Voldemort based at Durmstrang.

Wizarding Europe was torn in two, much as it had been during the Muggle wars decades earlier. The Americans, having learned nothing from history, washed their hands of the affair, trusting their distance to keep them isolated. Germany, still shaky from its reunification, threw in its lot with Voldemort. Spain sided with Hogwarts. Both sides struggled for control of France and with it control of Beauxbatons.

A wizard's war is unlike Muggle war in one respect. It is rare to see large-scale conflicts. Neither side wants their world exposed for all Muggles to see, and it takes too many resources to hide the results of a big fight. Battles are small, with perhaps a dozen wizards or witches on each side.

And so tonight there are five of us and five of them playing a deadly game of Hide-n-Seek in the French countryside. It has been a bitterly cold December, and we huddle together for warmth for a few moments before we go out again in search of our enemies. Our families are safe at least. That is one less thing to worry about.

Then a most peculiar sound floats out of the darkness. A young man's voice, singing. Singing! It rings out clearly, rather closer than we'd thought. I'm not familiar with the song.

"He's singin' bloody well, y'know," one of us says. There is a general mutter of agreement. Other voices in the distance join in the song. They're singing in harmony. It sounds amazing and completely out-of-place.

"It's Christmas." I think we all realize that at the same time. The song comes to a beautiful end, and we pause for a moment of silence. Then one of us strikes up "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen." Slowly, shyly, everyone joins in. If we aren't quite as good as they are, we are at least as enthusiastic.

The echoes of the final "tidings of comfort and joy" die, and it is quiet and peaceful for a moment. Then they start again, this time a song we know even if the words are different. Almost defiantly, I sing along with them as do my friends and comrades. The song fills the night sky, and it doesn't matter that we can't understand each other.

"There's someone coming!" our lookout hisses. We scramble for a better view, hands reaching for our wands. One lone figure steps out into the open, waving a white flag. It shines like a Christmas star. He comes forward maybe thirty or forty feet and stops. It's like he's waiting for something. Or someone.

One by one, we all come out of hiding. All of us, from both sides. We walk into this no-man's-land and greet the men we've been trying to kill. The confusion on their faces mirrors that on ours. These men are sons and fathers just like us, not the faceless monsters we've been led to expect. One of them has a violin. One of us has a flute. Together we play and sing. We find more songs that we all know.

We find that we all have brooms handy. It doesn't take long before we've set up a miniature pitch. They transfigure the Quaffle and Bludgers while we set up the posts.

While they cobble together a Golden Snitch, we set off a few Lumos spells so we can see what we're doing. None of us are particularly good, but we have fun.

Dawn comes as an unpleasant surprise. We've made friends here tonight, and now we must go back to our duty. Back to war. We are left to ponder what we will do when we join in battle and the curses start flying. We realize that those who call the shots will not be those whom we cut down. And we realize that on each end of the wand, we are the same.