

A Pair

by electronicquillster

Sometimes what you want is in front of your eyes before you realize it. Sometimes you realize it before you're ready for it, and just because you realize it, doesn't mean that everyone around you will realize it, too. Victoire Weasley and Teddy Lupin have their insecurities, but they also have the potential to be something great.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Author's Timing Note: I have absolutely no confidence in JKR's math skills. So, for this story, Teddy is about to start his seventh year, and Victoire her sixth. If that is too much of a problem.... Don't read it, I suppose? I couldn't handle trying to figure out why Teddy would possibly have a relationship with someone still going to Hogwarts when he was nineteen the spring before the epilogue takes place. And it could totally be, as I implied, JKR's ability to mess up timelines (for example the Gryffindor Quidditch team in reference to... everything about the Gryffindor Quidditch team, including Charlie, Gryffindor's losing streak, and Oliver discovering Katie Bell in what appears to have been her first year when Harry's the first first-year on the team in 100 years). And that is the end of my timeline justification ramble.

The soft humming caught her attention, and Victoire Weasley paused with her fingers poised to snatch another apple for her basket. She hadn't realized the rest of her cousins had retreated to other parts of the orchard (or skivved off the task altogether). It was rather pleasant humming that was meeting her ears, and a smile broke across her lips in spite of the August heat and soreness in her arms from hard work. Victoire tilted her head to the side, and from this angle she could look through the branches and catch sight of the only person left with her.

Teddy Lupin, Hummer of Pleasant Melodies.

Revelations hung in the air, drifting down with the light that streamed through the branches of the apple trees. Teddy Lupin, though he was treated as such by all the Weasleys, was, in fact, not family. He was very handsome with an admirable build. Teddy Lupin had also always been a rather decent bloke, very smart, and kind to those around him. Victoire thought maybe she ought to investigate Teddy Lupin more thoroughly.

Victoire tucked the strawberry blonde strands of hair that had escaped the knot at her neck behind her ears and then reached for another apple.

"Teddy," she called out, dropping the apple into her basket.

"Yes?" The humming stopped abruptly.

"Hi."

There was an awkward pause, then a hesitant, "Hi," in reply.

Victoire saw him look out of the corner of his eye in her direction in a questioning way, and she grinned. She put another apple into her basket.

"Did you want something, Victoire?" he asked a minute later.

She moved out from behind the branches to look at him properly. "I just wanted to say hello."

"Well, you didn't."

"What?"

"You said 'hi,' not 'hello.'"

Victoire's eyes narrowed, and she moved back into the leafy cover of the tree. He was foiling her plan.

"Aw, Victoire, I was only joking."

She didn't reply. She plopped another apple into her basket, harder than she should have.

"I'm sorry for patronizing you," Teddy tried sincerely.

A smile flitted to the corners of her mouth again. Teddy had always been too nice. "You could have been in Hufflepuff, you know."

"And you could have been in Slytherin."

She scoffed in protest.

"I meant to pay you a compliment," he explained hurriedly. "My grandmother was in Slytherin. Plus, I've seen you in action scheming against your cousins before."

"What were you humming?" she asked, changing the subject. She felt guilty for making Teddy feel like he had to apologize or explain himself.

"Oh. It's, uh... The Avada Kedavras."

"*What?*"

"I know, I know. It's, er... not the best name for a band, but they're this really great new rock group. They've been getting a bit of air time on the Modern Music Network."

"Maybe I'll have to tune in a little more often and catch them," she said.

"I *definitely* recommend it," he responded. "They're really great. I already said that. It's just that they've got their own sound, not like everyone else, and it's really nice to have something different, especially because they're..."

"Really great?"

"Yeah." He had ducked his head slightly, and Victoire could see a streak of red appearing in his sandy brown hair.

Victoire smiled more to herself. She plucked half a dozen more apples for her basket, then stretched her tired arms above her head, arching her back. "You finished, Teddy?"

"Yeah, I think this will do. What about you? Do you want me to levitate your basket back for you?"

Victoire moved again to where she was unobscured by the branches, giving him her most beautiful smile. "I was hoping you would offer."

Teddy was already of age and could do magic, but Victoire still had to wait until February before she could do magic outside of school. With a double flick of his wand, Teddy hoisted both of their baskets into the air and turned towards The Burrow. Victoire quickly joined him and laced her arm through his. Evidently he wasn't expecting that because one of the baskets swayed, and a couple of apples toppled out. Victoire laughed, though not condescendingly, and stooped to pick up the fallen fruit.

Now that she was close to him, she could detect the faint blush that was growing on his cheeks. She didn't draw attention to it. She didn't want him completely flustered and uncomfortable around her. That would do her no good. It would be amusing, sure, but only at his expense. "Are there any other new bands I should be aware of?"

It was something she knew he could talk about without feeling too uncomfortable, and she didn't reach for his arm again. If she wanted to have him, she'd have to work on him a little at a time so as not to scare him away. Before long, they were in the cooler sanctuary of the kitchen where her grandmother was just placing a pitcher of fresh lemonade on the table.

"Oh, look at those lovely bushels of apples! Thank you, dears. Teddy, if you'll just put them over there on the counter." Molly waved her hand over at an empty spot. "Come have a drink, you two. I'm guessing you're the only ones who completed your apple-picking task?"

"Looks like it," Victoire said, pouring two glasses of the cool liquid for her and Teddy as she sat at the table.

"Well, thank you, again, dears. Teddy, you look rather flushed. Did you get too much sun on your face? I have a good cream for sunburns. I'll just fetch it for you." Molly bustled out of the kitchen to get a cream that wouldn't help the red on Teddy's face.

Yes, Victoire decided that getting closer to Teddy was an intriguing and worthwhile pursuit. She would just have to work slowly and carefully so as not to break him or have him constantly blushing.

At Hogwarts it became apparent to Victoire why she'd never thought about liking Teddy before. It was simple: she almost never saw him unless she made a conscious effort to. He was a year ahead of her as well as a member of a different house. Even though they were both in the Duelling Club, they had their own friends. At meals, Teddy sat two tables away with the rest of Ravenclaw House. Rumor had it that the Ravenclaw common room had a very extensive library of its own, so the members of its house didn't even wander out to the school library as often as everyone else.

However, Victoire did spend extra time a few nights a week in the library because, occasionally, she did catch Teddy there. He was by himself whenever he did appear there, as was she, and they'd share a table and a little bit of conversation for an hour or two.

Usually studying by herself in the library served more as an annoyance. The library was one of the few places members of all four houses could mingle. So, understandably, there were many other students doing just the same thing she was doing: pretending to study, but mostly looking out for those particular people they wanted to see. It was understandable, yes, but it didn't make it any less annoying to be surrounded by simpering, whispering girls and preening boys.

At least by pretending to do all this extra studying some of it stuck and she was reaping the rewards of higher marks.

Victoire watched two girls walk up and down the same three rows of books, shooting coy looks at a boy nearby, retreating around the corners, and silently...only not-so-silently...giggling their knickers into knots.

"Is it often that you growl at the other people in the library?" Teddy whispered and slipped into the chair next to her. Victoire felt a small flutter in her stomach when he grinned at her.

"Was I really growling?"

Teddy laughed. "You didn't know?"

"I think I was concentrating too much on glaring at them," Victoire conceded.

"You know, half the Ravenclaws don't study as much as you seem to," Teddy said, opening his Transfiguration book.

Victoire didn't say anything.

"Oh, I didn't mean to imply that you need the extra studying," he rushed, a streak of red appearing in his hair. "I'm sorry, Victoire. I just meant..."

"I didn't think you meant it that way, Teddy. Don't worry."

"I just meant to say you come here more than I can stand to."

Victoire tucked her hair behind her ear. "Isn't that almost blasphemy coming from the lips of the Head Boy?" she teased.

He rolled his eyes, still grinning. "Head Boys don't study," he mockingly insisted as he pulled out his Transfiguration book. "They snap their fingers and get O's on all of their N.E.W.T.s."

Victoire tried to chuckle as silently as possible. "So you just abuse your position and pull strings to get the good marks, then?"

Teddy gaped for a second. "No, I meant that I'm really not smart. I mean," he seemed to be stumbling slightly over his words, the telltale red streak growing more prominent in his hair, "I am smart, but I was just joking that I was stupid, not to say that I'm the *most* smart..."

"Kidding, Teddy." Victoire bit her lip to keep from laughing outright and nudged him reassuringly. "I knew you were kidding, and so was I. I know you're very smart and work hard."

Teddy hung his head slightly. "I always say the stupidest things around you, Victoire."

Victoire let her fingers brush over his arm for a moment and said, "Trust me, the stupidest thing you could say is going to be smarter than *anything* that will ever come out of Trevor Berk's mouth."

This made them both laugh. Poking fun at the endearing, yet empty-headed Gryffindor Beater seemed to put Teddy completely at ease again, even though they received a sharp glare from the passing librarian. The two quickly bent over their books to feign seriousness.

She remembered what she was thinking in that moment and part of what she wished she had said. She knew in that moment that she and Teddy were truly compatible and that she genuinely enjoyed his company.

As they packed up their things and left the library for the night, Victoire only had one complaint: Teddy didn't seem to see her as anything more than another one of the Weasleys.

Victoire couldn't remember a more enchanting evening, and that was obviously saying something, since she'd been around magic her entire life.

Her Uncle Harry and Aunt Ginny had a beautiful house, large enough for the entire Weasley clan and more to come to. This time it was for New Year's Eve. The party was lit entirely by fairies, and the effect of it was mesmerizing. There were hundreds of them, floating around, casting soft light upon the guests. It was difficult to find people because the dim light made it so easy to blend in. Victoire and Teddy had agreed to meet up again near the grandfather clock in the entryway after a few minutes, and she was weaving her way silently through the other guests to get there. Part of her strawberry blonde hair was swept up, falling in perfect, soft, curled waves onto her shoulders, contrasting beautifully with the green dress robes she was wearing. She wouldn't deny that she had taken extra care in getting ready for this party.

Her attention was caught when she heard her name. She paused and whipped her head around to the left.

"Sorry, what, dear?" It was her Uncle Harry.

"You heard very well what I said," Aunt Ginny replied.

"What I *thought* I heard you say was that Teddy and Victoire were spending a lot of time together tonight."

"That's not quite what I said, Harry. I said they seem to be inseparable tonight."

Victoire grinned. It was true, and she was loving every moment of it.

"What do you think about it?" Ginny asked.

Victoire moved closer, glad for the large arrangement of flowers between them to hide behind.

"I think..."

"*There* you are!"

Victoire jumped as someone grabbed her shoulder.

Teddy chuckled in her ear. "It's not nice to eavesdrop, you know."

"Don't scare me like that," she scolded, hitting him lightly on the chest.

"Who were you listening to?"

"How did you even find me? I can hardly see anyone in here."

Teddy pulled her along, away from Harry and Ginny. "It's not that difficult to spot you, Victoire. You stand out against the crowd. Now come on."

He led her to the side of the room and swept quickly behind one of the long curtains of the window. Victoire was puzzled, but followed immediately. "What in the world are we doing here, Teddy?"

He grinned, rummaging in his robes for something. "We're going to enjoy the properties of mistletoe, of course. It's a party, isn't it?"

Victoire's jaw dropped slightly, and a thousand butterflies began a mad frenzy in her stomach. This was completely unexpected, even though she wanted to kiss Teddy very badly.

He pulled the mistletoe out and held it in his hand while he pointed his wand at the curtain they were hiding behind. She could still feel it hanging against her right side, the coolness of the window on her left, but now she could see through the curtain as if it weren't there. This was nothing like Victoire was expecting. With a swish and a flick of his wand, Teddy muttered, "*Wingardium Leviosa*," and the mistletoe rose into the air, merely hovering until Teddy moved his wand, directing it upwards, over Victoire's head, and then out from behind the curtain.

Victoire watched, perplexed, as Teddy concentrated on steering the mistletoe around above the crowd around them. "Perfect," he whispered. "Now watch this..."

Teddy proceeded to let the mistletoe drop and nudge two unsuspecting strangers who looked utterly shocked. Unfortunately for them, the few people around them who noticed wouldn't let them break holiday tradition, strangers though they turned out to be.

Though Victoire didn't enjoy the properties of mistletoe with Teddy the way one would have expected that evening, she enjoyed watching their mistletoe surprise numerous people. Victoire had to put up a silencing barrier around them so they could laugh without being caught. They laughed so much her sides were sore, and her cheeks were sore from smiling so much.

At the end of the evening, her heart was a little sore, too. She was happy, but there was still that acute yearning for something more with Teddy.

It was only to be expected that returning from the holidays would mean less time with Teddy again, but that certainly did not mean Victoire had to like it. She was glad to see the notice on the board in the common room that there would be a Duelling Club meeting after dinner the next evening, the first day of classes. Victoire was determined she was going to take some initiative and partner with Teddy, even if she had to hex his friends out of the way or her own friends, for that matter. She could tell them outright that she fancied Teddy, but she didn't exactly want to hear about it constantly from them.

The whole day proceeded rather slowly, but, again, she didn't expect it to be any different.

Dinner was fine, but she was eager to get to the Duelling Club meeting. She left the table a minute or two before her friends, hoping to be able to be in the Duelling Hall early enough to catch Teddy when he got there. She slipped between a couple of groups of Hufflepuffs milling around the Entrance Hall and then went up the stairs. She turned when she heard someone dashing up the stairs behind her.

Her face lit up when she realized it was Teddy. No one made her smile like Teddy could now. "Hey!"

"Hey," he said, catching up with her. "You're on your way to Duelling Club, right?"

"Yes."

"Of course. I knew that. You never miss Duelling Club. Not that I take mental note of who's attending, I just know you like it. Well, you do like it, yeah?"

Victoire laughed, "Yes, of course I like it."

"Ugh, I'm rambling stupidly again."

Victoire just grinned as they made their way down the corridor.

"I'm beginning to think you've put some sort of unfair hex on me, just to torture me. I don't carry on like this around anyone else."

Victoire shrugged her shoulders. "There's no way you can prove whether or not I performed any such hex."

"Maybe we'll have to spend more time together to see whether or not it's some sort of enchantment."

Victoire's eyes widened slightly, and she didn't say anything, only continued walking along next to him.

"Stupid again, I'm sorry," he said.

"Oh, no, no, it's not that, it's just..." *That that is exactly what I want, and I'm shocked and thrilled that you want it to?*

"Look, Victoire," Teddy began, breaking off his steps, "I just mean to say that I liked being around you over the holidays. We've never been very good friends before, but now that we are, I want it to continue, if that's all right with you. There was so much I wanted to talk to you about today, and I couldn't because you weren't around."

"Oh." Friendship. Better than nothing, and she *wanted* to have him as her friend, too. Over the holidays that had become something she loved and counted on. Being his friend was important, and... It could always lead to more later. "Well, tell me all about what I missed today. It isn't my fault you're a year older, anyway."

In that moment, Victoire was so caught up in her own thoughts and feelings that she didn't notice the streak of red in his hair.

"It's your fault you're a year *younger*, though."

Victoire scoffed. "I don't think so. It's not as if I could really control any of that." Victoire blinked. "Ugh, I really don't want to think about any of that in relation to my parents."

Teddy laughed, and they continued down the corridor again.

"Anyway, tell me your stories."

"Right, well, it started in Potions. Honestly, I don't know what Geardy was thinking..."

At dinner, Teddy had suggested they go out for a fly before curfew. The spring was tempting them with an almost warm, sunny March day, and who were they to refuse the enticement of it when they were so eager to be done with winter for the year? So they finished their meal a little early and went their separate ways to collect their brooms with arrangements to meet in the Entrance Hall to go out. When Victoire descended the stairs, she immediately spotted Teddy, sporting extremely short hair as he always did when flying. He was shifting his weight impatiently from one foot to the other. His face brightened as she approached him.

"It's the perfect blustery day outside. Excellent for flying."

Victoire couldn't help giggling.

"What?" he asked.

"I just love that you say 'blustery' is all." Teddy looked ready to defend his vocabulary's honor, but Victoire tugged the end of his scarf, pulling him along. "Let's get going; the sun is already setting."

He fell into step with her, and they wove through the various groups of students, catching bits of conversation as they passed, but not caring, of course.

"...can't believe what she was wearing..."

"...wish he would just die, except he already has. I'm pretty sure he's trying to kill the rest of us with boredom..."

"...no way they'll run that pattern Saturday in the game..."

"...says things with the French would be better if Bill Weasley weren't so biased by his wife."

Victoire stopped dead and whipped her head to the side. It was an absolute impossibility that Sam Read could know anything of the intricacies of delicate ties between the British and French magical governments. Victoire herself wouldn't even know if her father weren't Kingsley Shacklebolt's appointed ambassador to the French. If Sam thought he could say *anything* about politics...

"Hey," Teddy called after her. "Hey, hey, hey." He caught up with her quickly, grabbing her arm to stop her and pull her back. "Stop, Victoire."

"But did you hear what he...?"

"Yes, but does it *really* matter what he said? What he thinks? Is it worth it for you to care enough to hex him and get yourself in detention?"

It was only then that Victoire realized her wand was raised. The outraged look on her face softened only slightly into a glare. The few people immediately around them skirted uncomfortably past and averted their eyes.

"Does he matter at all, Victoire?" Teddy asked again.

She sighed. Teddy let go of his grip on her arm and tugged her hand, pulling her back toward the door out to the grounds. "Come on," he urged. "You need a good fly."

Saturdays were good days for Victoire. Sundays, though equally as relaxing, were always overshadowed by the threat of Monday morning pressing down upon the weekend.

After a glorious lie-in, Victoire got ready and went down for a late breakfast with Lydia and Jillian, two of her dorm mates and closest friends. After the initial flurry that ensued over Victoire's revelation that she liked Teddy, her two friends had settled into supportive roles that were neither too pushy nor too teasing, and Victoire was grateful for that. Lydia was stolen away en route to the Great Hall by her boyfriend Will Wickham, which left Victoire and Jillian to meander along by themselves, occasionally passing other Gryffindors going to and from breakfast.

There was a great swell of noise coming from the fourth floor, which was where the library was. When they got to the landing on the fourth floor, there was a large group gathered together around something or someone, many of them laughing or jeering.

Jillian and Victoire exchanged a look and then pressed forward into the throng of people. Victoire lost track of Jillian, but she was able to press her way almost to the front of the crowd, close enough to see what was going on. Two of the Slytherins in her year, Montgomery and Winters, were mercilessly picking on a girl Victoire thought was Jim Birmingham's younger sister Debbie, a third year in Gryffindor. They were saying terribly embarrassing things, and the girl was scrambling around on the floor, crying and trying to gather up her belongings, which were strewn all over.

Where were the teachers? Where were the Prefects? Why wasn't anyone doing anything for this poor girl?

People kept pressing in around Victoire, but no one broke out of the crowd to step forward and defend the little Birmingham girl. Terrible jostling and jeering, and no end in sight.

Then, someone was at her shoulder, pushing through with a purpose. He looked at her twice, anger in his eyes.

"Victoire, why aren't you doing anything?"

Teddy's words were like a bucket of icy water flooding into her stomach, and she tried to open her mouth to say something, but found she had nothing to say.

Teddy broke through the throng of people, wand drawn, and Petrified Montgomery and Winters. She couldn't process what he was saying; all that registered was that he was yelling at the bullies and then scolding the crowd that had gathered, sending them all on their way. Victoire didn't move, and people filtered quickly around her and away from the scene.

Teddy helped to gather up Debbie's things and helped her up, offering her a handkerchief. He was speaking quietly enough that Victoire couldn't hear, but it seemed he was insisting on escorting her to the Hospital Wing to see Madam Pomfrey about a cut on her arm. Victoire finally stepped forward. "Can I help?"

"It's a little late to offer assistance now," Teddy replied shortly, putting his arm around the young girl and leading her in the direction of the Hospital Wing. "It's not really needed anymore." His tone was biting, and he wouldn't even look at her.

"Teddy?"

"I can't believe you stood there and did nothing, Victoire." He turned his head to look at her briefly, and the look he gave her was painful. "I thought you were better than that."

"I..."

"Save it." Teddy shook his head and continued down the corridor, refusing to look at her anymore.

Victoire was paralyzed with guilt and hurt. She felt a hand on her shoulder and knew it was Jillian, but she now needed to get away, and quickly. She left Jillian behind, almost running back to Gryffindor Tower. She ignored everyone she passed, flung herself through the portrait hole as someone else left the common room, and dashed up to her dormitory.

Bitter tears stung her eyes and quickly began streaming down her face. She flung the door shut behind her and flung herself against it, barricading out the rest of the world. Her inaction in the situation shouldn't have bothered her. Maybe she would have felt a little guilty, but it would have been nothing to this agony. She was hurting from being humbled, but she was more miserable because of who had humbled her. She was angry that she cared so much about what his opinion of her was. When had that happened? When had every action begun to revolve around him? She hated it. She hated how much it hurt to have him think badly of her. The disappointed look in his face was unbearable, and she couldn't get it out of her mind. She sunk to the floor in a heap and sobbed, heart aching as much as her throat.

What hurt the most was watching him walk away, disappointment radiating from him.

Her stomach was full of hot guilt because she hadn't done anything at all to help little Debbie Birmingham and because she wasn't even sure she would have felt guilty if Teddy hadn't been there. Would she have merely continued to stand by and watch? She was ashamed and felt so worn and torn up inside. She had to fix this, and not just to look good in Teddy's eyes. He may be the spark right now, but she knew she could be a better person, and it was time to simply *be* that better person. No more excuses, no more waiting for others to step up. It was time for her to be a true Gryffindor.

After lying on the floor for the rest of the morning until all her tears were spent, Victoire knew she had to get up and face all of this mess. She washed her face, but puffy,

miserable-looking eyes still stared back at her in the mirror. She took a deep breath and squared her shoulders, then left the refuge of her dormitory, determined, finally, to pull up her courage and face her earlier display of cowardice.

She started by going to the Hospital Wing. She didn't know Debbie at all, but she owed her an apology for her inaction. Debbie seemed touched that Victoire apologized, but it was an awkward conversation that didn't leave Victoire feeling any better or worse. She sighed and wiped a small tear off her cheek as she opened the Hospital Wing doors to leave.

Her next intention was to go and find Teddy. However, she didn't have to because there he was, not two meters away.

Her heart dropped, and she looked quickly away from him, biting her lip.

"Hey," he said.

"Hey," she managed to reply. Her heart was racing in the agony of the moment.

"What were you doing?" Teddy finally asked.

Victoire raised her head a little, unable to look at Teddy, but at least lifting her gaze from the floor. "I was apologizing to Debbie Birmingham."

"Oh."

Silence engulfed them. Victoire began to wring her hands slightly. "Look, Teddy, you were right this morning. I should have done something, and I didn't, and I feel terrible about it." Teddy didn't say anything, and so she took a quick, deep breath before continuing. "What hurts even more is that I let you down. I can't stand having you think badly of me."

Teddy stepped forward. "Victoire, I may have been harsh..."

"No, Teddy, you weren't." She looked directly at him now. "I deserved to hear everything you said."

"I didn't mean to hurt you."

"Don't apologize to me when I was the one who did something wrong. I disappointed you, and I just hope that I can be better, be the friend that you need me to be."

Teddy shook his head slightly. "Victoire, I don't know what to say."

"You don't have to say anything."

In a split second, Teddy stepped forward again, took Victoire's face in his hands and kissed her for a long moment. Victoire's heart leapt, and she was about to melt into him when he pulled away.

"That's what I want to say."

"Oh." Victoire felt a little breathless.

"Yes." His hands were still cupping her face, but he seemed to be waiting.

Victoire wasn't quite sure what to say now, so she didn't say anything. She didn't move either the moment felt so fragile. Her head and heart were racing.

"Is that alright?" he asked, looking truly worried in that instant.

"It's perfect." She placed her hands over his. "You're my best friend, Teddy, and I love you."

Teddy smiled and brought her lips to his again.