

# Releasing the Beast Within

*by Lady Whitehart*

Voldemort needs another spy inside Hogwarts. Wormtail gives Animagus lessons.  
Crookshanks gets some exercise. Consume beverages with care.

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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Consume beverages with care.

Then there's Ginny's pet Pygmy Puff,  
that little purple ball of fluff.  
Arnold is something beyond the norm:  
He's Bella in Animagus form!  
I wonder if Voldie thought it was funny  
when Bella became a purple dust bunny?  
If he and Bella want to scheme,  
they must add Kreacher to the team!

A/N: It's always the seemingly innocent things that are the most dangerous. Voldie needs a spy in Gryffindor tower, and it's up to Peter Pettigrew to teach one of the Death Eaters the finer points of undercover work. The reason so very few people want to become an Animagus is explained.

As always, thanks to Verity for 'taking one for the team' and beta-ing my work!

Disclaimer: The characters aren't mine. The theory isn't mine either. I just own the twisted mind that came up with fic.

No Pygmy Puffs were harmed in the writing of this fic. All creatures mentioned can be found in *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*.

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### Releasing the Beast Within

In the gloomy drawing room of the old Riddle House, Voldemort gathered the members of his Inner Circle of Death Eaters. He had decided that he needed a way to have access to Potter's daily life. Since he had been found out, Wormtail was utterly useless for the job of pet rat. *Then again*, he mused, *Wormtail is generally quite worthless in most instances.*

But Wormtail's ability to change into a rat had given him the idea to have one of his minions transform into some kind of a pet. A pet who would then have access to the Hogwarts dormitories. Wormtail--being the only Animagus in the group--was given the task of teaching the other Death Eaters how to transform.

The rat-like little man strutted back and forth importantly. "It's not too difficult--"

"Obviously not, since you can do it, Wormtail," Snape jeered from the back of the group.

"Let's see you do it then, Snape. Although, there aren't any naturally oily animals," Pettigrew shot back.

Bella glared at Snape, pure maddened malice in her eyes. "Oh, yes, Snape, let's see if you can manage this one. Or are you trying to slither out of this duty as well?"

"In case you have forgotten," he began stiffly, "I am already at the school. There is no purpose in subjecting myself to becoming a pet to one of those wretched brats."

"Severus, when was the last time you got to sit on someone's lap and be stroked for hours on end?" Gibbons taunted.

"Why, just the other night I--" Severus angrily drew himself up. "That's none of your damned business!"

"Thank you for not sharing the sordid details of your personal life, Severus," Voldemort hissed. The last thing he wanted was to hear how someone as unattractive as Severus Snape spent that pittance of a salary the school paid him. Probably the best the oily little man could afford was some scruffy, cross-eyed, inbred almost-Squib. "Now, Wormtail, explain how one transforms into an animal before I decide the best use for you is a snack for Nagini."

At this, all of the assembled Death Eaters snickered to themselves while Amycus and Alecto broke out into raucous laughter. Voldemort was disgusted by their behavior. If this was the best that the pureblood world had to offer, he probably should be thankful that his idiot mother had decided to sully herself with Muggle filth--at least he had been spared the possibility of ending up like these fools. "Silence!"

"Right, then." Wormtail's beady eyes flicked back and forth between Snape and Bellatrix. "As I was about to say, everyone has an animal personality within them. Becoming an Animagus is tapping into that part of yourself. You won't know what you'll turn into until you actually transform, so keep an open mind and try not to force yourself into any particular animal."

"Why not?" Gibbons asked, looking skeptical.

Wormtail shivered. "Because if you do, you might end up spliced as two or three creatures."

"What a load of rot!" Snape snorted.

"It is not!" Wormtail protested. "Why do you think Sirius Black, the Gryffindor sex god, never went out with anyone? All those girls clamoring for his attention, and he never bothered with any of them."

"I had always assumed he was far more interested in Lupin than any of the girls," Snape argued.

Fury flared on Bella's face. "How dare you say such a thing about my dear, departed cousin--"

"That you offed," Snape reminded her silkily.

"Enough!" roared Voldemort, drawing his wand. "Wormtail, what happened to Black? I could use some levity about now."

A wickedly gleeful look spread across the little man's face. "He ended up with a goat's genitalia: huge balls and a long, stick-thin penis."

"And how, precisely, do you know this?" Snape asked, staring the little man down.

Wormtail squirmed in discomfort and whispered, "That's none of your business, Snape. At least the entire school didn't get a chance to see--"

"Bella, try again," Voldemort interrupted; he really did not want to know what the entire school had seen, especially if it had anything to do with Snape's body.

Bella closed her eyes and tried to relax, this time whispering the incantation. Nothing happened until the third time she spoke the incantation. Suddenly there was a loud crack, and Bella disappeared. The Death Eaters looked around, trying to figure out where she had gone.

"What the bloody hell is that?" Amycus asked, pointing at what looked like an overgrown purple dust bunny.

"It looks a miniature Puffskein," McNair replied, prodding it with his foot. With an indignant warble, the purple puffball skittered out of his way.

Gibbons bent over to poke it with his wand. "I think it's Bella."

"Honestly, Bella, is that the best you can do? A ruddy Puffskein?" Snape sneered, picking her up by a few strands of hair. Bella squeaked furiously as she tried to wriggle out of his grasp.

"That is enough, Severus." Voldemort glared at him, suppressing the urge to kill Snape--and all of his followers for that matter--with a single wave of his wand. "Unless someone else is willing to volunteer, we need to come up an idea as to how to make the most of Bella's Animagus."

"Does it have teeth?" Alecto asked eagerly.

Snape dangled her above his face, mocking her inability to defend herself. Bella lunged for his nose, only to find that biting wasn't an option. Snape laughed at her. "Utterly **useless** as far as that goes. There will be no attack Puffskein, Master."

Fighting the urge to scream, Voldemort began pacing back and forth. All he wanted was a loyal Death Eater to be placed in a position to keep an eye on Potter. Was that too much to ask? Why couldn't one of them be something a little more useful, like a Metamorphmagus? That way one of his Death Eaters could be disguised as one of the Gryffindor students and deal with Potter more directly. No, that would just make things way too easy.

"I've got it!" Pettigrew said, bouncing up and down in excitement. "I saw in the Weasley Wizarding Wheezes catalog that they have a new item--Pygmy Puffs. Draco could Imperious a student to slip Bella in with the lot when the store is full of students, and all Bella needs to do is make sure she gets picked by someone who is a Gryffindor. That Mudblood, Granger, already has a familiar, but the Weasley girl doesn't have one. Yes, yes, she could become Ginny Weasley's pet! Oh, Bella, you won't mind it with her; she's very kind towards pets. You'll get plenty of treats and..." He broke off, feeling the fury of Voldemort's red eyes upon him. "Anyway, once she's there, she will have complete access to Potter. Why, she could put pretty much any plan into motion. Keeping him away from Granger is the key; she is the main part of the boy's brain."

The assembled group, including Voldemort, was stunned into silence.

"Wormtail, that is the most outlandishly preposterous idea I've ever heard, and I've been teaching for fifteen years," Snape mocked as soon as he recovered. "There is far too much room for error with this plan. How is Bella supposed to be sure the Weasley girl picks her? What is she supposed to do if she ends up in a cage the entire time?"

"I never said the plan was perfect!"

Snape smirked. "The understatement of the year."

Voldemort held up his hand to silence them. "You are correct, Severus. This plan is highly faulty." The dark-haired man gloated. "However, therein lies the reason it could work. It's such a random thing that there is no way Dumbledore would ever expect it."

Snape's gloating sneer dissolved, and he dropped Bella to the floor. She tried to attack his ankle. "Surely, Master, you cannot be seriously considering this plan?"

"Since--at this point--there is no alternative, I will take it into consideration." There was solid note of finality in his tone. "Wormtail, I will need you to change Bella back into her human form."

Pettigrew's satisfaction at having the Dark Lord side with him over Snape was short-lived. Muttering the counter charm, he reluctantly returned Bella to herself.

"Of all the disgusting things!" she sputtered. "A miniature Puffskein. I should have been something ferocious like... like..."

"A hippogriff with the trots?" someone supplied with a snicker.

"A jarvey with mange?"

"Maybe a moke with scale rot?"

"Shut up!" Bella screamed, brandishing her wand. "At least I had the courage to try! You men were too worried about damaging your--"

"Bella," Voldemort shot her a warning look. "Severus, you are to return to Dumbledore for now. I will be in touch with you."

Bowing low before his Master, Snape made ready to leave, but not before hearing Bella hiss, "I'll see you in hell for this, Snape."

"No doubt because your idiot nephew will botch his plan after he takes your advice," he retorted coolly before Disapparating.

"Come, Bella, we have much to discuss, and Wormtail has agreed to teach you the counter charm." Voldemort ushered her to another room.

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For the last two days, since Gibbons--Polyjuiced to look like a student--had dropped her in the pen with the other Pygmy Puffs on display at Weasley's Wizarding Wheezes, Bella had been waiting. If the Weasley girl didn't buy her, she hoped that Wormtail would remember to make sure that she was somehow freed from this terrible prison. She had cloistered herself in the far corner of the pen, possessively guarding her small stash of kibble.

Shortly after the redheaded blood-traitor twins opened the doors, the joke shop was packed with Hogwarts students. Bella tried her best to scurry around the cage and blend in with the rest of the pink and purple balls of fluff. This was the most frustrating experience she had ever had, looking cute and adorable, nibbling on whatever it was that they were fed, and trying not to be picked by one of the many silly teen-aged girls or small children that cooed over the cage. One little boy had tried to pick her up, and she had wished for the ability to bite, settling instead on emitting a loud, frightened squeak.

Bella retreated to the farthest corner of the cage. Maybe she should just try to lie low for a bit. This gave her time to contemplate her current situation. *I have to get into Hogwarts somehow. I will keep an eye on that idiot Potter and get back in the Dark Lord's good graces. And, she thought, her annoyance getting the better of her, I will find out exactly what Snape is up to and nail his greasy, traitorous ass to the wall.*

No sooner than she had finished the thought than one of the male puffs cuddled next to her. As unpleasant as the notion was, Bella decided to tolerate his presence. It wasn't until he began sniffing her that she became concerned. Without warning, the male puff tried to climb onto her back.

*Bloody hell!* Bella thought, letting out a screech and darting out from under him. She scrambled to the other side of the cage, colliding with a human finger.

"Oh, you poor little thing," crooned a girlish voice. Bella froze on the spot as a gentle finger stroked her purple fur. "Did he scare you?"

*He did **not** scare me! He tried to mate with me, you bloody twit!* Bella thought furiously. She looked up to see the face of a girl, a girl with long, bright-red hair. Could it finally be the Weasley girl? Perhaps she would be able to get out of this furry hell that she had volunteered to be stuck in. Yes, yes, she would be able to do her Master's bidding at last, she would return to his good graces, and best of all, she would eliminate Snape.

Yanked from her thought by the sound of raised voices, Bella peered between the bars of the cage to see the one thing that could finally put her plans into motion. A middle-aged, dumpy, red-haired woman was telling off a teenage boy in furious tones--Molly Prewett Weasley.

"If I see you do that again, I'll jinx your fingers together."

Bella snickered inwardly. *It would be best to do more than that, Molly.*

Just then the girl interrupted. "Mum, can I have a Pygmy Puff?"

"A what?"

"Look, they're so sweet."

The girl got her mother to come over to the cage, and Bella had to forcibly suppress the urge to change back into her human form and curse the pudgy blood-traitor into oblivion. One of the owners opened the top of the cage, allowing his younger sister to put her hand in to pet them. They were soon cooing over the various pink and purple balls of fluff. Much to Bella's dismay, the garish pink male that had recently tried to mount her was snuffling against the girl's hand.

*You will not steal my way out of here!* she thought, plowing into him and knocking him out of the way. Immediately she began making a purring noise as she nestled into the girl's hand. She was getting the hell out of here even if she had to crawl up the girl's sleeve to do it. Sadly, the stubby, long-toed feet of a Pygmy Puff weren't very conducive to climbing.

"Oh Mum! Can I have this one? It really wants to come home with me," the girl cooed, cuddling Bella to her shoulder.

Molly took the fluffy purple ball from her daughter. Bella continued to purr against her will. *You had damn well better agree.*

"Do they require a lot of care, George?"

"Not at all, Mum. And since we didn't give Ginny a birthday present yet, the Puff is half price, and I'll give you four months of food and a carrying cage for free," the young man said, smiling.

"Well... "

"Please, Mum."

*Listen to her if you value your pointless, broodmare existence, Molly,* Bella thought, her purr stalling slightly.

Molly eyed her critically. "Oh, very well, Ginny. How much trouble can such a tiny creature cause?"

*Just you wait and see, Molly,* Bella thought wickedly.

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Later that evening, Bella was curled up on Ginny's bed, eating a bit of Puff treat that the girl had offered her. She was absolutely exhausted. Granger's stupid cat had been trying to get at her ever since she had arrived at the Weasleys'. Bella was convinced that Snape was sitting in that hovel at Spinner's End, getting drunk on elf-made wine, hoping like anything that she had been devoured by the cat. No matter. Soon she would find a way to put him out of commission once and for all--providing she didn't become a cat treat first.

"You are the sweetest little thing," Ginny gushed, stroking Bella's fur.

*Think again.*

"I feel like I can tell you anything," the girl continued softly.

*Please don't... unless it's something that will help me present Potter to my Master or end Snape's life.*

"But you need a name..."

*Make it a good one at least.*

"I think I will call you... Arnold," she finished with a bright smile.

Bella stopped nibbling her treat. *Arnold? Arnold! For the love of Merlin, you dense, irritating girl, I'm a female!*

"Ginny! Supper!" Molly's voice called from downstairs.

"Be right there, Mum!" Without warning, Ginny scooped Bella up, snuggling her briefly to her cheek before depositing her safely in the little carrying cage.

Alone in the confines of her newest prison, Bella paced back and forth, fuming over the latest indignation. This was all Snape's fault! She wasn't exactly sure how it was, but it just had to be. She flopped down in the corner of her cage. She had no choice but to see this through. *I'll make you pay for this, Severus Snape, you slimy, half-blooded worm! I will make you pay.*

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A/N: For the record, I know that Bella would probably appear on the Marauder's Map, and that Harry would (hopefully) notice her in the Gryffindor dormitory. That's why I don't think it's a viable theory, but the resulting fic was entertaining at least. Wasn't it? Let me know what you think by leaving a review.