

You'll Rebel To Anything

by SS Lupin

Weeks after the battle at Hogwarts, Voldemort comes back with a vengeance, and the heroes of the Second War escape and leave the Wizarding World behind. Magic, however, is persistent in bringing them back.

You'll Rebel To Anything (As Long As It's Not Challenging)

Chapter 1 of 4

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Disclaimer: Don't own; don't sue.

Izzy's Ice Cream Shop is quiet this morning. Carol, the assistant manager, ticks off the items in her mental to do list.

Lock car door – check.

Open shop – check.

Organize payroll – check.

Feeling pleased with herself, Carol breathes a sigh of relief - until she hears a shout and crash outside her office door.

"Shit! The Smith boy bollixed things up again."

Carol leaves the office to be greeted with the sight of a broken window and a shocked Smith covered in ice cream and feathers.

~*~

Binghamton Books should be a paradise for Henrietta and Roland Marsden. The young, bookish Henrietta would always spend her break hours reading from the store's many shelves, and her adoring husband could be found studying for his university night courses or bringing her take away.

One could only imagine the sweet conversations they would hold together, tucked away in the staff room before Roland had his night class and Henrietta had to work her second shift.

"You idiot! How could you possibly forget to write that paper?"

"I don't know – and keep your voice down!" Roland opens a carton of rice and pushes it to the center of the table.

"Maybe it was because I had two other papers and a problem set due today as well."

"If you would just let me help you, then—"

"No, and that's the end of it." He spoons some chicken into his plate and lets the silence grow thick between them.

~*~

"Harder, oh yeah, like that..."

August obliges – to both women above him. He'd never thought himself to be a great lover, but soon after losing his virginity, he'd discovered how wonderful sex could be – and how good he was at it.

When they all finish, August catches his breath for a bit. Then he kisses each girl on the forehead and goes to use the loo.

And almost faints when an old patched Wizard's hat, perched atop the toilet seat, straightens out and asks him if he's enjoying his summer.

~*~

Dr. Peter Simon leans back in his chair and examines his watch. Two minutes until the end of the hour. He watches the couple before him scream at each other for a few more moments, puts his fingertips to his temple, and addresses them.

"Mr. and Mrs. Turner, may I remind you that with every moment you yap like mad dogs, I am adding more appointments into my book, which accrues more payments from you. And while I don't particularly care about your monetary affairs, I do care about my ability to hear. Is that clear?"

The couple looks at each other and proceed to agree on something for the first time since they had wed.

They storm out of the office without leaving their marriage counselor his final check.

~*~

Draco Malfoy looks up from his parchmentwork and holds back a sigh. It's Percy. Again.

"What is it?"

Percy adjusts the collar of his robes as he leans over the partition of Draco's cubicle. "You have time after work?"

Draco shakes his head. "Sorry. I don't," he says, not feeling sorry at all.

After several more attempts of finding a crack in Draco's full to bursting schedule, Percy sniffs and walks away.

Good riddance, Draco thinks and finishes the short list he had been working on. It's a small one – took him the better part of a year to locate the names on it, though.

Satisfied that the person at the top of his list has received his correspondence, Draco checks the name off, spells the list to shred itself into dust, and pulls something out of the pocket of his robes.

It is a matted gray feather, sticking to Draco's fingers and smelling of ice cream.

Author's Note: This is a very last minute entry into Potter_Place's Summer 2007 Prompt Challenge, answering Prompt One:

Post war (Voldemort wins) finds our characters hiding all over the world, disguised as mild mannered... you decide. What happens when magic INSISTS on finding them? Must be cheerfully dark, quirky (no Snape as chemistry professor), and believable. Feel free to let them revolt against Voldy or not.

The title is from an album from Mindless Self Indulgence of the same name. Lyrics to "You'll Rebel to Anything (As Long As It's Not Challenging)" can be found here:

http://www.mindless-self-indulgence.com/lyrics_youll_rebel_to_anything/

Many, many thanks to Southern_Witch_69 for beta-ing this.

What Do They Know?

Chapter 2 of 4

Continuation.

Disclaimer: Don't own; don't sue.

On the fence

The consequence

What do they know

about that?

~*~

John freezes when he sees Carol emerge from her office. He watches her as she takes in the sight before her: a shop void of any customers, her most inefficient employee standing in the middle of a chocolate and pistachio flavored wreckage with broken glass at his feet and some feathers still floating to the floor.

"Jesus, Smith!"

John didn't attempt to feign innocence. "Erm, I suppose I should get the mop—"

"No – I'll get it."

Before she returns, John remembers to stuff the owl's message into his apron pocket.

"I don't know what to do with you, Smith," she says when she comes back, edging past Harry to sweep up the glass closest to the broken window.

John takes off his uniform cap, careful not to muss gel-downed hair. He knows what's coming next.

"You've been working here for how long, Smith?"

"Um..."

Carol stops to count on her fingers. "It's been eight weeks since you came here looking for employment."

John hangs the cap on a wire bowl where several browning bananas rest. "That long?"

"And ever since you started working here, some strange stuff has been happening – power going off in our store and nowhere else, the ice cream still frozen after... you saying nonsense words under your breath – are you doing drugs?"

John shakes his head, though he considers it.

"Doesn't matter anyway." Carol sets the broom aside. "Listen, Smith—"

"Do I have to pick up my last check, or is it coming in the mail?"

She looks down. "Stop by Wednesday after five."

John turns to go, but a conscience from someone long dead speaks up.

"You need help with this mess?"

"Is it going to be like the power going out?"

John nods.

She sighs. "I'll be in my office."

When she enters the shop, after closing her eyes and counting to ten, both the mess and Smith are gone, leaving nothing behind save for his uniform cap and a new window.

~*~

August shuts the door behind him gently and stares at the hat. It doesn't look any different than it did when he got Gryffindor's sword from it three years ago or during any of the other times the Hat has appeared since his escape.

"You are a figment of my imagination," August says calmly, moving to the sink to wash up.

"What happened to the Gryffindor I Sorted?"

August splashes water into his face. Closes his eyes. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Sure you do. And sleeping with all these bints isn't going to change anything – have you even checked yourself for disease?"

"Of course not. There are spells for that sort of thing."

Then August realizes his mistake.

"So you admit it's true!" the hat says.

"Forget it."

"There are spells to get rid of Voldemort, too—"

"Don't say that name!"

"Afraid he'll come after you? I think you're afraid of a lot of things!"

"Shut up!"

The hat's brim curls up into a sneer. "I bet you're afraid for your Gran, too. Merlin knows what has happened over the years—"

August screams so loud that he hears knocking on the door. The Sorting Hat is gone. "You all right in there, luv?"

August leans onto the sink and takes in a few steadying breaths.

"I'll be right out," he says, ready for another go.

~*~

Dr. Simon pushes lank hair away from his face and sticks the Turner file into the rubbish bin when he hears his office door open.

"There isn't much else to do," he says to his receptionist as he straightens his desk.

"Wrong again, Professor."

Simon's head whips up at the figure before him. "Do you have an appointment?"

"No."

"Are you and your partner in a crisis of any sort?"

"I'm not with anyone."

"Then kindly get the fuck out of my office."

"Professor, please! I—"

"You've no right to march in here, demanding things of me."

"He gets more powerful every day."

"Obviously. That's why I didn't stay and fight."

A pause. "The Wizarding World needs—"

"Been there; done that."

"Dumbledore would have—"

"Leave his name out of it!"

"Harry's back."

Simon shook his head. "Impossible. He's dead."

"You're not the only one who's faked his death to hide."

Simon needs another moment to catch his breath. "Spare me any other sentimental tripe you saved for this visit."

"There is a meeting tonight at eight." A piece of parchment flutters onto his desk. "It's under Fidelius."

"And you're the Secret Keeper?"

"Of course."

Simon collapses into his chair and waits until the door closes and he is alone.

Only then does he take the parchment and reads the words.

"I should have bled to death when I had the chance."

~*~

"Henrietta, someone's on the phone."

"Thanks," she says, taking the phone from the girl at the counter. "Binghamton Books, Henrietta speaking. How can I help you?"

"It's about Roland," the voice at the other end says.

Henrietta closes her eyes and leans against one of the bookshelves. "What'd you do to him?"

"Quick to assume he's the victim?" The voice, which Henrietta realizes belongs to a man, laughs again. "Maybe you're the one about to be hurt."

Henrietta's mind races to her second worst fear. "Who's he with?"

"He's going to rendezvous at his school." The voice proceeds to tell her the building and room number. "I'd suggest heading there as soon as you can before they finish. He was never one to last long, was he?"

Henrietta is about to retort, but the caller hangs up.

She leaves the phone at the counter and makes up her mind. Grabbing her purse out of the staff room, she storms out the back door.

~*~

Roland curses under his breath as he makes his way up another flight of stairs. Naturally it was the night he had to think up something to say to his professor about the paper that there was a room change to the seventh floor, and the escapators weren't working.

Red-faced and breathing hard, Roland climbs up to the seventh floor with two minutes to spare. Running through the near empty halls, he finds the new classroom – and Henrietta standing in front of it.

"Who is she?" she says, her voice flat.

"How'd you get here before me?" he asks, dumbfounded. "Wait. Why are you here?"

"I used the elevator. And don't give me that look. Who is she?" she repeats.

"Who are you talking about?" Roland moves to the door. "Listen, I need to get to class—"

"Don't change the subject, Roland Marsden. Is she smarter than me? Prettier?"

It dawns on him. "I'm not cheating on you, if that's what you mean."

"You can't hide it from me now. I know she's in there."

"I'm not cheating on you! This is where I'm having my class, which I'm late for."

"Just tell me the truth!"

"You want the bloody truth? Here it is: I'm going to my class, and when I open this door, you'll see I was right all along."

Only when Roland pushes the door open, he discovers they're both wrong.

"Hello, Granger. Weasley. You're right on time."

Author's Note: Thanks to Southern_Witch_69 for beta-ing this!

Lyrics at the top of the chapter are from the song "What Do They Know?" by Mindless Self Indulgence. The whole of it can be found here:

http://www.mindless-self-indulgence.com/lyrics_what_do_they_know/

Shut Me Up.

Chapter 3 of 4

Revelation.

Disclaimer: Don't own; don't sue.

Henrietta – *fuck it* – Hermione stays silent and stares around her. It doesn't take long for her and Ron to whip out their wands, however.

"We're not going down without a fight," she says, pointing it at Draco Malfoy.

A taller man with short, black hair sighs and pulls out a wand as well.

"This was bound to be a disaster," he says with a long, deep drawl that sends shivers up Hermione's spine.

"Snape?" Ron says, switching his aim to the man.

Yet another man, who was staring at the ceiling, brings out his wand but aims it at no one in particular. Hermione slowly recognizes him as Neville Longbottom – his tanned skin and muscled arms throwing her off – and edges toward Ron.

"What did you do to Neville?" she screeches.

"Would you all please remain calm?" Draco says, brandishing his own wand. "It will only take a few moments—"

The man Ron identified as Snape laughs. Another voice joins him, and Hermione trains her wand at its source.

When she sees the room's final occupant, her wand slips out of her fingers and clatters to the floor.

"Harry? Is that you?"

~*~

It must be hard for Hermione, Harry thought, to take in the sight of a short, overweight ice-cream shop worker with several piercings and too much eyeliner and identify it as her short, underfed, and bespectacled friend from childhood.

He shrugs and says, "Pretty much, yeah."

He's surprised when Ron crosses the room and envelops him into a big hug.

Hermione doesn't take too long to join him, but Harry can feel hesitance in her arms.

"For the love of Merlin, can we finally start the meeting now?"

Hermione steps away from Harry and turns to Malfoy. "You orchestrated all this?"

"Yes, now quiet!" He points his wand to the door, and Harry hears it lock.

"But... why?" Hermione asks.

"Let me get to that!"

Snape puts a hand on Malfoy's shoulder. "I believe that Mr. Malfoy has brought us all here to bring down the regime we escaped from."

Ron stares in disbelief. "You're joking, right?"

"I made your wife come here believing you were having an affair for a joke?" Malfoy shakes his head, then smiles. His teeth are impossibly white and straight, Harry thinks.

"Actually, that *is* rather funny."

"We're not married," Ron says.

That wasn't the first thing Harry thought he would say, and Hermione looks like she feels the same way.

"Excuse me, Ronald?"

"What? I'm telling the truth."

"That self-centered ass insults our relationship, and the first thing you say is that *wearen't married*?"

"Roland and Henrietta are, but not us! When are you going to understand that?"

"What a charming lover's spat," Malfoy says.

"Shut up!" Ron and Hermione shout in unison.

Harry tugs on his lip ring before he speaks. "Even if you did want to bring... him down, why enlist our help?"

"Do you need to ask?"

"Do you need to answer a question with another question?"

"Enough! Both of you. I'm never going to leave if you two keep this up." Snape slides his wand up his sleeve. "What are your plans, Malfoy?"

"Finish the job."

"You want us to *kill* him? He must be mad," Hermione said, her normal skin color returning to her cheeks.

"How else can we defeat him? He'll keep coming back any way he can," Ron objects.

"Simple. We'll make sure we get the job right this time," Draco says. "Look, I've gotten most of him gone. Harry just needs to deal the killing blow. Again."

"If I didn't get it right the first time, what makes you think *this* will work?"

"He's weaker than ever – most of the true Death Eaters have been killed or defected. Only a handful of the old guard are still left."

"What about your parents?"

Neville, looking like he hadn't spent the better part of an hour in a trance, steps over to Malfoy and waits for his answer.

"Father's in hiding. Mother's... not well." Malfoy shakes his head. "Will you do it?"

Harry shoves his hands into his pockets. Ron and Hermione look at each other apprehensively. Neville rubs his nose.

And Snape coughs. Loudly.

"Ah, yes. I am offering a stipend of five thousand Galleons to those involved. Each."

Harry joins the chorus of "yes" that follows.

"Wands in, then."

As Harry puts his out with the others, he notices Hermione walking to where she dropped it, smiling in surprise when it floats into her outstretched palm, and exchanging a look with Snape, his expression amused.

Hermione extends her wand arm into the circle, and Malfoy whispers a few Latin words. Six bands of blue light shoot out of the wands and form a single burst of white. It blinds Harry for a moment, and when he can see again, the light is gone.

"What the hell was that?" Ron says.

"Magical contract," Malfoy says. He pulls some small parchments out of his robes and passes them to everyone. Harry catches his breath when Malfoy hands him one.

"Your new headquarters are at these coordinates. There will be a meeting tomorrow night there, at eight o'clock. Don't be late."

Ron examines the parchment. "This must be wrong. It has to be."

"I assure you that my plans are flawless."

"But... this place... it's my--"

"See you tomorrow, Weasley." Malfoy raises his wand and Disapparates.

"What is it, Ron?" Harry asks.

Ron crumples the parchment in his fist. "It's the Burrow."

Author's Note: Southern_Witch_69 beta'd this. Thanks so much for keeping those commas in line.

Lyrics to "Shut Me Up" can be found here:

http://www.mindless-self-indulgence.com/lyrics_shutmeup/

Molly.

Chapter 4 of 4

Matriarchs and meetings.

Disclaimer: Don't own; don't sue.

They sit at a booth in the pub, all adding a little to the awkward silence that surrounds them.

Harry fidgets with his drink for a while until he finds some relief in playing with his lip ring.

"Ew, Harry, why do you keep doing that?"

Harry lets the ring go with a final pull. "I dunno. Habit?"

"Why'd you get all of them anyway? Didn't they hurt?" Ron takes a deep drink from his pint.

"Well, yeah, but not that much. I got them because, well... I like them." Harry shrugs. "Why did you grow your hair out after the war? Why did Neville get so built?"

Why did Malfoy get so hot?

Harry, blinks, then motions for another drink.

"Yeah, Neville. You look... different."

Neville gives Hermione a weak smile. "I became roomies with a footballer, learned the game. Turns out I'm pretty good at it."

"You got on a team?"

"I played for the Birmingham reserves... got traded to Portsmouth..." Neville shrugs.

"That's amazing, Nev!" Ron grins.

"I thought you didn't care about football," Neville says.

"Can't watch Quidditch on the telly, can you?" Ron says sadly.

"I can't believe I never recognized you when we saw the games," Hermione says.

"We've all changed. I had trouble figuring out who Harry was, I'll tell you that much."

Harry laughs with all of them.

"How many piercings do you have anyway?" Ron says after catching a moment to breathe.

"Just count them, Ronald," Hermione says, slurring the end of his name. "Two on his left ear, one on his right... one on his lip... two on his right eyebrow—"

"Three."

"*Three*, Harry?"

"Well, it's sort of closed now... so two."

Hermione shakes her head as she tallies the figures on her fingers. "And one on his nose, bringing it to... seven."

"Eight."

"But if the other eyebrow one doesn't count..." Hermione looks up.

"It's not on my eyebrow."

Silence visits the table again until Neville giggles and Ron groans aloud.

They burst out laughing once more.

~*~

"Today's been pretty strange, yeah?" Ron says as he collapses into bed.

"Mmm," Hermione agrees, wincing at the jostling of the mattress.

"I can't believe how everyone has changed. Snape's not so greasy-looking—"

No, he isn't, Hermione thinks with a wry smile.

"Nev's more fit than me, and Draco has found the balls to actually do something. Who knew?" Ron kisses Hermione goodnight a little more wetly than she would have liked, rolls over and falls asleep.

Yes, she thinks, everyone has changed except for them.

She keeps to the edge of the bed as she falls asleep.

~*~

Neville tugs on the collar of his shirt as he stands in front of the front door of the Burrow. The only set of robes he owns doesn't fit him now; they are too tight around his shoulders.

One last look over his shirt – slightly wrinkled at the hem – and his jeans – frayed in various places, and he knocks on the door.

Instead of a cheery response from Mrs. Weasley, he hears a gruff voice from behind the faded wood.

"What is your name and business?"

Neville coughs before he answers quietly. "Neville Longbottom. I'm here for a meeting."

"Lies. Neville Longbottom is dead."

"Whoever told you that is mistaken," he says. "Look, what can I do to convince you otherwise?"

Silence answers him. Neville curses Malfoy and his half-baked plan and turns away to Disapparate.

"How does Augusta like her tea?" An almost whisper through the wood.

Neville shakes his head. "Hates the stuff. She'd take a strong cup of coffee laced with whiskey any day, though."

Neville hears a deep laugh from within, then the click of a lock turning. The door opens, revealing a grim-faced Molly Weasley.

"Well, come in, we don't have all day."

Befuddled and worried, Neville follows her into the house. He expects her to make the left turn that will lead them to the kitchen, but instead, she's walking to a door Neville has never seen before.

"Um, Mrs. Weasley—"

She turns around slowly, and Neville has the sudden urge to flee.

"Call me Molly," she says before she trudges down the stairs.

~*~

When they all have gathered, Malfoy begins the meeting.

"I'm sure there's no need for introductions here, but just in case..." Malfoy points out everyone sitting at the table. "Mr. Neville Longbottom, Miss Hermione Granger, Professor Severus Snape—"

"Please refrain from using that title —"

"Mr. Arthur Weasley, Miss Ginevra Weasley, Mrs. Molly Weasley, Ron Weasley—"

"Hey!"

"Myself," he says with an upward tilt of his eyelids, and..." Malfoy turns to face him. "Our illustrious hero, the great Harry Potter."

Harry glares at Malfoy, but the effect is ruined by the quirk of Malfoy's pink lips as he continues.

"We are all here to continue the job that should have been finished three years ago, as agreed upon through magical contract."

"Are we the only ones?" Hermione asks.

"Do you think I'd put all my Ashwinder eggs in one cauldron?" Malfoy scoffs. "I have other operatives working elsewhere."

"So why don't you use them to finish the job?" Ron interjects.

"As much as I loathe to say it, you are the best. And Potter's the only one who can kill him."

Harry tugs on his lip ring. "What makes you think I can do it this time? It didn't work before."

"You know the magic of wands is a tricky business. During the battle at Hogwarts, when you came up with that theory—"

"It was not ridiculous!" Harry says, even though he can't really remember the logic behind his *Expelliarmus*.

"Obviously it was, since Voldemort is prancing about in the Minister's office as we speak!"

Molly, who was observing the meeting with a bored detachment, slaps her palm on the table.

"If you don't get a move on, I may have to do something drastic."

Harry mutters, "Sorry," and Draco pales significantly.

"I am not faulting you for fighting," he says with a shaky voice. "We just need to get it right this time."

"And how are you going to do that?" Ron asks, wary of the woman sitting at his side.

"You're about to find out," Malfoy says with a dangerous grin.

Author's Notes: Hi everyone! I know it's been a long time since this has gotten an update, but I expect this fic to be finished in by the end of Spring. I am also planning to continue "Recovery" -- it's definitely not abandoned. :-)

Many thanks to Southern_Witch_69, who beta'd this.

Lyrics to "Molly" can be found here (though this song would be better appreciated when listened to):

http://www.mindless-self-indulgence.com/lyrics_molly/