

Begin to Hope

by reallycoolkid

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In 1998, the whole world went to hell.

In 2017, Voldemort destroys the New Order, prompting eleven children to take
Voldemort on themselves.

The Beginning

Chapter 1 of 4

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Disclaimer: JK Rowling wrote Harry Potter. These are all her characters, etc, etc.

What if Voldemort hadn't killed Harry Potter?

That's the first question I ask myself every morning when I wake up.

What if Harry had won the final fight? How different would life be? First off ... my family and everyone close to me would still be alive and well. I wouldn't have to live in hiding and go out in secret and disguise. All my friends would still be talking to me, and I wouldn't be in the terrible mess I'm in now...

There is, of course, much more to this story. Let's start at the very beginning.

Harry Potter tracked down Voldemort on December 9th, 1997 in a small town right outside of London. They fought for hours, but when it finally came down to it, Voldemort fought... and won.

And from that point on, Voldemort was unstoppable.

On December 25th, 1997, he led the grisly Ministry Massacre, which killed almost all of the people working in the Ministry. The rest went into hiding.

In January 1998, he invaded Hogwarts and took captive or killed most of the non-pureblood students. Hogwarts was closed permanently after that, and the building still stands in its spot, neglected and idle.

After that, Voldemort just kept gathering followers, and everyone was too scared to try and to stop him.

With Albus Dumbledore, the only one he ever feared, and Harry Potter, his prophesied rival, both dead, no one had the courage to stand up to him.

All members of the wizarding world feared for their lives. Stories were told of the unlucky ones that had been caught and tortured for information and killed if they didn't disclose anything... or worse, they were forced to join Voldemort's ranks.

It was, perhaps, everyone's greatest fear. If Voldemort called upon you to enlist, it would mean giving up everything you had and devoting your life to his service, or death. But death seemed a welcome alternative to working under such a cruel dictator.

My parents, Luna and Colin, were killed valiantly two years ago in a fight with several Death Eaters. The thought of them being gone used to make me bawl like there was no tomorrow, but I realized it was better that they were in heaven, rather than down here in hell living in fear and secrecy from Voldemort.

My younger brother, Humphrey, on the other hand, is still in mourning. He was a quiet boy even before they were killed, but now he's downright unsociable, and there's nothing I can do to cheer him up.

Upon finding us orphaned, Hermione Weasley started her "Witchcraft Underground School for Students," which all of the students who attend it fondly call it "wuss" She knew we hadn't anywhere else to turn, and she wanted to give us one last lingering hope to the magical world, that maybe one day Voldemort would be overcome.

The school is located right outside of Bristol, England. It's a small, shabby building on the outside, built to look like a dirty one story ranch-style house, but the inside is like a mansion. The entire building, other than the entrance room, is located underground. It's got dozens upon dozens of curses and spells upon it for protection, and like Hogwarts once was, it's Unplottable, which makes it unlocatable for anyone who doesn't know its exact location or what it's there for.

Hermione Weasley, as I said before, is the Headmistress, and she teaches Defense Against the Dark Arts and Potions. She's married to Ronald Weasley. As it turns out, Hermione and Ron were with Harry until the end, but Ron only managed to escape within an inch of his life. Because of this, he is paralyzed from the waist down and will be wheelchair-bound for the rest of his life.

Minerva McGonagall, Hermione's oldest teacher, still works with her as the Transfiguration teacher and Deputy Headmistress, although she isn't there all the time; she works as part of the New Order as well and is always busy, running around trying to keep everything under wraps.

There are only a few teachers working here. Not many people are willing to risk their lives to teach a few measly students simple magic.

The day everything changed for the worse was May 27th, 2017. It was my birthday, and I was turning sixteen. I was actually kind of excited for once; nothing horrible had happened in quite a while, and we were all enjoying the silence, not knowing how horrible things were going to end.

I had spent most the day getting ready for my small "party," including curling my hair and putting on some light makeup. I usually didn't get dressed up, or even care about my appearance, but today... I felt different. I felt like something was about to happen, something important, and I had better look my best.

I was checking out my reflection in the full-size mirror in my bedroom when I heard my name being called from behind. "KERRY!"

Klaus jumped on my back from behind, knocking us both to the floor. He started laughing uncontrollably, and I pushed him off of me, grinning only because he's an idiot.

"Klaus, what was that for?" I rubbed my back and sat on my knees, facing him. He adjusted his glasses, as they had nearly fallen off his face, and looked at me happily.

"Happy birthday!"

I shook my head, smiling at him. "Thanks, Klaus."

Klaus Weasley is my best friend in the entire world. Son of Ron and Hermione, he's dumb enough to know better but smart enough not to care. He has a great sense of humor and can always make me laugh.

"No prob." He stood up and leaned back down to give me a hand. I took his hand, and he pulled me up to my feet. I turned around in circles, trying to dust myself off.

"You have a piece of yarn on your ass," He motioned for me to turn around, which I did, and he reached down and smacked my butt.

"Klaus!" I cried teasingly.

He shrugged. "Couldn't help it," he said with a smile.

"Come on, you little lovebirds," Farley Lupin stuck his head in my room and looked at us. "You're holding up your own birthday party!" He scowled slightly, playing his part of taking care of the younger kids, namely us. His father, Remus Lupin, used to be in charge of keeping order around the school, but he was captured, tortured, and killed in 1999, and when Farley became old enough, he took the responsibility upon himself. Farley's mother, Nymphadora, is still alive, but she doesn't work at the school. She travels around Europe, working with Flitwick and trying to get people to join the New Order, but without much luck.

I thanked him and he left. I turned back to Klaus, who was whistling and twiddling his thumbs as if nothing had happened. I giggled.

"We're not lovebirds, are we?" I asked, casually, smoothing out the hem of my party dress.

"No, of course not. We're more like... fat ostriches." He patted my head and led the way out of the room. "Come on, Kerry, we shan't be late now, shall we?"

"No, we shan't." I followed him out of the room. We really weren't lovebirds. Sure, we were best friends, but there was no weird "sexual tension" between us or anything. We just liked each other as friends and nothing more.

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY!" everyone cried as I made my way down the steps into the basement. I looked around the room. Balloons and streamers covered every available wall, and confetti had been enchanted to fall from the ceiling every so often. And everything was decorated in my two favorite colors, pink and green.

"Thanks, guys!" I cheered over the loud pulsing music of the Wireless. I saw Farley and Annabelle dancing in the corner of the room while Klaus was teasing Princeton and Greg on the other side of the room. Kimberly was getting some punch from the food table with Maverick, and Tally, Humphrey, and Penelope were all conversing together. They greeted me as I made my way towards them.

"Where are the teachers?" I asked them as I strode up to them.

"Gone," Penelope answered simply.

"What do you mean, 'gone'?"

Tally rolled her eyes at Penelope. "They're all upstairs. Some sort of secret meeting for the New Order, or something," She took a sip of her drink, holding her pinky straight up in the air as she did, the sign of a sophisticated girl who knew what she was talking about. The daughter of Viktor and Gabrielle Krum, she's only thirteen, but she's a girl who knows what she's after in life. Her mother died in childbirth, but her father hangs around the school a lot and is always there for her. She's a spoilt little thing and a daddy's girl.

"Something new come up?" I asked. "On my birthday?"

Tally shook her head, her long blonde hair falling into her eyes. "They won't tell us. I tried to interrogate them all when Tonks came back today, but she wouldn't tell me a thing."

I gritted my teeth. All eleven of us hated being kept out of the loop. Sometimes the teachers and adults wouldn't tell us anything, even though we all thought it was best if we were in the know. We needed to know what was happening, so we could prepare ourselves. Right?

Kimberly pulled me away from Tally and started to chatter away about something she had read recently. Kimberly Finnegan is fifteen as well, daughter of Seamus and Cho Finnegan. Ever since their deaths in 2010 and 2014, respectively, she's gotten quiet, although she hasn't completely retreated into a shell, as Humphrey has. We're pretty close.

"Princeton, come now, what are you doing?" Annabelle yelled at the youngest of our group as he came flying down the stairs and traipsed around the room in a maroon dress. I turned to find Maverick and Greg laughing in a corner.

"Apparently Maverick bet Princeton three Galleons he wouldn't come to the party in that dress," Klaus sidled up to me and muttered under his breath.

"I'm amazed they got him to do it," I replied. But then again, maybe I shouldn't have been amazed. It was, after all, Maverick Weasley we were talking about. Maverick Weasley, son of Fred and Frederica Weasley, and mischief maker extraordinaire. He's the spitting image of his father, and another one of my good friends.

"You have to admit that it's pretty funny." We watched as Annabelle tried to catch Princeton as he ran around the room, singing the song on the Wireless at the top of his lungs. Annabelle, daughter of Bill and Fleur, thinks she's so high and mighty just because she's seventeen and oldest girl. She's always trying to act prim and proper and reprimand all of us when we misbehave, but for the most part we ignore her.

I laughed and Klaus smiled at me, standing up straight.

"Care to dance?" he asked as the current song changed to a slower one and Annabelle finally caught Princeton and tore the dress off him, demanding he change into something more suitable.

"Sure..." We made our way out onto the dance floor, which for our purposes was just the other side of the room. I wrapped my arms around his neck and leaned my head on his shoulder while he wrapped his arms around my waist and held me close to him.

We swayed back and forth to the music slowly. I closed my eyes and just stood there in his arms. I could feel the rest of the room's eyes upon us.

That's when it all went to hell.

"Everyone ... HIDE!" McGonagall came flying down the steps leading to the basement like a bat out of hell.

"They've found us!" Her hair was flying away from underneath her hat, a startling difference from the tight bun she almost always wore in it. "Quick ... hide!" She grabbed the two youngest, Penelope and Princeton, and ran towards the back of the room.

"What ... what's happening?" I cried, jumping out of Klaus' arms and looking to McGonagall for directions.

"You-Know-Who!" she whispered. "He's found us!"

Klaus and I exchanged glances and ran toward the back window, which was enchanted to look like a real window, despite the fact that we were situated several hundred feet underground. If one was to push on it, it would flip up, revealing a secret underground passageway that, after a few miles, led up, outside of Bristol, to the middle of a neglected farm near an old willow tree.

I motioned to the rest of the kids. "Follow us, guys!"

Klaus leapt through the window and helped me through, then he reached out a hand to help the rest of them. Maverick jumped through, ignoring Klaus's outstretched hands, and jumped away from the window as if it were on fire. He started to run down the passageway.

"Don't go too far, Maverick!" I called as his footsteps became farther and farther away.

Greg and Humphrey were next, coming in through the window as fast as they could. Then I helped them stand up, and I showed them where to go. "Get going that way!" I pointed toward the passageway, which was very dark and led straight down for as far as the eye could see.

Annabelle lifted up Penelope and Tally before climbing up herself. They all fell into a heap right inside the window, clumping up and holding onto each other and crying hysterically.

"Guys, don't cry!" I tried to comfort them as Klaus helped Princeton and Farley up through the window. "Shh, it's okay, but you need to be quiet before they find us here!" That shut them up rather quickly. They all cuddled together, still weeping silently.

Farley used his strong arms to close the window, and locking it tightly from our side. "That should keep them out," he whispered to Klaus and me.

"Let me in, let me in too!" A loud banging could be heard from the other side of the window.

"Shit! McGonagall!" Klaus slapped his forehead with his hand and knelt back down beside the window to unlock it, but Farley pushed his hands out of the way.

"Listen!" Farley cried.

And then we could all hear it: the sounds of footsteps coming down the basement steps.

"Ah, ha!" We heard someone cry, presumably a Death Eater.

"Minerva, how nice to see you..." a sly voice said.

"H-hello." Her voice shook slightly as she spoke. "What do I owe this pleasure?"

"Where are the children?" the first voice spoke again.

"Children? What children?" Her voice gained some strength, and she moved away from the window leading to us.

"Don't play stupid with us, wench!" the second voice rasped. "We know they were here just moments ago. Where've they gone?"

"I don't ... I don't know what you're talking about ... there are no-no children here..." Her voice lowered and faltered as she spoke, and Klaus and I glanced at each other quickly. We thought we knew what would happen next.

"Dispose of her," the second voice rasped before heading back up the stairs.

"*AVADA KEDAVRA!*" Through the crack of the window, we saw a flash of green light and heard the sound of a body falling to the ground hard.

The first Death Eater cackled a few times before spitting like a savage and heading back up the stairs.

We all sat, holding our breath in silence for a few moments, while we heard the rest of the Death Eaters rampaging around upstairs, looking for us and other things to destroy.

When the sounds finally quieted down up there, we all let out our breath and turned to face each other. The looks on everyone else's faces were mixtures of horror and

fright that I'll never forget, but Penelope, with a tear-streaked face, summed it up best:

"*What* are we going to do?"

The Necklace

Chapter 2 of 4

With the realization that everyone they knew and loved has died, Kerry and the children must pick up the pieces of their lives and find a way to move on.

I don't know how long the eleven of us waited there in the tunnel. Minutes? Hours? Days? It felt like forever.

When Klaus finally deemed it safe, when we heard no more noise from above, he whispered to Farley and I, "I'm going upstairs to check it out. If I'm not back in ten minutes, follow the tunnel down, find a way out, and don't look back."

We nodded and he silently slipped out of the passageway and into the darkness of the basement.

A minute later, Penelope softly began to cry.

"Shut her up!" Farley demanded of Annabelle. Annabelle took Penelope onto her lap as if she were a small child and started to rock her back and forth to shush her, muttering comforting words all the while.

A small hand tapped me on the back, and I turned around to face Princeton.

"Kerry, I'm scared," he whispered in his small, little-boy voice.

"You have to be brave, Princeton. I know you're scared; we all are."

"Even you?" he asked, his eyes wide.

I nodded. "Even me." I took his hand, and we sat quietly in the darkness for a few moments longer. Someone coughed, and I could feel Farley growing anxious beside me.

We sat there for quite a long time. I grew impatient myself. What if something had happened to Klaus? I'd never forgive myself for letting him go out there alone.

Finally, when it had been about half an hour, Farley insisted that we couldn't stay there any longer.

"If he'd have found something, he would have come and got us! They must have still been up there when he went up, and they caught him and now he's dead."

"No! He wouldn't have just gone like that he would have been careful. You're ridiculous, we have to wait for him!"

"I'm not waiting, and I'm taking the children with me." He grabbed Tally and Humphrey roughly and pushed them down the rest of the path, bent-over to avoid hitting his head. Humphrey cried out in pain as he did so.

"You're hurting him! Let go of my brother, Farley. You're not taking him!"

"Yes I am! I'm going to save all of you by taking you out!" He motioned for Annabelle to stand up, and she did, with Penelope still in her arms. They huddled close together, and Maverick and I looked at each other hopelessly. I knew he wouldn't leave me, but I couldn't really stop the others from leaving.

They started to move down the tunnel, but they didn't get very far when we heard a faint cry from outside.

"Kerry! Come out, quickly!"

Immediately Farley turned and ran back to where I was standing. "Did you hear that?" he asked.

I nodded and reached a hand out to open the secret door to find Klaus peering in at me.

"Come on, follow me!"

"What is it?" I asked as I jumped down through the hole.

"It's Trelawney; she's well, I don't know if she's going to just follow me!" He led me through the basement and up the stairs. The others were close behind.

"Avoid looking at anything directly," he called behind me. "Everyone is " He didn't bother to finish the sentence.

We went through our dining area and music room, past a few bodies, and I felt my stomach churning. The horrific thought of it all that it had happened only a mere hour ago was more than I could stand.

When we passed Viktor Krum's body, it was more than my heart could take to hear Tally's cry of surprise, and then her pitiful sobbing as she realized she was now an orphan.

I heard the toll it was taking on the others as well. As we passed through each room, gasps of shock and horror at the damage the Death Eaters had done rang through my ears. Annabelle shrieked at the sight of the strewn bodies and nearly fell backward; luckily Maverick was there to catch her and help her back to her feet. Penelope's hand flew to her mouth, and for a moment I was sure she was going to be sick, but I ushered her along and we got past it.

We managed to continue up another flight of stairs to one of the more remote bedrooms, the empty ones no one used. He guided all of us inside, and we formed a circle around Madam Trelawney's body.

She wasn't looking so good. She had collapsed on the floor, beside the bed, and she was breathing hard. Her clothes had been torn, her hair was in disarray, and her eyes were unable to focus. It seemed the effort of staying alive was more than she could take.

"Children. Children. I'm the last alive, am I? Everyone else is gone, aren't they?" She managed to sputter, looking pitiful as she did so.

Klaus nodded solemnly at her.

"I knew it. I knew I would be. I heard them coming, and I just knew I should hide so they wouldn't find me, but they did anyway!" She started to cough violently, and I held her shoulder to keep her steady. "The curse they put on me is working fast. Spreading through my body. I'll be dead soon."

Penelope started to cry again, and Farley told her roughly to be quiet.

"I don't have any strength left, or else I'd get it for you, but children. Get the necklace. The necklace is what you need."

"Necklace? What necklace?"

"The necklace. Get the oh dear, Minerva must have had it today, you go and check her but then again, I just don't know " Her eyes rolled into the back of her head, and she stopped breathing for a second.

"Trelawney! You have to wake up tell us what necklace!"

"Children... just... get the necklace. Oh, my dear boy... my dear boy!" She grabbed Klaus by the scruff of his shirt and shook him. "You aren't misbehaving in school, are you now, Timmy? You stop that. Be good."

Klaus shook himself out of her grip. "She must be hallucinating... Trelawney, come on, snap out of it, you have to tell us what necklace you're talking about. It's me, Klaus, not Timmy, tell us what necklace we have to get!"

"It'll just the necklace OH GOD!" She grabbed her chest and without another word fell backward to the floor, lying there motionless.

I kneeled there, looking at her, completely shocked at her sudden departure from this world. I felt the tears burn behind my eyes, and that's when I realized the hopelessness of it all. Our entire world had come crashing down, and I hadn't realized it until I saw the effects of the Death Eaters work right in front of me until I saw this helpless woman die at another's cruel hand.

It took a moment, but slowly, ever so slowly, each one of us began to open up and cry. The boys tried to comfort us, but one could see they were trying their hardest not to.

After a few moments of lamenting, Klaus took a bedsheet and covered Madam Trelawney's body with it.

Farley, wiping his eyes on his sleeve, took charge of the situation. "Alright, what with this just happening " He stopped, took a breath, and began again, his voice rougher and edgier, now that we was sure he wasn't about to cry. "Obviously this old bat was crazy"

"Don't talk about her like that!" Tally screamed and hurled herself at him, beating him with her fists. Klaus was fast to stop her, but she didn't stop struggling in his arms.

"Everyone's dead, and you just talk about Madam Trelawney like like it's nothing! Everyone's *dead!*" With one last cry, she stopped struggling and just lay there in Klaus' arms, sobbing hysterically.

"She didn't know what she was talking about!" Farley defended himself. "I think we should clean up, and and take all the bodies away, and then move to a different spot where someone won't be able to find us. It's now too dangerous to be here, now that the Death Eaters can find us and everything "

Klaus interrupted him. "Aren't we going to look for the necklace?"

"What good would the necklace do?"

Klaus stroked Tally's hair back away from her face as she sobbed into his shoulder. "I don't know, but it was obviously important if Trelawney, on her deathbed, found it most important to tell us to find it!"

"Look, she was just a crazy old bat; that's why they only put her in charge of mixing the mashed potatoes. Why the hell should we listen to anything she has to say?"

"Why don't we just give it a try, Farley?" I pleaded with him. "Maybe it's nothing... but then again, maybe there is something to it... It wouldn't hurt just to give it a chance."

He glared at me but finally agreed. We all traipsed back downstairs to where Professor McGonagall lay on the floor in the basement, cold and unmoving. Trying to avoid crying again, Annabelle took the four youngest children away to the corner to play a game, a feeble attempt to keep their minds off all the destruction and death in the house, while the remaining six of us stripped Professor McGonagall's body and looked through everything for a necklace of some sort.

After a half hour's worth of searching, we came up empty-handed. We had gone through everything short of taking off her undergarments, which would have been disgusting, but had still found nothing.

"This is useless. I told you there was no necklace. Trelawney was just hallucinating. Maybe she had thought of when she was younger, and hopefully better looking, and she had had a necklace, or something."

"But she said that Professor McGonagall must have had it today, meaning the teachers probably switched it around, always giving it to somebody else, so no one would find it. That suggests it's pretty important," Kimberly argued. She pulled her hair into a tight bun, a sign that she was thinking hard. "Maybe someone else had it."

"Why wouldn't the teachers have told us about it? If it was so important, why not mention it at some point or another? Did they think they were all going to be around forever?" Farley paced back and forth over the hardwood floor, running a hand through his hair and looking slightly crazed.

"No, they didn't think that, but probably they figured if less people knew about it then it'd have less of a chance to 'accidentally' slip out and the Death Eaters would know."

"Why wouldn't they have just told us? This is useless. I think we should just give up and go."

"Farley, stop being such a pessimist."

"Where else are we going to look?!?" he snapped at me. "There was nothing on her person what else do we do?"

"Hey, guys, I found something," Maverick called, pulling on her jacket.

Klaus and I hurried to kneel beside him. "What is it?"

"It was sewn into her jacket sleeve... It's a piece of paper... but I can't get it out."

"A piece of paper... right. How helpful! It's probably a note for some recipe of McGonagall's Great Grandma Fifi's best chicken casserole or something," Farley grumbled as we tore it out.

Klaus held the paper in his hand. "One-sixty-nine," he read.

I frowned at it. "One-sixty-nine? That's all it says?"

Klaus nodded.

"What does that have to do with anything?" Kimberly asked.

We all shrugged.

"It could go to anything! How useless."

"Farley, stop it. We have to find out what this goes to and soon."

* * * * *

We all went to sleep heavy-hearted that night. We hadn't figured out what 'one-sixty-nine' meant, nor had we the energy to clean up the disaster area the Death Eaters had left for us. We fell asleep in the same room, too scared to part from each other for even a moment, and Farley was supposed to be keeping watch, but when I woke up the next morning, he was fast asleep.

I shook my head and smiled at his simplicity, the dolt. I checked on everyone in the room; everyone was sleeping soundly as if nothing would disturb them. I headed downstairs for a glass of water.

I've always been a light sleeper. Usually the slightest noise during the night can awake me, which is really a curse, considering the Burrow is nearly always creaky and making noises. I usually wake up of my own accord anyway around half-past five every morning, just in time to see the sunrise.

In my opinion, the world is prettiest and most at peace just as the sun peaks over the horizon, keeping watch over all of nature, and nothing is awake just yet. Maybe the earliest chirp of a bird here or there, but other than that, just peaceful silence. It's my utopia.

To my distaste, I found in the kitchen that the Death Eaters had smashed all of our best silverware and dinnerware, leaving me with nothing to drink out of but an untouched vase I found in the music room.

I emptied the vase of its previous occupant, a dying flower, and washed it out thoroughly, making sure it contained no residue before I filled it with clear water. I was just thankful they hadn't smashed or dried out the well while they were here.

After getting my fill of water, I decided to take a short walk around the grounds of the building. It was a gorgeous morning, and I wanted to take advantage of it.

After putting on a light jacket and my shoes, I ventured outside. The smell of dew on the lawn and the sensation of the bright morning sun on my face helped me forget all the problems inside the house; all the lost parents and friends, the mourning children, the disaster the Death Eaters left, and most importantly, the significance of the necklace.

My pace slowed to a slow stroll as my mind raced over what I knew about it.

Well, it's important... but that means next to nothing!

Then I remembered that Trelawney said that they switch it around.

What could be so important that they'd need to switch it around? What could 'one-sixty-nine' be for?

I was still thinking hard when I heard screams from inside. I took off for the house, thinking the worst had happened.

I ran in the door, threw off my jacket, and bolted up the stairs into the room where they had all been sleeping.

"Maverick! What are you doing?"

Maverick was sitting on top of Princeton, tickling him all over his body. Princeton was shouting at him to stop, but still laughing uncontrollably.

"Stop it, Maverick, I mean it!" I cried at him over Princeton's own cries.

Maverick looked up at me, rolled his eyes, and fell over backward, landing on the ground away from Princeton. Princeton got up slowly, holding his stomach and moaning like a baby.

"Oh, stop it, he didn't hurt you that badly," I remarked.

"He's wounded me! I'm dying!" Princeton began to fake a slow and painful death, as boys are prone to do. Maverick began to pretend to whack him over the head repeatedly with some pretend heavy object, and Princeton fell to the ground and continued his death charade.

"Boys!" I shouted, completely angered over their unwise decision to joke about death, especially considering the present circumstances and the fact that the rest of the kids were just gently stirring now.

Princeton realized what he was doing and immediately his face fell. Feeling ashamed of himself, he turned away from me and began speaking with Kimberly to avoid further embarrassment.

Maverick, on the other hand, scowled at me.

"We're just having a bit of fun!" He took a step closer to me and stood up straight, showing off all six feet of his height.

"Maverick, I'm older than you," I boasted.

"Yeah? You're also about a foot shorter."

"I am not! I'm only a couple inches shorter."

"A couple inches? Try a foot and a half!"

"I'm only eight inches shorter than you, but I could still probably beat you up."

"Stop that ridiculous nonsense!" Annabelle called from the other side of the room.

"Or what?" we snapped in unison as we both turned to glare at her. Everyone laughed.

We stopped fighting, and by this time everyone else had awoken and was complaining that they were hungry. Kimberly and Greg headed to the kitchen to scrounge up something for us, and before too long, they had fixed up a meager meal, which would, at least, subdue us for a while.

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When we finished eating what little food we had left, we sat around the undestroyed kitchen table and discussed what to do.

"We still don't know what the 'one-sixty-nine' goes to or if it even goes to anything at all!" Farley said.

"Don't be thick. It has to go to something. I want to find that necklace "

"Don't start on about that necklace business again! This is just ridiculous. There was no necklace, even from the start, I'll bet."

"Farley, hasn't anything been able to penetrate your incredibly thick head? There IS a necklace, there absolutely has to be, so be quiet and let the rest of us talk."

"If you can remember, I'm the oldest here, and that should give me seniority, and I should be the one making decisions "

"But we're not going to listen to your decisions if your decisions are UTTER CRAP." At Greg's outburst, Farley pounded his fist on the table and got up and began to pace, completely frustrated.

"Look," Annabelle said with an air of superiority, as though whatever she said was going to be taken as law. "Why don't we all just think about what it is, and then if we have any ideas, we'll investigate them, and maybe we'll come up with nothing, and maybe we'll come up with something,"

That left them silent and wondering.

After a moment of speaking, Klaus spoke up. "Wouldn't it have to be a combination of some sort?"

I agreed, the idea forming in my mind. "Yes, or the number to a vault, or something, right?"

The thought lodged in all our minds at the same time.

"Gringotts!"

Jack & Gringotts

Chapter 3 of 4

In 1997, Voldemort defeated Harry Potter.
In 1998, the whole world went to hell.

In 2017, Voldemort destroys the New Order, prompting eleven children to take Voldemort on themselves.

After we had all agreed Gringotts would be the most logical place to look for the necklace, we had a huge argument about who would go. All of the oldest wanted to go, claiming they were the most knowledgeable and able to defend themselves, while the youngest wanted to go as well, saying they never got to do anything, and it wasn't like they were complete idiots; they knew how to fight and would do a good job as well.

As it turned out, we ended up taking everyone.

All eleven of us packed into Farley's magic car, which flew... when provoked enough.

"It was a present from Mrs. Weasley," he boasted, referring to the eldest of the Weasley clan, "Knowing how interested I was in Muggle affairs, she gave it to me for my 15th birthday, saying it had been Mr. Weasley's some time ago."

Remembering a story I had once heard tell of, I said, "Didn't Mr. Weasley's car disappear into a forest of some sort?"

"Yes, but that was a different car. This one is newer, and a lot better." He slapped the hood of the car, and the windshield wiper broke and slid down the hood to the ground. We all stifled a laugh as he glared at us before fixing it with his wand. "Well it runs, which is all that matters."

With an enlargement charm, the eleven of us all managed to squeeze in comfortably, with Klaus and I fitting in the front passenger seat together and everyone else in the back. Farley seated himself in the driver's seat and turned around to look at them all seated in the back.

"Everyone ready?"

"Yes," they all chimed.

"Alright, then! Off we go!" He fumbled with the keys for a moment before getting the engine turned on. He flipped a switch and we rose into the air unsteadily. I held onto Klaus for dear life, and we looked at each other with a hint of fear in our eyes, hoping we hadn't made a wrong decision by having Farley drive us.

"Yes. Then." He pulled a knob on the dashboard and everything disappeared, including us. A few of the kids let out a shrill shrieks, not expecting it. I clung to the invisible Klaus tightly as the car started to move slowly upward and forward.

"We're really moving now!" Farley yelled as we started to pick up speed. Within a moment we were zooming along the clouds, passing out of our neighborhood within seconds.

Suddenly I felt a hand tug on my shirt, almost near my chest, and then brush my breast suddenly.

"Sorry," Klaus said beside me, "I can't see anything, you know." I could tell from his tone it hadn't been accidental at all.

"A likely story," I teased.

He shrugged, our shoulders bumping, and I could tell he had a stupid grin on his face.

We made it to London in a little under an hour, but it took us much longer to just find a safe place to park. Farley couldn't decide on a place where no Muggles... or wizards, for that matter, would see us, but we finally decided upon an abandoned street a few blocks away from Gringotts.

We landed roughly, bumping all of our heads on the roof in the process. Farley, however, seemed extremely pleased with himself as we got out.

"What a ride, eh?" he said, once more patting the car on the roof, as if it was a small boy deserving praise instead of a clunky old car that had barely made it to its destination.

"Oh, yeah, what a ride," Klaus said sarcastically, rubbing his neck as he stretched.

Farley narrowed his eyes at Klaus, realizing he was being made fun of. "Let's get going, shall we?"

We hurried along the deserted streets until we got to the bank.

Gringotts had stood empty for years. After the Ministry Massacre, everyone had rushed to empty their life savings out of their vaults, and then it had been abandoned. It stood desolate, a reminder of the magic community's former glory.

The once splendid structure had degenerated into a forlorn-looking, crummy edifice, where only the bravest would venture on a dare from one of their so-called friends.

The street outside was teeming with all variety of creepy citizens, mostly wizards broken, drunk, and stoned. There were even goblins around, the creatures that had once run the place, but even they seemed afraid of it, frightened of what might lurk inside.

We managed to find a somewhat decent-looking fellow and persuade him to accompany us inside... after a small amount of money changed hands. He introduced himself as Jack, and we told him we were looking for vault one-sixty-nine, and he immediately led us to a magic underground cart that would take us there.

"Get in," he commanded. He rubbed at his nose, which suggested a cocaine problem. I made a face at our choice of cart-riding buddy, but we all followed his order anyway, even though the cart was barely big enough to hold all of us.

He hopped in after us and pulled a lever. The cart shot forward in the dark, and I let out a scream as we dipped and dropped on the small metal track.

Jack lit a lantern and held it above our heads, smiling at me with what few teeth he had left.

"You're a pretty little thing" He said, reaching out a hand to touch my face.

I shuddered and pulled away. Klaus glared at him disdainfully before pushing Jack's hand away.

"She's not interested, thanks."

"What a cheeky little boyfriend you've got there!" he said, glaring at Klaus and reaching out to slap his face. Klaus turned his head and slapped Jack's hand away, a warning that he shouldn't mess with us.

"He's not my boyfriend," I replied, "But I'd take him over you any day." I glanced at the rest of the people in the boat. "Hell, I'd take Annabelle over you."

Klaus held back a laugh and Jack glared at me as Annabelle looked over at me to see what the commotion was all about.

Jack, clearly agitated, spoke no more until we reached vault one-sixty-nine. As I stepped out of the cart, the land underneath me seemed to shake.

"How far underground are we?" I questioned.

He spit out of the side of his mouth. "Bout six kilometers below the surface."

Maverick whistled and Penelope gasped audibly.

Jack looked at her, one eyebrow raised.

She stuttered as she responded, "I that's a long way."

He nodded swiftly and led the short way from the cart to where the vault was located. He made a sweeping gesture towards it, and all of us looked at it hesitantly.

I voiced what we were all were thinking. "Do you have the key to get in?"

He looked at me like I had three heads.

"Are you crazy? Why in the name of Godric would I have a key?"

"How are we supposed to get in there?" Kimberly asked, looking concerned.

"Damned if I know!" he shouted, quite irritated. "I was paid to take you down here, not open your damn vault for you!" He spit on the ground again and turned back to the cart to wait for us. He crossed his arms over his chest and sat there, staring at me blankly.

Farley rolled his eyes and sighed. "So how are we supposed to get in there?"

"Wouldn't the metal be rusted after all these years?" Princeton dared ask.

Jack snorted from over by the cart. "Doubt it. And there were curses placed by the goblins on those vaults, so that whoever should touch them will be sucked inside and not found for quite a while. But now that's it not maintained obviously there wouldn't be any checking if anyone was inside, now would there?" He sniggered, as if he had told some enormously funny joke.

Tally pushed Maverick forward and he stumbled, almost falling into the metal door.

"Try and open it," Kimberly said.

"With what? I'm not going to touch it!" He put his hands on his hips and glared at all of us. He looked around and found nearby a lead pipe, covered in some sticky substance that none of us wanted to think about. He picked it up with a look of distaste and slowly made his way over to the foreboding door.

With a cry, he flung the pipe at the door and jumped backward. We were all surprised to find the pipe wasn't sucked in. On the contrary, it hit the door firmly with a loud clanging noise and fell to the ground, as if it was a normal door.

Maverick picked up the pipe, finding it still intact, and this time touched the door with it in hand. He still wasn't sucked in.

With everyone holding their breaths, he reached out with the slightest tip of his finger and touched the door. We all gasped as he did so, but to our relief, he didn't disappear. He stood there as solidly as ever, a frown on his handsome face.

"Well, that makes things a lot easier!" Klaus said happily beside me. He walked up, completely unafraid, and pushed on the door with both hands. It didn't budge. "I suppose the goblin magic wore off over the years..." he said, more to himself than to us.

"So how are we supposed to open it?" Annabelle asked pessimistically.

"We're going to knock it down," he declared emphatically.

* * * * *

That's how we found ourselves, all eleven of us, as well as Klaus' helpful persuasion of employing Jack, pushing against the metal door with all our might. And as luck would have it, after several minutes of all our weight against it, the entire door gave away, collapsing to the ground beyond the doorframe. We all peered in anxiously to see what treasures awaited us.

It was empty.

"How could this be?" Klaus cried, throwing his hands up in anger. "The necklace was supposed to be in here!"

Farley stood smugly waiting by the cart, his arms folded over his chest, watching the rest of us with a superior expression, as if he knew all along that there would be nothing there.

"What if someone got it before us?" Greg asked, his voice barely above a whisper for fear some unseen force would hear us. I understand the tension you're trying to convey, but they probably just made a whole lot of noise breaking down a metal door, so perhaps this should be re-phrased.

"I don't think so. Maybe it wasn't ever in there to begin with. Maybe that was a decoy of some sort."

Klaus went off into a rant about how he was never wrong, but I was distracted by Humphrey nudging my side.

"Can I see the piece of paper?" he asked out of the side of his mouth.

I nodded and quietly handed it to him. He took it from me and examined it thoroughly.

"And now we've wasted all this time, and for nothing. I'm so disappointed in "

"Hey, wait!" Humphrey said, interrupting Klaus' painfully boring monologue. "Might you have all had it upside-down?"

Klaus and I went to Humphrey's side to see the slip of paper. He showed us the 'one-sixty-nine' side, and then turned it around so it read, 'six-ninety-one'.

Klaus and I looked at each other. It was painstakingly obvious that we had just read it wrong.

"Er alright, back in the cart, we're going to vault six-ninety-one. We all hopped back in the cart; Annabelle and Farley grumbling about wild goose chases all the while.

We made it to vault six-ninety-one in no time and used the same procedure as before. Maverick brought along his lead pipe, touched the door, and it didn't suck him in, so we once again used our weight as our friend and managed to crush the door, knocking it to the floor.

Only this time we were very much excited to find a special necklace lying on a pedestal just inside the door.

An Examination

Chapter 4 of 4

In 1997, Voldemort defeated Harry Potter.

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Klaus took a step inside the door and grabbed the necklace off the pedestal where it was laying. He held it up to the light of Jack's lantern so we could see it more clearly.

"That is the shittiest thing I've ever seen in my entire life," Maverick said simply. He turned on his heels and went back to wait near the cart.

"That's it?" Farley cried, taking another quick look inside the vault. "Where's the rest of it?" He peered at it closely, as if hoping it would do a trick for him.

"I guess this is it," Klaus said, turning it over in his hands.

It was about twenty-two inches long, long enough to hang off your neck and down your chest. It was made entirely of rough, little black rocks that had been strung on a piece of gold chain. In the very middle of the necklace, encased in one of the rocks, was a small blue stone about the size of my smallest fingernail.

Klaus held it out to me, and I took it from him to examine it for myself.

"Well, it has to do something if it's that ugly," Tally said logically. She turned her head to the side and squinted her eyes to get a better look at it.

We all agreed it must have some magical power, and I held it out in front of me, holding my nose with my other hand as I did. The air was so old and dank underground, I could barely breathe. Not to mention it was cold as a tomb. I could feel myself shivering through my thin robes. I let go of my nose and started to rub my shoulders to regain some warmth in them. Klaus glared at me, and I held the necklace up.

We watched with bated breath as Klaus got out his wand and tapped it lightly, hoping it would show us if it had any powers.

It didn't do anything. Klaus frowned, thinking maybe he had done something wrong.

"Necklace, do something!" he commanded it. The necklace did nothing.

Penelope giggled at his futile attempt, and he glared at her, thinking she was mocking him. She gave him a shy glance and moved behind Annabelle to hide herself.

I put the necklace around my neck and shook it at Annabelle. She jumped back in surprise, almost crushing Penelope, and the rest of them laughed, but nothing else

happened out of the ordinary.

I rubbed the blue stone and pinched it between two fingers, hoping perhaps there was some kind of latch I needed to catch, but felt nothing. I thought there had to be something we were missing, so I took each of the rocks in my hand and looked at each one closely, but they were all very similar and all very boring.

"What could its powers be? What could it possibly do?" Humphrey asked, looking confusedly at it. "It looks so... plain."

"And boring?" I added. He nodded.

"Maybe... maybe it doesn't do anything," Greg suggested. "Maybe it's just valuable, or something." He heaved a sigh, as if in pain.

"Why would they care so much about a valuable necklace?" Tally asked. "It's not like the New Order was poor or anything."

"Maybe they all knew they were going to die sometime, and when the time came, we'd need money." Greg scratched his head, deep in thought. "Should we get an appraisal?"

"An appraisal!" Farley threw his hands in the air, signaling his utmost displeasure with this necklace. "This is disappointing, and a complete waste of my time," Farley said, staring me down as I played with the necklace. "Aren't you hooligans ready to go yet?" He had made his way back over to the cart and was standing there waiting with Maverick.

I glanced at Klaus for his opinion of the situation, and I noticed his eyes soften, as if he felt bad for me. I straightened up and marched over to the cart, holding the necklace firmly in one hand.

"I think there is something special about this necklace. We've just got to find out what!"

The rest of them all tramped over to get back in the cart and begin the journey back up above ground, and I noticed with some satisfaction that as Klaus brushed by Farley, he did it just a bit more roughly than he needed to. I shot him an appreciate glance, and he grinned.

I noticed Jack eyeing the necklace hanging around my neck as I sat down between Klaus and him. I fingered the necklace carefully, wondering if I'd have to stuff it in my pocket to keep it out of Jack's reach. He did seem like the dodgy type, after all.

"What is that?" he asked, pointing at it with one dirty finger. He reached out to take it from me, but I moved away. I didn't want him to take it from me. It had to stay in my possession at all times, or else who knows? Even if it wasn't valuable, it still might have hidden powers, and I didn't want Jack getting a hold of it.

I shook my head. "We don't know. Have you ever seen anything like it before?" I gently held it out a bit more for him to see, but then I noticed Farley glaring a warning at me, and I pulled it back away, looking abashed.

Jack grunted at my movement and turned away, which I took as a no.

The rest of the time going back up was spent between Farley and Klaus arguing. Farley kept saying it had been a wild goose chase, and the necklace was of no value at all, and Klaus kept telling him he was ridiculously stupid, and someone should beat him up. Maverick offered, but Annabelle held him back.

By the time we reached above ground again, I was sick of hearing them argue about it, and I gave the necklace to Greg and told him to be careful with it. He assured me he wouldn't let it out of his sight, and he and Princeton and Humphrey went off to play with it and see what they could find out.

Jack held out his hand to me as the rest of them stood up there deciding what to do, and I slapped him a high-five, thinking that's what he wanted.

He glared at me, as if I was stupid.

"No, you wench, I want money!"

"Money? -- We already paid you!" I turned away from him, to run back to the car, but Jack pulled my arm back so I was once again facing him.

"I want the rest!" he snarled.

"The rest of what? You asked for five Sickles, and that's what we gave you."

"I meant five Galleons."

"Five Galleons? Hell no!" Farley yelled from the other end of the street where he was arguing with Annabelle and Maverick.

Jack didn't even glance up from my face. "What don't have any money? Then perhaps something else can be arranged..." He glanced down at my chest and licked his lips as he spoke.

"No, you pervert, leave me alone!" I pushed him, and he stumbled backward a foot or two. I turned to follow the others back to the car but he stepped in front of me and grabbed my arm.

"No one says 'no' to me," he growled threateningly, standing up straight to make the most of his height.

"Yeah? I think I just did, you piss-head tosser!"

The quizzical look that crossed his face for a split second was almost enough to make me laugh out loud; but I held it in, for my sake.

He grabbed the collar of my robe and started to shake me, demanding more money.

"If you don't give it to me right now "

I screamed and kneed him in the crotch. He dropped me roughly and fell to the ground, wheezing in pain. I started to sprint away, and Maverick and Klaus came running over to see what all the commotion was about.

"The little jerk tried to take advantage of me," I was breathing hard as I made a face at the thought of it. Maverick looked at Jack in disgust while Klaus stomped off toward him. He seized Jack's robes and pulled him up so they were eye level.

"No," Klaus said firmly and sent Jack sprawling backwards into a mud puddle with a punch to his right eye. Jack cursed and brought a hand to his eye, which was already beginning to swell.

Klaus brushed his shoulder off and came marching back.

"Close your mouths and stop drooling over me," he told us as he passed by, looking proud as a peacock.

"Well aren't YOU the muscular one!" I finally said, still amazed at Klaus' breath-taking act. The three of us headed over to the car, still talking about it, leaving Jack alone in the puddle to wonder where he had gone wrong.

"Oh, SHIT." was the first thing we heard when we got back to the car. Farley was shaking his fist in the air, silently mouthing obscenities to himself. Everyone else was looking on, realizing they shouldn't disturb him while he was so obviously in one of his rages.

"What's happened now?" I said, dismayed. Klaus and I joined Annabelle's side at the hood of the car. She was biting her lip and looking nervous.

"The car's not working!" Princeton cried happily from where he was perched on the roof of the car. Farley glared at him before turning back to Klaus and I.

"What did you do to break it?" I asked, putting my hands on my hips to confront him.

"I didn't do anything! I just came over and tried to put the key in, and it didn't work."

We turned to see what Klaus had to say.

"That sucks," Farley cried out in frustration. "What do we do, then?"

"Why don't we just spend the night here?"

"Because we are eleven kids out in the middle of some dark alley, and it is almost nine at night. Does that explain?"

"We'll sleep in the car."

"Yes, and get mugged!" Farley cried, quite aggravated.

"We won't get mugged."

"We don't have anything else to try. Maybe if we wait, in the morning the car will start. Maybe... something in it just needs to cool down, or something," Annabelle tried to reason with him, but she didn't know what she was talking about, obviously.

"Let's just sleep in the car, okay, Farley? Stop arguing. You're retarded, anyway." I turned from him and called to the rest of them. "Boys, get over here! What are you doing over there?"

Greg, Humphrey and Princeton came hurrying over from where they had been playing with the necklace halfway down the street.

"The car won't start," Annabelle explained patiently to the boys as they joined us.

"What do you want us to do about it?" Princeton asked, looking confused.

"Shouldn't we just sleep here overnight?" Tally asked, rolling her eyes at the stupidity of this entire situation.

I gave Farley a pleading look, and he finally shouted, "Yes! Fine! Whatever you want! Don't listen to anything I have to say!"

We all got back in the car and settled down in our previous seats, trying desperately to fall asleep so we'd have enough energy in the morning, if need be, to walk back. However, with all eleven of us crunched in there, there was no sleep to be found.

"Humphrey, stop poking me!"

"I don't have enough room, and you're bothering me."

"I can't help it you're right next to me!"

"Stop fiddling with that!"

"If you don't stop moving, I'll hex you!"

"The street light is bothering my eyes."

"Why can't we just go home?"

"I warned you "

"It's so cold here, too!"

"Dashing through the snow..."

"Petrificus Totalus!" Greg's voice rang out as he went to curse Humphrey. I frowned, turning round to unfreeze Humphrey, when I saw that he was still moving. I looked at him, surprised.

Greg looked down at his wand, as if it was the culprit.

"Why didn't it work?" he asked angrily. He raised his wand again. "Densaugeo!"

Humphrey flinched, but again nothing happened.

All of us stared blankly at Humphrey. He looked back at us weakly, shrugging sheepishly, as if he was sorry he wasn't being hexed.

"Why isn't..." I said, letting my sentence trail off.

"Are you doing anything to stop Greg from cursing you?" Annabelle asked Humphrey sharply.

He shrugged and shook his head.

"Maybe you're just stupid." Maverick said. He whipped out his own wand and aimed it at Humphrey.

"Furnunculus!"

Again, nothing happened.

We all sat there for a minute, staring at Humphrey as if he were a disease. We pondered, wondering what it could mean that nothing happened when we tried to curse him.

Princeton gasped.

"I know what it is!" he cried.

He reached out a hand and pulled something out from underneath Humphrey's robes.

The necklace.