

The Dark Revival

by Pennfana

Voldemort, believing that the Death Eaters are losing their enthusiasm, decides to try to rekindle their fervour through the most desperate of measures: a tent revival. (The rating is for the occasional use of bad language.)

The Idea is Hatched

Chapter 1 of 4

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Disclaimer: Unless something's gone terribly wrong, I am not J. K. Rowling. I own nothing that is her creation. I also owe the opening line of the second section to another source; it's a modified line from Ghostbusters II, spoken by the character "Viggo the Carpathian". I don't know who wrote that particular line, but as I was about seven years old when that movie was released, it's pretty safe to say that it wasn't me.

Dedication: Although I almost never dedicate my stories, this time I feel moved to make an exception...or rather, three exceptions. First of all, to all those beginning writers who have given me some of my strangest ideas through their mistakes; may we all remember that once we were like you, and may we have patience as others had with us when we were first starting. Second, to my late grandfather (nearly ten years now), whose sense of humour irreparably warped my own. Thanks, Papa Ben. And last...but never least...to B. J. P., whose ability to joke about almost anything has been a life-saver for me more than once.

Chapter 1: The Idea is Hatched

Picture this.

England. The city of Lincoln, dominated by a large hill. The castle, crouching like a cat who has no intention of moving from its cozy cushion. Across from it, the immense gothic-style Lincoln Cathedral. The bells are ringing now, a cacophony that (if you listen closely) has a rhythm and eccentrically dingy tune of its own. Also imagine, if you will, a house somewhere up the street from these two stately landmarks. It's a perfectly ordinary-looking house with brick stained by many years of smoke billowing out of its chimney. There is a rudimentary garden in the front of the lot, and the whole thing is surrounded by a low stone wall. This one is about three feet high and nearly a foot thick, covered in various forms of parasitic vegetation and dwarfed by the holly behind it. From the gate by the street there is a small stone path leading to the front door. Nothing at all to notice about it, really.

Except, of course, that although everybody knows that it's always been there...it absolutely oozes the sense of belonging...nobody can help wondering if it had always been there last week.

On a mountain of skulls in the castle of pain, he sat on a throne of blood.

Or rather, he'd like to think so. It was true that he was the most feared wizard of his time, and it was likewise true that he and his followers had done their share of torture and murder. But the truth was that at this point in time, he was sitting in a comfy rocking chair in the house that had always been in Lincoln. However, it was at the top of the unimaginatively-but-truthfully-named Steep Hill, and for many people that was like climbing a mountain anyway; much steeper and you'd need a grappling hook to get

up and a parachute to get down. Nagini was curled up in her basket by his feet, and it would've looked quite domestic if it weren't for the skull-and-snake motif he'd decorated the place in and the fact that he looked like a noseless cross between a newt, a rhinoceros and George W. Bush. But the room was cozy enough for the (now literally) cold-blooded Lord of Darkness, and it was the perfect place for hatching nefarious plots and planning dirty deeds.

The fact was, he wasn't quite sure that he had his followers' absolute devotion anymore. And while Voldemort was very good at Reigns of Terror...he had of course had a very successful one seventeen years ago before that little incident with the baby, and he was on the cusp of a new one based on improved strategies...he wasn't quite at the point where he could easily replace old (and, quite frankly, somewhat defective) followers with shiny new ones.

It just isn't like the old days, he mused. Back then, they'd tell me that they'd walk through fire for me, kill for me, die for me, and even make egg salad sandwiches with sardines on dark rye bread for me. They still do, but it's almost like they don't believe it anymore. It's almost like...

Voldemort started at the thought. *It's almost like the shine has come off and all they see is a gloomy service full of black robes and oddly cooked eggs.*

At this thought he grew angry. His red eyes blazed. His grey face contorted into a mask of fury. "They should be proud!" he declared to Nagini. "I am the greatest wizard ever to walk this earth since Slytherin himself. They should be proud to be in my service! They should be offering me their lives, their children and their favourite hats! I will have my vengeance. Come, Nagini, and help me plot my nefarious...er...plots! They must be reminded, and reminded they shall be. I will show no mercy! I will have torture! I will have pain! I will have..."

And inspiration hit the Dark Lord like a gooey mud splat on a starched white shirt. His eyes glowed with malice and his high, raspy voice burned with glee.

"I will have...a tent revival!"

With his course of action in mind, Voldemort summoned the Inner Circle of the Death Eaters to their Chief Secret Meeting Place (really the lower level of the Magna Carta pub; it wasn't far from his house, and they served decent food...for a Muggle establishment, of course). Given the location and the clientele of the place, the efforts of the Inner Circle to dress inconspicuously never failed to amuse the Dark Lord. They were getting better at it now, but each of them would often forget one small but important detail. For example, on one rather memorable occasion Lucius Malfoy, in an attempt to show off his superior knowledge and Muggle dress sense, had shown up at a meeting wearing a black tank top and a leather miniskirt with some rather fetching pink boots. And as for the day when Goyle had shown up wearing a thong...

He shivered at the thought. Nobody, even the Potter brat, should ever be subjected to the sight of a Goyle's naked backside. He truly had an arse like a bag of hammers...heavy, lumpy and uncomfortable to sit on.

Not, of course, that Voldemort would know about that last one from personal experience, but he had a very fertile imagination, especially for things which could cause other people pain.

In any case, recent attempts at Muggle clothing had proven more successful. Voldemort himself was quite comfortable in a t-shirt and blue jeans, though sometimes he had trouble getting his favourite wig...black, of course...to stick to his head. In the early days the local Muggles had insisted on knowing the reason behind the more unusual aspects of his physical form; eventually they came to accept his vague references to "an industrial accident" and left him alone. Only tourists bothered him now...but then, tourists bothered *everyone*, in his opinion.

Once they had all assembled, Voldemort put on his best "Impressive" face. "Oh hear ye, my loyal followers, my Knights of Walpurgis. Let my words enter your ears and inspire you with malice this day. It hath come unto mine omniscient eyes that...oh, for Merlin's sake, Wormtail, what is it?"

The cringing Peter Pettigrew had been tugging on Voldemort's sleeve. "Master," he whispered, "I would not insult you for the world, but...the Muggles are staring."

The Dark Lord sighed. "Nothing to see, folks, we're just rehearsing for a play. All right, then. So much for an opening speech to put awe into the hearts of my followers...the fact is that I have picked up some signs of discontent lately. Nobody...yes, Bella, including you...seems to have the fire of the old days. Where is the zeal which you once had for doing my noble work? Where is the fervour of your declarations of loyalty to me? Where are the egg-and-sardine salad sandwiches? This cannot continue. So I have decided to do something to rekindle your former wrath against those who do not obey only me. I have decided...oh, what is it *this time*?"

"Scuse me, sir, but do you think...erm, that is...can I be in your play? Sounds like good stuff to me." A lanky, awkward Muggle boy had walked up to the table.

"Certainly not," snapped Voldemort. "It's a private performance, and you really wouldn't want to be part of it anyway, trust me." The boy persisted for several minutes, during which Voldemort's hand itched for his wand. Only the fact that he really did *not* want to have to leave Lincoln...a good Evil Base Station is hard to find...kept him from casting the Killing Curse then and there. Finally he bellowed, "BUGGER OFF! ALL THE ROLES HAVE BEEN FILLED!"

The boy scowled. "Fine, then. See if I ever audition for *you* again," he said, muttering all the way up the stairs and out onto the street.

When he was certain that the intruder had gone, Voldemort continued. "My course of action will not be a pleasant one to take, but I feel it is for the best. What lies before you, my loyal henchmen...and henchwomen, of course...is a trial of strength and spirit that will leave many of you feeling drained. You have suffered much for my soon-to-be-immortal sake, but that is nothing compared to the trial ahead. I have decided, in my magnificence, to renew your dedication to me in the most painful way possible. I am holding a tent revival, my dark Death Eaters, and you are all to attend. I will accept no excuses from anyone, even you, Snape. It's the summer holiday now, so you have no dunderheads to teach. Are there any questions?"

Lestrangle reluctantly put up his hand. Voldemort sighed. "Yes, Rodolphus?"

"Er...my Lord...will there be pinwheels?"

Author's Notes: I'm aware that JKR no longer uses the term "Knights of Walpurgis", but in the scene where I use it, it seemed to be a better fit than "Death Eaters" by virtue of being more dramatic. However, I only use it that one time; in my references to the Death Eaters as a group later in the story, I use their proper name.

Although the story itself was largely written after the release of HBP (and my reading of the above, concluded about three days afterwards), the idea was conceived some time before and a basic plot summary was written down. I briefly considered never unleashing this on the world after I finished, but I honestly had so much fun writing this that I thought it deserved to be shared. Therefore, if there is any part of this story that is not totally AU, I can assure you that its presence is a complete accident.

In 2005, I sang Evensong at Lincoln Cathedral for a week with my choir; like Winchester three years before, it was a wonderful experience. I have no idea why Lincoln seemed to be a good place to set the first part of this story, but it's a beautiful city and I plan to return there someday. My description of the hill in this story is heavily based on a diary entry of mine from our first day there. (Incidentally, I was in England when HBP was released; I picked up my copy in Cambridge that day. I finished reading it in Lincoln that Monday; this is possibly the shortest time I've ever taken to finish reading a book of that length.) At any rate, the food (and the tea) at the Magna Carta really is good, and I'd recommend the fish pie at Brown's Pie Shop...at least, I think that's what it's called...a short way down the hill from the Cathedral as well.

This piece is pretty much complete; the last two chapters need a bit of polishing and expansion, but that's it. Updates should be relatively regular...for me, that is...meaning, in this case, roughly once a week.

Oh, and incidentally, I owe part of the inspiration for this piece to Evadne's absolutely hilarious vignette collection called "Once Upon a Freakin' Time" over at fanfiction.net, particularly the chapter titled "The Death Eaters Have a Bake Sale". I urge you to check it out; it's been one of my favourite stories for years.

The Preparations begin

Chapter 2 of 4

In which Voldemort may be tempted to ask that immortal and perilous question: "What could possibly go wrong now?"

Chapter 2: The Preparations Begin

Disclaimer: The story's mine. Except for a few background Muggles, most of the characters aren't.

It was only the first day of the Revival, but already he could see that something had gone terribly wrong.

Voldemort stared at the sight before him, his jaw dropping and his eyes bugging out. Realizing that this was not precisely the most imposing look for a Dark Lord with a face like his, he recovered himself and glared at the assembled women, one of whom looked guiltier than the rest. "Narcissa!" he yelled as the witch stepped forward. "Will you explain to me exactly what is the meaning of this?!"

Narcissa gave a short curtsey as she nervously looked at the Dark Lord. "Well, the thing is, my Lord...ah...well, you see, this is...well, this is part of our contribution to your revival. We thought that some redecoration, both of ourselves and our minds, was in order and red is so suitable because it's the colour of blood, and that's rather what we...er, besides, although black is and always will be a classic colour, the thing is that red is far more fashionable this year...we've decided that just because we serve you, my Lord...which is a privilege that no right-minded witch or wizard would ever turn down...we don't have to be dressed in boring black all the time. Red seems suitable, especially as a tribute to those imposing eyes of yours...er, if your Lordship approves, that is..."

Voldemort would have raised an eyebrow if he'd had any. "And if I do not? After all, it is such a...Gryffindor colour."

Narcissa turned as red as the robes she was wearing. "Well, my Lord, I...that is to say, we...had hoped that you wouldn't mind. The Rouge Death Eaters, after all, are still at your service. We just chose red as our uniform, that's all, and since we're supposed to be your handmaids and I read in a book somewhere that handmaids wear red..."

Her master's scarlet stare was not encouraging.

Narcissa took the hint. With cheeks a similar hue to those of the robes she was wearing, she straightened her shoulders and spoke. "Ah, well. It was just an idea. All right, ladies, let's change these things back to the way they were..."

** Some years ago, Narcissa had idly picked up a copy of The Handmaid's Tale in a somewhat misguided attempt to see what Muggle life was really like. She never made it through the entire book, but she thought that if that was really how Muggles lived, then perhaps a life ruled by the Dark Lord would actually seem like a favour.*

And then there was the problem of the marquee. Voldemort didn't think he'd seen such a problem with an erection since Bellatrix Lestrange had "accidentally" hit Antonin Dolohov in the private bits with the Cruciatus.

Snape was stomping around the grounds, swearing at various other Death Eaters as they tried to erect the marquee. His shouts of "No, Crabbe, you nitwit, it's *wingardium leviosa*, not *winglehampton leviathan*!" and "Lucius, you incredible moron, the poles are supposed to be *vertical*, not *horizontal*!" could be heard at least a mile around. The marquee itself, made from the finest black canvas with the familiar Dark Mark pictured in silver and green, was still in a heap on the ground as Snape tried to orchestrate its raising.

Voldemort strolled up to the scene of the chaos and asked mildly, "Everything all right, Snape?"

Snape scowled. "Absolutely brilliant, My Lord. Give me another week and perhaps these twits will have exhausted every possible mistake they could make while erecting a marquee and so will, by complete accident, actually put the thing up *correctly*."

"Careful, Severus. These are your Brothers, after all."

Snape muttered something under his breath that sounded suspiciously like "Bloody inbred pure-blood morons!" Just as Voldemort was about to command him to repeat it, his eyes went wide and as Voldemort ducked he shouted, "Avery, watch where you're swinging that...OOF!"

Goyle Senior poked his head into the mess. "Did somebody mention eggs?"

While Snape was swearing profusely enough to make even Voldemort blush, Lucius motioned Goyle over to where he was standing. "I think that if you pull this rope here, Goyle, you can straighten out the central pole. I'd do it, but I don't want to get rope burn. Besides, you're stronger. Do it!" So Goyle did it.

When the dust had settled, the Death Eaters located the central pole sticking out of the roof of a Muggle barn about two miles away. The marquee floated back down over the site of the Revival, trapping several luckless Death Eaters under its heavy spread.

"BLOODY FUCKING HELL!" Snape shouted as he wrestled himself free. Voldemort would've raised an eyebrow if he'd had any to raise. "And I mean it in the most respectful of ways as possible, Master," said Snape, not looking in the least bit repentant.

"Of course you do, Severus," said Voldemort, sounding deceptively mild.

Stalking off to see if any of the other Death Eaters were still trapped beneath the canvas, Snape swore again.

Now, Voldemort wasn't precisely the sort of wizard who tolerated any kind of mistakes from his followers. Of course, he didn't mercilessly Crucio the Death Eaters to ensure that they were afraid of him; many of the Death Eaters being ex-Slytherins, he knew very well that their ambition would lead them to the other side. After all, why risk certain torture when you could get a nice hot meal and the knowledge that you were safe from Azkaban? Furthermore, he knew that purposely alienating his Death Eaters was a Very Bad Idea; should he suddenly start to randomly torture his followers, they just might decide to sabotage The Cause from within. After all, Slytherins being as sneaky

and ambitious as they are, one of them might take it into his or her head to ensure that this enterprise would suddenly and irrevocably go pear-shaped so that she or he could achieve world domination instead.

So why would such ambitious human beings become part of an evil organization where there was only one leader and absolutely no prospects of advancement, even if their crazy scheme to rule the world did come off without any further Potter-shaped hitches? The answer is deceptively simple.

Even if Snape never took advantage of it, Voldemort offered a great dental plan.

Finally, when they had managed to erect the tent with no further mishaps, they noticed a curious crowd gathered around. "Scuse me, mate," one clearly Muggle man said to Malfoy with perplexity in his voice, "but I 'adn't 'eard that the circus was coming this week."

Voldemort sighed. "All right, who cast the Muggle-Repelling Charm?"

Predictably, nobody stood forward. The man who had spoken before looked at Voldemort and said, "You're that bloke who had that accident a few years back, right?"

Voldemort glared; the man took a step backwards. "Yes, I am. I am also having a very bad day and, if I please, I can ensure that *you* have a similar accident here and now if I have to answer any more of your *ridiculous questions!*"

"Only...ow can you live without a nose on?"

"LEAVE! NOW! AND NEVER COME BACK!"

"All right, all right, I only wanted to know..." the man kept muttering as he walked away, clearly impressed by Voldemort's capacity for shouting. The others in the crowd, unsure what Voldemort had meant by his threat, wandered off in disappointment. After all, most of them had been quite looking forward to seeing the circus. But what fun could a circus be when the clowns were all dressed in black and the closest thing they'd got to an elephant was this weird grey bugger with red eyes and no nose?

Once all the appropriate Memory Charms had been cast and after he had seen to the Muggle-Repelling Charm himself, Voldemort finally took his place at the front of the "room" formed by the marquee, politely allowing his followers to sit and then, in his most majestic voice commanded them to "Stand and recite the Death Eaters' motto!"

The assembled Death Eaters broke into a confused murmur and MacNair, after arguing some point extensively with Lucius, Severus and Bellatrix...a foolhardy move if ever there was one...reluctantly raised his hand. "Yes, Walden?" asked Voldemort, his red eyes flashing his displeasure.

In a voice so squeaky that he might've been one of Pettigrew's rodent friends, MacNair said, "Er, Master, forgive me, but...none of us seems to know what our motto is...er...we do have one, don't we?"

Before Voldemort could respond with a well-placed Cruciatus, Crabbe jumped up, waving his hand wildly. "They're over there," said the Dark Lord absently, gesturing towards the portable toilets set up just outside of the East side of the marquee. "No, my Lord," Crabbe said. "I know the motto!"

Amazed that one of his dimmest followers had actually been able to string together such a sentence, Voldemort let him continue.

"It's *Stercus, stercus, stercus, moriturus sum*, isn't it, Master?"

Lucius slapped his henchman on the back of the head. "No, you idiot, it's *Quando omni flunkus, moritati*."

"Absolutely not!" barked Severus. "Although I must say that after all these years I still think it's probably not quite correct and not really what we ought to have gone for as a Dark Motto, it's actually *Aut vivam in aeternam, aut temptabundus moriturus sum!* Does *that* sound familiar to any of you dunderheads?"

The assembly of Death Eaters had to admit that he had a point. Rodolphus Lestrage's lips moved as if he were trying to figure out what the motto meant and suddenly burst out laughing.

"Is there something amusing which you'd care to share with your Dark Brethren, Rodolphus?" asked Voldemort, feeling ever more like a schoolteacher. He could almost be glad that Dumbledore had turned him down as a Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher after all...

"Er, my Lord, it's only that our motto translates roughly to 'I will live forever, or die trying'. Ah, shouldn't we have something that's a little more...dignified?" he asked. Seeing his Master's angry glare, he paled and stammered, "I-I-I g-guess not, My L-lord. S-s-s-orry to offend."

"You should be glad that I am not inclined to make you sorrier," Voldemort grumbled.

"Yes, Master."

Voldemort glared at his assembled minions. "Would anybody else care to insult our noble Dark Motto?" Although he thought he caught Snape muttering something about "noble" and "Dark Motto" being a contradiction in terms, nobody else felt moved to comment about it.

Author's Notes: I like writing Snape in this story, even if *he* is more volatile than the Snape I usually write. I know I may be overstating his temper a bit, but it's wonderfully therapeutic.

The Handmaid's Tale is, of course, a book written by Margaret Atwood. It's actually one of the two novels she's ever written that I've ever actually *liked*, though perhaps "like" is the wrong word. I first read it when I was about nineteen, and I've been fascinated by it ever since...horrified, in a way, because she has said that when she was writing this she didn't do anything to her characters that hadn't been done already in real life, but fascinated nonetheless.

Voldemort's "LEAVE! NOW! AND NEVER COME BACK!" is a minor tribute to one of my favourite films... "The Two Towers". While I still prefer to read The Lord of the Rings rather than watch it, I am nonetheless very fond of the movies, especially "The Two Towers"...and, it must be said, I prefer the extended versions of all three to their theatrical release.

The "OOF!" and "Did somebody mention eggs?" joke may seem a little obscure to anyone who doesn't speak French. The French word for "egg" is "oeuf" (pronounced something like "euf"). It's often mispronounced as "oof" by people who are learning to speak French.

"*Stercus, stercus, stercus, moriturus sum*" is from Terry Pratchett's book Interesting Times. Rincewind the "Wizzard" (Pratchett's spelling, not mine), says it when Pretty Butterfly tells him to say something "in Wizard language". The translation as given by Pretty Butterfly is "O Excrement, I am about to die". As this is very close to what he's really trying to say, I think I'll leave it here...I'm sure you can figure it out well enough yourselves. =)

"*Quando omni flunkus, moritati*" is from "The Red Green Show"...it's Possum Lodge's motto, and it's supposed to mean "When all else fails, play dead". As I've largely stopped watching TV in recent years, I suppose it's quite telling that this is one of the few shows I'd actually still watch if I had the time. The series itself ended in 2003 after 13 years, but there are still stations which show it as a re-run. As far as I know, there are clips available on YouTube; I encourage you to check them out, though the

humour may take some getting used to.

"*Aut vivam in aeternam, aut temptabundus moriturus sum*" is my own creation. I know very little about Latin, but then, "*Draco dormiens nunquam titillandus*" is, I hear, not quite perfect itself. In any case, this motto is supposed to mean precisely what Lestrage thinks it means..."I will live forever, or die trying". Very fitting for Voldemort, I thought.

More to come next week.

Nothing Else Can Possibly Go Wrong, Right?

Chapter 3 of 4

Peter Pettigrew makes a suggestion, the Death Eaters dance and Macnair undergoes a very personal transformation.

Author's Note: It may help you to get the full benefit of this chapter if you listen to "The Old Landmark", which was sung by sung by the late, great James Brown in *The Blues Brothers*.

This was going too well. He knew it.

Mind, he was pleased. Despite the numerous disasters which had befallen the Dark Revival before it had begun, the rest of the first day had gone well. After the botched recital of the motto, he had given his Death Eaters a three-hour sermon about the superiority of Purebloods and the disasters which awaited the wizarding world if they let more Mudbloods in. After the most recent meeting at the Chief Secret Meeting Place he had even written a Death Eaters' Prayer. He was actually very proud of it, as simple as it was. Still, although he hoped to someday have a professional writer re-write it, preferably at wand-point...one *must* have the appropriate tone of fear and trembling, after all...he believed that "Show us thy mercy, great and powerful Dark Lord, for we have offered thee this day a delicious egg-and-sardine-salad sandwich on dark rye bread" would suffice for the moment.

Yes, Voldemort was pleased, but with the strange sort of pleasure which one feels when one knows instinctively that it won't last. And almost precisely on cue, Peter Pettigrew approached his Master with his typical rat-like nervousness.

Voldemort sighed. "What is it, Wormtail?"

Pettigrew cringed. "We need music, Master."

Voldemort glared at him. "What did you say?"

Pettigrew grimaced and kissed the hem of his master's robe. "My Lord, music is generally a part of these affairs. It brings up the mood a bit, gets people enthusiastic..."

If he'd had any eyebrows left, Voldemort would've arched one. "I suppose that you have a selection prepared, then?"

"Of course, My Lord. Er, I've got something special in mind, actually, though it's still got to be polished a bit, My Lord."

Voldemort, tired of the cringing, waved a grey hand at his most pathetic sycophant. "Get on with it, then, Wormtail. I eagerly await this...music."

Wormtail flicked his wand at a piano that was suddenly and conveniently there. Rather unexpectedly, it started playing music. The astonished Animagus almost forgot to sing. The others glared at him as they were compelled to sing along with him.

Let us kneel (kneel and bow)

To the old (the old Dark mark)

Let us kneel (kneel and bow)

To the old (the old Dark mark)

Let us kneel (kneel and bow)

To the old (the old Dark mark)

Let us stay in the service of our Lord!

(Several of the Death Eaters started tapping their feet as well as singing, much to their chagrin.)

Voldemort, ohh! (He's my Lord, oh, my Lord)

Let us fear our Dark Lord

At the (Hey! Hey!)

Dark Mark

Praise Our Lord, well!

(Looking absolutely horrified, Snape stood up and took over the lead vocal.)

Let us kneel (kneel and cower)

At the old (Old Dark Mark)

Let us kneel (kneel and cower)

At the old (Old Dark Mark)

Let us kneel (kneel and cower)

At the old (Old Dark Mark)

(Bellatrix and Rodolphus were the first on their feet, but everyone else soon joined them. Macnair jumped up onto some folding chairs and started tapdancing, knocking most of them over and landing in an undignified heap behind Voldemort's lectern after a botched hands-free flip. Snape started dancing, too. Or at least Voldemort thought it was dancing. That, or he was having a seizure.)

Do it, know it, feel it, (Death Eaters)

People, people, well (Kneel and cower)

Let us kneel at the old (Kneel and cower, Old Dark Mark)

Kneel and cower at the old (Let us kneel, Old Dark Mark)

Kneel and cower at the old (Let us kneel, Old Dark Mark)

Kneel and cower at the old (Let us kneel, Old Dark Mark)

Kneel and cower at the old (Let us kneel, Old Dark Mark)

(BONGGGGGGG! Dolohov, dancing with great enthusiasm but not paying any attention to where he was going, hit the central pole and knocked himself unconscious. Oddly enough, he kept singing.)

Death Eaters,

Brothers, sisters,

Yeah, Lord, Yeah, Lord, Yeah, Lord, Yeah, Lord,

Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh

Oh, Lord

Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh,

Voldemort

(Narcissa and Lucius took turns tossing each other up in the air. The last time Lucius went up he somehow failed to land, and Narcissa, still dancing madly around, gave herself neck strain trying to find him.)

Let us all (all go back)

To the old (Old Dark Mark)

Let us all (All go back)

To the old (Old Dark Mark)

Killin', cursin', learnin', burnin'

(Crabbe and Goyle drew their wands, setting off fireworks inside the marquee. The entire place filled with smoke, but to their horror, nobody could stop singing or dancing.)

Gonna go back, ahh (oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh)

Gonna go back, ahh (oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh)

Gonna go back, ahh (oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh)

Gonna go back, ahh (oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh)

Let us stay in the service of our Lord!

When the dust had settled and the smoke had cleared, the marquee was still standing. Except for Voldemort, it was the only thing that was. Lucius was clinging to the top of the central pole. Dolohov was still unconscious. Bellatrix and Narcissa were huddled under a table and Snape, the LeStrange brothers, Avery, Macnair, Rookwood, Mulciber and Nott were apparently trying to untangle themselves from each other's robes. Wormtail was cowering behind Voldemort's throne and the Carrows were nowhere to be seen; they would later be inexplicably found in the same barn where the central pole of the marquee had been found on the previous day. Crabbe and Goyle were unconscious on the ground, having apparently headbutted each other in their fervour after setting off the last of their fireworks. Greyback was rolling on the ground and howling, and Yaxley and Jugson were trapped under a heap of folding chairs.

"I don't think we're going to try this again," said Voldemort, his shrill voice sounding oddly strained.

That night at dinner, the Death Eaters were strangely quiet. Nobody wanted to admit it, but they were starting to wonder if this Revival thing was possibly a bad idea. Sure, their fervour had increased in the past day or so, but they were all *really* sore from their unexpected song-and-dance routine. Several of them refused to look at anyone else in the eye, except for Snape, whose facial expression clearly said, "Mention this to anyone ever again, and you may live to regret it...or then again, maybe you won't!"

Finally, apparently unable to stand the unnatural silence emanating from the others, Rabastan LeStrange took a deep breath and asked, "What have you got in mind for tomorrow, Master?"

Macnair snickered. "Probably some kind of Dark Healing, right? It'll start out as another sermon against the Mudbloods and when people start confessing that they've got some Mudblood ancestry, you'll start cursing them left and right to cure them of the stain, only it won't go right...instead, they'll start praising the Potter brat!"

"You'll pay for that remark, Macnair," Voldemort said in a high-pitched growl. He drew his wand with a menacing swish.

"I'll handle this, my Lord!" shouted Yaxley, inexpertly brandishing his wand in an attempt to demonstrate his revitalized enthusiasm. "*Croutio!*"

Everyone stared in amazement as Macnair turned into a crouton.

Voldemort glared. "Take note, my Death Eaters, that the next time that one of you is stupid enough to dare to speak so presumptuously, you may share your Brother's fate! Now, somebody pick him up so he doesn't get crushed, we don't have so many members that we can afford to lose an expert torturer. Oh, and Yaxley, I expect you to milk Nagini for me for a month when this is all over with. As Wormtail could tell you, this is neither a pleasant nor an easy task."

With one last glare, Voldemort swept away. The effect was quite ruined when his robe caught on one of the stakes of the marquee and brought half of it crashing down.

Augustus Rookwood carefully approached his Master's throne after the marquee had been put back up with a surprisingly minimal amount of trouble. The Crouton Macnair (as they had taken to calling him) had been secured in a hastily-erected "medical station"...really a magically-enlarged crate charmed against any rodents, birds, ants or other miscellaneous creatures who might be tempted to take a bite. Several hours later he still had not returned to his usual self, and Voldemort was considering additional punishments for Yaxley...perhaps a week locked up with the Umbridge woman and her saccharine pinkness would do it. Much more than that and Yaxley would probably start acting like her himself, and there was nothing more pathetic than a Death Eater in pastels.

"Master, might I have a word with you?" he asked, falling to his knees and kissing the hem of Voldemort's robe.

Voldemort eyed the Death Eater warily. "Rise, Rookwood. This isn't going to be one of your marvellous ideas again, is it? I believe we've already had our Disaster of the Day."

"Er, yes, actually, My Lord...wait, My Lord, this one might actually work!" Rookwood barely managed to stop himself gibbering in terror as Voldemort moved to draw his wand.

"It had better work, Rookwood, or you may find yourself in a very embarrassing predicament...much as you did when you organized that ridiculous vodka-tasting night. Speak!"

"Well, My Lord, since Macnair hasn't turned back into himself yet, so to speak, I thought that maybe we could work this into the Revival somehow. I mean, sometimes revivals like this include healing the sick, or at least making it look like they do...perhaps you could come up with some sort of spell to heal him? After all, My Lord, you are most creative when it comes to the creation of new spells..."

Voldemort thought for a moment. "Your idea has merit, Rookwood, which goes to prove that even a blind squirrel will find a nut once in awhile. However, my creativity normally extends only to the more...painful aspects of spell-casting."

"Er, then, My Lord, perhaps you could create a healing curse? After all, the fact that it's a healing spell doesn't necessarily mean that it has to be *nice*."

Voldemort glared. "I'll keep that in mind, Rookwood. Now leave me, unless *you* want to be my test subject for this 'healing curse'!"

"Yes, Master." Rookwood bowed and then ran away, paying no attention to the concepts of dignity, courage and not tripping over his own robes.

Author's notes: I'm sorry I've taken so long to post this...a full month after the chapter was promised. Between being unexpectedly busy (job interviews, band competitions and doing most of the housework, rather than my usual half, because my mom's sick at the moment) and accidentally locking myself out of my computer for a week, I've gotten a bit behind. I can honestly say, though, that I now have some good advice for those who would care to listen: never use punctuation in a password. It took me about a week to figure out how to activate the System Administrator account on my laptop, and because of a mistake I made when I'd *almost* figured it out, I now have an accidentally-created account named "Clamav User" that I can apparently neither use nor delete.

The Blues Brothers has been one of my favourite movies since I was a child. I was watching it one day early in the writing of this story, hence the presence of "The Old Landmark". This was actually the second scene I wrote, which is probably fortunate as it's also the scene which has been revised the most.

The mention of Umbridge and her saccharine pinkness (and the results of spending too much time with her) are something of a tribute to ubiqirk's brilliant "Back in Black". There are few things more ridiculous than the thought of a Death Eater who has started Thinking Pink!

The "vodka-tasting night" referenced by Voldemort was taken from the movie *Calendar Girls*. While it's not depicted there either, one character makes a reference to it and from the tone of her voice, it was something of a disaster.

Finally, Rookwood's comment that "the fact that it's a healing spell doesn't necessarily mean that it has to be nice" is a slight reference to one of my favourite passages from Terry Pratchett's *Interesting Times*. The passage in question talks about miracles in Pratchett's usual style, which means it's a bit silly but somehow you can't stop yourself from thinking that maybe he has a point:

Whatever happens, they say afterwards, it must have been Fate. People are always a little confused about this, as they are in the case of miracles. When someone is saved from certain death by a strange concatenation of circumstances, they say that's a miracle. But of course if someone is killed by a freak chain of events : the oil just spilled there, the safety fence just broke there : that must also be a miracle. Just because it's not nice doesn't mean it's not miraculous.

The Last Day—To the Relief of All

Chapter 4 of 4

The De-Croutification spell, the return of the Random Muggles and the end (finally!) of the Dark Revival.

Disclaimer: If I didn't create it, then I don't own it.

Chapter 4: The Last Day...To The Relief of All

As a Dark Lord, Voldemort prided himself on his ability to delegate tasks to his underlings. So many of his predecessors had failed simply because they had lacked the ability to choose which of their followers might be trusted with the simple, everyday tasks which were so essential in the administration that was central to a Reign of Terror. Mad Lord Nolvroot had reportedly been so crazy that he'd made a bowlful of geraniums a general in his Dark Army. Nimerick the Nutcase had trusted absolutely nothing to his subordinates and had ultimately ended up with a Reign of Terror so thoroughly overrun by paperwork that Hendricus Potter, his nemesis (What was it about those damn Potters?), had only to waltz into Nimerick's office and torch it all, then Apparate out and hope that Nimerick had never heard of *Aguamenti* (he hadn't). Oddly enough, Curzadh the Completely Normal had been relatively good at delegating tasks; he had slipped up only once, when he'd absentmindedly handed *his* nemesis, one Jacobus Sneypa, the one weapon in the world which could vanquish him. Voldemort, wishing not to be known in the history books as Voldemort the Incompetent, had therefore taken great pains (usually someone else's, of course) to make certain that his Reign of Terror did not become a Reign of Errors.

However, he'd apparently considered the delegation of this task quite poorly; although both Severus Snape and Antonin Dolohov were both extremely imaginative when it came to the creation of new and interesting spells (Voldemort had always admired Severus' *Levicorpus* spell, though he'd never admit it), the Dark Revival had so far failed to instill a proper spirit of co-operation in these two Apostles of Evil, who had hated each other since that strange business years ago involving Dolohov's sister, a smuggled magic carpet, a tapir, an ancient Whomping Willow and several gallons of marmalade.

Voldemort was still trying to figure out how the whole thing was possible...he wanted to try it with Bellatrix someday...when finally, after watching the pensive Dark Lord for several minutes, Dolohov asked, "Master, what is thy bidding? Honestly, I wouldn't ask out of turn, only we've been Transfiguring birds into croutons all day and we're finally ready to test it on a human being..." he trailed off, noting his Master's grey-faced disapproval.

"It is lucky for you, Dolohov, that I am disposed to be charitable towards you at the moment. If your experiments with Severus had not yet shown any results, I might have been less lenient. But as it happens, I *have* come to check on your progress. Severus?"

"My Lord, we believe that we have hit upon a solution. However, I do think that we should take some time to refine the incantation, as it is...inconsistent with the dignity of our Dark Brotherhood and therefore inconsistent with your dignity as well, Master."

Considering everything that had happened in the past few days, Voldemort was surprised that Severus had managed to say this with a straight face. "Tell me, Severus, what is the incantation?"

Dolohov coughed.

Snape glared at his companion. "Master," he said tersely, "I want it to be absolutely understood that I had nothing at all to do with the phrasing of the incantation."

Dolohov glared right back at Snape. "You know as well as I do, Severus, that this was the only incantation that worked with that wand motion you came up with."

Snape would have retorted, but Voldemort had a look in his eye that clearly spoke quite clearly of Pink Lacy Robes for a Year If You Keep On Bickering, Severus...And This Time I Might Even Curse Your Hair Pink If You Push Me Too Far, You Dungeon-Dwelling Heliophobe.

"Tell me what it is, Severus," he said softly.

It looked as if someone had shoved something unusually unpleasant under his prominent proboscis. "It's 'Oo, ee, oo ah ah, ting tang, walla walla bing bang,' Master."

Voldemort stared at them for a moment, finally shifting his full attention to Dolohov. "I share your colleague's displeasure with this incantation, Antonin. What the hell were you thinking?"

Surprisingly, Dolohov blushed. "I remembered a nonsense song I heard once when you sent me on a reconnaissance mission among the Muggles, my Lord. The tune just sort of stuck in my mind after I heard it. It popped into my mind when I tried to turn those croutons back into birds, and I found myself singing it when I performed the wand movement."

"And it has to be...*sung*?" Voldemort asked, thinking that this would *really* undermine his reputation if it ever got out.

Snape crossed his arms. "I'm afraid so, Master. They turned into self-playing sets of Great Highland bagpipes when we didn't sing it."

Voldemort silently offered a prayer to whatever divinity might possibly be watching over exasperated dark wizards who were well aware that most of their followers were complete idiots. "Get Yaxley in here, then. Since he's the one who caused the problem, it is only fitting that you test its solution out on him."

Had he not been the fearsome Dark Lord he was, Voldemort might have been taken aback at the look on Snape's face just then. "With the greatest pleasure, my Master."

Yaxley was summoned and promptly Croutified, and Snape volunteered Dolohov to perform the de-Croutification. Rolling up the sleeves of his robe, Dolohov twirled his wand around his index finger, traced a complicated Celtic knot in the air and sang, "*Ooh, ee, ooh, ah-ah, ting-tang walla walla bing bang! Ooh-ee, ooh ah-ah, ting-tang walla walla bing bang!*" There was a flash of multicoloured light and the area filled with putrid yellow smoke. When it had cleared, Yaxley stood resored to his former self, albeit looking extremely fearful, as he had since the initial Croutifying incident; he'd been walking around with a look of abject terror on his face for so long that Voldemort idly wondered if his face had simply got stuck that way. If so, it was a damn good thing that the Death Eaters wore masks; what use would an evil minion be if he looked even more scared than his hapless victims?

Putting on his Serious Dark Lord face, Voldemort glared at Yaxley. "You have been extremely fortunate, Yaxley. Have you anything to say to us?"

"I don't wanna wrestle," he groaned, and fell to the ground in a faint.

"Take this cretin to the medical station, will you, Dolohov?" Voldemort sighed. "I want him to be back to normal...or at least, as near to normal as he can get...by the time we de-Croutify Macnair. Snape, go with him and make sure he doesn't get lost."

"Yes, Master." The Death Eaters bowed, conjured up a stretcher for Yaxley and bore him to the medical station, arguing all the way. When he was sure that they were out of earshot, Voldemort collapsed onto the ground, put his head into his hands and groaned.

Gibberish! They've got me using bloody gibberish for an incantation! My Dark Lord credibility is really going to suffer for this one...

And if I have my way, so is Yaxley.

Having decided that Macnair could stand to be a crouton for a little while yet, Voldemort had decided to do the Decroutification after giving the revival's final sermon.

Admittedly, it looked a little strange to have a stretcher containing a bell jar with a crouton in it arranged so close to the podium, but Voldemort thought that perhaps it would serve as a useful warning to his followers. It was far better than putting it in words; "Behave yourselves or I'll turn you into croutons" somehow just didn't sound very impressive.

He'd been speaking for half an hour now, and seeing that most of the Death Eaters were starting to shift restlessly in their seats, he decided to wind things down with a few announcements.

"We will be raiding the Misuse of Muggle Artifacts Office at the Ministry of Magic in two weeks' time in order to acquire the cursed tea set and bedroom slippers that they confiscated from Borgin & Burkes last week. Lucius, do try to stay out of Azkaban this time; it's such a hassle to break people out.

"Severus Snape would like to remind his Dark Brothers and Sisters that the Cruciatus Curse is not a toy.

"The Malfoy family will be hosting our annual picnic on their estate on August 13; all are commanded to attend, and you are reminded to bring your bathing suits as the pool will be open. Mulciber, do try to find one that actually fits this year. I am certain that I speak for everybody when I say that last year's incident in which we found your shorts floating a short distance away from you after a dive should not be repeated. Your bare bum is not as attractive as you think it is.

"Finally, while I appreciate the spirit, Dark Jokes like 'My Dark Lord has no nose!' 'How does he smell?' 'Terrible!' are not appropriate." He glared directly at Rabastan Lestranger and Augustus Rookwood as he said this, and both men had the good sense to look ashamed. However, when he looked away from them, Voldemort thought he caught a hint of shaking shoulders in his peripheral vision; he decided that Lestranger and Rookwood must have simultaneously come down with a cough.

"Now that's over with, I shall proceed with the De-Croutifying of Macnair. Yaxley, Jugson, bring him in." They complied, nearly tripping over their own feet in his haste to do their Lord's bidding. When the stretcher had been placed on the tent's makeshift altar (really another crate which was Glamoured to look like a solid obsidian block), Voldemort paced behind it and glared at his followers.

"I believe that I do not have to tell you twice," he said, "that I would *not* appreciate it were this to be necessary again. However, I command you all to observe, this one time, the awesome demonstration of the power, the might and the dreadful mercy of your Lord Voldemort!"

He unsheathed his wand, traced the Celtic knot in the air and sang the incantation; unfortunately, Voldemort was unfamiliar with the tune of the song and accidentally hit a wrong note. The Death Eaters looked on in amazement as they saw the crouton slowly enlarge and resume the shape of Walden Macnair. His eyes opened only for an instant before a black smoke issued from Voldemort's wand and completely surrounded him. It solidified into the shape of a large round thing with a long, curved tail. The crowd assembled under the marquee was strangely silent for a moment, until Macnair started rocking on the altar, yelling something that was muffled by the black shape but which sounded suspiciously like "Get me out of this thing!"

"Bloody hell, my Lord," said Mulciber, stricken. "You've put him into a comma!"

Voldemort glared at him. "Thank you for this astute assessment, Mulciber," he growled. "Snape! Dolohov! You two have got some explaining to do!"

Dolohov's eyes were as wide as a house-elf's, but it must be confessed that he found the situation amusing enough that not *all* of his trembling was the result of fear. Snape simply ran a hand through his greasy hair, absently wiped the grease off of his hand with his reluctant colleague's robe and studied the rocking, shouting comma while re-playing his memory of the events that had placed Macnair within its black casing. "My Lord," he said, attempting for once to find the most tactful way to say something, "far be it for me to imply that you could actually have made a mistake, but it seems that you sub-consciously felt the need to improve upon the tune of the incantation, which is entirely understandable."

"Very well, then, Snape," said Voldemort, practically tripping over all of the commas he'd just used. "But remember, all of you...nobody is *ever* to speak of this incident again, unless you want to spend a week cleaning up after Nagini! Is this clear?"

A murmur of what was probably consent ran through the assembled Death Eaters.

"Good," he said. "We're finished here. I, Lord Voldemort, officially declare this Dark Revival closed. You are all hereby commanded to take down the marquee and not to bother me until you're done with it. Go forth and spread my Evil in the world!"

Having decided that it would be prudent to be as far away from the Revival site as possible whilst his followers attempted to take down the grand structure at its centre, Voldemort wandered off to see if he could find some wildflowers to zap into oblivion. However, he hadn't got far when Mulciber came running up to him. "My Lord! My Lord!" he shouted. "Please come back...we need your help!"

Voldemort glared at him. "I believe I was quite clear in my instructions, Mulciber," he said. "Half the confounded thing's still standing, and I specifically commanded all of you to leave me alone until you were done with it. So if you really *do* wish to disturb me, then it had better be for a good reason, or you'll be cooking for me for a month. Is this clear?"

"Yes, my Lord, perfectly clear. Honest, I wouldn't bother you, only it seems like we've been discovered by some Muggles...somebody must have taken down the Muggle-Repelling Charm too soon. We took a vote, and it seems that almost everyone thought that it might be wise to ask you to deal with them, my Lord."

Voldemort's eyes flashed scarlet. *WHAT did I do to deserve such idiotic henchmen?* "Very well, then, Mulciber. Go back and tell them that I'm on my way."

The moment that Voldemort saw the red bathrobe, he knew that there was going to be trouble. He glared at the Death Eaters. "All right, which one of you took down the Muggle-Repelling Charm before we were finished here?" Not surprisingly, given Macnair's recent experiences, nobody was willing to step forward and for a change, neither Crabbe nor Goyle looked more sheepish than usual. He did, however, notice Wormtail trying to slink off again. No matter; he'd simply hand him over to Snape for the rest of the summer. *That* would put the proper fear of his Lord back into him. Besides which, Snape had been looking entirely too happy with himself lately; perhaps a few weeks with nobody's favourite rodent would take him down a peg or two.

And if it worked out satisfactorily, perhaps he'd consider sticking them with each other every year.

Turning his attention back to the confrontation, he was ever-so-slightly amused to see Snape nose-to-nose with a man who looked like Gilderoy Lockhart might if he'd run to fat. The Lockhart look-alike was wearing a red velvet bathrobe tied with a gaudy gold curtain tie in the shape of a rope with tassels on the end. "I don't *care* if you think that this is a wonderful place to celebrate your Lou-wosname! *We* were here first, and we demand that you vacate this field immediately!"

The man in the red bathrobe snorted. "This is Open Country, you greasy git...we've got as much a right to be here as you do!"

"Not as far as I'm concerned. I'll hex the bathrobe right off of you if you don't leave *now*," Snape growled with great menace.

Lockhart's pot-bellied look-alike snorted. "I'd like to see you try, mate!"

This time, Severus smirked. Brandishing his wand, he made a great sweeping gesture with his arm and intoned, "*Elenim Virga is appellunt!*" and innocently started to hum something which sounded suspiciously like Ray Stevens' "The Streak".

In an instant, the hideous red bathrobe had disappeared, though the man's purple underpants, cheerily decorated with yellow smiley faces, lingered for a few seconds before following the bathrobe into nonexistence. An elderly woman clad in a blue bathrobe clapped her hand over a younger woman's eyes. "Don't look, Ethel!" she gasped as the man started to run away, far faster than any human being had a right to be able to do."

When the Muggles had been chased off to a more suitable venue for their Lughnassadh celebration, Lucius raised an eyebrow at his old friend. "Wouldn't it have been easier just to say 'Evanesco bathrobe', Severus?"

Snape sneered companionably at his old friend. "Perhaps, Lucius, but that would have ruined the song." He strode off as Lucius stared at him in bewilderment.

"As soon as somebody had figured out what that mysterious beige streak was that kept showing up all over the country, he made the news; once Snape's spell had worn off and the man's identity had been discovered, he changed his name and moved to New Zealand in an attempt to escape the publicity which he'd once sought so desperately.

If Voldemort had thought that his followers were terrible at raising the marquee, he was appalled at how terrible they were at taking it down. In the last half hour they had somehow managed to break the laws of gravity in at least a dozen creative ways; currently it was still fully set up, but courtesy of Crabbe and Goyle (of course), it was upside-down.

Snape glared. "Why don't we just Evanesco the bloody thing and be done with it, Oh Great High and Mighty Master?"

Voldemort looked down his nonexistent nose at the spy. "I'll pretend that I didn't hear that sarcasm in your voice, Severus. And might I remind you about what happened the last time that we had to Evanesco something that big?"

A greasy eyebrow arched Northwards. "I'm not entirely certain that Rodolphus *didn't* mean to end up in the middle of the Sahara, Master, as he and Bellatrix had been quarrelling again, and you *know* how she is when she's angry. It was just his bad luck that the Aurors found him before Wormtail did."

"An entire tribe of nomads had to be Obliviated, Severus."

Snape sneered. "I was not under the impression that we were to concern ourselves with the doings of the Magical Law Enforcement, Master. So much of what we do causes them large amounts of paperwork. It's what you might call the nature of our organization."

Voldemort still wasn't quite pleased with Snape's tone of voice, but he had to admit that he had a point. He sighed. "All right, then, we'll Evanesco it. Wormtail, you may do the honours."

Pettigrew nearly dropped his wand in his haste to Vanish the marquee. He drew his wand and shouted, "*Evanesco marquee!*" There was a great flash of light, and (perhaps surprisingly) the marquee vanished. Unfortunately for Wormtail, it also took both the Malfoys with it.*

Voldemort closed his red eyes and counted to ten. Then, suddenly, he turned to Wormtail and kicked him where the sun didn't shine.

Apparently Wormtail could screech like a rodent even when he was human. Voldemort smiled. "That, Wormtail, was for being so utterly useless. Really, you should be thankful...it was that or the Cruciatus."

Wormtail's only answer was a groan. The other men looked at each other, each glad that it wasn't them and each hoping that this particular punishment wouldn't replace the good old Cruciatus. There's only so much a man is willing to put up with, after all.

"Wormtail later found them living as patients in a psychiatric hospital in Ireland. While they'd been somewhat upset at the beginning of their time there...the straitjackets were just so unfashionable...they found that once they'd got settled in, the service was exceptional and they had the run of the admittedly beautiful grounds. The only thorn in their sides there was that they had to endure an hour's counselling session every day, where an opinionated Muggle tried to convince them that there was no such thing as magic, they weren't wizards and it was impossible for anyone to be killed without actually dying, so there was really no such thing as Voldemort either. Lucius was seriously considering a move to the place after his retirement, and Narcissa would have been perfectly happy there if it had been more tastefully decorated.

Epilogue

Sighing, Voldemort unlocked the door of the House That Had Always Been There and let Nagini slither in before him. Absently throwing up the substantial wards on the place (couldn't chance the Potter brat and his sycophants breaking in...after all, being attacked by wizards, even relatively inexperienced ones, was always hell on the furniture), he wandered into the kitchen and made himself a nice hot toddy to take to bed. By the time he got to his bedroom, Nagini had already curled up in her customary spot beside his pillow. He set the toddy down on his nightstand, changed into his pyjamas (dark green with little silver snakes all over) and sat down on the surprisingly comfy mattress.

Admittedly, the Tent Revival had not been an unqualified success. Indeed, much of it had seemed to be a complete disaster at the time. But the sermons had seemed to bring some good results among his followers, and ever since the Crouton Incident, Macnair had been surprisingly obedient. Voldemort briefly considered turning the lot of them into croutons for a day or two, but finally decided against it. After all, he might accidentally put them into his favourite Dark Salad (rhubarb leaves garnished with belladonna with a lovely garlic-and-hemlock dressing; thanks to his horcruxes, Voldemort didn't have to worry too much about such mundane things as being poisoned) and eat them. And as utterly, unforgivably useless as some of his followers were, it would be too much trouble to replace them now. No, better to try to repair their defects. Crabbe and Goyle quite aside, most of them were capable of learning a thing or two, even if it was only a thing or two.

Downing the toddy in one snake-like gulp, he swung his grey legs up onto the mattress and pulled the frilly pink duvet (a gift from Bellatrix...he worried about her sometimes) over himself.

Yes, the Tent Revival had definitely had its merits. Perhaps he would consider making it an annual event...

Author's Notes: So here we are, finally...how long has it been, anyway? I lost the original copy of this chapter months ago and have been trying to reconstruct it ever since; it took a long time for me to tweak it enough to make it as funny as I wanted it to be. I hope you've enjoyed this bit of silliness, and I apologize for the delay.

By the way, did anyone spot the Monty Python reference in this chapter? I can't promise any sort of reward if you did, but let me know anyway, if you like. =)

"Mad Lord Nolvroot" should be recognizable to people who have read "A Change of Name". I thought that the name was just too good not to use it again somewhere. I've no idea where "Nimerick the Nutcase" and "Curzadh the Completely Normal" came from, though; I just needed a couple of odd-sounding names, and there they were. "Hendricus Potter", however, was completely intentional; one of my great-grandfathers was named Hendricus, but when he and his family came to Canada from Holland he anglicized it to "Harry". As for "Jacobus Sneypta"...it's a reference to both James Potter ("Jacobus" is the Latin form of the name "James") and Severus Snape (I read somewhere that "Sneypta" is an older form of "Snape").

About the "dungeon-dwelling heliophobe" thing...at the time that I re-wrote the "Snape and Dolohov tell Voldemort what they've come up with" scene, I'd been re-reading "Diaries of a Dungeon Dwelling Moron" by Gedia Kacela and "Lamentations of a Starry-Eyed Twit" by She's A Star, both found over at Fanfiction.net. I'm not normally a

Snape/Sinistra fan, but these stories have been favourites of mine practically since I joined the fandom. I was looking for a suitable insult for my favourite character at the time (one can only say "greasy git" so many times before it becomes boring), and with a little help from an old favourite story, there it was. =)

"Ooh, ee, ooh ah-ah, ting tang, walla walla bing bang" is from one of my favourite nonsense songs, "Witch Doctor". I'm not sure who actually wrote it, but I've heard several cover versions of it. The one I usually listen to isn't the Alvin and the Chipmunks version, though; it's the one by Sha-Na-Na.

I needed something nonsensical for Yaxley just before he faints, and the first thing that came to mind was "I don't wanna wrestle". I couldn't figure out why it sounded so familiar, but a couple of days after I wrote that bit, I found out why. Turns out it's from "Detour", a fifth-season episode of "The X-Files" that I'd only watched once. I still have no idea why it came to mind when Yaxley fainted, though.

The coma/comma thing is my way of exorcising one of my minor pet peeves. It absolutely ruins a scene for me when a character is described as being "in a comma". I just can't take it seriously. After all, who's ever actually seen a person encased in a punctuation mark?

Once again I've decided to mangle the Latin language to create a spell. "*Elenim Virga is appellunt!*" is supposed to be a Latin translation of "Oh, yes, they call him the Streak", but I'm afraid that the closest I've been able to come is something that might, if I'm *very* lucky, translate to "For indeed they call him the stripe". The original English line is from a song by Ray Stevens called "The Streak"; my mother used to sing it to my brother and I to make us laugh when we were kids.

I am officially declaring any resemblance between the Lockhart look-alike and a certain real-life personality to be completely coincidental.

And that's it. Again, I hope you've enjoyed this story. As usual, when I wrote it, I tried to make myself laugh; I succeeded, and hopefully I got you to chuckle a bit, too! =)