

Lady Blood

by dragonwings

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Quote from a future chapter of Lady Blood.

What do you do when the bad guy's the good guy? When the lines blur between moral and survival? Harry, Ron, and Hermione are in the middle of the Second War, and when alliances with a vampire are forged, the struggle to find the right side emerges while the two sides clash.

Meet the Lady

Chapter 1 of 2

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Professor McGonagall paced nervously around her office. Harry, Hermione and Ron were due to arrive at any minute. She glanced briefly at the clock, and then continued her pacing. She had no idea that Albus' charge was so... *odd*. She had only met It once. And It had been unconscious. She strode over to her desk and reviewed the papers strewn over it. Minerva McGonagall was usually a strict, neat woman who prided herself on keeping her head in difficult situations, but this... *this* was too much.

She had thought that It was dead. That It had never existed, a mere myth. A story that was meant to be told by the fire with a cup of hot chocolate to keep the demons away. But the myth was real.

The myth was Victoria, Victoria Gelding.

Flashback

Minerva was grading papers in her office when she heard a familiar sharp knock. Albus, she thought as she scurried from her seat. But he's supposed to be in London. What on earth is he doing here? Brushing the thoughts from her mind, McGonagall tugged her robe straight and opened the door to admit the Headmaster.

"Albus, what a surprise, I didn't think to see you until—Oh my god, Albus! What is that?" she shrieked. Professor Dumbledore carried a limp body in his arms. He strode past her and deposited It, (Minerva didn't have a better name for whatever It was,) on the small couch by the fire.

"I have to go, Minerva; Harry needs me." And without further explanation, he ran from the room.

Professor McGonagall inched toward the unconscious form draped on her favorite chair and peered closely at the hood that covered Its face. Horrified, she backed away, desperate to put some space between her and It. It reeked of death and blood. It'll be gone soon; it'll be out of your office. Just pretend It isn't there. Minerva shivered.

When did the fire go out? *she wondered. She glanced involuntarily towards the chair where It lay. There was something wrong with It, and it wasn't just the fact that It seemed to be a corpse.*

End Flashback

Yes, Victoria Gelding was strange indeed.

Minerva quickly gathered the papers and filed them neatly away in a folder to peruse later.

She straightened up her desk and prepared for her appointment with the trio. She pursed her lips; they were late. But she couldn't blame them. The three were worn to the bone. Over the course of the past three months, they had searched tirelessly for the remaining Horcruxes, recovering not only Helga Hufflepuff's cup, but also Salazar Slytherin's locket. The all three had changed in one way or another, but their friendship had always shone through.

Minerva marveled at how Harry, Hermione and Ron had changed, but how their friendship had not. On the rare nights they spent at Grimmauld Place, they were always bright and encouraging, soothing worries and fears away with smiles.

Life was not all laughs and smiles though. Voldemort had hit hard on the wizarding community, and it was beginning to crumble. Diagon Alley had shut down and Gringott's had mysteriously disappeared. Prostitutes and dealers roamed the grubby and deserted streets. Shops went bankrupt; people disappeared, sometimes just children, but often now whole families would just vanish into thin air... And no one wondered where they went. There was a subdued atmosphere in every house; no one was safe from this war. The Ministry of Magic was a joke; people worried more about survival than breaking the law. It was a dark and gloomy age.

Minerva looked up at the sound of the loud rap on the door. "Come on in, Mr. Potter. I believe we have much to talk about."

An hour later, Harry, Ron and Hermione were relaxing in front of a roaring fire in the empty Gryffindor common room. Hermione stretched out like a cat on the plush rug.

"Who do you think it is that Prof—Minerva wants us to meet?" she asked sleepily.

"I dunno," shrugged Ron, slouched in his chair. "Could be anyone."

"We'll find out soon enough, won't we, Harry. Harry?" Hermione looked up from her spot on the floor, "Oh, look, he's asleep already. C'mon, Ron, let's get him to bed. We'll all sleep in your old dorm room tonight."

Levitating the sleeping Harry from his chair, Ron and Hermione made their way up to the dormitory and off to sleep.

A girl was perched on a castle spire, looking out onto the deserted Hogwarts grounds. A ragged scar ran down her right eyebrow and cheek, slicing through a ghostly glass eye swirling with mist. Her left eye glittered a venomous red as she surveyed the Forbidden Forrest. She was pale and wraith-like, insubstantial, and had an unhealthy look about her. Her white hair fell down to her ankles. Her thoughts were simple, animal-like. A simple need to obey and serve. She felt a need to kill, to hunt, to feed. But tonight, she must mourn. She flung herself off the tower and felt the wind envelope her. Without a second thought she was at the table. The great table. Master's Table. But Master was gone. Master had told her to stay behind, to stay hidden. There are bad people, he had told her. Bad people who want to hurt her. She didn't like being hurt. And Master's word was law. Master taught her the ways of all her people; he taught her compassion and love. She knew that she loved Master. But after tonight, there would be no more Master. Only the servant, free at last, but she would never be free. She knew what Master wanted her to do, what she *must* do. It had been very important to Master.

Flinging herself prostrate at Master's tomb, she began to change from wraith to wolf. She howled as she circled Master's tomb, at first slowly, then faster and faster. She felt the chains coming off; she felt herself breaking free. When the ceremony was complete, she made the change back. *Interesting*, she thought as she surveyed herself, *very interesting*.

She could think clearly now. Gone were the simple thoughts and needs. Gone was the slave, the animal, the servant. Here was the new power, the new knowledge, the new thirst. Temptation flooded her senses and nearly overwhelmed her. The sense of her hand on cool marble stopped her. Here lay her old Master, Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore. Her friend, mentor, teacher and savior. She would never forget the day he saved her. He thought that he had just saved her life, but in reality he had done so much more. All she had ever known was hate, cruelty, the thirst for power and knowledge. He had brought love, patience, kindness, and compassion into her life. He had shown her the light.

Only for her to be turned away.

She was evil. And she knew it.

To her, it was natural. To thirst for blood and power. To slay her foes and command slaves to do her bidding.

But to them, she was an abomination. A scar on the face of truth. She herself was not only ungodly, her creation was too. Her birth a new benchmark in the bowels of the Department of Mysteries. The first cauldron baby. A new type of fighting machine. Deadly and powerful, yet weakened to do their bidding. A hybrid of abomination and darkness.

But she didn't care.

To her the world could go only like this: A good person cannot do bad things intentionally. That makes them a bad person. A bad person may do good things intentionally, but that does not make him a good person.

There was no crossing over to the light for her. But she could try to do good things.

And that was the way it had always been with Victoria Gelding.

Meet VOID

Chapter 2 of 2

"When you're cursed with living until the end of time, it's not a curse; it's a blessing." Quote from a future chapter of Lady Blood.

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Victoria woke up early the next morning just as the sun was coming up. She got out of bed and stood on the cold, stone, dungeon floor. She raised her long, pale fingers and ran them slowly down her face. She was still weak; last night's pitiful feeding had hardly been enough. Victoria walked over to the dresser and picked out a pair of black robes. She wrinkled her nose. They were old and torn and dirty; not at all fit for the likes of her. She tossed that pair to the ground. She ripped through her closet, tossing ragged robes to the ground as she discarded them all, one by one. Victoria screamed and whipped out her wand. Within seconds, the pitiful robes on the ground were reduced to ashes. She stood there, clad only in a torn nightgown and her hair wild and disheveled.

How long? How long had it been since she had last taken care of herself? What had she been reduced to? Reduced to the lowest animal, unable to care for herself? She put her wand away and kicked the wardrobe in anger. All of that was about to change.

A few hours later Harry, Ron and Hermione made their way to Professor McGonagall's office for another meeting.

"So who do you think it is?" Ron asked for the umpteenth time.

Hermione kicked the nearest statue, and Harry hit his head with his hand.

"RON! FOR THE LAST TIME! WE DON'T KNOW!" Harry and Hermione shouted.

"Ask one little question and everyone starts fussing," Ron muttered sullenly.

They turned a corner, and they were there.

"Finally," Harry sighed as he knocked on the door.

"Come in Mr. Potter, I have someone for you to meet." called McGonagall.

Harry, Ron and Hermione walked through the door and into a nightmare. Sitting there, in a chair in one corner of the room by the extinguished fire was a... well, Harry was *almost* sure it was a girl. She was pale white and emaciated. Her white hair cascaded past her shoulders to where it almost pooled on the floor. She was wearing second hand school robes, no doubt stolen from the laundry's lost and found (Harry highly doubted that she went to Hogwarts, she *looked* seventeen, but he thought he'd remember someone like that). The only color came from the vivid red scar that ran down the right side of her face and her other red eye.

Ron paled noticeably and Hermione let out a small squeak. Professor McGonagall rose from her chair and announced the visitor. "Ms. Gelding, this is Mr. Harry Potter, Ms. Hermione Granger and Mr. Ronald Weasley. This is Victoria Gelding, Albus Dumbledore's charge."

Only Hermione kept her wits about her. She strode forward and offered Victoria her hand. "Hi, I'm Hermione!" she chirruped in a false voice and smiled, what she hoped was a friendly smile. Victoria didn't smile back. Instead she rose to her feet and shook Hermione's hand without comment. Now that she was standing, Harry could see that she was a whole head shorter than Hermione.

Taking a deep breath, Harry walked forward. "Harry Potter. Professor McGonagall tells me that we are going to work together?" It was more of a statement than a question. Victoria nodded her head slowly and shook his hand.

"Well, let's get started shall we?" said McGonagall briskly. She motioned to the three chairs in front of her desk and the trio sat down. Victoria came to stand behind McGonagall's shoulder as she handed the three manila folders, Ministry of Magic magical access cards and a tin of Ginger Newts.

"Now, I don't want you opening them now, but the folders contain all the information the order has collected on the next Horcrux."

"And here are three Ministry of Magic access cards. These will give you access to any department in any Ministry of Magic around the world, including the Department of Mysteries and the library." Hermione let out a happy sound.

"Now, Ms. Gelding here is your information officer. Anything that may be too risky for you three goes automatically to her, she is a trained spy unlike you three, and it's her job to get information. If I find out that you have been doing any dangerous snooping in places where you shouldn't be, and you're back in Grimmauld Place before you can say 'Quidditch.' And lastly, here are your supplies." She handed them each a top of the line magically expanding sports bag that could store up to three tons of equipment and still be as light as a feather. "The same rules apply as last time, do not get caught, do not start fights unless you can actually win, and of course, don't do anything *stupid*. I expect that you memorize your alibis by tomorrow morning. Be here at eight sharp to review your route and meet up with Victoria. Any questions?"

Hermione raised her hand. Professor McGonagall sounded exasperated. "Ms. Granger, as I have repeatedly told you, it *isn't longer necessary* to raise your hand. Now what is it?"

"Will Victoria be traveling with us?" she asked pointedly.

"Yes. Not only is she a spy, she is also a body guard. Is that all? Very well then. See you all at eight sharp."

The trio rose and walked out the door, closely followed by Victoria.

"Bye! See you tomorrow, Victoria!" called Hermione as they separated in the hall.

"Goodbye. I will see you in the morning," she said.

Harry was startled by her thick, musical voice. It was frail and slightly croaky, like it had rarely been used, but it hinted at something powerful lurking beneath her delicate surface.

Once out of earshot, Hermione whispered, "Poor girl."

"Well, there's obviously something wrong about her, but pitying her? That's a bit low," remarked Ron as they turned a corner.

"Honestly, Ron do you notice anything? She's a vampire."

"Are you sure about this Hermione?" Harry asked. "Professor McGonagall wouldn't just shove us in with an out of control vampire you know."

"Positively, although, I think that there's something else wrong too though."

"Out with it then!" said Ron.

"I'm not sure," Hermione said absentmindedly. "But I bet we could find out in the--"

"Library," Harry and Ron finished for her.

She beamed. "So glad you agree, let's go."

An hour later, the three were still doing research in the library. Or at least, Hermione was. Harry and Ron were poring over the maps and alternatively quizzing Hermione on it.

"So," Harry said as he scanned the folder looking for a new question. "What do you think the next Horcrux will be?"

"I don't know, actually," she answered as she pulled down another book from the Restricted Section.

"C'mon! You've got to have some idea!" Harry exclaimed.

"All I know is that it's near a small farmhouse called 'Wicked End.' It's to the east of a small Wizarding town that in English translates to, Oh my god, I think I've got it!"

"Not quite right," said Harry frowning. "It's Patrick's Dire."

"Not that you prat, I've found Victoria!"

"Wicked! So let us see!" said Ron excitedly as he put his folder away.

Hermione plopped a dusty book titled "Ministry Myths, Facts, and Legends" down on the table. "Look here, it says *in June of 1992, the Department of Mysteries' Experimental Breeding Squad began experimenting with DNA from Dark Creatures. No official report was made, but the project was top secret and highly experimental. Below is a list of rumored "ingredients" to creating this artificial human.*

1. Vampire Anatomy
2. Banshee Vocal chords
3. Dementor Essence
4. Werewolf DNA
5. Veela DNA
6. Basilisk Blood and Venom
7. Sphinx Blood
8. Dragon Blood
19. Re'em Blood
10. Boomslang Venom
11. Werewolf Blood
12. Bicorn DNA
13. Jobberknoll DNA
14. Occamy DNA and Blood
15. Acromantula Venom
16. Augurey DNA"

"They honestly expect us to believe that?" asked Ron incredulously.

"Shut up, there's more," said Harry, and Hermione continued reading.

"According to rumor, the Experimental Breeding Squad was actually able to create a hybrid seventeen-year-old girl. However, many are doubtful of its existence. One man, an anonymous ex-member of the Squad, refused to give any information regarding the subject. Saying, 'Really, why can't you people leave me alone? Yes, there may have been some experimenting down in the Department of Mysteries, but I assure you, VOID 6.0 is not even active--now look what you made me say!' Even more rumors suggest that VOID 6.0 was created, and on the night of its execution, it was rescued by a mysterious wizard who not only managed to bypass all the Ministry of Magic security, but a whole team of highly trained hit-wizards. Hopefully, VOID does not exist as it would mean ultimate destruction of the worst kind."

"That's it?" demanded Harry. "Just a little footnote that the most powerful weapon in the world is out there and no one knows where the bloody hell it is?!"

"But we do know where it is. Victoria is VOID. I'm absolutely positive. Look at this list of poisons, what do they have in common: they're all deadly and extremely rare and powerful. Most poisons have the side effects that Victoria would be experiencing. It's highly possible!"

"Hermione, we aren't even sure it exists," argued Ron. "Besides, don't you think that the Ministry would've rounded it up by now?"

"Well, it was stolen by an extremely powerful-- oh my god, what if it was Dumbledore who saved Victoria!?"

"What?! Hermione be reasonable!" Ron shouted.

"It would make perfect sense! According to this book, VOID was stolen in early June! And where was Dumbledore in June? At the Ministry! Oh and where was Dumbledore that was SO important, he was almost too late to save Harry? And she's been Dumbledore's charge for the past 17 years. I'll bet you ten Galleons that Dumbledore was the one who saved Victoria," said Hermione firmly.

"You know, Ron, it doesn't sound so crazy after all, once you think about it," said Harry slowly. "There are some Muggles who have been experimenting with genetics, and they've gotten pretty far in that field. They're almost certain that they can artificially create human life."

"And why not try it in the wizarding world?" argued Hermione. "I bet they were just fooling around, but you know, they could have been secretly preparing for the second war. VOID *would* be the ultimate fighting machine you know."

"So, okay let's pretend that Victoria was VOID. What do we do? Just go up to her and say, 'Your cover's blown, we know that you're an evil, deadly, powerful fighting hybrid that's on the run from the Ministry, and man-kind is in danger right now and if Voldemort gets his hands on you, everyone would die, so would you please kill yourself?'"

Even though, according to these potion ingredients, not only is she immortal, she is toxic!" Ron said that all in one breath.

"He's got a point," admitted Harry. "But really, what do we do?"

"Nothing," said Hermione firmly as she snapped the book closed. "Absolutely nothing."