

A Compromising Predicament

by beaweasley2

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*** contains DH Spoilers – sort of ***

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Chapter 1 of 1

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They had reviewed the plan down to the last detail, even though they had so little time when they got the warning. The four of them had arrived just in time to rescue the children, but had been unable to save either parent. The warning had come too late. They had managed to get to the Underground with little fuss, using the red Muggle bus to get to the station, and easily bypassed the mechanical bars with the cards Arthur Weasley had given them. But once in the throng of all the Muggles, they couldn't use any magic spells and had to travel as Muggles or risk getting caught by the Ministry of Magic. At least they had to be careful until they were safely out of the city. Unfortunately, both on the bus and when they had entered the train car, the Muggles definitely took notice of the group, some openly staring at them, most staring, then looking away embarrassedly. Neither the men, nor the woman, knew why. The Order of the Phoenix had planned very thoroughly for these types of rescues when the Muggle Registration Acts were passed. Arthur had even helped select the Muggle clothes. The members of the Order were ready to handle any contingency. Or so they had thought.

The middle-aged man with thick straw-colored hair, wearing a tweed coat over a brightly colored tropical-print shirt and light blue trousers, had shuffled his group to the only

three empty seats in the underground train car. A rather old man in a light blue and white pullover and colorful plaid golf pants quickly sat down next to him. The third man wore a pair of tan cargo trousers, dragon-hide boots and a T-shirt with the logo of a popular Muggle rock band, which would have seemed normal except for his age and the odd purple hat and coat he wore that clashed with the large white skull and bright red gothic text of his T-shirt. He did, however, graciously allow the woman to sit as he braced himself by holding onto the bar by her seat. The woman was the only one that looked somewhat normal, in her long flower-print dress, and therefore, received fewer stares. Each one of them held a child in their arms, except the man in the tweed coat, who had a boy sitting next to him. What seemed to amaze the Muggles, besides their strange attire, was the fact that all the children were sound asleep at that hour of the day. The four members of the Order and their charges had been the center of attention ever since they had arrived. That was until the accident.

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"Oh, this was a grand idea!" Sturgis Podmore, the square-jawed wizard in the tweed coat, declared agitatedly. The lights flashed and flickered in the underground car, threatening to go out, because the section they sat in was leaning slightly off-kilter, after having been knocked off its track. "Thankfully these four grandkids of Caradoc Dearborn are still sound asleep. No thanks to you!" he stated, glaring at Elphias Doge. The eldest child, Bryon, age five, sat slumped against his side, fast asleep. Sturgis wrapped his arm protectively around the boy.

Sitting on the bench next to them, Elphias Doge, the elderly wizard with silver hair, looked up and gave Sturgis an annoyed glare. "Stuff a sock in it," he grumbled as he shifted little Tania in his arms. "I don't want to wake her. She's hard to hold when she gets all squirmy." There was a loud banging caused by some of the Muggle men trying to open a window and the doors. "Wish they'd knock that off, hard to think with that going on," he snapped, annoyed.

"At least Molly's Sleeping Draught is still working," Hestia Jones said softly to her companions. "Poor Debra and her husband the Muggle... What was his name? Cobert? Norbert? Robert that's it. Such a tragedy... At least we have the kids," she said remorsefully, sitting across the compartment, holding a bundled baby cradled securely in her arms. Muggles up and down the car were banging on windows and trying to pull the doors open. A wayward spell had blown the car off the track and jammed all the doors shut in the narrow tunnel. Now all the Muggle passengers were beginning to get anxious.

"Take the under the ground train, Hagrid said," Sturgis complained. "It's a nice safe way to travel with kids... Get us out of the Muggle city easy... If I get my hands on the oaf... I'll..."

"It's not his fault we just need to find a way out of here, that's all," Hestia spoke up nervously. Her usually rosy-pink cheeks were even more flushed than usual. All that could be seen of the six-month-old wrapped in the blanket was his black curly hair, a perfect match to hers. "Really we should just Appar..."

"Are you kidding? With all these Muggles, people here? Are you off your Hippogriff?" Elphias cut her off before she finished the word.

"Hush. I have a Deluminator," Dedalus Diggle suggested, standing next to Hestia. He shifted a sleeping toddler, Ralph, in his arms to reach his pocket, his purple top hat nearly toppling off his head. "One of Dumbledore's got it right here... I could simply put out the lights... Then when the lights go out, we could just leave you know Apparate."

"Do not say magic words! Muggles remember," Sturgis hissed. "No magic words. We don't want these Muggles to get suspicious!" Little Byron stirred and Sturgis looked at the boy a moment and then back to his companions.

"Maybe we should send a Patronus..." Dedalus suggested. Sturgis gave him an exasperated look, which Dedalus ignored as he continued to search in his pockets. Little Ralph wiggled, trying to get comfortable again. "Darn it nearly dropped him. How about just making the thing move?"

"Move where?" Hestia asked. Several Muggles tried to move down the car to try banging on other windows and gather at the doors. Dedalus was jostled into her as the Muggles passed. "Ouch! That's my foot!" she exclaimed in pain.

"Sorry," Dedalus apologized, straightening his hat. "Maybe I could just open the doors and we could walk out?"

"How? We cannot use magic and the doors are jammed. Can't you hear them all complaining?" Hestia reminded him. The exclamations of the Muggles were becoming both comical and vulgar in her opinion. "Sturgis is right. We have to be inconspicuous."

"I still have my wand..." Dedalus stated, giving up on finding his Deluminator as Ralph wiggled slightly. The little tyke freed his arm so that he could suck his thumb.

"*WE* all still have our wands but we cannot use them in here. Not right now! International Statute of Secrecy mean anything to you?" Elphias asked irritably. "We are surrounded by Muggles, and this this is supposed to be a secret transfer. No magic in front of the Muggles none! The Ministry is all over-run with Death Eaters."

"Hence the under the ground train I know." Sturgis threw up his hand and accidentally nudged Byron. "But you broke it!"

"*I DID NOT BREAK IT I SNEEZED!*" Elphias shouted, having said the same thing six times since the accident. Little Tania began to whimper and he turned his attention on the girl.

Little Byron stretched and yawned, and Sturgis gently stroked the boy's hair to settle him down. "Well, when you *sneezed* you must have *said* something, because your wand shot off and did some spell that broke the train car, and now we're stuck," Sturgis stated, exasperated. "Now please, no more magic words."

"McGonagall is going to murder us! This is going to get the attention of the Ministry!" Hestia exclaimed softly, worried. "I'm surprised that the Department of Magical Catastrophes hasn't already been alerted."

"Oh, please," Elphias moaned. "Nelson in the Improper Use of Magic is a friend. He'll..."

"And if Magical Law Enforcement, or one of the Death Eaters, or someone from the Auror Department we don't know, or worse that are on *his* side come then what?" Sturgis snapped at him, trying to control his rising anger.

"There is always Arthur. He could get us out?" Hestia suggested.

"Or Shackbolt no, wait, he's in Kent, isn't he, saving the Wellington kids. How about... Tonks?" Dedalus suggested. He shifted Ralph to his other shoulder. "Merlin, kids get heavy after a while," he mumbled under his breath.

"Brilliant! A train car full of Muggles and a klutzy witch! Them International Statute of Secrecy tracers will all go off and we'll get caught!" Elphias exclaimed, ignoring Dedalus's complaint. "Might as well just Bombarda ourselves out! Oh, wait can't Muggles!"

"I hear wailing do you...? Could be those things Arthur called sirens... Or it could be an Augury cry..." Dedalus asked, ignoring Elphias's sarcastic retort.

"Have you ever heard an Augury cry? Don't sound like them at all. I think those are please-men... Arthur told me about them," Sturgis said and paused to listen to the sirens. "Yep, that is please-men. They will try and get us all out."

"And then the Ministry finds the kids... No thank you. These kids need to be taken to safety, not handed over to the Child Custody Services Social Official... what did McGonagall call them again?" Elphias asked, looking up at Hestia. Flashing colored lights could be seen from the windows.

"Child Social Services," Hestia politely corrected him. "I know. They will look the kids up, find out who these kids are and the Department for Muggle Registration will get them. Not an option," she stated more calmly than she felt. The people in the trapped underground car started yelling, and some were cheering.

"Come on, move to the back," Elphias suggested, nestling Tania tighter in his arms. "When the Muggles are all let out we can Apparate. The confusion will cover our departure."

Sturgis prodded Byron gently. "Come on, son. It's time to go," he said, hoisting the boy in his arms. The four wizards moved to the back of the train car away from the doors. Shouts and grinding could be heard, and more cheers rose from the Muggles trapped inside. Each wizard tried their best to be inconspicuous at the back of the car as the rest of the Muggles scrambled toward the doors. Metal on metal made a screeching sound and the doors opened. The Muggles began shoving and pushing to leave the train car.

Sturgis gave the nod for everyone to draw their wands. "There are four people back there, still stuck in the car. A woman and three men... they have kids with them," someone said from outside. Hestia looked out the window to see a Muggle talking to a man in some kind of stiff-looking uniform.

"Yeah, there are... four of them, I think a family," another man shouted over the noise outside.

"Oh, bless them, they care," Hestia said.

"Let's go we've wasted enough time," Sturgis announced and Apparated with Byron, still sleeping soundly, held tightly against his shoulder. As one, the other three members of the Order Apparated with their charges to the safe house to meet up with Molly Weasley.

Author's Note:

I used the Potter Place Summer 2007 Newly Added Prompt #12: Between two and four witches and/or wizards are stuck in a confined situation with a number of Muggles (e.g., in the London Underground, a cinema, a theatre, a hotel, etc.) because of some unanticipated event (e.g., a power outage, a blizzard, a flood, etc.). For some reason of your choosing, they are unable to Apparate out right away. Why and how did they end up in that predicament; how do they deal with it; and how do they finally get out of it? The main two to four wizards and witches must be canon characters, but they can be any characters of your choosing, and it can be set in any time period.

The canon characters, Sturgis Podmore, Elphias Doge, Hestia Jones and Dedalus Diggle are all Order of the Phoenix members; Caradoc Dearborn, was a member in the first battle. Debra and Robert and their children are my invention.

Having only ridden on the London Underground once I sincerely apologize for any errors I might have made regarding British public transportation...

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Author's Notes:

I owe a big debt of gratitude to Notsosaintly for all her hard work and time in cleaning this story up and making it presentable. Thank you. I appreciate it more than you can know.