

Burning Day The Beginning of the End

Disclaimer: The characters belong to JK Rowling, unless you happen to not recognise one, which means that it's probably mine. On the other hand, I might have borrowed a lesser known character from her, so you never can tell, can you?

If I own any of this, then it would be my take on the plot. (Except for the concept of Butter Rum, which I shamelessly stole from ... uh, am using as a tip of the hat to UdderPD.)

Note: If you are coming into this story and have not read Like a Phoenix from the Ashes (also to be found on this site), then you will want to go back and read that one first. It's not required, but there will be comments made and relationships referred to that will make a great deal more sense to you if you start there, and then come here to read this one.

It was a beautiful day on the island, but that could be said for all of them. Even when it rained it was a beautiful warm rain, perfect for long romantic strolls that sometimes led to gentle lovemaking under the stars.

This particular day had quite a few adults and several children on a veranda overlooking the ocean. "I would not have believed that I could say this, but this is definitely the life," said the second tallest of the group. His long black hair was pulled back, and one of the ladies was actually doing a loose braid. "Thank you, Pansy," he said.

"You're welcome," the black-haired beauty said as she finished, leaning forward and kissing the tan Potions Master on the cheek. She was just starting to show on her second pregnancy. "We've got a spell that can do it as well, but it's nice to have your hair touched by a human sometimes."

"Yes, quite relaxing," Severus said. "Again, thank you." He took a long drink from the mug before him before setting it down with a very satisfied look. "What did you say this drink is, Harry?"

Harry smiled as he put down his own mug. "It's Butter Rum." He shook his head. When he started again, it sounded as if he'd changed the subject. "I can't believe that it's taken me this many years to get through all the papers and ... well, to be honest, *crap* that both Sirius and my parents left me. All those Dark Books in the Black Vault? Yeesh. If it weren't for the fear that someday might need those as a reference on how to *break* said curses, I'd have had all those destroyed. But as for the drinks, I discovered about six months ago that the Potters had owned a rum production company in the Barbados. It was still a going concern, but not doing well, since the people running it at the time were more concerned with having a name that meant it was expensive than they were with actually getting it out there so that people could be drinking it." He shook his head. "Needless to say, that team no longer works for me. But while I was ... we were, to be honest ... while the tour was taking place, we ended up in research and development. After convincing the people in there that I was really the owner, I was introduced to this drink - a non-alcoholic alternative to Butterbeer. It should be hitting all the wizarding establishments within a month, if it's not already there."

"You will most definitely be wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice," Albus added with a smile. "This beverage is possibly the most delicious non-alcoholic drink I have ever tasted."

"We'll have to introduce you to some of the more interesting Muggle drinks, sir," Hermione said.

"Now Hermione, what have I told you?" Albus admonished.

"Yes, sir ... Albus," she replied, blushing. "It's difficult, though. I'm so used to treating you with the respect you deserve."

"By that logic, dear lady, I should be calling you Mrs Potter, rather than Hermione, for you were involved in a terrible battle that few else could begin to understand."

"You've made your point," she said with a small chuckle.

"I've thought of suggesting to R and D that they should work on wizarding equivalents to other Muggle alcohols, but I draw the line at drinking Butter Scotch," Harry said with a laugh. "Probably every single Muggleborn would react the same way." At the puzzled looks from those raised in the wizarding world, he held up his hand and made an odd movement. A small wrapped candy appeared in his hand, and he handed it to Albus. "One of the best butterscotch candies out there. Most muggleborns would think of this flavouring if a drink came along with the same name." Albus popped it into his mouth and gave silent approval to the candy moments later, losing years from his countenance as he savoured the small candy.

"Enough about my business prospects, though," Harry said. "We're here to enjoy the sand and the surf, watching our children cavort. Thank you again for that sneaky little aversion field, Albus. We haven't had a worry about them drowning when our backs are turned."

"Quite all right, my boy. They are my grandchildren, if you will. Don't forget Severus's part in the casting."

"I wouldn't dream of forgetting Uncle Severus," Harry said quite seriously. "If you had told us in the middle of fifth year that I would not only bury the hatchet with my most hated professor, but that I would also invite him to live on an island that I own *and* ask my children to call him Uncle Severus -"

Severus barked out his own laughter. "Quite. I likely would have looked at the individual telling us such news and asked them exactly where they had purchased their pharmaceuticals, because they quite obviously had purchased badly brewed lot."

Susan stood and kissed the man's cheek. "Aren't you glad to have children that like you around, though?"

"Much to my eternal surprise, Susan, I have to answer you 'Yes'. It is quite likely that the mere existence of my old lord and master was the underlying cause of my mood through your school years. Having the son of my worst enemy decide to 'bury the hatchet', as the phrase has been said, has done wonders for my mood as well." He looked to Harry. "I know that I have said it to you before, and you have told me that it is unnecessary, but I disagree. I thank you for being the bigger man and forgiving me my childishness. I see in you what your father James likely would have become, which is why I accepted the apology for his actions from you. I thank you for being willing to be my friend."

Harry smiled. "Yeah, we've travelled this road before. I understand your need to thank me, but it's not necessary. I've been there, growing up, Dudley chasing away anyone who might have thought of being friendly to me, so when I was finally adult enough to realise a few things, and realised that you had made the first overtures of peace, I couldn't *not* offer you the hand of friendship." He paused. "There. Think that satisfies the need for effusive 'thank yous' for another year?" Severus merely grinned his reply and took another drink from his mug.

Albus was about to speak when the permanent Floo in the middle of the table flared green, and Ron Weasley's head appeared. "Harry?"

"Yo," Harry said, to the rolled eyes of his wives. "What's up, Ron?"

"Mind if I visit you guys? I need to bring Percy along with me, though, because he's got some disturbing news I think you need to hear."

"Bring who you want. I assume that we'll see you in a bit?"

"Yeah. Give us about half an hour. Daph's just gotten back from her meeting, and I need to get Percy a little more calmed down. He's hyperventilating over the concept of talking to you." This last was punctuated with a small laugh.

"I'd think he'd be hyperventilating at the concept of seeing four extremely sexy women topless. Five, if Daphne decides to join the others. Seriously, should we dress to make him more comfortable?"

"Nah," Ron answered. "Either he'll freak out over it, be so worried about your reactions that he doesn't notice it, or not give a damn." He blinked. "If it's the last, I'll just roll him over and cover him with dirt, 'cause he's undoubtedly died and not noticed it."

"Especially if Daphne's running around topless. My ladies are better looking, I think, but you would have to be dead not to notice that your wife could easily grace the pages of Playwizard."

"What's that say for Pansy and the rest?" Ron agreed with a smile.

"That I am the luckiest man in existence to have four goddesses grace my life with not only their love but with children?"

"Excellent answer," Albus said with a laugh, to which Ron agreed before ending the connection.

"I wonder what the 'disturbing news' is?" Luna asked. "It's obvious that it must be something from within the Ministry, because Father would have told us if it was something brewing in the regular wizarding world, especially with Lorelei visiting with him right now."

"We'll see," Harry said. "Probably wanting to blame me for something. After all, it's been five years since the downfall of Riddle. Plenty of time for the people to have decided I'm to blame for something."

"Why do you think I haven't set foot in England since I moved here?" Severus drawled. "I might have become much more of a human being, but I do not wish to subject myself to the average witch or wizard."

"You're much better suited for teaching students that you know are interested in the subject you're teaching," Hermione said. "I understand that somewhat. I'm not a good teacher for the average student, because I expect that everyone studies as much as I do, and that's simply not the case."

"Plus," Severus added, "the average student comes into Potions with the general attitude that they need the class for this or that career. I teach best the student that takes the class because the love of brewing is in their blood; a part of their psyche; something that they will learn, no matter who the teacher."

"Which describes me not at all," Harry said with a laugh. "I've never been drawn to it, although I did show a remarkable ability to *use* your potions throughout my school career."

"Yes, well playing Quidditch the way you did tended to make that somewhat likely," was the amused response.

Cries of "Uncle Ron!" from the two oldest still on the island made them look up to see four redheads walking toward them - two male and two female. The taller of the two girls was gloriously unclad from the waist up, while the other wore enough to satisfy the needs of modesty.

Harry stood and walked toward them. "Ron, good to see you again. Ginny, it's good to see you too. More than a year since we last saw you, wasn't it?" Ginny nodded with a smile. He turned to the taller redhead. "Mrs Weasley, it's good to see you as well."

"Especially as much as you're seeing?" was the amused response.

"I'm married, not dead. Were it not for my own bewitching ladies, I would envy the children you will eventually bear," he answered her in an over-the-top manner, finishing with a bow.

He stood and turned to Percy Weasley. "It's been a long time, Percy. Come on over to the table and we'll get you all settled, and then we can cover whatever it is that's got you worked up." He led them to the table, startling Percy when he realised that both Albus Dumbledore and Severus Snape were at the table. Harry chuckled at the double-take.

The Weasleys all sat down and took the mugs offered them, and Percy once again did a double-take as he tasted the Butter Rum. He quashed the questions and cleared his throat. "I should have talked to you even before your children were born, but ... well, I wonder if I ended up in the wrong house. Apologies should have been tendered from me several years ago." He took a deep breath and shook his head. "That is neither here nor there. What I need to tell you is that something is brewing at the Ministry. I am hearing rumours of a new Dark Lord attempting to rise, and even worse, that they will want *you* to deal with him."

Harry's eyebrows rose. "How has a new Dark Lord rising managed to miss ... of course. The Prophet never learned their lesson, and are announcing the attacks as an upswing in hooliganism that just happens to leave people dead, right?"

"Precisely. And the Daily Prophet is also saying that you've had your fun and your vacation, and that it's time for you to return to the wizarding world and become an Auror as you had said you wanted to be in your fifth year."

"Excuse me?" Pansy asked dangerously. "Are you saying that the wizards and witches out there actually have the stones to say that Harry *owes* it to them to come back and save them? That they think that they have the right to *demand* his presence?"

Percy turned to look at her and blinked in surprise. Pregnancy looked quite good on all the women, but it made Pansy almost literally glow, and the righteous anger only increased that aura of hers. Percy was stunned by the sight.

"I think you need a shirt, sexy," Hermione said, tossing one at her. "The way you look, Percy may not be able to stand for a while."

"I know I won't be able to," Harry murmured.

Pansy slipped the blouse on and buttoned enough buttons to keep the shirt closed. "Now that I'm not quite so distracting, would you answer my question?"

He shook his head as if to clear it, and then said, "Unfortunately, that is exactly what they seem to be saying. If it gets any worse at the Ministry, I'll likely quit my job and look elsewhere for work."

Harry looked at him. "Is it overly mercenary for me to ask you to stay and spy for me?"

"You'd trust me?" Percy asked, incredulous. "I wouldn't, after how I've treated you these past years."

"Yet you've bitten the bullet, as the Americans say, and come to me to warn me that something is up. The Percy from my fifth year would have thought that anything the Ministry was doing was the right thing, and that I should just shut up and let them do what they wanted."

"I unfortunately must agree with you," Percy interrupted.

"But," Harry said, once again taking control of the conversation, "you now look at what's happening and realise that the Ministry can't always be trusted, and decided to warn me about it, rather than let me be blind-sided." Percy started to open his mouth, but Harry raised a hand. "You're still working at the Ministry, and I'm in more contact with Ron, Ginny and the twins than anyone else in your family." He paused. "Any word yet on Bill and Charlie? Last I heard, they'd dropped off the face of the planet."

Percy shook his head in the negative. "No sign of them for at least three years. We hope they'll show up again soon. As for the other – I assume that you want me to listen in at the Ministry in my official capacity as Fudge's toady and then pass along whatever I can to these two and the rich reprobates?"

"Precisely," Harry said. After a moment, he asked, "Have you ever called them that to their faces?"

"Yes, after spending twenty minutes as a six-foot-four penguin," Percy replied. "They simply laughed and capered around the store."

"That's Fred and George all right," Susan giggled.

Severus was about to speak when the Floo flared again, and Minerva McGonagall's voice came out. "Harry! Albus! Severus! I do hope one of you is listening!"

"We're here, Minerva," Albus said. "What has happened?"

"Oh, it's horrible! The wizarding world is in an uproar right now – Cornelius Fudge has been murdered, and a Dark Mark was floating above the body!"

"Good heavens!" Severus exclaimed. "How is it possible? If he had returned, my mark would have flared at least once, much as it did last time, and it has been utterly quiescent." He held out his arm for the others to see, and only the barest of tracings could be seen.

"I doubt that Tom has returned from beyond," Albus said. "He was quite thoroughly dead when last we saw him."

"And no little wraith body slipped out this time," Harry added. "When his head vaporised, he was gone completely. As the movie said, 'He's not only merely dead, he's really most sincerely dead.' Doornail city, damn it." He leaned back in his chair for a long time before sitting up and saying, "I'm betting it's someone trying to pick up where the last jerk – Tom – left off. The reason they're using the Dark Mark is twofold, I'll bet – first off, it strikes terror into the hearts of the people viewing it; and second, it was a tricky bit of magic, so they probably didn't know how to tweak it. If they can't tweak it, then they can't change the symbol. Hence, it looks like Tom rides again."

"You are likely correct," Albus said. "I suppose that I should return to the school then, since things are about to get quite ugly, I can imagine. I am relieved that you have postal filters up, since you will likely be the recipient of many a Howler – or would be, if they were deliverable to you." He looked to the image of Minerva McGonagall and said, "I will be returning to the school shortly." She nodded and ended the connection.

"They'll get to screaming for a while, but I'm not coming back to work on this one if I can avoid it. This may be what the American westerns called the 'Best Gunfighter Syndrome'. Well, they don't actually call it that, but it gets the idea across. The best gunfighter around is defeated by someone else so now everyone wants to test their skills against the *new* best gunfighter." He shrugged. "I defeated the biggest, baddest Dark Lord around, so now the Dark Lord wannabes have to fight me and defeat me before they can claim the title of 'Meanest Wizard Standing'. I don't intend to go back and fight the little ponce, whoever it is, unless I have no choice in the matter."

He looked to Percy. "It's probably best for your job if you go back now, as fast as you can. Maybe whoever takes the job after Fudge will need you to help them find everything, plus, it'll position you to get as much information as you can. Are you willing to be my spy?"

"Yes, Mr Potter," Percy said. "Gladly."

"Call me Harry. And no puns meant, but it's going to get hairy there, so watch your back and stay safe. We've got a secure Floo connection here in the house, so feel free to Floo to the Ministry from here. They'll never know where it came from, courtesy of the goblins." Percy nodded and followed Hermione up to the house.

"I want to care, but I really can't," Harry said. "I feel for his family, since they've lost a loved one, but I didn't like the man after everything he tried to pull with me, including trying to get me to help his political career. I just wonder who will end up with the job now?"

As Hermione returned to the group, the table Floo flared yet again, this time displaying Lawrence Lovegood's face. "Lorelei's gone!" he screamed into the flames. "They broke in and took her!"

Harry was on his feet immediately. "Who did? What did they look like?"

"Dark robes," the newspaper man said. "Not sure what colour; just dark. I was stunned almost immediately, and when I woke up, I noticed she was gone. No blood anywhere, but there's things knocked over. She ran, I'm thinking. She's gone," he repeated, sinking out of sight of the flame. "I failed her; she's gone."

"We'll be right there, Dad," Luna said, holding back a few of her own tears. "We're coming." The connection ended, and they all stood.

As they began to run toward the house, they saw an owl flying toward them. This was a very unusual thing, given the wads, and usually meant that one of only a handful of people were writing, and they all had recognisable owls.

This one was not familiar. It swooped down to Harry and literally dropped a small package before flying off. He opened the envelope to find a letter and a jewellery box fit to hold a ring.

Mr Potter,

If you've opened the box first, you're wondering what it means. If you're looking at this letter first, it means that I've just confused you.

Either way, you need to know that I need you here in England, and I will do anything I need to in order to get you here.

Hence the small gift I gave you.

Harry opened the box. His eyes narrowed as he caught sight of what lay within – it appeared to be a child's finger. Luna gasped in horror.

If you don't want any more of her returned to you in such a manner, then I would recommend that you return to England post-haste. She will be returned to you – alive – in return for you turning yourself over to me.

Simply return to England and I shall know it soon after.

If you want her alive, we had best have a deal.

Lord Basileus

Harry crumpled the paper in a fist as he scowled at the ring box. "Our dear 'Lord Basileus' has made his last mistake, it seems," Harry growled fiercely. A nearby rock exploded into shrapnel, which harmed no one.

"I am intending to return to England to deal with this little prick," he said. "We'd best pack up the entire family, because I know damned well that I'm not going alone." He looked to his guests. "Can I impose upon some of you to keep an eye on our other children?"

"If you'll trust me with 'em, Daph and I will watch them," Ron said.

"Done," he said after a quick consultation.

"I'll accompany you on your mission," Severus said. "They may not be my children, or even any relationship to me, but -" He stopped, choking on his emotions for the first time anyone could ever remember, other than Albus, who had been there that awful October night when Harry was fifteen months.

"They're your family," Harry said simply. "We won't leave you behind. You either, if you want in, grandpa," he added as he looked to Albus.

"If possible, I would like to be there to watch you bring this Basileus down," was Albus's only comment.

Harry nodded, and while his wives and guests packed, he called Gringott's. "A word with Ragnok, if you please?" he said into the flame. "This is Harry Potter."

"One moment, please," said the goblin at the other end. Moments later, Ragnok himself entered the room. "Mister Potter. May your gold be bright, your weapons sharp and your enemies dull."

"Also to you, good sir. I apologise for taking your valuable time, but I will be returning to England before the day is out, likely to my ancestral home. There is apparently a new Dark Lord who felt that his life expectancy needed to be severely shortened by kidnapping my daughter and sending me one of her fingers."

Ragnok snarled. "We will stand with you if you so desire, Harry Potter." The goblin stood straighter and clasped his right fist to his left breast in salute.

"We'll see if it's necessary, but no matter what, I appreciate the offer." He smiled a humourless smile. "I need to check out how much of a menace this Basileus is. I wouldn't want to involve the goblins in a meaningless pissing contest. If we call in your people, I want real battles to be in the offing."

"The offer stands, even if only one goblin stands with you," Ragnok replied seriously.

"Appreciated. Since we will be travelling to the Manor shortly, I would like to meet with someone face to face for a fact-finding mission, if you will."

"Excellent. Call the bank when you are ready, and I will come myself."

"You honour me," Harry said with as stately a nod as could be managed in the Floo fire.

"You honour all goblins by thinking us equals, my friend. I shall see you soon."

Harry was rubbing the back of his head as he exited the flame. "He surprised me, and I smacked my head on the fireplace."

"What did he do?" Albus asked.

"Called me his friend," was the simple reply.

Severus had returned in time to hear that and simply said, "I do so hope that 'Lord Basileus' has his will made out."

Burning Day Dynasty's End

Disclaimer: In an effort to waste words every chapter, I would like to point out, at the top of each chapter, that unless I say otherwise, none of this belongs to me, and instead belongs to someone who is likely the wealthiest woman in England – JK Rowling.

Maybe I can lay claim to the plot I'm using?

"You and Albus can share the dower cottage, if you'd like, or take rooms here in the manor," Harry said as they looked around the manor house. "Same for you, Ron and Daphne. In fact, if Albus and Sev take rooms in the manor, you two can take the dower house. It needs a married couple in it again." He smiled distantly for a moment.

"That was where your parents lived when ... well, when *it* happened, wasn't it?" Daphne asked.

"From what I've been told, that's where we were living when the Dark Tiddler struck. I've no real memories of the place, so it's not as if you're intruding on them. That's also a house for a small number of people, so moving the five adults and all our children in there would likely make the place explode. The manor house works quite well for us. Use it with our compliments."

He turned. "In the meantime, however, I have a diplomatic call to make." He walked to the Floo and called Gringott's. A minute later, Ragnok and another goblin were standing in the room. Harry looked at the fellow and scowled, trying to remember something. "I've met you before, sir, but I don't know if I ever got your name."

A smile that showed no teeth was his response. "You met me when you were eleven, more than half your lifetime ago," the goblin said. "Back then I was a cart handler. I've climbed the ranks a bit since then."

"Griphook!" Harry exclaimed with a big grin on his face. "Sorry about not remembering your name."

"You have had more important things to do than remember the name of a goblin that you met only once, Mr Potter. I admit to some surprise that you remembered my appearance."

"That's our husband for you," Luna said proudly.

Dobby appeared in the room suddenly, dressed in a luridly coloured butler's uniform. "The meeting room has been prepared, Master Harry," he said.

"Thank you, Dobby." He motioned to the goblins and then headed first into the room, showing his trust of them by showing them his back. He sat at the head position at the table and waited for everyone else to take their places.

"All right," he said when everyone had been seated and had drinks in front of them. "I've been suckered back to England by some little jerk with delusions of grandeur. He's taken a step too far by kidnapping my daughter and slicing off her finger to give me proof of her being in his clutches."

"I told you before, Harry – if you decide to go to war with this burgeoning Dark Lord, let us know, and you will have troops available," Ragnok stated.

"I do appreciate it. We'll have to see, though. A lot of it depends on just how big a threat this fool is. For one thing, he's using the old *Morsmordre* spell, so that means he wants to be thought of as the successor to Voldemort, but my personal thought is that he simply doesn't have the membership to alter the spell, since that's a tricky bit of work. Right Hermione?"

She smiled and lifted her wand, saying "*Sigilus!*" What appeared over the table was a periwinkle symbol that combined an otter, a stag, an eagle, a phoenix and a penguin, all cavorting happily together. "I'm researching how to take that mark of Severus's arm. I'm pretty close, but I want to make it as painless as possible."

"And I've said that I don't mind some pain," Severus replied with a smile.

She grinned in response. "I know you've experienced the Cruciatus. That doesn't mean I want to hit you with something that could be just as painful."

"We're getting off track," Harry said. "That shows that the Dark Mark spell can be modified, so the new Dark Lord either couldn't be bothered or doesn't know how."

"Or he hasn't realised that the only way he'll properly make a name for himself is to have his own mark, not use one from a *failed* Dark Lord," Ron said. After a momentary pause, he asked, "Dork Lard'?"

"Fits with the thought process I have about this guy. He uses the old *Morsmordre* spell, which gives him a tie back to a failed Dark Lord. He's

arrogant, which is actually a given, since he's trying to openly be a Dark Lord so soon after the last one Went Away." The others chuckled as they realised that they could hear the capitalisation. There are several things that point as his laziness or bad scholarship as well. The spell is one. His chosen Dark Lord name is another. Is there anyone at this table who *didn't* translate Basileus to some form of leader? I've seen it as 'war-chief', 'king' and even translated as 'emperor'."

"If he weren't an ineffective little gimp, I'd figure that you were talking about Draco Malfoy," Daphne said. "Arrogant, bad scholar, and thinks more of himself than he should."

"Given his little problem -" Susan started to say.

"Which one?" Pansy and Daphne asked simultaneously. Their eyes met and they started giggling.

"I'm sorry," Pansy finally said through the giggles.

"Nah, I wasn't as unlucky as you – he just liked to show off to impress the girls."

"There was something to impress with?" Ginny asked quietly.

Pansy replied. "No. That's the reason we're giggling."

"From someone else on the receiving end, I can vouch for the fact that it's not that big." He shrugged as the table went silent. "Hey, no worries. It's over and done with, and led to me being married to four lovely ladies. I can't exactly complain, can I?"

Ragnok smiled, showing all at the table great respect by not showing teeth. "We need to prepare for the eventual attack on those who would mar the hand of your beautiful daughter," he said, bringing the conversation back to its start point.

"My apologies," Harry said. "Time is money, and we are wasting both of yours." He shook his head. "It really comes down to me making sure that Lord Basselope knows that I'm in England. Best way to do that is to go to Diagon Alley and mingle with the tourists. I expect that shortly thereafter, I will be contacted. Possibly while I'm still there."

Luna shot to her feet and grabbed Hermione. "My father! We're so worried about this that -"

Griphook stood. "May I join you, in case there are problems?" She nodded, and the three ran for the Floo.

"Damn," Harry said. "I can't believe that I forgot that Lawrence ... dammit." He shook his head. "Enough of that. We'll see him in a few moments, I hope, and then I'll contact the other parents and get them here."

"Let me set goblin guards on those you deem necessary," Ragnok said. "No charge. A sign of our solidarity in ending this Dark Lord menace."

Harry nodded and waited for Lawrence to arrive with the small party that had gone to retrieve him. "Lawrence, I'm sorry -"

"What are you apologising for?" Lawrence asked darkly. "You're not the one who lost his own grand-daughter, in his own home."

"Our opponent is wealthy, and could obviously afford to hire ward breakers." He looked to Ragnok. "I don't know enough about the concept – can you tell whose work brought a ward down?"

"It can be done, yes. Griphook, contact the department and see to it." The other goblin nodded and left the room.

The rest sat and comforted Lawrence. "We don't blame you," Harry said. "We have an enemy with access to some money and some muscle, and none of us found out about it until today. The Ministry appears to have been hiding evidence of this Basileus's work. He came out of the closet, so to speak, with today's murder. None of us had any reason to suspect this might happen."

Griphook returned a moment later. "The team is on their way. Would I be correct in assuming that you suspect William?"

"No one's seen him in a few years. He could have disappeared into a bottle, or he could have decided that it was really my fault that he lost his girlfriend and his job and decided on revenge. I'm actually hoping that you *don't* find any residue of his work there."

"We still need to plan," he said. "Honestly, if he's decided to come out as a Dark Lord, then if I spend the next handful of days wandering around Diagon Alley, acting as if I'm familiarising myself with the Alley again, we're likely to see Dweebo the Wonder Chicken show up with his people. Or maybe he'll just send the people to grab me."

"Dweebo the Wonder Chicken?" Ginny asked with a giggle. "Where *did* that come from?"

"To mock your enemy such shows your contempt," Ragnok said. "I definitely approve."

Harry had taken, in the last five years, to doing most of his magic wandlessly. It had become second nature to him, although he kept the holly and phoenix feather wand around – it was an old friend, after all. Knowing that he didn't want that little titbit of information released, he took a moment Transfigure a piece of wood into an exact duplicate (right down to the little scratches on it) before heading out to Diagon Alley.

The trip was a nightmare of epic proportions to someone who prefers his privacy, such as Harry. Now almost 23 years old, he was reminded of his first visit to The Leaky Cauldron. He found himself wondering if Doris Crockford actually ever travelled anywhere, because the only times he'd ever met the woman she'd been in the Cauldron.

It wasn't any better in the Alley. People were happy to see that he had returned, and were mobbing him, hoping to speak to him or touch him, as if the mere act of touching him would somehow transfer strong protections to them.

He finally managed to get to Weasley Wizard Wheezes, where he found Fred and George looking out the door. It opened and he was pulled inside quickly, and the door shut immediately behind him. "Business meeting!" George shouted through the door to the people outside. "We'll be back shortly!" They set to pulling him away from the front door and into the back.

"What brings you to Diagon Alley ..." Fred started.

"... after five years of wedded bliss?" George finished. "Looking for something to spice up your love life, perhaps?"

"If so, you're in luck," Fred said. "We've just started marketing a more ... adult line of ... ah, toys, if you will."

Harry looked at them for a moment before bursting into laughter. "I'm sorry," he finally gasped to the amused Weasleys, "but I was seeing a connection between your pranking and your adult line."

"Do tell?" Fred asked, interest piqued.

Harry shook his head. "I assume you've managed to develop the equivalent of the Muggle vibrator, only without the need for batteries?" They nodded at him. "My thought was one of those that you'd also put some of your fake wand enchantments on, and the look on some poor woman's face as she holds a vibrating rubber chicken."

"Harry, you are diseased to think of something like that," George said.

"No wonder we love you," was Fred quipped reply.

They enjoyed the laugh for a few moments before getting serious. "Why are you really in Diagon Alley?" Fred asked. "Does it have to do with Fudge getting murdered yesterday and that Dark Mark glowing over the body?"

"Yes and no," Harry replied. "Apparently the Ministry has been hiding from the public the fact that someone is positioning himself to become the new Dark Lord. He's calling himself Lord Basileus."

"Arrogant little prick, ain't he?" George scoffed. "'Lord King'? Bit full of himself."

"Yeah, well he's managed to sign his own death warrant. I'm here in England to get the little fucker to notice me," Harry growled. Several nearby glasses danced on the counter. "Sorry," he said, quashing his anger, and allowing the glasses to stop dancing.

"Who did this Lord Basingstoke hurt?" George asked.

"He sent us one of Lorelei's fingers." Harry said simply.

The reaction of the two men was shocking, even to Harry. For only a moment they stood stock still, and then their eyes narrowed as they turned as one and fired a spell at the back wall, howling with rage as they did. Harry was forced to repair the wall a moment later, since they had managed to completely remove it.

"The little bastard did *what?*" Fred asked dangerously.

"She may be no relation to us, but she's our little niece," George added, "and no one, and I mean *no one*, hurts our little girl that way."

"Promise us you'll leave something for us to ... play with," Fred finished.

"No promises, guy," Harry said in a voice rather thick with emotion. "I've got the goblins mobilising in case we need them for war, now I've got you, and do you really think that my wives are going to just sit by and let this happen? We're not going to leave you out of the loop, but I can't promise that there will be enough to scrape into a small box when we're all done with him."

He pulled them into a hug. "It means everything to us that you feel that way, though." He scowled toward the front of the store. "Now I just have to go back out and face that ravaging horde."

"You can handle them, Harry," Fred said, his good mood back as if it had never been gone.

"You're Harry Potter, The Man Who Killed Voldemort!" George added, striking a pose reminiscent of a certain Defence Against the Dark Arts professor.

"Is he still in St Mungos?" Harry asked with a grin, to which he received two vigorous nods as an answer. "Good." He steeled himself and headed back toward the front of the store. "Time to face my destiny, I suppose." He stepped back into Diagon Alley and made his way toward Gringott's, hoping to perhaps check his vaults, or at least get some idea of how well his investments were doing.

The crowds had finally started to thin as he got closer to the bank, and he found Lawrence and his wives on the steps waiting for him. As he mounted the stairs, he heard several loud cracks of Apparation.

He turned to find himself faced with the usual black robes and white masks. "Oh, give me a break," he said to the dozen people so robed. "That didn't work for He Who Now Pushes Up Daisies, and it won't work for Lord Basketball, or whatever he calls himself." He pulled his wand. "Now, do

you leave peacefully, or do you return to the message to your Lord Baskerville that I'm willing to let him be if he'll give up this foolish nonsense and return what he took from me, or do you return to him in pieces?"

"Lord Basileus will not be denied!" shouted a heavily accented male voice, who immediately fired a spell in Harry's direction.

Harry dodged it handily and fired a Stunner in the man's direction, followed by a fan of various other non-lethal spells toward the other eleven. Much to everyone's surprise, Harry hit with six of them, handily taking the ones so hit out of the battle. At least one of them Apparated away as a loud wet sound erupted from them, and Harry knew that he'd be explaining to his boss why he'd left after being hit with an Explosive Diarrhoea Curse. As they traded spells, he thought of talking to the twins about developing some 'prank' munitions. Explosive Diarrhoea was bad enough, but what if it was truly explosive?

The others had joined the fray, and it was surprisingly difficult a fight. The heavily accented man was a very good fighter, more than making up for the lesser skills of the ones still fighting alongside him. In a one-on-one fight, Harry would have been able to defeat him with ease, but with trying to keep his facility with wandless magic and helping to protect the other five, he was hampered in his capabilities.

This became all too evident when the fighter that Harry had mental christened Accent suddenly charged at Harry, punching him hard in the jaw and slapping something on his chest. Harry brought his hand up and punched Accent back as hard as he could, driving the man away from him and knocking his mask off. As Accent stood, a cadre of Aurors appeared in their dark maroon robes, distracting everyone for just a split second – long enough for Accent to fire a spell at Harry. Even as Harry leapt into the air to dodge, he felt the nauseating feel of a Portkey behind his navel. As he faded away, he heard Lawrence shout "You!", obviously in recognition of someone – likely Accent.

Harry landed in a cell somewhere – hard. He had been in the air in the midst of an evasion, and continued the movement as he reappeared – barely pulling his head out of the way in time. He still crashed very hard into the wall, stunning himself for a moment. This was more than enough time for people to come rushing into the cell and Stun him into unconsciousness.

He awoke in very different surroundings. He was in a well-appointed room, chained to a wall, facing a throne-like chair. He looked down to find himself wearing nothing. *I've learned to be comfortable on the island, to the point where Daphne can rise out of the ocean like Aphrodite with flaming red hair and I don't react, so I don't think this is going to embarrass me the way the Dark Jerk wants it to.*

He was pulled out of his musings as people began to filter into the room, ending finally with he who was obviously Lord Basileus, simply by how he carried himself. Harry watched him walk, and said the first thing that popped into his mind. "Bloody hell! You mean to tell me that the wizarding world is afraid of a swaggering ferret?"

'Lord Basileus' finished his walk to the throne and sat down. "I would watch my tongue if I were you, Potter," he said, removing all doubt from Harry's mind. "You seem to be unaware of which one of us is in power here."

Harry snorted. "I'm to be afraid of a man – and I use the term loosely – who can't even perform his own harmful spells because they'll backfire on him and hurt him instead?"

Malfoy reacted differently than Harry would have expected – he smirked and said, "A true leader does not need to dirty his own hands, Potter. He gets others to do it for him. Flint, if you would?" A moment later, Harry was writhing under the influence of the Cruciatus.

"Coward I name you," Harry growled when his senses returned. "You don't have the balls to do it yourself."

"I know what you're hoping to do, Potter," drawled the blonde man. "You're hoping that I'll get so angry that I'll let you challenge me to a duel, hoping that I'll return your wand to you. I know how dangerous you are with that wand, so –" Draco held up the wand that had been taken from Harry when he had been searched in the cell. Grasping both ends, Draco quickly snapped the wood into two pieces. "Oops, you seem to have broken your wand, so I have every right to deny the duel." He sat back, relaxing deeply in the chair. "I think it's time that we have a little fun before returning your body to Diagon Alley, crucified the way the Romans used to do it. We'll get your little slags sooner or later, and kill those half-blooded monstrosities you call children before their eyes."

That was all that Harry needed to hear. "Draco Malfoy, you are definitely too stupid to live. First you kidnap my daughter and slice off a finger to draw me back to England, and then you tell me that you're going to murder my other children in front of their mothers. Tell me, do you have your will made out?" he finished with a growl.

"What are you talking about – kidnapping your daughter? We don't have any one of your mongrels yet." Draco looked angrily puzzled at Harry's comments.

"You honestly expect me to believe that?" Harry asked as he flexed his arms, letting a burst of magic loosen the fasteners holding the plates to the wall. He swing his arms around, catching two of Malfoy's goons around their necks. One hard yank later and Malfoy was down two minions. He swing his right hand out, the chain releasing from the dead henchman's neck, and it snapped into a straight line, pointing directly at Marcus Flint for just a moment. At that exact moment, a bolt of violet-white lightning arced down the chain from Harry's hand and incinerated the man who had taken eight years to finish a seven year school. The chains fell from his arms and ankles and he strode forward, literally glowing with power. His left hand shot out, and all of the remaining thugs slammed against the walls several inches off the floor, staying there in whatever position they had been in at the time. This meant that several would be out of the fight even if they were released immediately, since the position that they had assumed required the breaking of bones.

Harry stalked forward and grabbed the front of Draco's robes. "You're the dreaded Lord Basileus? Give me a fucking break! Now tell me where my daughter is, or I take your head to the Ministry to prove that you're the one. Don't make me rip it off and keep it alive long enough to rip whatever they need out of you."

Draco now did for the first time something that Harry expected – he lost control of his bowels and began gibbering. “I’m serious, Potter! I don’t know where your daughter is! We never grabbed her! Our first official introduction to the wizards was assassinating Fudge! We didn’t even know any of your children were in England!”

Harry glared deeply into Draco’s eyes for a long moment, judging the truth of the man’s statement. A few moments later, he threw him at the wall, sticking him to it as well and breaking his wand arm in the process. He conjured some clothes and then concentrated as he looked at the throne. A few moments later, he dropped a conjured note into it and made a ‘shooing’ motion at it, causing the chair to disappear.

Ten minutes later, Amelia Bones, Kingsley Shacklebolt, Nymphadora Tonks and a few other Aurors, as well as his wives appeared. “Hello Aunt Amelia,” he said. “Turns out that this new Lord Basselope was Draco Malfoy.”

“That’s Basileus!” Draco yelled. “At least get the name right!” With a look of calculation on his face, he added, “And it took Harry Potter to bring me down!”

Harry laughed. “It required seven people and something extremely explosive to kill Voldemort, you dickless jerk. I defeated you and your entire cadre while naked and wandless. You are literally nothing to me. And now you get to join your mother in Azkaban, and I can probably make a claim on the Malfoy fortune.”

“As a matter of fact, you can,” Amelia said. “That would take you from the richest person in England to the richest person in Europe.”

“I think I will,” he said. “By the way, is Narcissa still mauve?” Amelia nodded with a smile.

“Um, Mr Potter?” one of the Aurors asked. “Would you please unstick these fellows from the wall so that we can take them into custody?” A moment later, everyone that had an Auror in front of them fell to the floor, making two men scream as their broken legs became compound fractures.

In short order, all of them were in Ministry holding cells, and Harry was saying, “If I can make that claim on their money, I want to before they go to trial. Less bribery going to happen if I have their money.”

“Agreed,” Amelia relied. “So, how are you doing really?”

“I’m trying to figure out who has my baby girl,” he said. “Malfoy didn’t. He’s filthy because I threatened to rip his head off and keep it alive long enough for interrogation if he didn’t give me my daughter back.”

“Can you do that?” Tonks asked in wonder.

“Not likely,” Harry responded, “but Malfoy thought I could, so he squealed like a pig with its testicles in a vice.” He shook his head. “I’m sorry. This is bringing out absolutely the worst side of me.”

“Understood,” Amelia said. “Let’s get back to the Ministry and see about Lawrence. He recognised someone, according to your wives?”

“I guess so. I heard him shout just as I was being Portkeyed out.”

A minute later they were all congregating in a small meeting room just off Amelia’s office. “Now Lawrence,” Amelia said, “What was your reaction in regards to as Harry was being Portkeyed away?”

“I recognised one of the people who had attacked my house and kidnapped my little baby grand-daughter,” he said. “It was one of your Aurors.”

Burning Day Ministry Malevolence

Disclaimer: Again, as always, a waster of words for the NaNoWriMo, wherein I inform everyone reading that I make no claim whatsoever on any of the characters that you recognise within these electronic pages. Unless stated otherwise, they all belong to JK Rowling.

Note: as this is being written before the chapter really begins, I don't know where the character will show up, but as a prize for not only being the first to correctly guess who Basileus was but give correct reasoning, I have named a character after this individual. If this character doesn't show up in this chapter, then it will definitely be in the next.

Also, you may recognise certain references here and there. I hope the original writers will see them as the nods to them that they are intended as.

Harry stared at Lawrence for a moment before turning to Amelia. "Do you have access to sketch artists, or a wizard or witch who can – hell with it, the Pensieve. Have him pull the memories and we can look at them and know who the soon-to-be dead Auror is."

Amelia looked sideways at Harry for a moment before nodding. She pulled out a sheet of parchment and a maroon quill, as well as an impressive looking cup that would not have looked too small if Hagrid were holding it as a drinking cup. "These are an Affidavit Quill and an Evidence Pensieve. When I activate it, it will take down every word said in this room, so please be quiet." She looked to Lawrence, who nodded. When she tapped the quill, it stood up over the parchment and waited.

"I, Amelia Bones, am interviewing Lawrence Lovegood in regard to the disappearance of his granddaughter, whom he states was kidnapped. Is that correct, Mr. Lovegood?"

"Yes, Madam Bones, that is correct."

"You have stated to me that you saw the face of one of the kidnappers, is that correct?"

"Yes it is."

"Did you recognise this individual?"

"Not at the time of the kidnapping, but I did see them again earlier today."

"Do I have your permission to place the memory of the attack and the memory of when you recognised the attacker into an Evidence Pensieve? The memories, once in there, can not be tampered with."

"Will I lose the memory?" he asked, worried.

"No. In fact, the Pensieve will copy and store the memory, and the original will be returned to you."

"I agree to the use of the Pensieve, Madam Bones."

"Excellent. I need you to concentrate upon the attack for me, and I will remove the memory. Once I have returned it to you, I will need you to concentrate upon the incident wherein you recognised one of the attackers."

"I understand," he said, and he began to concentrate.

With his agreement, she stated, "May it please the Court, there is a time gap between this statement and the next ones, since the incantation to remove the memories is a silent one." She held her wand to his temple and slowly extracted a silvery thread, which she carefully slipped into the Pensieve, stirred for a moment, and then lifted her wand, the memory still clinging to the wand. After a moment of new concentration, he nodded and she repeated the process.

"The memories have now been inserted into the Evidence Pensieve and will be examined." She tapped the Pensieve and looked within its depth, nodding occasionally and shaking her head once. She came out of the first memory and quickly entered the second. She exited equally as quickly with a look of deep anger on her face. "Let the record show that in both memories I have seen the face of Auror Michaela Pamir. End of record." The quill finished writing and then gently set itself down next to the parchment.

She stood and walked to the door of her office. "Linda?" she asked the woman sitting there. "I need to speak to Auror Michaela Pamir as soon as possible. She is to drop *anything* she is working on in order to come see me. It may be phrased to her as a request, but see to it that she is aware that it is in fact an order."

A few minutes later, Linda poked her head in the door. "Ah, Madam Bones? Director?"

"What is it, Linda?" she asked carefully.

"She's ... ah ... with the Minister right now, on her detail. The Minister won't release her to me – she insists that you phrase the request personally to her, the Minister."

"Ah, it seems that I shall have to remind Madam Umbridge of a simple fact – that I run the Aurors, not her."

Harry looked at Amelia Bones with a look that could freeze water. "You mean to tell me that the people elected Dolores Umbridge as Minister for Magic in that short a time?"

"No," she replied, "she was Fudge's second, so the job falls on her until an election can be held. We're hoping to get someone else – anyone else – over her. She's made a hash of things already."

"Treating the Ministry as her kingdom and the employees as her subjects?" Hermione asked, her attitude one that anyone who knew Minerva McGonagall would recognise.

"Exactly. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to inform both the Minister and a certain Auror that I *will* be interviewing her. Either the Minister allows it or I put her on administrative leave – or possibly fire her – and interview her once she is no longer on active duty. She *is* being interviewed today, however. No Auror of mine is going to be involved in this sort of operation."

A few minutes later, Amelia Bones returned to her office, the Auror in question in tow. Auror Pamir blanched when she saw the array of people waiting in the office. "They all are here for testimony purposes, Auror Pamir," Amelia said in a voice that scared Harry, even knowing that it wasn't aimed at him. "Mr Lawrence Lovegood gave the testimony that pointed to your involvement in the abduction and kidnapping of Lorelei Potter, age four. Mister Potter and his wives are here to deliver testimony as to what they know about the aforementioned abduction and kidnapping. So, to whom did you deliver Miss Potter?"

"I don't know what you're talking about," the woman said, but the waver in her voice told every one listening that she was lying.

Harry cleared his throat and looked to Amelia, who nodded. "I received a note, ostensibly from the so-called Lord Basileus, also known as Draco Malfoy. However, the aforementioned Malfoy had no idea what I was talking about when I questioned him regarding the whereabouts of my daughter. Considering I had given the coward the choice between extreme pain or a fairly safe journey to a Ministry cell, he spilled everything, including the contents of his intestines and bladder, much to the disgust of everyone there. This uncontrolled reaction leads me to believe that his story is thereby true, and that neither he nor his followers knew anything about her abduction. It was only when I returned from dealing with the self-styled Lord that I discovered that my father-in-law had seen someone that appears to be you, according to Director Bones, since she was able to put a name to the face in the memories."

"He is correct, Auror," Madam Bones said severely. "I recognised you. Do we drag the truth from you, or so you help us locate the missing child?"

Michaela Pamir looked at the group facing her. None of them were making any attempt to hide their contempt and anger. Potter himself looked as if he was going to kill her whether or not she helped him find the child. "Can you ... can you promise me some form of protection?" she asked.

"I take it that those who asked you to do this were highly placed within the Ministry?" Amelia Bones asked. Pamir nodded vigorously. "If your word helps us find the child, then yes, we will help you."

Michaela Pamir thought for a long moment before nodding and beginning to speak. "I helped grab the child from Mr Lovegood's place after the curse-breaker we hired helped to drop the wards."

"Who was the curse-breaker?" Amelia asked.

"William Weasley. He needed the money. To him, one of the selling points was that he might redeem his honour by working with the Ministry. We never told him the objective, since it was known that he would likely have a severe problem with the removal of any child from their family. It was also why he was not told whose home he was lowering the wards on. Our boss was fairly certain that he would have balked, and we needed the best to lower the wards long enough to grab the child. Once we had her, we quickly returned and delivered her back to the Minister."

The room was silent for a moment. "Are we talking Fudge or Umbridge?" Harry finally asked.

"All right, to be precise, we gave her to the Undersecretary Umbridge, Cornelius Fudge's second in command. She said that word came from Fudge himself to pick up the child, since we would need your help to deal with Basileus. He wanted him out of the way before the public even knew that he existed."

"So his murder actually happened while the owl with the letter and the finger was in the air," Luna said carefully. "Fudge was still alive at that point."

"Yes, he was alive when the letter was sent, but what finger are you talking about?" she asked with more than a small amount of puzzlement.

No one spoke after the question was asked. They simply pushed a small ring box forward. She picked it up and opened it carefully.

A hastily created rubbish bin served nicely to capture Michaela Pamir's reaction to the sight of Lorelei's severed finger. Harry nodded as he watched her heave into receptacle, as if he were receiving an answer to a question as yet unasked.

When the Auror was able to sit up without needing to perform reverse peristalsis any longer, she looked to the assembled people, who now seemed slightly warmer to her presence. She stared at Harry for a very long moment, and then drew her wand and handed it to him, before pulling her badge and handing it to Amelia Bones. "I never knew that they intended to maim the child, Director. I am aware that I am complicit in the maiming, and therefore eligible for Azkaban. I figured that I'd save you the trouble of firing me and just quit. The wand is yours, Mr Potter. There is no way I can make up to you and yours for my part in allowing this to happen."

Pansy spoke next. "A bit over the top of a reaction for a confession, wouldn't you say?" she asked archly.

Pamir looked at her and said, "I grabbed her for the sole purpose of bringing her to Umbridge. If I'd known that they were going to slice off one of her fingers, then ... hell, I'd have killed the entire team to *stop* it, if I'd known. And I'll swear an Oath to that effect, if you want. I never intended the kid to be crippled; just picked up to get Mr Potter to deal with Basileus. So you might consider it over the top, but I consider it ... I've got a niece about Miss Potter's age. I can visualise little Dorothea missing a finger, and I know I'd kill anyone involved in doing that to *her*, so I figured I'd make your job easier, since I was involved in doing it to someone else's child." She leaned forward and started to cry gently into her hands.

The group shared a look and a nod. "Auror Pamir?" Amelia Bones asked, once again putting on her Director of Magical Law Enforcement hat. The woman looked up from her hands, eyes already quite red. "How would you like to be involved in recovering Lorelei from her captors and bringing them to justice? You'll end up still taking some heat from your part in this, and by necessity there must be some punishment, but you strike all of us as being truthful in your recitation."

She looked to Harry, who slid the wand back to Auror Pamir. "I swear by my life that the testimony that I have given here today before this group is truthful to the best of my knowledge. I swear that I had no knowledge of what would be done with Lorelei Potter and would have stopped it had I known. I swear this at the cost of my own life if I lie." A glow of silver flared out from the woman, who then put the wand back down and slid it toward Harry.

"Keep it, Miss Pamir. You'll need it as part of your job."

"I didn't swear that oath to keep my job," she protested.

"No, you swore something that could have killed you," he said. "That takes you off the Evil Overlord list and moves you into the Unwilling Dupe of the Evil Overlord column. It's happened before, and will happen again. I expect that Umbitch is going to continue trying things like this until she thinks she has me where she wants me."

When the others looked at his for an explanation, he gave one. "She grab my daughter and sliced off her finger, sending it to me as if the writer were Draco 'Lord Basalt' Malfoy. Had I thought about it, I would have realised that it had to come from the Ministry, because not even Tom 'I'm Shit With Anagrams' Riddle could get around owl post restrictions. But the point is that she got me angry at Draco, although I didn't know it was him at the time, to the point where I returned to England to clean up the Ministry's mess, as if it were their right to order me around. Now I'm betting that she's given Miss Pamir here up to the wolves, so to speak, expecting that we'll all pull an Umbitch manoeuvre and absolutely shred the young lady without really listening to her story. However much Umbridge is a barking little toad, though, she's canny, and will likely allow that we might get the real story, so I expect that any time in the next week, we'll get summons before the Wizengamot."

As if his words had been the trigger for a Summoning Charm, there was a tapping of many beaks at the window. Harry blinked. "We're underground. Why are there windows?"

Amelia laughed. "We have special windows for deliveries and such, and we like the scenery. Being able to look at the Alps is much better than looking at a bare wall." She stood. "Now let us see what all the owls are clamouring about." The window was opened, and all the owls flew in and landed before one of the people, including Michaela Pamir.

"All the letters are safe as far as any extra curses or spell-work of any kind. If they had spells on them, they would be redirected to a separate office where they would have the letters removed and disarmed," Amelia explained as they looked at their respective owls.

Harry was first to retrieve the letter, his owl flying off immediately. He opened the letter, looked at his watch, scowled and stood up. "It appears that I'm late for a meeting of the Wizengamot, before which I have been summarily summoned by Mistress of Magic Dolores Umbridge, to answer charges of assault and destruction of property of a valued citizen."

"In other words, like so many others, if she gets enough money from the right purebloods," Pansy said, "all is forgiven. As long as that money keeps coming in, of course. Mine, of course, demands that I appear before the court as well, although mine is for unspecified reasons."

Amelia growled. "Mine just warned me of an emergency meeting of the Wzengamot. Shall we join the party that they have planned?"

"Just a moment, Amelia," Harry said. "Do you have anything other than the Evidence Pensieve?"

"I have many Pensieves. Why?"

"I wouldn't put it past them to *Obliviate* Miss Pamir when she walks into the courtroom. I was thinking that she take the memory of that night and put it in the Pensieve, so that it can be returned to her if she *is Obliviate* d." Amelia grinned.

The group entered Courtroom Ten in one group, with Amelia peeling off to join those on the bench, giving Dolores Umbridge an angry look. Umbridge saw it and ignored it.

"Mr Potter, if you would seat yourself in the chair down front, we can begin our proceedings?" spoke the sickly-sweet voice that he had loathed all these years.

He calmly walked down front and sat in the same stiff chair that he had been in years earlier. The golden chains rose and wrapped him tightly, and he merely smiled. He closed his eyes and felt the magic of the chair. Locating the spell that activated the chains, he released it, causing them to fall away from him.

"You are on trial here, Mr Potter!" she shrieked into the chamber. "You will not ignore Ministry rules, child, no matter what your old Headmaster might have taught you!"

The years have made you even stupider, you old toad," he growled, not moving from the chair. "And don't mistake this for contempt of court. It's purely contempt of *you*. Now before this hearing of yours goes anywhere, I want you to return my daughter to me."

Umbridge went from angry to triumphant in a split-second. "And what would make you assume that I had anything to do with your daughter's disappearance? If you're not a good enough parent to keep her from running away, don't blame that on me."

"How about I bring forth evidence that you had something to do with her disappearance then?" Harry asked with a nasty grin.

"Please do," came Umbridge's unctuous tone.

"Auror Michaela Pamir, would you please approach for testimony?" he asked. She looked at him blankly as she approached him. "Do you have any memory of the events of the last twenty-four to forty-eight hours?"

"No, sir," she said. "I worked and went home," she said calmly. "Nothing out of the ordinary."

Harry smirked. "Madame Bones?" he asked.

"Yes, Mr Potter," she replied, standing. "It was suspected that this might happen, so I have before me an Affidavit written by Affidavit Quill and signed with blood. This affidavit avers that the memory contained within this Evidence Pensieve is in fact a true memory, placed here in the circumstance that she was to avow no knowledge of her actions in the past forty-eight hours."

Umbridge scowled. "And what has this to do with this case and Potter's false claim?"

"Simply that according Auror Pamir's *prior* testimony to me, she has intimate knowledge of the situation. Auror Pamir, please approach me," she requested. The young Auror stepped forward to face Madam Bones. "This Pensieve contains a memory that you placed in before entering the courtroom. Do you permit me to return it to you?" The young woman nodded, and soon the silver thread was back inside the young Auror's head.

The woman stood and blinked for several seconds before scowling and looking back to Madam Bones. "If I knew who had done it, I'd bring them up on charges. I was *Obliviate* d of the memories."

She turned to glare at Umbridge. "I was sent with a team of Aurors to the Lovegood home, along with curse-breaker William Weasley, who was not aware of whose home he was helping us get into. We had been told that we were rescuing a child, but not to take the man into custody – we were simply to get in and out, rescuing a young girl. Once we had her, we took her to Minister Umbridge."

"How do we know that the memory placed into the Auror's head wasn't tampered with?" Umbridge asked. "After all, Potter was able to disable the chair; perhaps he tampered with the memory to discredit me."

Harry raised an eyebrow at the woman. "If I'm as powerful as that, wouldn't you say that anyone trying to get on my bad side is making a stupid, if not fatal mistake?"

"Are you threatening me?" she shrieked.

"Are you in possession of my daughter?" he asked simply. "If you are, then I'm merely stating that I will do what is necessary to reunite my family. If you have nothing to do with her disappearance, then you have nothing to worry about."

He shook his head. "Now, I believe that the original charges that you demanded that I appear for were for harming a respected member of this community? Might I assume that you refer to the self-styled 'Lord Basileus', also known as Draco Malfoy?"

"While his parents had many of us in the Ministry fooled, Draco is not a Death Eater, and would not have had any reason to try to become a Dark Lord," Umbridge blustered. "You broke into his home and interrupted a party, severely injuring many of his guests."

"I suppose that I did this while naked and chained to a wall?" he asked dryly.

"I care nothing for your sexual perversions," she replied smarmily, rather obviously letting her eyes glide across all four of his wives.

"Might I call witnesses, or have you already got the verdict ready to be read?" he asked, anger tingeing his voice.

"You will watch your tone in this courtroom, young man, or you will be found in contempt of court!" an elderly Wizengamot member exclaimed.

He turned and bowed to her. "My apologies, Madam. I did not mean to imply that the Wizengamot was corrupt, or show contempt for this body. I merely intend to show my contempt for a specific person. You were never intended to be a target of my ire." She raised an eyebrow and nodded sharply at him.

He now faced Umbridge once again. "I wish to call Auror Kingsley Shacklebolt to the front, if I may?" Before Umbridge could say anything about it, Shacklebolt was stepping forward.

"I'm here. What do you wish to ask?"

"How was it that you were drawn to the place where you found Draco Malfoy and the others?"

"A large throne-like chair appeared in Auror headquarters, with a note stating that the chair was a Portkey that would lead us to Lord Basileus. We knew that it had to be someone in the know, because there was no one outside the Ministry who even knew of the name Basileus – the name was being kept under wraps in an attempt to prevent panic. The team, which included Madam Bones, found Mr Potter in conjured robes, with a number of people stuck to the walls, and three dead on the floor. One had been electrocuted and the other two had their necks broken. When we asked what had happened, Mr Potter stated, and I quote, 'Turns out that this new Lord Basselope was Draco Malfoy.' Mr Malfoy's response was, and again I quote, 'That's Basileus! At least get the name right!' After a moment of thought, Mr Malfoy was heard to say, 'And it took Harry Potter to bring me down!'" He paused. "That strikes me as an admission of guilt, and my team members agreed, I believe."

"You are correct, Auror Shacklebolt," Amelia Bones said. "It sounded like an admission to me as well, especially knowing no one outside the Ministry not involved with the burgeoning organisation of the new Dark Lord should have been aware of the name. Whether or not there was a leak to Mr Malfoy, the fact that he stated 'It took Harry Potter to bring *me* down' states guilt."

Umbridge scowled. "Can I assume that all your witnesses will be Aurors who were at this site and heard this conversation?"

"Yes," Harry replied.

"Very well," she said. "Charges are dismissed. You are free to go."

"Excellent," he replied. "Now that we have that out of the way, I wish to return to my daughter. Aurors under your command abducted her and delivered her to you. I want her back."

Umbridge sneered. "This special session of the Wizengamot is closed," she said, and banged the gavel. Before Harry could do anything to stop her, she had been whisked from the room.

"This *will* get quite ugly," he said.

When they returned to Amelia's office, Linda handed her a note. Amelia read it and then handed it to Harry, who raised an eyebrow. "Looks like we have a meeting with the goblins."

The group left the Ministry and headed straight for Gringott's Harry's wives flanking him as the warriors that they were. They stepped into the bank and were immediately whisked into Ragnok's office, where they found Ragnok, Griphook, and a broken down redhead. Bill Weasley looked as if he had not been in very good condition for a very long time. He had a long scraggly beard that had grey scattered throughout it, his once immaculate long hair was wild and untamed, and he looked as if he had perhaps not bathed in some time, although there was no obvious smell to verify that thought.

"As the note stated, we found out who had done the ward work," Griphook said. "Mr Weasley's work was quite familiar to us here in Gringott's."

Harry looked at the prematurely greying man and saw something that disturbed him – the man's eyes, which would not meet his, were dead. "Bill?"

"Mr Potter," he said softly. "Here, this is yours." He handed him the two halves of a wand. "It was bad enough what Charlie and I did to you five years ago, and we both paid for that through the loss of our jobs, and in my case my fiancée. I did small jobs here and there, and then someone in the Ministry came to me and offered me good money for a simple ward breaching. They told me that they'd bring me to the site. They told me that I would be helping to rescue a child from a bad situation. I was side-along Apparated to the site, where I was given my directions, and a Portkey to use once they were inside."

He looked Harry squarely in the eyes for the first time. "Then the goblins approach me and tell me that I hurt you once more, by helping the Ministry kidnap and mutilate the child Luna bore for you." He shook his head and looked at his hands. "I can't stop hurting you, and given what I did to you and Ginny all those years ago, you have no reason to trust anything I say to you."

Harry looked at the wand and then to his wives, and finally to the goblins. All made it clear that the decision was in his court. Nodding, he decided. "Bill, you hurt me badly five years ago. Really badly. At the time, I wanted you dead, and would gladly have killed you. The thing is, now I have a family, and I suddenly begin to understand a bit of what was going on. You were looking at family and not-family, and thinking that Ginny and I were too young to make a commitment of that sort. In a way, you were right. Ginny was, at least, and I simply can't say as far as I'm concerned, so I'll give the benefit of the doubt here."

"Where your problem came to was in your method of making the point, which ended up tearing apart your family. You ... the wizard world has a cruel streak that I don't think you really see when you grow up in it. You take some of the most interesting things for granted. I have never heard a single person raised in the wizarding world see anything wrong with Neville's uncle holding him out a window trying to see if he was a wizard. The uncle dropped him. If he'd been a Squib, that would have killed him. The wizarding world's reaction seems to be 'Who cares?' I played a sport that regularly puts people in the hospital wing at the school. A caretaker that can threaten bodily harm on a regular basis – and again no one reacts."

He breathed deeply for a second, trying to pull his thoughts together. "What I'm trying to say is that part of your upbringing teaches you that there are very few things that have lasting consequences. So you did to Ginny and I what you did, based on the thought that eventually magic could repair it, since it seems to be able to repair everything else." He laughed. "I love the guys, but some of what Fred and George did to you guys while growing up makes Dudley look like a piker."

"But then you have this reaction when you see that you hurt me again. You renounce the wizarding world by snapping your wand." He sighed. "I need you around, Bill. You're still damned good at what you do. I know this, because goblins put up those wards for a many a Galleon. You were *still* able to get through them. So we're going to go down to Ollivander's and buy you a new wand, and you'll help me try to get Lorelei back from Umbridge." He clapped him on the shoulder. "Maybe then you can get some of your feeling of self worth back."

Bill looked into Harry's eyes for a moment, and Harry could see the moment that Bill believed what Harry said, because he watched the life flow back into the man's eyes. "I will die before I hurt you again, Mr Potter," he said. "I owe that to you."

"And you owe it to your family to get back on your feet."

Griphook spoke. "Did you have any help in breaking through the wards, Mr Weasley?"

"No. It took me close to an hour to do it, I'll admit. You guys have gotten trickier." He suddenly blanched. "My apologies, sir. I did not -"

"No offence was intended or taken," Ragnok said. "Would you be willing to accept employment as a freelance teacher for the time being? If you made it through our wards in only an hour without setting off the alarms, then our best team needs to be taught how to get around that. You broke through some of the best wards we ever put on a household."

"You'd ... you'd hire me back, even for freelance work?" he asked hopefully.

"Our ally is willing to give you his trust, nominally. We choose to echo his decision."

"I accept," he said. "Please let me replace my wand and clean up, and then I can return to cover whatever you may need from me."

Ragnok smiled softly. "I believe that you would do best remaining with Mr Potter. The most interesting parts of the upcoming days will be at his side, so you are in an exciting place to be, Mr Weasley."

A short time later, after getting Bill a new wand that worked even better than his old one, they returned to Potter Manor. The reunion between family members was tense, but promised to improve once Harry told them that he had provisionally forgiven Bill, who begged off on a longer meeting until such point as he could get showered and shaved, and into the cleanest clothes that he could manage. This led to Harry asking Dobby and Winky to see what they might do about new clothes for the man.

"There are times that your 'saving people thing' makes me so proud of you I could burst," Hermione said thickly.

"How about screwing me senseless instead?" he asked with a grin, wiggling his eyebrows lasciviously.

"You may wish to wait on that," Severus said as he walked into the room carrying an envelope. "This just arrived from the Ministry, and seems somewhat urgent."

By Executive Order of Dolores Umbridge

Minister for Magic

Polygamous marriages are hereby outlawed within the British Isles, and all previous multiple marriages are declared null and void as of this date.

All children of said unions are hereby to be considered illegitimate, and should be brought to the Ministry for proper placement within wizarding families.

This Executive Order covers all illegitimate children. All illegitimate children shall be placed with proper families at soonest opportunity.

Dolores Umbridge

Minister for Magic

Burning Day Councils of War

Disclaimer: Are we going through this again? Does anybody out there believe that I actually own the Harry Potter universe and characters? I wish that were the case, but it's not. That honour goes to JK Rowling. I think I might own some of the plot and the twists therein, but beyond that? Nothing involved in this story belongs to me.

Harry looked at the parchment for a long moment and then laughed. It was not a pleasant sound.

"Well, she's got what she wanted. I'm now officially her enemy. I need to make a few Floo calls and set up a war council." With that he stepped from the room.

Severus looked at the others. "He will need you at his side, now more than ever. Umbridge is bound and determined that she will crush him underneath her heel before she dies, because he is the first person never to kowtow to her and to do it openly." He sighed. "As far as the wizarding world is concerned, she has just created a new Dark Lord, and this one will succeed where all others have failed. Harry *will* change the wizarding world forever."

"She wants a war; she's got a war," he said. "I refuse to sit around and let her keep control of my daughter. She's wanted me hurt for years, ever since what I said about Riddle turned out to be true. She probably had nothing to do with the death of Fudge, but she's canny enough to take advantage of it." He shook his head. "Anyway, I've made my calls. Owls will be sent out to a number of people from Gringott's, ostensibly concerning this or that matter. The fact that all of them will be sent to the same secure boardroom that we'll be Flooing to shortly is hopefully going to escape the notice of the Ministry. I think we should all get ready and then head out." He snapped his fingers. "I forgot to mention to the goblins to include Ron, Ginny and Daphne."

"Don't worry about it," Ron said as he came into the room with his wife and brother, the Potter children milling around their feet, seeming somewhat worried. "After that littler titbit from the Ministry, you'll need someone to guard your children. The Ministry will not get these children without a fight," he finished with a growl.

"We'll contact Ginny and tell her as well," Daphne said. "You guys need to leave."

Half an hour later, Harry was in Gringott's, in one of the most secure meeting rooms that they had. Arrayed around him were many of the teaching staff of Hogwarts, Severus Snape, all of his adult family, every Weasley except for Ron, Ginny, Molly and Charlie, Amelia Bones, Kingsley Shacklebolt, Nymphadora Tonks and Michaela Pampir. That there were goblins present was understood by all.

"Let us begin," Ragnok said. "Harry? Care to explain?" Several of the people there started at hearing the head of the goblin nation refer to Harry in such a familiar manner, but Filius Flitwick just grinned widely.

"Thank you, Ragnok," Harry replied, ignoring the reactions around the table. "There should be some background before I tell you why you've all been asked here. However, this information is sensitive enough that if you choose not to be involved in what I feel needs to be done, then you will need to be *Obliviate* d of that specific information, if only for your protection. Does anyone here at the table have any ethical or other concerns over this, or is not willing to be *Obliviate* d?" No one reacted. "Good. It seems that the names were chosen wisely."

"It's hard to say when it began, but I ended up involved in this in the last twenty-four to forty-eight hours. I and my family were rather enjoying our time on the beaches of my island, not bothering anyone. Then, in rapid succession, a message from someone in the Ministry came to tell me that a new Dark Lord was rising, and rather than dealing with him themselves, they insisted on calling in the last Dark Lord killer. This was the gist of the information given to me at the time."

"Before that was even finished, we received word that Cornelius Fudge had been assassinated and a Dark Mark was found floating above his body. Needless to say, this backed up the information we'd been given concerning the new Dark Lord."

"Again, before the dust had even settled from our *learning* that the old Minister had been murdered, we received a quick call from my father-in-law Lawrence Lovegood that my daughter Lorelei had been taken by people in dark robes."

"As that call was finishing, an owl that I didn't recognise found our island and dropped off a note that claimed to be from the new Dark Lord, calling himself Lord Basileus. It also dropped off this package." He slid the ring box forward and opened it.

"We've kept it preserved, on the extremely slight chance that it can be reattached, if we can get to her in time. But that's Lorelei's finger, right down to that little scar on it from cutting herself on a seashell two months ago."

The murmurings around the table were dark and angry, and Morgana Sinistra said, "If you want help dealing with this 'Basileus', I'm in."

"Thank you," he said, "but Malfoy's already been dealt with," he said simply.

"Draco Malfoy was trying to be the next Dark Lord?" Sinistra asked, incredulity colouring her voice.

"My thoughts exactly," Harry replied with a small smile. "He sent some of his people to capture me, and it worked because he managed to hire at least one competent minion. I spent some time unconscious because I was Portkeyed out in mid leap, and smacked into the wall when I arrived."

He laughed. "I awoke chained to a wall and naked -"

"Haven't tried *that* yet," Hermione murmured loud enough to be heard, a slight smirk on her face telling everyone that she intended it to be heard.

"Yes dear," Harry said, "As I was saying, I was chained to the wall and stripped completely. Malfoy comes in and crows, snaps the wand he found on me, threatens my wives and children, and I proceed to kill three of his people in anger. Everyone else is in recovery, because I slammed them all against the walls, and quite a few broken bones resulted. I called the Aurors, and Madam Bones and a few Aurors arrived, and Draco proved that he can be goaded into giving up important information if you kick his ego hard enough."

"He admitted to being the new Dark Lord," Amelia said. "He did so within my hearing."

"He also stated that he knew nothing of the whereabouts of Lorelei. Considering the note stated that he personally knew, that meant something else was going on. We got back to the Ministry where we discovered the identity of one of the Aurors on the team that abducted Lorelei."

"That would be me," Michaela Pamir said. "I made the mistake of believing that Umbridge really had the interests of the child in mind. I know better now, but wish I'd had that information then."

"Tell me about it," Bill growled. "I was the guy that helped you get in to get the child, hurting Harry yet again." He paused for a moment. "Before this goes any further, I need something answered, if I may?" Harry nodded. "I thought you had cast Narcissa and Draco out of the Black family and denied the marriage to Lucius, legally making Draco a no-named bastard. Why do you keep referring to him as Draco *Malfoy*?"

"Ah," Harry answered. "Simple. Apparently Lucius realised that Draco was his last possible chance at the Black family fortunes, having forgotten that Andromeda had been welcomed back into the family. He remarried Narcissa and accepted Draco as his son, assuming that once they successfully killed me and took over the wizarding world, they could overturn the will that Sirius wrote, thereby giving them all the money." He smiled. "That dream was crushed along with Lucius's head when I killed Voldemort. Interestingly enough, with the only living Malfoys both being in prison – for life, I assume for both – that means that the money in that vault goes to whatever Malfoys may exist in the world. If there are none, I could likely make a claim for it, but not as a Black. Is there a rule of combat?" He shook his head. "Not that I need the money, to be honest. Let's get back to the situation at hand, though."

"Apparently as soon as Umbridge realised that we knew about Miss Pamir's involvement, she called an emergency meeting of the Wizengamot, where she tried to put me on trial for attacking a fine upstanding member of the community, and closed things down immediately after she lost spectacularly, without ever giving me a chance to deal with the Lorelei situation. I have just recently received a missive from the Ministry informing me that all polygamous marriages in Britain are to be considered illegal, and that all illegitimate children are to be brought to the Ministry to be given to *proper* homes."

He stood and began to walk around. "I could take the route of marrying one of the ladies, and adopting all the children that way, but I'd imagine that Umbridge is considering that I'll do that, and has prepared a counter to that already."

He stopped and slapped his hands on the table loudly, startling a few of them. "So I won't take the legal route, at least not obviously."

"Let me take the legal route on this, Harry," Amelia said. "I believe that I can hit her where it hurts almost immediately. I'm quite certain she looked at certain statistics, and I know the people she would have had to talk to. If I'm right, I'll call my own Wizengamot session and ruin her political career."

"Do what you can legally, Amelia, but be aware that I've come to the decision that I need to do to the Ministry what I did to Hogwarts' Board of Governors. It needs to be disassembled and rebuilt," he replied.

The group at the table looked at each other for a very long time before Professor Sinistra spoke again. "That school has run better in these last five years than I'd ever seen since I started going. I'm behind you on this."

Albus cleared his throat. "I am just a small amount your senior, dear Morgana," he said with no little humour, "and I can say the same – these past five years at Hogwarts have been a joy since the new Board of Governors took control. Were it any other than Harry suggesting the dismantling of the body that governs our very way of life, I would fight it both tooth and nail. Instead, I shall use my fame as one of the greatest Light side wizards for some good and support Harry's efforts with the public." His voice showed his distaste of the label that he had been given by the public.

"In that vein, I need the goblins to do something for me in their role as my bankers and investment team. I want the Daily Prophet. I will either own it or force the Ministry to nationalise it, at which point the game changes completely." He turned to Albus. "Thank you, grandfather."

Arthur Weasley stood. "Mr Potter, I and my wife wish that we could take back what we did to you those five years ago. We've always held out hope that perhaps someday, something could be worked out and we would get back into your good graces. I say this purely to explain that, while I do not believe it to be the case, my decision to join in your quest for a more fair Ministry could be caused by a desire to fix things with you – to support you as we should have before. My support is with you in your endeavour, but be aware that the support may be due to ulterior motives that I am not consciously aware of." He sat back down and looked to his hands.

"Weasleys are fond of sweeping gestures, are they?" Harry asked with some amusement. "Bill tried to apologise for his part in this by snapping his

wand, but I bought him a new one, because I can use a good curse-breaker and ward builder, and Ginny apologise in the Great Hall at Hogwarts, which was not an easy thing, I'd imagine. Ron is the one who takes after you the most, I think. The apology was private, but no less heartfelt and self-deprecating, warning me to watch out for his reactions. It was that blinding honest that allowed me to be willing to allow the chance to forge a new friendship with them, and now with you. I'll accept you on the team, and maybe someday be able to visit you at the Burrow again." Arthur's head shot up in surprise, and Harry simply smiled at him. "It's a start, sir. No promises, but we can at least start."

"You know we are behind you," Ragnok said, "and if you need troops to fight actual battles, we will be with you." He turned to Amelia. "You may wish also to point out to your Minister Umbridge that we do not take kindly to the declaration that our citizens must surrender their children to the Ministry in order that they must find 'proper' homes. In fact, we would appreciate the return of the child of one of our citizens to his proper family, lest we be forced to sever all ties with the wizarding world, and all that such a severing entails."

"Who did they take of yours?" Harry asked. "If this has started already -"

"Ah, it seems that we forgot to tell you that we have appreciated your work for us so much that we have made you and your family honorary goblins. You are subject to our laws, but you have never broken any of them that I am aware of, or even bent them."

"You're losing your touch, Harry!" Tonks laughed from the other side of the table. "You're becoming respectable!"

"Hush, Nymphadora," he said with his own answering laugh, which drew a scowl from her. He stood and walked to Ragnok, kneeling before him and exposing his neck to the goblin leader. Ragnok simply chuckled and motioned for him to rise. "You do me great honour, sir." Ragnok simply waved off the comment, but it was obvious that there was some affection in the movement.

Turning back to the rest of the table, Harry said, "So, we need to get this going, and we need to do it right. Any suggestions? Remember that we're talking ... the goblins could get in serious trouble if word ever got out that they were involved in this thing to the slightest degree. We are literally talking an overthrow of the current administration, and rebuilding the government of the wizarding side of Europe from the ground up. We can expect no help from the other wizarding governments. In fact – Amelia, Albus? Be prepared to speak to the other governments and let them know that we have no designs on their lands. We only want things to change here, and since the normal way stopped working a long time ago, someone decided that it was best to fix things the only other way that they can be fixed."

"We shall work on the diplomatic side," Ragnok said. "Keep them off balance for a time. You are aware that you are likely the one who will have to take the reins of power for a short time, until someone you deem trustworthy can take over?"

Harry's grimace said far more than any words could. "And that is why we all shall help you, my child," Albus said with a smile.

Amelia Bones strode through the halls of the Ministry building with a purpose, and it was evident to all who saw her. They also knew her, and felt that being somewhere best defined as 'elsewhere' was a very good idea.

She entered the Hall of Records and walked to the office of the Senior Secretary. "Janice, may I speak with you?"

A woman of similar age to Amelia looked up and a grin split her face. "Amelia Bones, you sly old fox! How have you been?"

"You know how it goes, Janice. Good times, bad times, and now ... I'm looking something up. It involves my niece, and I'm rather worried about her."

"This involves that stupid Executive Order that Acting Minister Umbridge enacted, doesn't it?"

"As a matter of fact, it does. Would it be safe to assume that someone came down here investigating polygamous marriages not long ago?"

The woman named Janice scowled angrily. "The 'Great One' herself did. Turned out that the only existing marriage of that type was just dissolved by her proclamation."

"So Harry's marriage to my niece and the other girls was the *only* one affected?"

"Precisely. Came in here asking for the information, and left cackling madly about showing somebody how to do things." She paused. "Given the way she looks, it's more like she should have been croaking, not cackling. Never met a person who looked more like a toad than that woman."

"Are you willing to come to my office and sign an affidavit about this information? Maybe even leave a copy of the memory in an Evidence Pensieve?"

"That worried about this?" Janice asked.

"She's set herself up against Harry Potter, Janice. The young man killed the deadliest and most dangerous Dark Lord of at least a century or two. And now she wants to pit the Ministry against him?" She softened. "Besides, she's hated him for seven years. He made Fudge look bad by trying to say that Voldemort was back, and she was most definitely Fudge's toady." She smirked at the reference.

Janice stood. "Shall we? We can catch up on old times on the way up to your office."

"This is highly irregular!" Umbridge exclaimed the next day.

"I agree," stated an elderly man with a monocle in his eye. "Emergency meetings of the Wizengamot are unusual to say the least, and now for two to be called in the same week?"

"This never would have happened if Dumbledore was still the Chief Warlock!" another cried.

"It quite likely would have," Amelia said quietly, still managing to make herself heard. "And we can not rely on one man to dig us out of our troubles all the time. That was part of what led to the last 'emergency' session." No one missed the sarcasm colouring the word 'emergency'.

"Explain," demanded the monocled man.

"Quite simply put, *Acting* Minister Umbridge is abusing the powers of her office for a personal vendetta against a single individual, namely Harry Potter."

"You have no proof of this!" Umbridge shrieked.

"Incorrect," Amelia said. "We have enough that you are likely to be stripped of your Ministry career, if not sent to Azkaban for a short time."

Amelia faced the remainder of the Wizengamot, while motioning to Kingsley Shacklebolt to keep Umbridge in his sights at all times. "As many of you saw at the last meeting, Miss Lorelei Potter was kidnapped at the request, or possibly orders, of Madam Umbridge. This was so that a letter could be sent to Harry Potter, in order to get him to take care of a problem that they chose not to worry about, as if Mr Potter were something that they owned and could order about."

"He is a national resource," Umbridge said sternly, "and it is the Ministry's right to oversee and utilise such resources."

"By less than legal means, it seems." You have seen the proof of the kidnapping, and have heard from Mr Potter concerning the letter regarding Draco Malfoy's other identity. Since at the time he received that letter, only Malfoy's people and some of the Ministry knew of the name Basileus, there were only two possible sources for the letter. Only the Ministry has access to the spells that permit an owl to pass anti-owl wards, and those are only used in the direst of circumstances. They must be justified every time that they are used. This means that it was either a Ministry job, or someone highly placed in the Ministry was in the employ of Draco Malfoy. We have seen that Dolores Umbridge was the one to whom Lorelei Potter was delivered, so she needs to explain how it is that a young child in her care, whether by the family's choice or not, ended up missing a finger, which was sent with the letter that set Mr Potter on Draco Malfoy's trail."

"Follow that trail. Umbridge has Miss Potter kidnapped. A letter is sent by someone in the Ministry to get Mr Potter to deal with the up-and-coming Dark Lord that we later discovered was Draco Malfoy. This letter contained the finger of Miss Potter as proof that she was being held."

She looked at each member for a moment. "This alone proves misuse of power, but then we have the Executive Order from yesterday, which was designed purely to affect Mr Potter once again."

Amelia Bones turned and nodded to Auror Tonks, who opened a door to allow entry to several people – Harry, Auror Pamir, her friend Janice from the Hall of Records, and Albus Dumbledore. "These people are all here to give testimony regarding this. All have affidavits signed and memories stored in Evidence Pensieves concerning this information. Janice Bardstone, of the Hall of Records, will be able to state that Madam Umbridge entered the Hall *before* the Executive Order was created, looking for information into polygamous marriages, and found that Mr Potter's was the only one currently existing. The order came out not long after that information came to her attention. In asking Madam Bardstone about the information, she volunteered the memory that Madam Umbridge left laughing when she found that there was only one current polygamous marriage."

"Shall we be permitted to examine the evidence, or take your word for it?" one crochety member asked.

"We should retire to chambers and review the evidence. If what I say is shown to be correct, then I believe that we should at the very least place sanctions upon Madam Umbridge, if not completely remove her from office. She would also not be permitted to leave our custody, if no legal damages are assessed against her, until Miss Lorelei Potter is back with her parents. This would require that we overturn the blatantly abusive Executive Order that she placed into effect."

The Wizengamot nodded and slowly filed into the chambers behind them, leaving Umbridge guarded by Shacklebolt. In surprisingly short order, they had returned to the main chamber, almost all of them scowling at Umbridge for a moment.

The monocled man stood. "After reviewing the evidence, we determined quite a few things. First is that Mr Potter is not someone to be trifled with. I can't say as I'd be too happy if someone kidnapped my child and sent me her finger, had I a daughter. The evidence chain does show that Miss Potter was delivered to Dolores Umbridge, who had a responsibility to keep the child safe and unharmed. To make up for the pain and suffering on the part of the family, for each hour that Miss Potter has been missing from her parents care, Madam Umbridge shall be assessed one thousand Galleons, counting from the hour that Auror Pamir's memories show that Miss Potter was delivered to Madam Umbridge. These monies are payable to the Potter family." He looked to Umbridge. "For the sake of your bank account, I would recommend that you send an Auror to retrieve Miss Potter."

"The Executive Order has been overturned and declared to be null and void in all ways, and this information shall be published immediately." He inhaled. "The last involves the final punishment of Madam Umbridge." The woman looked up in fear. "We shall not pronounce the punishment until Miss Potter has been reunited with her family, in this room. We do not trust that Madam Dolores Umbridge would not make an attempt to use the child as leverage to lessen the punishments."

Dolores Umbridge sagged as much as it is possible for a toad to sag. She looked to Shacklebolt and said something too low for Amelia to hear, but Shacklebolt obviously understood. Without taking his eyes from the woman, he motioned for several Aurors to approach him, and he rapidly gave them orders, never once removing his eyes from his charge. *I'm going to have to see that he gets a good position in the new regime, Amelia thought. Very professional, which is as it should be.*

It was only twenty minutes later when Nymphadora Tonks came running into the room, grinning madly and giving Harry a thumbs-up. "She's just being looked at by one of our Healers," she said, "but she looks good," Tonks said.

Harry grinned. "I trust Auror Tonks with my life *and* my children's lives, so if you want to stop the clock, you can. If she says that Lorelei is safe, then she is."

The man with the monocle nodded. "Very well. Dolores Umbridge, for the blatant misuse of power shown during your time in the Ministry, you are to be stripped of your title and pension, and sentenced to fifteen years in Azkaban. There is evidence of years of such abuse, which is why the Azkaban sentence was levied. If there is any money remaining upon payment of the damages to the Potter family, you will need to live on that when you are released." He nodded to Kingsley Shacklebolt. "Aurors, take her into custody."

She was quickly shackled and dragged off, screaming, "This is all your fault, Potter!" as she was removed.

A few minutes later, Tonks came in again, leading a small child, who immediately screamed "Daddy!" and ran to Harry, leaping into his arms at the last moment. He caught her and spun her around joyfully.

"I love you Lorelei," he said. "How are you doing?"

"I'm okay, Daddy. I was a little scared, but not now."

"I'm glad," he said. "How are your hands?" he asked sadly.

"Fine," she replied. "I washed them before they brought me here. See?" She held up both hands to show him.

Two completely unblemished, undamaged hands.

Burning Day The Calm Before

Disclaimer: Are we at this yet again? Do I really need to remind you all that JK Rowling owns these characters (save the occasional unrecognisable one like Michaela Pamir and Janice Bardstone), and that I make no money at all from them?

Note: At the end of the last chapter, I referred to Lorelei's hands as unblemished, yet mentioned that the finger had a scar on it, which was why they knew it was hers. I can either offer that up as an oops, or tell you that it was meant to refer to the fact that there were no obvious new injuries within the last few days. Take your pick as to which you prefer.

"As near as we can figure, she studied Lorelei's hands before Transfiguring some piece of scrap into a finger," Harry said. "The finger we were sent wasn't a finger, basically. None of us thought to check as we should have." He scowled. "We've spent years in the damned wizarding world, doing what the Muggles think is impossible, and we *still* think like that when something like this happens. Seriously – if you walked into a room and saw what looked like Ginny and I having sex, what would be the first reaction?"

"Honestly?" Hermione said. "My first reaction would be to stun them both and see who changed at the end of the hour. I know you too well." She held up her left hand and motioned to her wedding ring. "Plus there's that little link we all have, so I'd know it wasn't you." She smirked.

"Okay, let me rephrase it – you walk out on the beach and see – oh, Severus and Minerva going at it in the sand. What's your honest first thought?"

Severus blinked at the imagery before shaking his head to clear it; not disgusted, but it was obviously not his choice of partners. His wives and the others at the table thought for a moment and nodded. "You're right," Pansy said. "First thought would honestly be that it really was those two."

"So we fell down on the job of checking this through," Harry said. "God forbid there's a next time, but we need to check carefully when something happens like this."

"So where do we go from here?" Susan asked, changing the subject somewhat. "Do we continue with the intention to tear down the current way of doing things in the wizarding world?"

"My vote is yes," Harry replied. "Umbridge wasn't the cause, she was a product of it. She gained power because of the way that the wizarding world thinks. We're not doing this for me, or you, or any of us. We're doing it so that Lorelei's children won't have the worries that we've had about a corrupt government. I want to see if we can develop an oath of office that is a *real* oath, to ensure that the person taking the job really has the best interests of the people in mind, rather than their own."

"Gods, I hate this," Harry growled. "I want to just sit back and enjoy that my baby girl is back. I want to just sit in a corner and cry for a while over the worries that I couldn't let myself feel. I want to kick myself for joking when I thought my daughter's life was in danger. But I can't. I have to push forward and actually be the fucking saviour of the wizard world again." His grimace showed some of his old self-loathing rising to the surface.

"If you could excuse us?" Hermione asked the assembled group. "It appears that we Potter women have to pull our husband out of the funk we should have seen coming. We'll be back in a while. You can carry on with the planning; we trust you." They gently grabbed Harry and pulled him from the room.

"Which one of them will be pregnant when they get back?" was the amused question they heard from Severus as they disappeared back to their island.

Luna stepped forward, shrugging off the robes she'd been wearing. She wore nothing beneath. "I never thought I'd say that summer in England was too cold for me," she said with a smile. "I much prefer this island. Now look at me, Harry."

He looked up at her, a deep pain within his eyes. "What kind of a man am I?" he asked. "I made jokes while my daughter was in the clutches of an evil woman, holding her hostage for whatever nefarious purposes she might have had."

She undid his robes, then his shirt, and then pressed her body against him. "The kind of man who knew to push his pain to the side in order to save his child. Save *our* child." She pulled him down and gave him a searing kiss. "Think what that means to me, beloved. You were so happy when you found that I was with child, carrying Lorelei. Now you will do to the wizarding world what it has sorely need for many years, and the catalyst was Lorelei. Do you know what that means to me – to *us*, because you would do it for any of our children – what it means to know that you literally will change the world for your children?" She kissed him again, softer and sweeter this time. "You love our children so very much, and it hurts to see them hurt."

Hermione hugged him from behind after removing the shirt that Luna had unfastened, and he felt her bare breasts against his back. "You hurt for what you did *because* you love them, Harry. You didn't react the way you did because you *don't* love them. As Luna said, you pushed your pain aside." After a pause that Harry assumed involved a look between the two, given Luna's nod, Hermione turned Harry to face her. "If you had reacted

the way you used to, in school, what would have happened?"

"We'd be in a bloody war right now – and I mean that quite literally; no swearing intended – and Lorelei would likely never be returned to us, because I'd have literally ripped through the opposition."

"Right. So you stopped to think about the source of your anger and put that anger to good use. By controlling it, you've cleared out a new Dark Lord and gotten rid of some of the corruption at the top, and made yourself look good in the eyes of the public. Think about that, love. The people are much more likely to listen to you now."

"Because I didn't go in all 'thud and blunder' the way I usually do?" he asked with a wry smile.

"Exactly," Luna said, turning him back to face her. "And besides, Harry, you're forgetting one small thing in your desire to punish yourself. Well, two, actually. First is that she's my daughter and I'm terribly happy with the way that you handled yourself these past days, so you shouldn't be kicking yourself." Her eyes took on a smouldering look and she added, her voice an octave lower, "Second is that any punishing is our job."

"So if you don't mind, we're going to torture you now," Hermione said, gently nibbling his ear, while Luna undid his trousers.

A moment later Luna said with a smirk and in a husky voice, "I think we've managed to get his mind onto more important things, based on the evidence." She followed that by attempting to take his entire length into her mouth, which made him groan. Releasing him, she slid slowly up his body. "Which one of us drives your desire most today, my husband?" she purred.

He gripped her bum tightly and ground against her. "A certain blonde-haired minx seems to have fired me up quite a bit. What do you think I should do about it?" he growled.

"I think you should carry her over to that table and try to give Lorelei a brother or sister," she panted. "Evil man," she groaned as he lifted her off the ground. "I'm supposed to be seducing you, not being seduced by you."

"It's your diabolical sexual aura, Luna. You're really a succubus in disguise. You must be. No normal man could last against the sexuality you exude." He placed her on the table and managed to get her to disengage her legs from around his waist.

"That must make you an incubus then," she panted. "Oh Morganna yes!" she screamed as Harry knelt at the end of the table and began to pepper the insides of her thighs with gentle kisses and soft grazing with his teeth. He kissed her directly on her lower lips, letting his tongue dart inside quickly and making her thrust toward him. He smiled and continued to tease her with thrusts of his tongue alternated with gentle suction when he captured her clitoris.

Finally, when every breath of hers seemed to be a soft moan, he stood and pressed against her, sliding in with ease. Even after a child, she, like her co-wives, had made a strong effort to get those muscles back into shape, and it had paid off. "Gods, I think you're tighter than before you had Lorelei," he groaned, not for the first time.

"For you, my husband," she moaned, which became a constant happy noise as he began to slowly stroke in and out of her. Her legs locked around his waist again, and she began to cry, making Harry grin.

She only gets like that when it's going to be a big one. Better make sure the table is cushioned properly, he thought, although not quite as coherently as he wanted it to be. Despite having his hands rather solidly gripping her hips as his thrusting gained speed, he let his magic flow in an effort to soften the table.

Luna gasped as his magic began to flow, arching her back and literally lifting completely off the table as he felt her orgasm crash over her. Vaguely realising what was causing such a powerful reaction in her, he focused all his attention on her, pulling back slightly on his magic flow. She literally glowed for several seconds as she bucked against him, and he found himself overpowered by all the sensations running through an already highly sensitised part of his body – her delightful localised tension, the ever so enjoyable friction between bodies, and now a large amount of magic – and emptied into her, seemingly forever, before finally collapsing against her on the table.

"Goodness," she giggled when she was finally capable of speech again. "I think I'm going to be sloshing when I stand up. That was quite the explosion, my love." She kissed him softly, and smiled as she felt him stiffen slightly once more. "I need to recover some more. Maybe you should show Hermione that little trick when she's finished with Pansy. Or maybe show Susan right now."

He turned to see Hermione making love to Pansy, and marvelled at the odd spells that people had created for various reasons. She had wanted to have children with her co-wives, and bear children by them, and had researched spells for it. In a collection of Japanese sexual magic, she had found the solution, although it had not been what she had expected. None of the other ladies seemed to complain about the effects of the spell, and fully understood his sex drive now. Pansy's swelling belly held a child fathered by Hermione. An odd spell, and nothing he'd ever hope to experience on the receiving end, but oddly erotic for him to watch nonetheless.

Susan sidled up to him, and as she flowed into his arms, he realised that he could actually hear her heart pounding, albeit extremely softly. "Wishing you were Pansy right now?" he whispered as he nibbled her neck.

"Oh yes," she hissed as her knees wobbled slightly. "Harry, please don't tease me. I'm too horny right now, and I just want a good, hard fucking. I need you inside me now."

"Your wish is my command, my wife," he said as he gripped her perfect derriere for a moment before spinning her around, making her lean her arms on the wall, and then sliding all the way in in a single stroke. He let his magic flow again as he had with Luna, and she growled deeply, a sound that seemed to shoot down his spine and straight back into her, since they were now coupled. This was going to be a hard and fast one, he knew, as the sound she made caused him to start thrust with abandon, making a smacking noise as their bodies met. Considering she liked to be

spanked, he wondered if his body striking hers felt like that. He added some force to his thrusts, making her growl change to a satisfied moan.

In short order, he was once again releasing what felt like an unbelievable amount into his beautiful redhead wife, and collapsing against her. She squeezed him once or twice, managing to make him prove that he wasn't *quite* finished, and then laughed a throaty laugh. "So, what do you think of your torture session, Mr Potter?"

"I can honestly say, Mrs Potter, that a quote from a Muggle children's film works best here. 'If this is torture, chain me to the wall!'" he answered her with a laugh.

"That comes later, love," both Pansy and Hermione said. Hermione was rampant again, not having cancelled her prior spell.

"Sorry, Hermione, but I'm rather enjoying where I am right now, and don't feel like leaving," he grinned. She blinked in surprise and then looked down, blushed slightly and cancelled her spell.

"Sorry about that," she said, the blush worsening.

"If it disgusted me, I'd tell you. I won't partake, shall we say, but neither will I complain if I see any of you in that condition." He thought for a moment and then smirked and slapped Susan lightly on the bum, drawing both a delighted squeak out of her and a quick throb against him. "We'd best be returning to the rest of the group. We have a war council to work on."

They all chuckled at Susan's disappointed noise as Harry pulled out, and were impressed by the redness of her bum. "You have *got* to do that to me again sometime," she purred. "That's one of the most powerful orgasms I've ever had with you, and that's saying something."

Once they had reluctantly dressed again ("God, it feels like my nipples are going to explode, they're so hard," Susan moaned as the silk robes slid over her breasts), they went back to England for the meeting.

Soft laughter echoed through the board room when both Luna and Susan sat rather tenderly. "Should we expect a new delivery in about nine months?" Severus asked, his amusement evident.

"I can't say as that would necessarily bother me," Harry said brightly. "But that's for the future. We need to deal with right now."

He looked to Ragnok. "I don't know if I've said it yet, so I'll deal with it now, and if I'm repeating myself, please forgive me. I want full ownership of the Daily Prophet. I don't want the ownership being in the back pocket of the Ministry, so that the Ministry can libel anyone they want to and not have any worries. Any problems with that?"

"I doubt it," Griphook said. "You are the richest wizard in England and several European countries, such as Luxembourg and France. Oddly enough, there is a Belgian chocolatier whose monopoly on the finest anti-Dementor medication puts his fortune just barely above yours. The fact that he sells to the Muggles as well under a different name helps in that regard. If the acquisition of the Malfoy fortune happens as we expect that it will, the entire situation becomes moot, as you will be the richest wizard in all Europe, and most likely Asia if my sources are correct." Harry snorted softly, making both Griphook and Ragnok smile. "Thank you for your assessment," Griphook finished with a small bow, actually dipping the head to expose his neck for a moment.

"You do me great honour, Griphook," Harry said, placing his right fist on his left breast and bowing in the same manner to the goblin.

"And some wonder why we chose to ally with him," Ragnok was heard to murmur with a humorous tone in his voice. "Now that the Daily Prophet is a given, what else might we goblins do for our friends?"

"I've never planned a full scale rebellion before," he said. "Any suggestions? I know that we need to topple the Ministry and rebuild it, since the only way to make sure that all of Fudge's and Umbridge's cronies are out is to start from ground level and build up."

Ragnok steepled his long fingers for a moment as he thought. Finally he said, "I can assume that you would like it to be as bloodless as possible for as long as possible?" Harry nodded. "Well, one way involves some trickery and may cross a line that you might not wish to cross." He stopped and looked directly at Harry.

"Worst I can do is say that the idea doesn't appeal to me," he replied to Ragnok.

"The last few Ministers have been ... less than honest or fair to the goblins or other species. A case could be made that some of the edicts that came down in the last few years are dangerously close to breaking the treaty signed at the conclusion of the last war between wizards and goblins."

"Actually sir," Griphook said, "we never had a chance to deal with the most recent one, enacted by Madam Umbridge. Shall I find it?" At Ragnok's nod, Griphook left the room and was back far faster than anyone expected, grinning widely, to the point of showing his teeth. Harry found himself wondering what would make a goblin show that level of happiness to this many non-goblins.

Ragnok looked at the parchment and laughed. "This edict falls directly into our hands when we need it most, Harry. Take a look at it."

He took the parchment that Ragnok handed him, and almost immediately began to laugh. "That woman ... this thing proves that bigots are morons." He slid it to Hermione, whose eyes went wide.

"That ... she ... ooh, I'm glad she's in prison! How dare she!" Hermione fumed.

Pansy gently pried the parchment from Hermione's fingers, and began to laugh. "If this didn't play right into our hands, then I'd be angry too. But for her to have ordered that *all* Gringott's books are now subject to Ministry oversight? That's a polite way of saying that she's nationalising the bank – that the Ministry now *owns* Gringott's."

Ragnok nodded. "To continue my idea – we use this latest edict as an excuse to cut ties with the Ministry. We either insist that we talk to you, or perhaps Madam Bones, or someone highly placed that you trust. We use as the reasoning that in our previous dealing with you in major business matters, you have never attempted to treat us as inferiors or cheat us, and that we respect this." He shrugged. "It never hurts to use the truth in judicious amounts."

"So the general public sees the Ministry as the ones leading to the reason that they can't get at their money, and then sees me as the shining knight who rides in to save the day, allowing the regular wizard and witch to get at their money."

He sat back, thinking about it. "In my own way, I will be turning into a Dark Lord, as far as some people will be concerned. I can't help but realise that there will be those who are lost in the dismantling of the Ministry that didn't deserve to be hurt that way. But it needs to be done in order to help future generations not have to worry about their government trying to abuse them." He shook his head. "Think about what we're talking about here. Remember a few years back, how I railed and ranted about the 'sheeple' of the wizarding world? Now I'm planning to take advantage of that very attitude of theirs in order to give them what I think will be a better government. I really am doing it for the greater good."

He scowled. "What gives me the right to force my will on others? Even if it's not for power's sake or money's sake, isn't it supposed to be wrong to destroy a duly elected government, even if it's corrupt?"

Ragnok and Albus both smiled. "Harry, your very worry about such shows that there actually is little worry," Albus said. "As for overthrowing a duly elected government? Let me put you in touch with some of my international contacts. I believe that they might well be able to help you see your way clear on this issue."

"I certainly hope so, sir. I didn't kill Riddle just to become him."

Luna cocked her head and said, "Besides, the anagrams you can come up with for your name just aren't that terrifying. Who's going to run from the Dark Lord who calls himself Jerry 'A-Hater' Stomp? Or 'Mr Troy, a phaser jet?'"

"It's certainly better than 'Pretty Smerj O'Hara'," Hermione quipped.

Harry started to laugh. "If I decide that I must be a Dark Lord, then Hermione's *has* to be my Dark Lord name, just to keep me humble. Thank you," he said honestly.

"Any time," she replied with an impudent grin.

"Is there really anything we can do right now? If we're going to actually bring down the Ministry, it will likely eventually get into an actual fight. What do we do in that case?"

"People die in war, Harry," Ragnok said. "It is a fact of life, and something a warrior needs to remember."

"I never wanted to be a warrior," he said simply. He looked to his wives. "And given how Hermione responded to the post battle stress, I might not survive this time if *she* fights, although I guarantee my corpse will have the biggest smile anyone has ever seen."

"Harry!" she squeaked.

"Quite all right, Hermione," Albus said, his twinkle in full force. "Often many people react to death by celebrating life."

The meeting continued with various ideas tossed about what they might do, with nothing but the goblin protest being decided upon.

Another thing decided upon was to put the entire Potter Manor grounds under *Fidelius*, with Ragnok as the Secret Keeper.

The next day, the goblins protested the edict from the prior Minister, Dolores Umbridge. That edict regarding them had not been struck down by the Ministry and the new person in the job was exactly what the wizarding world *didn't* need, but who managed to play directly into Harry's hands. Rufus Scrimgeour had previously been Head of the Auror Office, and was a no-nonsense sort of man. "Rufus is a man of action," Albus told him. "With him at the Ministry's helm, I fear that this will eventually be forced to battle. He will not 'go gently into that good night', as the poem says. He has supported the current set-up for many years, and I believe is set in his ways. He would be an excellent man to have on your side, but I do not believe that such is possible, unfortunately."

Scrimgeour was of a mind to talk to the goblins about the edict, rather than overturn it, because he felt that there was merit to the decision that Umbridge had made. This did not endear him to the goblins. The wrangling point quickly became the reciprocity that the goblins requested. If the Ministry were to see all their books, then the goblins wanted access to the Ministry books. This, of course, was unacceptable to the Ministry.

The wrangling continued for days, and in the middle of it, Albus approached Harry. "My boy, I have managed to get you a meeting with a very prominent American wizard. He is by far the oldest of us all, to my knowledge. I am but a child to him." He smiled at Harry's somewhat incredulous look. "Perhaps phrasing it this way will make the point. When I was born, he was approaching his one hundred fiftieth birthday. That he is still alive is beyond astonishing. That he is still walking unaided, albeit slowly, is miraculous. His mind and wit are as sharp as ever, and he wishes to meet you."

"Certainly. When?"

"How does today strike you? It is barely five o'clock in the afternoon now, so that makes it roughly noon in Philadelphia." He paused. "Yes, that is correct. British Summer Time and their Daylight Saving Time match quite closely with their durations." He shook his head. "Perhaps some of your wives might wish to come along?"

"Come along where?" Hermione asked as she walked into the room.

"Harry is meeting with a diplomat from the Americas that I think he could learn quite a bit from. You might find meeting him interesting as well."

"Who is he?" she asked, interest piqued.

"A man well known historically throughout the United States and Europe. Benjamin Franklin."

"I am pleased to meet you all," the man said as he motioned them all to seats. He looked to Hermione with a twinkle worthy of Albus Dumbledore and said, "It does my heart good to know that I still have that effect on women."

"That's one of the few times in my life I've ever completely understood why they call it 'squeeing'," Pansy said to Susan, both of whom were giggling madly at their wife's reaction to meeting the famous American diplomat.

Hermione was blushing madly at the teasing. "I'm sorry, sir. I know you must get that sort of thing from American wizards all the time."

"Usually they aren't quite as attractive as you four ladies are," he replied with a smile that put them all at greater ease. "Now that we have the flirting out of the way, shall we talk about the reason you all are here? Albus tells me that you are attempting the overthrow of the current ruling body of your wizarding England. Why?"

"They're corrupt!" Pansy said with some heat in her voice.

"Prove it," Mr Franklin replied. "Give me the reasons why you think they're corrupt. What have they done?"

"The current administration is trying to keep an illegal edict in force against another sentient species," Luna said.

"Which one do they have a hate-on for? The centaurs, the goblins, or the merfolk?" Franklin asked.

"They're trying to get a look at the goblins' books," Hermione said, "and do not understand that the chagrin and anger they feel at the goblins request reciprocity is what they are causing to the goblins."

Harry shook his head. "The past several Ministers have done things that shouldn't be legal. Minister Bagnold threw an innocent man into prison because the evidence seemed to point to his guilt. He spent twelve years there before escaping. A trial likely would have shown his innocence. They've passed laws that nearly drove the creatures that they deemed dark straight into the clutches of exactly whom they were trying to fight, supposedly. Let's not forget the law regarding what to do to a werewolf that bites someone – execution of a sentient being as if all they are is a rabid animal. The Minister that was murdered a few days ago fought hiring new Aurors to fight Voldemort until such point as he actually saw Voldemort with his own eyes, which had allowed Voldie to grow and solidify his base. I was put on trial for defending myself. They were actually likely to snap my wand and expel me from Hogwarts. It was a sham trial, as Fudge and Umbridge tried to prevent me from putting on a defence by trying to prevent me from making it to the trial by rescheduling it. Umbridge, who took over for Fudge when he was assassinated, used Aurors to kidnap one of my children to get me to deal with the new Dark Lord that was rising. Mind you, they were doing everything that they could to keep the public from knowing about the Dark Lord Basselope."

Franklin chuckled and raised his eyebrows at that. "Sorry, I went to Hogwarts with the new 'Dark Lord'. I defeated him rather handily. He was calling himself Lord Basileus."

"Doesn't think much of himself does he?" Franklin asked with a laugh. "'Lord King'?"

"That's Draco Malfoy for you," Harry laughed. "Arrogant little ... individual." He shook his head. "Back to the story at hand. Mind you, the Fudge assassination was done by Malfoy, but my daughter had been kidnapped prior to that, in hopes of getting me so angry at Malfoy that I'd just wander in, blow through everything and perhaps ... I don't know honestly what she was she was thinking. As soon as I had dealt with Malfoy, she tried to take me to court for attacking a well-respected citizen, and I don't think you need more than one guess the well-respected citizen she was thinking of. As soon as we humiliated her in the case, proving that Malfoy had admitted it in front of the head of the Department for Magical Law Enforcement, she ran out and created an Executive Order dissolving all polygamous marriages in Britain. Ours was the only one, a fact we proved before the Wizengamot."

He scowled. "The problem is that they only change these things if someone complains. People are allowed to enter the highest office I'm aware of in British wizarding society and then blatantly pursue vendettas against people. They get away with far too much."

Franklin looked at them for a long moment before standing and walking over to his roll-top desk. They were all amazed to see a laptop in the space exposed. He tapped a key and a picture appeared, more than slightly risqué. "Whoops!" he said. "Hope none of you ladies are offended by my desktop picture."

Susan spoke up. "We're not all married to Harry; we're all married to each other. If we were offended by naked breasts -"

Franklin laughed as he continued to work, and suddenly several sheets of parchment appeared on the desk next to the laptop. "I love how they've managed to blend mundane and magical technologies." He handed the sheets of parchment to Harry, who began to read.

Somewhat puzzled, Harry read aloud. "In Congress, July 4, 1776, the unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America." He cocked his head.

"Keep reading son. I gave you the final version to read, but the rough draft is in there as well. I know more about your situation over there than you think, but I wanted to hear it from you. At no time have you said that you think you could run things better. You're offended that the government is so corrupt and resistant to change and want to change it."

"So reading this -"

"- will let you know that it's been done before, and successfully. You do sit, after all, with one of the signatories of the document that you now are reading. It sounds as if you are in need of a rebellion."

"I think so too, sir. I just ... it's the inevitable loss of life, sir. Is it really worth it?"

Franklin looked at him for a moment before picking up one of the documents and began to read. "When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new guards for their future security — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government."

He put the sheet in his lap and looked at Harry. "It was written for the colonies that became the nation you now are visiting, but think of what those words mean, Mr Potter. That it is possible to reach a point where bloodshed is preferable to living under the old regime. War is not an option that a smart man jumps into quickly. Would that I could talk to our current president here — I'd have warned him about this incursion into Iraq. This will not end well, I believe." He scowled. "I dislike what I seem to be seeing, but that is our problem, not yours."

"Would you recommend tearing down the wall between Muggles and wizards?" Susan asked.

Franklin thought for a long moment before answering. "It's a difficult question to ponder, but my thought is that having an arm of the government whose job is specifically to keep your world secret is just asking for the same corruption to arise and threaten again in a generation or two. You aren't changing things for just yourselves; you're changing them for your children's children's children."

Harry sat in his chair with his eyes closed, obviously deep in thought and not wishing any distraction. When he opened them again and met Benjamin Franklin's eyes, everyone could see the resolve there. "That's the Harry we fell in love with," Pansy said. "I think we'll be heading home soon to start our war."

"Yes, but not before I have a chance to at least offer to take this man out for dinner. He's done so much for me, possibly without knowing how much."

Franklin grinned widely. "I would be honoured, good sir. I would take great pleasure in dining with this generation's real sons and daughters of liberty." He rose to his feet, meeting Harry, and they shook hands.

Burning Day Approaching Thunder

Disclaimer: As I'm sure you're aware by now, none of the Harry Potter characters belong to me. Instead, they are the property of JK Rowling, and her lawyers would jump up and down on my spleen if I were to attempt to lay claim to anything of her world. I like my spleen the way it is, thank you very much.

Note: I haven't forgotten the goblin I mentioned in an earlier note, by the way. I just haven't had a chance to introduce him yet.

Also, I forgot to give credit to The-Caitiff (look for him on fanfiction.net) for the Harry James Potter anagrams of "Jerry 'A-Hater' Stomp" and "Mr Troy, a phaser jet". Those come from his excellent fic "At the Hands of the Other" (<http://www.fanfiction.net/s/3036211/1/>) - go read it, it's fun!

Final Note before chapter starts: A couple people commented on Hermione fathering a child with Pansy and blinked at it. It was not a typo. The method? Hermione strikes me as one of those people who would likely explode if she weren't learning things, and having a problem to solve is relaxing for her. (That's how I see her.) I won't describe it, although I basically said in the chapter what the method was. If you're really curious – there's an entire sub-genre of anime and manga involving this. Do a web search on the word 'futanari' and be prepared for some Not Safe For Work links. While not a big fan of it, I am aware of it, and it struck me that in a world where magic works the way it does in the HP-verse, someone might well develop the spells for allowing futanari to exist. (You'll understand if you do the search.)

They reappeared in England, laughing. "My God, that man is a charmer!" Hermione said with a blush. "I'll bet he could still charm the knickers off a woman."

Harry's eyes sparkled. "Given a chance, you'd be in line, wouldn't you?" She blinked at him, slightly worried until she felt the link. He was amused. "You forget sometimes that we all can feel what the others do, love. He wouldn't have to work that hard, would he?"

She blushed even more deeply than before. "If I was going to cheat on you, I'd be helping him take them off."

He kissed her softly and laughed. "I know – I could feel your arousal." He turned and walked to the Floo. "I need to talk to a few people, so I'll be back later. Stay safe." He disappeared from the room, but quickly popped his head back in. "Think on this, Hermione: perhaps you might want to teach him something about women's liberation?" he said with a wide smirk before disappearing once more.

"Did he just give me permission to seduce Benjamin Franklin?" she asked.

Harry appeared at Gringott's secure entrance and headed for Ragnok's office. "How go things, Ragnok?"

"They go, Harry; they go. We are currently in discussion with the Ministry, which seems ill inclined to permit the reciprocity we think is fair. We have closed the bank to the general public, who are beginning to grumble at our insistence of fair treatment."

"That doesn't surprise me," Harry replied. "Unfortunately, I expect this to rise to bloodshed level soon. How goes the purchase of the Daily Prophet?"

"Not at all," Ragnok replied. "Someone realised what was happening and warned the Ministry. The Prophet is *officially* the newspaper of wizarding England, wholly owned and operated by the Ministry."

Harry grinned. "Excellent. That positions me perfectly to turn the Quibbler into the voice of the resistance after we move him to a safe location. Lorelei needs her grandpa to stay safe."

After a momentary pause, he asked, "Do your people have any connections with the Muggle side of the British government? I mean, do you guys run Barclays or something? I'm realising that I need to speak with people fairly high up to warn them what's coming, especially since I'm about to tear down the wall between the worlds."

Ragnok thought for a moment. "We have a surprising percentage of the ownership of several international banks, Barclays included." He chuckled. "I'm going to let you in on a small secret. DeBeers, the South African diamond people? Wholly owned by goblins."

"Okay," Harry mused in shock. "So you've got money you can bring to bear, and aren't exactly hurting if you lose the wizard business for a while."

"Exactly. Let me contact you later in regards to meeting someone in the British government. It will require contacting someone who will contact someone else, if you understand me."

"Perfectly. It happens when it happens. Just ... stress that we're on a timetable of sorts. As much as the War of Insurrection lasted years, I don't think we can really hold out that long. Neither side can really hold out that long."

"We run the risk of a very bloody war if we work too fast, you realise," Ragnok said.

"It's a fine line we're trying to walk, and I don't know how to walk it. The fight with Riddle was a playground tussle compared to what we're trying to do. Honestly, he'd have left the government largely alone, since he'd have been able to control the people in those positions most important to the running of the government. The average wizard or witch doesn't really give a damn who's in charge as long as it doesn't disrupt their day to day life. What we're talking about here is changing things for them as well, which is where the Quibbler will come into things, pointing out how the Ministry not only can, but *has* done things that might affect them. We'll just have to list them for the people."

He shook his head. "Damn, I sound like I'm campaigning for an office or something."

"You may well be running things when you are done, Harry," Ragnok said.

"I don't want to run a government. I want to cavort naked with my incredibly sexy wives on my hidden island and make as many children with them as they're willing to bear for me." He delivered the line with a small whine to his voice, but there was a twinkle to his eyes.

Ragnok raised an eyebrow. "You could make the law so that the group of you could cavort naked in Diagon Alley," he said, his own eyes twinkling.

"Wouldn't that be a kcker?" Harry asked. "Wouldn't be fair to the ladies, though, and I don't need hate mail because I'm proving that I married the four sexiest women in all Europe."

"Your marriage will last a long time, Harry," Ragnok replied with a laugh. "I will contact you as soon as I have some word for you."

It was only two days later that Harry received a call from Ragnok. "My connections managed to get you a meeting with someone who has the ear of both the Muggle Royal Family and the Prime Minister. If you can convince him of your cause, he will likely manage to get you meetings with both the Prime Minister and the Queen."

Harry blew air out of his cheeks in surprise, in an effort to give him a moment or two to think. "Okay. When is this meeting, and what should I wear?"

"The meeting is tomorrow at 11 am, and you should wear a Muggle business suit." He also told him exactly where the meeting was to take place.

The next morning, Harry was in an Armani suit and Ferragamo shoes awaiting the arrival of his contact. He waited nervously, realising that somewhere along the line, he had become quite a bit more used to wizarding wear than to most Muggle clothing.

"Mr Potter, I presume?" asked a cultured voice from behind him. Harry turned to face a fairly nondescript man, one he knew he'd have a devil of a time trying to describe to anyone. "Call me Adam Smythe."

"Mr Smythe, I'm pleased to meet you. I hope that our meeting is satisfactory for both of us."

Smythe nodded and led Harry into the building. Harry could never quite describe the route he took to the meeting room, but he was fairly certain that it had been chosen for reasons of making it more difficult to escape. "Shall we begin? I was approached by some associates of mine who felt that a meeting between yourself and certain individuals within the British government would be a good idea. To be honest, your job is now to convince me."

"Fair enough. Let me get straight to the point then. What do you know about magic?" Harry asked.

Smythe raised an eyebrow and then rose to his feet in disgust. "My contact will be hearing from me about setting up meetings with the insane. I do not appreciate pranks. Good day, sir."

"Good day, Mr Smythe. Remember this meeting when you begin to hear odd reports from around the British Isles of things that you can't explain. Perhaps I can get my associates to find someone less closed minded." With that, he Apparated from the room back to Potter Manor, intentionally making the jump loud.

About twenty minutes later, while he was in the process of blowing off steam (and blowing things up), Ragnok arrived. "Good day, Harry."

"Hello, Ragnok. I apologise for not contacting you sooner, but I was attempting to calm myself to a point where I would not accidentally offend you. I thank you for your efforts, but I think you may need to talk to your contacts again, and see if they can find someone else that I can speak with. Prefereably someone with an *open* mind, rather than the Mr Smythe that was sent to meet me."

"Mr Smythe actually sends his apologies and wishes to meet with you again. You surprised him when you left, because that room was supposed to be secure from Portkey and Apparation. He was attempting to throw you off-guard in order to learn more from you, which is a time-honoured tactic. You proved the ancient adage, however – 'Your opponent will always surprise you.'"

"We're meeting in a place of my choice, then," Harry said. "How about managing a meeting at one of the Muggle Banks you own major interest in?"

"Barclays should do quite well, I believe," Ragnok said with a smile. "Tomorrow at the same time?"

"Yes. Same suit, too. I refuse to use a different suit since I only wore that one for about thirty minutes today."

The next day led to Harry waiting in a Barclays board room for his meeting. Adam Smythe entered the room, looking properly shame-faced. "So much for trying to talk to you from a position of strength," he said. "I apologise."

“Trying to talk from a position of strength tends to make me think that you see me as an enemy. That's not what I'm after, and if you see me as an enemy, then the inevitable revolution within the wizarding world is going to cause no end of problems to you.” Harry's attitude was sharp and implacable.

“Revolution?” Smythe asked. “Are you sure it's inevitable?”

“Yes. It's already begun. Part of the reason for trying to meet with someone in the Muggle government is to attempt to mitigate as much of the problem as possible, but you lead me to believe that we are unfortunately going to be fighting a war on two fronts – our own Ministry, and the Muggle government.” He scowled. “Are my wife's parents the only Muggles *not* hostile to wizards? Every other example I seem to have gotten shows me that the only difference in the last four hundred years is that you now have more interesting and painful methods of killing wizards and witches.”

“Oh Christ,” Smythe muttered from the other side of the table. “I have really bollixed this one.” Unaware that Harry had heard him, he said, “I'm not sure how I can convince you that the problem we're having right now is purely of my making. I don't want you thinking that the Prime Minister or the Queen is planning on harming you and yours.”

Harry looked at the squirming man at the other end of the table for a moment before relaxing. “Not fun being on the receiving end, especially in a diplomatic situation, is it?”

Smythe looked at Harry for a long moment and then nodded, a wry smile on his face. “You seem to understand enough of the game to get by,” he said.

“I've been forced to learn. Seriously, for all intents and purposes, this is a diplomatic mission for me. We are in the process of overthrowing the current Ministry, because they have gotten unbelievably corrupt, in our opinion. Bagnold, some twenty-odd years ago, was throwing people into Azkaban without trials, because the surface evidence seemed to show that they were guilty. Sirius Black was one such individual hurt in this manner.”

“You have proof that he wasn't the mass murderer?” Smythe asked.

“Yes. I met the person he supposedly killed. That person was the one responsible for my parents' death, later Cedric Diggory's death, and the return of Voldemort to a physical body. I can personally vouch for my godfather's innocence, considering I met the man he supposedly murdered.” Harry snorted. “And they *still* haven't rescinded Pettigrew's Order of Merlin.”

“That's off the point, though. Bagnold's successor, Cornelius Fudge was really no better. He listened to the wrong people, such as a very rich man who was able to bribe his way to an innocent verdict. I was there when a man was arrested and thrown in prison, not because he was guilty, but 'because we have to be seen to be doing something'. It was found later that the man in question had been framed by Voldemort fifty years earlier, which is why he was the easy choice to throw in prison again.”

“When Sirius escaped prison, Fudge was going to have him Kissed by a Dementor – again with no trial. When the Tri-Wizard Tournament happened and Voldemort came back at the end of it, both Fudge and his closest advisor, Dolores Umbridge spent a year doing everything they could to destroy my reputation until the point that Fudge saw Voldemort with his own eyes, on the same day that my godfather died duelling one of Riddle's 'Death Eaters'.”

“I watched Fudge's actions. He didn't vote or rule in a manner that was best for the people, it was *always* what was best for Cornelius Fudge and his continued presence in the job. And his second in command seemed to work best in dealing with problems that she considered could cause problems with her boss.”

“With Ministry permission, she came into Hogwarts and ended up taking over. She was known to torture students. She did patently illegal things, and never paid for *any* of them until quite recently, simply because she could slide, being a Ministry employee.”

“They went so far as to kidnap my daughter about a short time ago, just to get me to come back to England and fight a new Dark Lord they were hiding from the public. Again, rather than teach people that the best way to stop a Dark Lord is to nip them in the bud immediately, they hid it and hoped they could force someone else to do their dirty work for them. They went so far as to make me think that this new Dark Lord had cut off my daughter's finger.”

“Are you sure that it was the Ministry that did this?” Smythe asked, horrified at what he was hearing.

“I'll never know if *Fudge* had anything to do with it, since he's dead, but his successor had the plan going *before* Fudge was killed. And Dolores Umbridge hated me for escaping her grasp *and* making good later on, becoming a hero to the people. When she got into the job, every single one of her law-making attempts was aimed either at curtailing the rights of people she considered to be less than her or specifically aiming an edict at me.”

“And now we have Rufus Scrimgeour in office, who basically is working quite hard at keeping the job. Umbridge wanted access to the goblin run bank – Gringott's – and forced through an edict demanding access to all their accounting records. This is tantamount to calling them liars. Wars are fought over this type of an insult. He is trying to keep the wizarding world running exactly as it always has. Who knows – he might have been a wonderful choice for Minister if we'd gotten him while Voldemort was still around, but he's no good now. People are still being oppressed by the fact that there are laws penalising them for things that they have no control over, such as being a goblin or a werewolf. The centaurs don't even deal with humans because of the way that they've been treated over the years, and that needs to change.”

Harry stopped and blushed. “Sorry. I get a little carried away when it's something that means something to me. The wizarding world was the first place I really felt at home after growing up with the Dursleys.”

Smythe blinked. "Dursley, Dursley, why does that name sound familiar? Wait, was there a son named Dudley?"

"Parents Vernon and Petunia?" Harry asked. When Smythe nodded, he asked, "So what did they do to catch your eye?"

"Tried to hide the fact that their son was a mule for a multi-million pound drug operation. Dudley's spending many many years in prison, while the parents are scraping by on what they can. Vernon Dursley lost his job, apparently, when his company apparently thought he wasn't quite what they were looking for – bad image and all that."

Harry grinned. "So I didn't have to pull the fact that I own majority stock in Grunnings out to influence him. They say that karma is a wheel, and it sounds like it rolled right over them."

"Interesting phrasing. To get back to the reason for our meeting, I take it you want to warn us – I think you call us Muggles – that some weird stuff is about to happen?"

Harry nodded. "It's more than that, though. I had a chance to meet with an American the other day – you wouldn't believe me if I told you who – and he made me realise just what they'd managed to do by making the Mundanes, I think they call them, aware of the existence of the magical world. They don't go screaming it from the rooftops, but they don't exactly hide, either. By doing it that way, they have advancements in magic that we haven't even thought of yet. So I want to drop the wall between wizard and non-wizard. Try to set it up similar to them. Yeah, there will be some interface problems in the beginning, but that will change within a generation."

He shook his head. "The problem is that there is likely to be some bloodshed, and I don't want that. But the current administration won't go down without a fight, damn it. We have to tear down the old Ministry and build it again from the ground up."

"I don't envy your fight, and I see why you needed to speak with us. Can you get us some proof of some of these things you say?"

"Some of them are purely my memories, with no real proof that would hold up in your courts of law, although they have in ours. We have devices that can store a copy of a memory, and others can go in and look at the memory. But that wouldn't hold up in your courts."

"It doesn't need to hold up in court – it just needs to be viewable by the people I need to speak to."

Harry nodded. "I'll see what I can do. Give me a few days."

Smythe nodded in return. "Have your people contact mine when you've got the information, and we'll meet again."

Both men stood as they realised that the meeting was at an end. "Thank you, by the way, for even provisionally forgiving me my idiocy from yesterday," Smythe said. "Sometimes your efforts work, and sometimes they blow up in your face." He grinned at Harry for a moment. "I can at least tell my superiors that they should trust my instincts a little more. You did manage to surprise me when you managed to get out of that room."

"I'm a bit stronger than most people you'll ever have in that room, especially since I could draw on my wives as well, if I absolutely have to."

Smythe raised an eyebrow. "Wives? How's that working for you?"

"Wonderfully, and not for the reason that most people would think. They ground me, and each other. We're a real team, and -" Harry stopped, just smiling broadly.

"Say no more," Smythe said with a laugh. "It's obvious that you love them just from that goofy grin on your face." He walked to Harry and offered his hand, and the two shook, the meeting ending on a much friendlier note than the one on which it had started.

Harry was awoken the next morning by someone landing on his chest. Luckily, it was not feet first – it was a full body hug attack from Lorelei. "Morning Daddy!" she said brightly.

"Good morning, beautiful," he said, kissing her forehead as they hugged. "You haven't done that in a little while."

"I just wanted to, especially after that woman took me for a while." She scowled. "Is there something wrong with my hands, Daddy? She kept scowling at me and saying something about abom .. adom ... it was a long word, and it didn't sound good. She kept staring at my hands for such a long time, and scowling, and muttering something that I couldn't hear, except for the occasional word that I probably shouldn't repeat if I don't want soap in my mouth."

He sat up and took her into his arms, the sheet sliding down to his waist as he did. "There is nothing wrong with you, Lorelei, with your pretty little hands, or with anything else. That woman ... I guess you could say that she's sick. She's had such a strong dislike of me for so many years, and unfortunately one of my beautiful baby girls got caught in the middle of the problem."

"You still love me?" she asked in a small voice.

Harry quashed the urge to kill that rose suddenly. He wanted to go to Azkaban and peel Dolores Umbridge's skin from her body for making his child think what she was thinking at the moment.

He hid the feeling well as he held her tightly. "Ask your mommies someday what my reaction was when she told me that she was pregnant with you. It was a surprise, but ... I knelt down on the floor in front of her and kissed her tummy, welcoming you. I grew happier every single day knowing that you were coming, and that feeling has *never* changed. I am so happy that you and your sisters and brothers are in my life, and I always will be. I will *always* love you. I will always love *all* of you." He rocked slightly as he spoke, holding the little girl that had been the impetus for the change he was

about to hit the wizard world once at the very beginning of his short monologue, but settled happily against his chest as he held her and spoke his feelings. She actually began to purr slightly.

Finally, she had settled down enough, and she disengaged from his hug and exploded from the room, once again a happy little girl of almost five. He shook his head in amusement at the sudden change. Hermione walked into the room as the girl sped past her.

"We'll deal with Umbridge together if it comes to it," she said simply as she walked over to hug her husband as he finally climbed from the bed. "I've never doubted it, and I never will. You were meant to be a parent. You handled that perfectly."

"I just told her the truth. I told her the things I wanted to hear growing up with the Dursleys. The difference is that I love my children; they aren't a burden." He scowled slightly. "I'd best make sure that the other children know that I love them as well. I've been spending so much time worrying about Lorelei that Alex and the rest might think that I love her the most, and that isn't true."

"Dear, they know. They were scared for her when she was missing, and they did overhear some of what you were saying to her. Especially at the end." She kissed him again. "We all know how much you love us. We know that you would die for us, but we'd really rather you didn't, if you get our meaning."

His eyes twinkled. "Not even the 'little death', just for you four?"

She grinned and backed him against the wall. "*That* one you can do for us as long as you're able," she purred, getting the response she wanted.

"Trying for another one," he asked softly as he gripped her bum. "Or would you -"

"Are you going to suggest Franklin?" she asked, cocking her head.

"If you're both willing," he answered, kissing her neck. "I know that he at least warmed up your engine, if not fired it up completely."

"But -"

"Yes, you have a very nice one," he interrupted with a laugh before lifting the hand that bore the wedding ring. "As for your other worry? *I know* that you love me, Hermione. I can *feel* it every night as I go to sleep. By the logic you're using, I should be jealous every time you make love to one of our wives, because you're making love to someone other than me. Am I asking you to bear a child of his? No. I am however giving you permission to pursue it if the fancy strikes you, beloved. Does that answer your question, and can I get back to slowly working my way down this magnificent body with my tongue?"

"The kids could walk in on us -" she moaned as he matched actions to words.

"So what? They've walked in on us before. Remember six months ago on the beach, when Alexandria came across us while you were so delightfully bouncing atop me? All our kids are doing is getting a healthy respect for the fact that we love each other, and they're learning that nude doesn't mean wrong." He spun her gently until she was against the wall, and let loose a small flare of magic, sticking her gently to it.

She moaned loudly as she realised what he was doing, and the moaning became louder as his tongue teased her nipples. He sucked gently for a moment, wishing she was lactating again, because she seemed to enjoy nursing while making love.

Eventually his tongue left her nipples and slid down her body further, spending a few moments teasing her navel, causing her to make a noise that couldn't decide if it was a moan or a giggle and that shot straight to his groin. He responded by biting her very gently, drawing what was a definite moan from her. He continued downward until he reached his final destination, and since she was already panting, he attacked in earnest, his tongue maddening her with every flick

Finally she released a happy squeal that only stopped when she had to inhale, so he stood slowly as she panted, and just as she seemed to get herself under control, he slipped inside her, causing her to begin squealing again. His fingers teased and tortured her stiff nipples as he nibbled her neck, all the while thrusting slowly into the ecstatic woman. He seemed to have gotten a good response from Luna and Susan by doing this, so he once again gave new meaning to the phrase 'magic wand'. Hermione's joyous squeals actually went ultrasonic, as far as Harry could tell. She seemed to be squealing, but he could no longer hear her. He could definitely hear her heart pounding, though, since nibbling her neck put his ear against her shoulder.

Her arms and legs began to quiver, and he realised what it presaged, so he released the wall's hold on her. Her arms and legs went around him almost immediately, and she began to meet him, thrust for thrust, as she began to orgasm. He felt his own approach and let himself go, once again getting the feeling of endless release. He was both startled and amused to see Hermione begin to glow as he continued to orgasm into her, although both the emotions were rather muted by the powerful release. As he finally finished, he watched as the golden hue that she had been emitting slowly disappeared back into her skin.

"I've heard of a woman having a certain glow during and after sex, but that's the first time I've ever seen it be literal!" he was finally able to say some time later.

"I could feel it, Harry!" she panted. "Oh goddess, now I understand why Susan and Luna were so horny for the rest of the day after you did that to them. They talked like it was actual ..." she blushed, even after years of marriage, "actual come you were releasing into them, but I think that it was pure magic. I think you were literally filling us with your magic as you came. I could *feel* your love flowing throughout my every pore." She lowered her eyelashes at him. "Not to mention the intense arousal you were feeling."

"I was having an orgasm!" he laughed. "How much more aroused could I be?"

She giggled as well. "I understand now, Harry. If, and I stress the word if, I decide to try to seduce Franklin, I won't worry now."

"Good," he said, kissing her deeply. "I trust you with my soul."

"I think you filled me with it a minute ago," she answered him, blushing furiously.

He received something of a surprise the next morning, when Smythe contacted him again. "Bring the proof, if you can, but I've managed to wrangle a meeting. How does today at noon sound to you?"

"If it helps us not end up in prison from being considered to be involved in an insurrection against the Crown, I'm all for it," Harry replied.

"Excellent. We should meet at Barclays again at about eleven, and I'll take us where we need to go."

Harry ran around quickly, gathering what he could for whomever he might be meeting. A short time later he was at Barclays with a small briefcase. Inside were a Pensieve and several bits of paper that might offer some sort of trail or proof of his statements.

Smythe arrived and immediately led him to a vehicle, and they were quickly headed out of London. Harry had never really seen much of the British Isles so he kept his eyes riveted on what he could see that might be of some interest. Nearly an hour later, they pulled up in front of a fairly nondescript building that Harry could immediately see was quite secure. He wasn't sure how he knew, since it was so terribly unassuming a building, but he knew that it would take a full military assault to get inside this place.

Smythe motioned him inside and let him through some of the doors before turning to face him again. "You've convinced me, but now you have to convince them. Good luck." Smythe opened the door and ushered Harry inside, closing the door without ever entering himself.

"We who are about to die ..." Harry murmured to himself nervously as he looked at the fairly empty room. There was a pane of mirrored glass across one end, a table and a comfortable looking chair. He nodded. *Fairly high up, and apparently want plausible deniability.* He scowled. "So much for the Pensieve," he said softly, "unless they have a wizard in there with them."

"Please sit down, Mr Potter," a voice said. It was distorted and deep, and Harry realised that there was no way of telling whether the speaker was male or female.

He sat down and looked expectantly at the glass. "Where do we go from here?" he asked softly.

"You try to convince us of the rightness of your cause. Why you should be allowed to take the reins of power in the wizarding world as opposed to leaving things as they are."

"I don't want the power. I just want to go back to my island and enjoy being married and raising children. The problem is, they'll someday go to the same school that I went to, and they'll fall victim to the same system that I did growing up."

"What happened to you that was so bad?"

He laughed. "I grew up with an abusive family that hated magic. That could have been avoided if the Minister at the time had been willing to give *everyone* trials, rather than assuming that because someone looked guilty, they were guilty. If Sirius Black had actually received a trial, I would have grown up in a much more loving environment."

"So you want to overthrow the order of things because you had a bad childhood?" the voice asked, and even through the distortion Harry could hear the disbelief and sarcasm.

Rather than shoot back in the manner that first struck him, he thought for a moment. "Maybe in a way you're right. I was a victim in that my godfather was wrongly imprisoned, causing me to sleep in a broom cupboard for ten years, since that's the only bedroom my 'family' thought I was worthy of. I went to school to face hero worship and ridicule due to a Ministry that didn't like some of what I was saying after my fourth year had ended. There are no libel laws in the wizarding world, so I can say anything I want to in print, and nothing legally can be done about it."

He started to rise, because he preferred to pace while thinking out loud, but changed his mind, since he didn't know who was in the hidden room. "In '81, Bagnold had tribunals set up to deal with the Death Eaters and suspected Death Eaters. My godfather was 'sentenced', if you can call it that, in one of those. No trial, just twelve years of prison. Fudge came into office and tossed an innocent man with a criminal record into prison for a time, because he had 'to be seen doing something'. No effort to find the culprit, just throw the guy with the criminal record back into jail. Mind you, we later discovered that the man had been framed, but I've never heard anyone offer to expunge the record and give him a chance to learn magic again." He shook his head. "Fudge was a royal nuisance to the people. More worried about his image than actually doing anything about the return of Voldemort. He and his second, although she wasn't at the time, Dolores Umbridge, spent my fifth year making the wizarding world hate me as an attention seeking psychotic, simply because they didn't want to believe that Voldemort was back. It took Voldie standing in the Ministry building before Fudge would admit it."

"Umbridge, on the other hand, literally took over Hogwarts. She tortured students if they disagreed with the Ministry line. In proof, I can show you the back of my hand. I have carved in it the words 'I must not tell lies'. The lies I was telling was that Voldemort had returned. Her punishment for becoming Hogwarts first Ministry appointed dictator and torturer was a promotion and a pay rise."

"I defeated Voldemort and left. Five years later, a new Dark Lord starts to rise. Do they tell the people to keep an eye out and see if he can be nipped in the bud early? No. They kidnap my daughter and convince me for a short time that this new Dark Lord has her and cut off a finger as proof." He paused. "Sorry, that was badly phrase. They made me believe that her finger had been cut off. It was not."

"They got me to England all right, but by the time I got here, Minister Fudge had been assassinated by the new Dark Lord, I assume in retaliation for hiding his existence. I never did understand the way that Malfoy thinks. Umbridge was now in charge, and as soon as I had dealt with the new Dark Lord, who was nothing to worry about in the slightest, by the way, she recognised the man and his money and tried to throw me on trial for damaging the reputation of a fine upstanding citizen. When we brought out proof that he had confessed in front of multiple witnesses, the case suddenly went away, and an Executive Order was passed negating my marriages and demanding that all 'illegitimate' children be brought to the Ministry to be given to 'proper' homes."

"It sounds interesting, but what proof do you have?"

"I brought a method of showing you my memories of the incidents in question, but unless there is some way to increase the ..." He frowned for a moment. "There are two modes for these Pensieves. One, you go into the memory yourself, but that is definitely right out for you, whomever you are, because you've no way of knowing whether or not you go into the memory physically or not. The other is to display it above the bowl, but that's too small to be seen from where you are, and you're back there for a reason – you don't want me to see your identities, and I understand and agree with that." He shrugged. "Honestly? Except for a handful of things regarding Dolores Umbridge, I've no physical proof at all of what I say."

"How would you treat the British government if you revolted from your current regime? I think you call us Muggles?"

"Right now, a skilled team can do almost anything they want to, since a good Obliviation squad can make you remember whatever they want you to. That's wrong. I personally think that we should try to open the doors between the two worlds – make them one. As for the Prime Minister and the Queen? I have my wand with me, and am willing to take an oath to defend them and the Muggle government with my very life. Such an oath is magically binding. If I swear something on my life and break that oath, it will kill me immediately. No questions asked. That's why an oath should be carefully phrased."

"But you would swear such an oath to protect the British Muggle government?" the voice asked.

"So you wish me to right now?" He pulled his wand and held it in salute. "I solemnly swear, at the cost of my own life, that I will -"

"Stop!" the voice yelled. "You have made your point. We will talk further shortly. You will be brought into another room, where you will meet us face to face."

Harry nodded, and waited for the door to open. A few minutes later it did, and Smythe smiled. "I guess you said the right things. Follow me."

He led Harry down a short hallway and to an ornate door. "You'll love this," he said with a grin as he opened the door.

He was facing the British Prime Minister and Queen Elizabeth.

Burning Day The Storm Breaks

Disclaimer: If I owned these characters, do you really think that I'd be writing this for free and throwing it out on the web, rather than making oodles of moolah the way that the real owner of these characters does? JK Rowling owns them, continues to own them, and is not terribly likely to sign over the rights to them to me.

I admit to being willing to talk, however, if she finds herself wanting to give the rights to someone else...

Note: At least one of my readers will recognise a goblin name here. He comes from an excellent story on fanfiction.net called "The Weasley Plot" (<http://www.fanfiction.net/s/2881749/1/>) by Loralee1. If you've read the story, you'll know the goblin. If you don't know the story, then go read it! It's a wonderful manipulative!Dumbledore story that focuses on our favourite redheaded family.

"You met the Queen?" Hermione said in a voice that could just as easily have been described as an eep.

"Yeah," he said, still a little surprised by the meeting. "I think I really made my point about my attitudes toward the current government by crashing to my knees and bowing my head as I said, 'Your Majesty!' It was quite obvious that I considered her worthy of respect, and wasn't about to try to usurp her position."

"You wouldn't look good in a dress," Luna said simply. It took a few moments, but the silence was broken by Severus trying very hard not to laugh.

"Be that as it may be," Harry said forcefully, trying very hard not to laugh himself and releasing a small chuckle anyway, "as soon as I assured them that we were not going to try what the Americans did two hundred years ago, and reiterated my willingness to swear that oath, I was given the green light. I've contacted Remus, and he'll be our official ambassador to the Muggle side of the government when we win."

"When?" Severus asked archly. "Getting ahead ourselves, aren't we?"

"We have to walk into this from the point of view that the outcome is a foregone conclusion. These beautiful women taught me that when I was fighting Riddle. They made me realise that I had to intend to defeat him and walk out alive. My original plan would definitely have worked against him, but I'd have been dead. I much prefer this outcome, with four wives and six children so far – seven if Pansy and Hermione will let me consider that one mine as well when it's born – and I'm happy."

He barked a very short laugh. "I think the fact that I was willing to put anyone *other* than myself in the top position in the new Ministry was something else that made the point for the Prime Minister and Queen. I guess I managed to convince them that I am in fact a loyal subject."

"So they actually gave permission for an insurrection?" Hermione asked, incredulity colouring her voice.

"Basically, as far as they were concerned, we'd be bringing the wizarding government more in line with the existing Muggle world. Right now the current administration can be seen as being in a state of insurrection, because they don't really answer to anybody. My intention is to change that."

"So how do we do that? The Ministry owns the Daily Prophet now, and the readership of the Quibbler isn't *that* high."

"High enough. Lawrence? I will give you the cash you need for the supplies, but I want you to do a very large run of a single issue, wherein I will announce my intention to fix the wrongs of the wizarding world. I'm not sure how to do it quite yet, but it needs to be done."

"I'll do it gladly. There will be a series of editorials from me and anyone else I can get to write, all about the things that the previous administrations have done, and how they're now hampering things today."

Albus sat back in his chair and smiled, but it was a sad one. "I still find myself amazed to be preparing for a complete and utter overthrow of the current way of doing things. My entire life I have fought against such things." He looked directly at Harry. "Do you know why this one is different?" he asked, piercing Harry with the twinkling, which seemed to have taken on an aura of determination, rather than the usual humour.

"No sir. No matter how you look at it, I'm doing what every other Dark Lord has ever done. Decided that I knew better than the other side."

"Ah, but there is a major difference between you and every Dark Lord I have ever known or studied, Harry."

"Remind me, sir, because I need it right now. Whether or not I have the blessing of the Queen, there's still a part of me that screams that I'm just becoming another Voldemort."

"How many trusted advisers did Riddle have?" Susan asked. "More importantly, who did he bare his soul to when he needed it?"

"Exactly," Severus said. "I joined Voldemort for so many reasons, none of them good, and all of them selfish. He spoke to no one of his innermost

secrets. There was none that held his deepest trust.”

“From what I knew of Grindelwald,” Albus added, “the same is true. He trusted no one completely.”

“So the difference is that I have a council?” Harry asked, disbelief evident in both his face and voice.

“No, the difference is that you have a council that you respect,” Severus said. “What would you do if you mentioned a given plan of action and Albus were to say that he was disappointed that you were taking that route?”

“Can we assume that I’ve told him my reasons before he pronounced his disappointment?” Harry asked and received a nod from Severus. “Then I’d sit back and rethink my position. Why do I want to do it if someone I respect ...”

He sat back heavily in his chair for a moment, and everyone could see the moment that the satori struck him. “I actually listen to ... I have people that I trust. None of the others have. I don’t want the power for myself; I want to make life better for my children.”

“I think what we really need,” he said a moment later, “is to talk to Scrimgeour and the others, in an effort to make the change happen painlessly. We know that it’s not very likely, but we have to at least try.”

“Agreed,” Albus said. “Would you like me to be part of that meeting?”

“Actually, I was about to try to cajole you into being there, so you’ve just knocked one thing off my mental checklist,” was the amused reply.

They managed a meeting the very next day, probably through judicious usage of Albus’s fame. They arrived at the Ministry and Harry was amused to see the secretary trying hard not to fall all over herself in meeting the both of them. She announced them both, and for the first time Harry got to see and meet the man who was now the Minister for Magic for England.

He looked rather like an old lion; there were streaks of grey in his mane of tawny hair and his bushy eyebrows. He had keen yellowish eyes behind a pair of wire-rimmed spectacles and – as Harry noted as the man met them at the door and then walked back behind his desk – a certain rangy, loping grace even though he walked with a slight limp.

“Sorry about your leg, sir,” Harry said without thinking.

“Old injury fighting dark wizards,” the man said, brushing it off politely. “What can I do for you gentlemen today? Rufus Scrimgeour, by the way,” he said to Harry.

Albus gently took the lead. “Thank you for seeing us, Rufus. The past few weeks have been quite filled with problems, and young Harry here has been at the heart of them, it seems.”

“Ugly business, that. I’m glad it’s over, though.”

“I’m not sure that it is, though,” Harry said.

“Umbridge is in Azkaban and Malfoy has been stopped. What more is there to deal with?”

Harry frowned. “Honestly, the Ministry itself. Has anyone really dealt with the aura ... the, what’s the word I’m looking for here -”

“Environment?” Albus asked helpfully.

“Yes! ... the environment of the Ministry that allows a Dolores Umbridge or a Cornelius Fudge or a Millicent Bagnold to take office?” Harry finished.

“Millicent was a quite good administrator,” Scrimgeour said with some asperity. “We did some excellent work against the dark elements of society when she was around.”

“Including throwing at least one innocent man into prison without a trial,” Harry replied, matching his tone.

“You need to understand the times, Mr Potter, and I doubt that you do. You mostly grew up in an era when we thought You Know Who was gone. There wasn’t the miasma of fear throughout the land like there was when You Know Who was at his height.”

“No, we just developed that miasma in my last three years at Hogwarts, while Fudge did everything he could to make the public feel safe, even though it was the worst possible thing he could have done to the people.”

Harry laughed with no humour. “I love how people assume that they know my life. I didn’t grow with the miasma of knowing Voldemort – I grew with the knowledge that my so-called family hated me, and wished that I’d died with my parents. I was a house elf to them, and nothing more. I grew up without love.”

He waved a hand to dismiss what he’d just said. “We’re still doing it. Nothing has changed at the Ministry, has it? Most everyone has the same old jobs that they used to, and those that are working to climb the ladder to reach where you are are still doing it the same way. The Wizengamot sits on their hands and does nothing unless someone actually brings a problem to their attention, and then they only do something if it might affect them personally. We need to change the Ministry, Minister Scrimgeour, and we need to do it now.”

“And what do you propose we do?” Scrimgeour asked rather acidly.

Rebuild it from the ground up. Take a page from the Americans and use their Declaration of Independence and their Constitution as examples of where to take a government. Give the people a greater say in things than they have now. It's their government, after all."

"Things have worked quite well so far, and I honestly see no reason that it should change," Rufus Scrimgeour responded. He looked at Harry for a long moment before saying in a lower, far more dangerous tone, "I would think twice about going up against the Ministry, Mr Potter. We are not as ripe for destruction as I think that you believe us to be. We will not go down without a fight."

"I don't want a fight, Minister, but we need a change – one that will not come so long as people ascend to this chair who care more for the job than they do the people they are supposed to be working for."

"I think that you had best watch your tone, Potter, lest you say something that you will regret later."

Harry looked to Albus. "I think that this meeting is at an end, sir. Shall we go?"

"I would have thought better of you, Albus," Scrimgeour said. "Coddling this child's fantasies that he knows how a government should run? Does he understand what he suggests?"

"Yes, he does, actually, and he has seen how this government works, Rufus. I do not think that he has a good picture of it at all. It has cost him his godfather, his freedom, and nearly his family. Good day to you, sir." he two men rose from their chairs and headed to the Apparation point.

Back in Potter Manor, they walked into the large dining hall that seemed to have become their informal meeting room. "Stupid, stupid, stupid!" Harry was repeating, hitting himself in the head with the heel of his hand. "Could I have been more antagonistic to the man? I never even said half of what I wanted to, all because I let my temper get away from me, and screwed any chances we have of a peaceful way of working this out."

"As much as you may be enjoying your self-abuse," Albus said, "I must *dis-* abuse you of the notion that you could have changed his mind. I agreed to this meeting because I had hoped that you could, but I fear nothing that you could have said would have swayed Rufus. He is the epitome of a Gryffindor Auror. He is almost the stereotype, if you will. He is on a given course, therefore the course is the right one, and nothing can sway him from it." The elderly Headmaster sat down finally. "I so wanted to be wrong in my belief about Rufus."

"So I should go ahead with my issue about the government?" Lawrence asked. "I've already got an editorial written, where I get quite personal about things. Literally. I talk about what it feels like to realise that the government has sent people into your home to kidnap your granddaughter, just to make someone *else* do something for them."

Harry blinked. "You still trust me to run this revolution?"

"I believe that the term is 'Hell yes!'" Lawrence answered with a smile. "You have done so much for me personally, and my daughter. She was existing at school until you came into her life. Now she has become the vibrant and beautiful, and – dare a father admit – sexy woman she was always meant to be. You have brought delightful grandchildren into the family, one of them related by blood to me, but I love them all. For the type of man that you have proven to be, I will follow you to the gates of hell, if need be."

"Then perhaps you'd be willing to move the offices of the Quibbler?" Harry asked. "The current ones are too well known, and likely to be destroyed when the fight against the Ministry begins."

"Hmm, yes. Do you have ..." Lawrence started to say before laughing. "What am I doing, asking the wealthiest wizard in England if he's got somewhere I can move to?"

"Let go have a conversation with Ragnok and Griphook, Lawrence. I'm sure that they can give us a good idea of the best place to move you to, and even get us a good set of wards." He thought for a moment. "I'm betting that Bill could likely do a kick-ass job on them as well."

"For free," Bill said seriously. "I won't accept your money for this. I owe you too much."

"I understand," Harry said. "Let's go talk to the goblins, Lawrence." He started to walk from the room. "Albus? Would you talk to Keith and Dorothy, and Alonso and Aldonza? I want them safe as well. Scrimgeour might not, but someone trying to curry favour with him might try something against them."

"I'll get right on it," Albus said.

"I think I'll come with you," Hermione said. "It might work better that way."

"Put a shirt on first," Harry laughed. "Your dad insists on thinking that you're a virgin until Alexandria's first child is born, so seeing your bare breasts, no matter how perfect they are, might give him pause."

She Summoned a shirt to herself. "I've gotten too used to that – I hadn't even thought about the fact that I was doing it. Was I bothering anyone?"

Bill looked thoughtful for a moment. "I'm trying to think how to say it without getting Harry trying to kill me."

"I wouldn't kill you, Bill. I'd compliment you on your good taste and gloat that I got there first." Bill blinked and then smiled, the first one that didn't hold a touch of self-loathing to it.

In Ragnoc's office, Harry was looking over the available properties and discussing the merits of each of them when Lawrence suddenly spoke up.

Mr Ragnoc? Do you still have any Delacours working for you?"

"Just call me Ragnoc. Yes, actually we have two of them – sisters." He cocked his head. "You wish to sound them out about your cause, and perhaps see if some matchmaking can be done?" The smile he gave Lawrence showed no teeth and a great deal of humour.

"Would I be so crass as to suggest such a thing?" Lawrence asked in a voice that made Harry actually look for a halo for a moment.

"Um, yes?" Harry replied with his own grin. He turned back to the documents and tapped one of them. "This one seems best suited for our purposes. Secluded enough to not be a worry in case the Ministry or whomever they hire can actually get to it and try to destroy it, but not so far away as to make it a problem to get a lot of people there if they try that."

"I agree," Ragnoc said. "Now we have the question of warding it."

"Of course I'll be hiring the very best goblin warders, and we have an offer of free assistance from Bill Weasley. He won't take any pay from me, but perhaps ...?" Harry asked hopefully.

"We would be greatly offended if anyone so skilled were to not accept at least a large bonus for work well done," Ragnoc said, eyes twinkling in an almost Dumbledore-like fashion. "That is one of the things that I like about you, Harry. You remember that there are others, and you want them to do well, as well."

"He gave me his broken wand. He thought the way to atone was to leave the wizarding world and never do magic again. That's not the mark of a man trying to set me up for a fall. That's someone who has learned his lesson."

He was stopped from saying more by the simple fact of Griphook leading two women into the room. They were quite familiar, and he smiled. "Fleur, you are as lovely as ever," he said with a huge grin. "I assume that you must be Gabrielle?" he asked, leaning over her hand and kissing the back of it. She blushed furiously.

"Impressive, 'Arry," Fleur said. "It takes quite a bit to make a Veela blush." She smirked. "Zen again, she does wish to be your fift' wife."

"There are obstacles to such an endeavour, dear Gabrielle," Harry said kindly. "First is the fact that I know you only as that cute girl I saved from the lake and as a devastatingly physically beautiful young lady right now. I don't yet know your inner beauty, although I suspect that it is impressive if you are like your sister. Second and most important is that you would need to be accepted by the other four wives. They are my very life, and you would have to impress them to begin to have a chance with me."

"But you allow me ze ..." She scowled. "Non, I will get rid of ze ...*the* accent."

"Why? It's part of who you are. Are you changing to be what you think I might want? That's a sure way to ensure that you *don't* impress the other four or me. Do you have a different reason for changing the accent? Then by all means do."

She thought for a moment and then nodded. "As I was going to ask, you will at least allow me ze chance to try?"

"It's their choice. I think you're quite pretty, and can say that at least from a physical standpoint would definitely be pleasant to wake up next to. But I need to know your heart if you're to become a Potter."

"Would zat Bill had understood you better," Fleur said sadly.

"Ah, there we come to the crux of this little scenario," Harry said with a grin. "All hell is going to be breaking loose in the British wizarding world, and I was wondering if you'd like to have a hand in it? You'd likely be working quite closely with one of my personal warders."

She looked at him with an expression that managed both suspicion and hope at the same time. "Am I to assume zat ze first name of zis 'personal warder' might be 'William'?"

"You can assume that all that you want to," Harry said with a smile. "I think you'll like him. He comes from a big family, and was engaged once, but as he says about it, he did the stupidest thing he's ever done, and lost everything that meant anything to him." He went serious. "He felt that he had destroyed his honour, and is trying to regain it. He's working toward redemption, knowing that from a personal standpoint he can never reach it." The grin came back. "I think that you and this guy might really hit it off."

"I zink zat I shall meet zis 'personal warder' of yours. Perhaps we might, as you say, 'it it off."

Harry looked to Griphook and mouthed a 'Thank you', which was responded to with a simple nod. "I believe that I shall take these two ladies home with me and let them meet my warder. Perhaps you could send the head of your team, and the three ... sorry, four can talk wards?"

"I expect that we shall send Steve along shortly," Ragnoc said. After a moment's thought, he said, "No. Steve is back in Australia again on a job. We shall send Alorkin instead. I expect that he will be along within the next sixty minutes."

The look of betrayal on Bill's face was priceless when Harry arrived with his guests. "Look, Bill, Ragnoc sent me his two best non-goblin warders, and if one of them by the odd name of Steve hadn't been in Australia, there'd be a goblin here right now. As it is Alorkin will be along soon."

Bill unfocused for a moment. "Damn, must be big if Steve is down there. Maybe they found something?" He shook his head. "You're right. We'll have this place you're looking at so warded that it'll take *us* hours to get through. The elder Miss Delacour – I'm not saying you're old, by the way," he added as a quick aside to Fleur, "is the best non-goblin warder that they ever hired."

"I would argue zat, Mr Weasley," she said, not unkindly. "I 'ad an excellent teacher."

"The man who taught you had the problem of having his head stuck so far up his arse that he had to open his mouth to see."

She paused for a moment and then moved much closer to him. "I would not 'ave fallen in love wiz such a man," she said quietly. "'E made a mistake, and even now tries to pay for it. 'E is still an 'onourable man." She leaned forward and kissed his forehead.

"You two go talk," Harry said. "You'll be needed within a few days, so best to start working out your problems now."

"If I know Fleur," Gabrielle said, "She will 'ave 'is clothes off within fifteen minutes, wezzer or not 'e can ignore Veela charm. And 'e can, I discovered years ago." She blushed furiously.

"Sounds like an interesting story," Susan said.

"Not for polite company," she replied. "Not ze least because it is embarrassing enough by itself."

"Say no more," Susan said. "I think we all have those stories we'd rather not have anyone know?"

"Agreed," Hermione said. "Although some of them are wonderful bedtime stories for adults," she said, eyes sparkling as she looked at Pansy.

"Down girl," Pansy laughed. "I'm the pregnant and horny one."

"You don't wish 'er 'orning in on your territory?" Gabrielle asked, then immediately winced. "I do not believe I said zat."

"You'll do for this group of strange people," Severus said.

Interlude:

For any revolution to succeed, it must have the popular support of the people. The rich and famous do not speak for those who consider themselves 'just plain folks', with a few rare exceptions, and those must be brought to the attention of those same people through more than just talk.

This revolution could be said to have gotten its start when the Ministry stopped caring for the very people it supposedly served, or when they threw innocent folk into prison without benefit of trial for a feeling of safety, or when they began to attack children publicly in the press, or when they began to heavily tax earned income but not unearned income such as rents and dividends. Most trace it, however, to a Ministry employee named Patricia Baddock.

Patricia Baddock looked through the tall stack of paperwork on her desk with alarm. The past few weeks had been difficult for the Ministry. There had been the rumours of the rising of a new Dark Lord, but they had been told quite clearly not to speak to others of it. Suddenly, the Minister was dead – murdered by the new Dark Lord! – and Madam Umbridge had stepped into the position of Minister.

She shook her head as she attacked the pile of mostly meaningless work. She nearly rubber-stamped one sheet of parchment until she saw the actual memo:

By Executive Order of Dolores Umbridge

Minister for Magic

Polygamous marriages are hereby outlawed within the British Isles, and all previous multiple marriages are declared null and void as of this date.

All children of said unions are hereby to be considered illegitimate, and should be brought to the Ministry for proper placement within wizarding families.

This Executive Order covers all illegitimate children. All illegitimate children shall be placed with proper families at soonest opportunity.

Dolores Umbridge

Minister for Magic

Patricia Baddock quickly handed this to her supervisor, who immediately spoke to a functionary in the Child Protective Services office, and before the day was out, there was a task force in place to begin the process of collecting the illegitimate children, defined as those children born into families not married under wizarding tradition.

The process began simply – low-level Aurors began sweeps of Knockturn Alley, gathering in children and interviewing them. Roughly half of them were released the same day, while the others entered the system.

Missing children reports were taken that same day, of course, but as is often the case when the complainant reported that the child had been either working or playing in Knockturn Alley, the Aurors tended toward laxity, since each of the low-level Aurors did a turn on the Retrieval Squads.

A rumbling of distaste began to build in Knockturn Alley. Many people who worked there – and in a few cases lived there – were used to being ignored or looked down upon because they didn't tend to use wands, or because they were in Knockturn Alley at all. Most wizards were snobs, whether or not they ever admitted it, since the average wizard or witch in England was trained in one of the many fields that simply never used a wand, such as low level Potions work. Many Potions workers could likely have tried for a Mastery, if not for the slight difficulty in procuring that wand. Only 'properly trained' witches and wizards could try for a Mastery, and to the English wizarding population, that meant that they knew how to use a wand.

This meant that the average person who visited Diagon Alley considered most working in Knockturn Alley to be Squibs. What they never thought about was that many of the people that they interacted with regularly in Diagon Alley were also people unable to afford a wand. The broom salesman, for example. The Apothecary clerk. The Fortune teller. The herbalist. While Ollivander put a great deal of work and time into his wands, and they were worth the cost, most people who worked the Alleys were lucky to be paid in Sickles. Most saw Knuts as their entire pay. They made it from day to day, as all people do.

But their children were often their lives. And now the Ministry was taking that from them as well. It was bad enough that the legitimate business owners were paying out a majority of their profits into taxes levied by the Ministry, while those who owned the buildings that they worked in paid nothing. To lose their children as well, because someone in the Ministry felt that they weren't a good enough parent?

Amelia Bones felt that something was off; she'd been in this business for far too long to not trust her instincts, and they were telling her that something was happening; something that she felt would end badly. She sent Tonks and Shackbolt to check out whether or not age had caught up with her, or whether her instincts remained as sharp as ever.

End Interlude:

A goblin walked into the room at roughly the same moment as a somewhat shell-shocked Bill Weasley entered with a fairly smug (and more than a little ruffled) Fleur. She was advertising that she had certainly enjoyed whatever had happened in that room, and that Veela were blessed with the ability to not need a brassiere.

Alorking looked at them, smirked and said softly, "You didn't stand a chance, Weasley. Give in to it."

Bill's voice was full of wonder as he said, "I did." The air was split with five squeals almost immediately, because Gabrielle and Harry's wives had noticed simultaneously that Fleur once again wore a ring on her finger.

"Ze fact zat 'e carried it wiz 'im told me everyzing." She gave Bill a smouldering look and said, "And now we can plan for a wedding again." He smiled widely, still obviously stunned.

"As fun as this conversation is," Harry said, "We need to do some planning. We've got the building picked, and we'll be going there as soon as you four want to, in order to see what should be done with warding the property."

He was about to speak further when a Floo call came in. "Harry? Anybody?" It sounded like Fred (or George), and he did not sound happy. If anything, he sounded a little scared.

"Yeah?" Harry shouted as he ran for the fireplace. "What's happening?"

"We've got a crowd outside in Diagon Alley, and things are starting to get a little ugly, from the sound of it."

"Any idea what's happened to cause it?"

"What little we can make out is that someone's been kidnapping children, and these people think that it's the Ministry that's been doing it."

"Okay. Do you think that we should show up, any of us?" he asked. By this point, the meeting had spilled into the area of the fireplace.

"Hard to say. It could get ugly really fast, but then again, you or the Headmaster showing up just might calm these people right down."

"Then a small number of us will show up and see if we can talk to the crowd and maybe calm them down. We'll Floo to you and head out from there."

"All right, Harry. See you in a few." Harry stood and turned to face the group. "So, who should go?"

"All of us," Pansy said. "We need to keep you safe."

"No," he said simply. "I will not accept you going into this situation at this time when it is so volatile. I've never really heard Fred or George – whichever one that was – sound really scared before, so that tells me that the crowd could erupt into violence. We have children, and I will not run the risk of leaving them orphans. I have no intention of going there and dying, but I'll be damned if I'm going to put the entire family on the line. *One* of you perhaps." He thought for a moment. "This is the crux point. No matter what, I think that the revolution has started, and we need to see if we can make it a bloodless one."

He turned to face the others. "Grandfather?" he asked Albus. "Will you come with me?"

"I believe so. Perhaps we can keep them quiet enough that no one will be hurt."

"Who else?" he asked.

"May I come, Harry?" Luna asked.

He couldn't help himself. Maybe it was the tension of what they were about to do, or maybe it was just the Marauder in him, but his first thought, which got vocalised, was, "Sure, but make it quick, we've got a crowd to meet." He winced as he realised that he *had* in fact just said that, and blushed in embarrassment as the crowd chuckled softly.

"I think I'll wait for later on *that* particular meaning," she purred at him. "But to rephrase my question, might I accompany you?"

He looked at her for a long moment before saying, "Yes. That's probably a very good idea. No idea if it's to help the revolution along, or to calm people down, but I think you should be there."

"It would be best to keep the number down," Albus said. "We are probably best if we leave it to us three. Too many and it will look as if we are bringing a small army against them. It is bad enough for them that the Aurors will be amassing soon."

"Good. Weasley Wizard Wheezes!" he said, throwing some Floo powder onto the fire.

"Glad you guys could drop in," Fred said. "Just wish it was in better circumstances."

George finished hugging Luna. "Have we ever told you how lucky Harry is? All four of his wives are rather cuddly."

"And taken, unfortunately," she sighed. "That is the way of things, however, and not even the Squeebling Throckles can change that."

"We're glad that Lorelei is all right," Fred said. "We were worried about her for a while there."

"She's doing quite well," Luna said. "She had a short crisis over what had happened, but Harry convinced her that nothing that ... individual did made us love her any less."

"They've all got me wrapped around their little fingers," Harry said with a smile. "And I wouldn't have it any other way."

"As pleasant as this conversation is," Albus said, "we should join the crowd and see if there is a point that they are aiming for, or if they are simply milling, awaiting a spark to set off the powder keg."

"From what we can see from in here, there is no specific point – it's just a lot of angry people milling around."

Harry looked at the others. "Gringott's," he said. "We can talk to them there, and see if we can defuse this."

"Agreed. Let us," Albus said, and they exited the shop, walking purposefully toward Gringott's. The crowd seemed to part for them, closing behind them again, and began to focus upon them as well.

At the steps of Gringott's, Harry turned around and looked out at the massive crowd. He thought for a moment and then said in a voice that carried to everyone in the Alley, "Is there anyone in this group who might be considered a spokesman for you? You all seem to be angry over the same thing, or at the same people, so maybe we can figure out how to deal with it?"

"You're working for the Ministry!" someone shouted.

Harry couldn't help it; he laughed. "Are you kidding me? The way that they've treated me over the years?"

A gentleman in his eighties stepped forward. "Maybe folks will let me speak for them. They seem to come to me with problems." The nearby crowd seemed all right with this choice, so he continued. "The name is Barnaby Nisslefoot, young man. We're angry because something is happening, and either the Ministry is behind it, or they just don't care!"

"What's happening? My friends said that it sounded like children are disappearing?"

"Exactly!" Mr Nisslefoot said. "My grandson disappeared two days ago, and the Aurors don't seem to want to do anything about it!"

"I want to try to help you. Is there any further information about ... has anyone seen the missing children leaving with anyone?"

"A few people down in Knockturn Alley have reported seeing the Aurors grabbing children, and a number of them have not been seen since," Nisslefoot said.

"Is there any connection between the children that have disappeared; anything that sets them apart from those that have come back?" Harry asked. He wondered why neither Luna or Albus were saying anything.

"Hard to say," Nisslefoot said. "Some of 'em have been half-bloods, and the others have been purebloods. All we know is that those who report seeing the abductions know that they were Aurors, because they often flashed their badges."

One person stepped forward. "I ... uh, I noticed something, but it only has to do with the purebloods that disappeared. All of them are ... well, to be crude, they're bastards. Parents aren't married. Quite a few of the half-bloods that were taken were from good stable homes, though."

Harry opened his mouth to speak when a loud voice pierced the area. "This is the Ministry. This gathering is illegal and needs to be dispersed now." Someone in maroon robes with insignia on the shoulders was striding through the crowd with little care for who had to be pushed out of the way. There was a V-formation of Aurors behind him, widening the space.

The man stepped up the Gringott's steps and faced Harry. "Are you the one who called this illegal gathering?"

"No, I was trying to defuse them and get them to return to their homes," he answered, trying to keep his temper in check. "They have legitimate concerns; they just want someone in the Ministry to listen to them."

"There is a process for getting a concern heard. This is not it." The man sounded more and more officious the longer he spoke.

"Actually, since you're here, maybe you can tell me. These people have seen Aurors picking up children and only returning some of them. Do you have any idea what that's about?"

"Don't you pay attention to the laws?" the Auror scoffed. "We have a mandated to pick up all illegitimate children and see to it that they are given to proper homes."

Harry went white for a moment while the crowd rumbled. "Wait a second," Harry said, starting to get annoyed. "Who signed this law into being?"

"Madam Umbridge, during her short term in office." The man delivered this pronouncement with the air of someone who had just won an argument.

"Who is the unmitigated idiot who kept this thing going?" Harry yelled in the man's face. "That law was struck down not twenty-four hours after she signed that edict! The whole purpose of it was to declare my children illegitimate and steal them from me!"

"I've no word on the law being struck down," the Auror replied, pulling his wand. "I'm going to have to ask you to come with me, sir." He motioned as if he were arresting Harry.

"That is a very bad idea," Harry said softly. "I don't want to cause you distress, but you do recognise me?" The man nodded. "Do you remember who one of my wives is? Maiden name used to be Bones?"

The man blanched and opened his mouth to say something, but Harry was never to know what it might have been. In the moments that his attention (and that of Albus and Luna as well) was on the lead Auror, the crowd had surged slightly to see what was going on. The green Aurors didn't know how to handle such an occurrence and fired into the crowd, which quickly led to a panic.

Harry and Albus worked to try to quell the explosive crowd; to keep them from hurting anyone in their rush to get away, but it was a losing battle. There were simply too many people, and only three people doing anything to try to stop it.

The dust settled a short time later to the sight of an empty square, empty except for some abandoned tattered cloaks. They looked out over the square and shook their heads. "At least the crowd dispersed," the lead Auror said.

Harry was about to say something scathing when he noticed something that chilled him. One of the abandoned cloaks was bleeding, and bleeding badly. He leapt past the man and ran to the cloak, lifted it and began to cry. Beneath the cloak was a child of about nine. It was obvious that the blood was from multiple wounds, and that this child would never again play with his friends, with his neck at the angle it was. The blood came from multiple broken bones and head wounds. The body was bleeding out the no longer needed precious fluid.

He stopped crying a few moments later and turned to face the Aurors. With a gesture, they all shot skyward, impacting the columns of the bank with great force, about fifty feet up. They stayed where they were as he turned to face Albus. "Go get Amelia, grandfather. If I do, I'll literally drag her here, and that's not how to keep her happy with me."

"You won't do anything rash to them?" he asked.

"Luna will keep me sane," he replied softly.

"I shall return shortly." With that, Albus disappeared.

Harry looked back out at the boy and started to cry again, this time deep, body-wracking sobs.

Burning Day Powderkeg and Spark

Disclaimer: When will it ever end? (Author takes on a dramatic pose and overacts his heart out.) How many times do I need to say that I don't own any of this? That it all belongs to JK Rowling and that *she* makes all the money? (Author blinks and realises that his acting skills have not improved over the years.) Uh, yeah. Well, it's still true – she owns it all.

Note: The quasi-riot in the Gringott's square was based on nothing in particular. I wasn't thinking of any specific incident. What I was thinking was that all it takes is one low level, fairly green Auror getting a little scared and firing off nothing more than sparks to let someone know that they mean business for a stampede to start. It wasn't so much of a riot as it was the equivalent of someone screaming "Fire!" in a crowded theatre. And a young child died in the stampede.

Amelia Bones arrived with Albus Dumbledore and surveyed the damage. Ripped cloaks were all across the square, and the body of a small child lay in the square. Harry himself was being comforted by Luna as he sobbed uncontrollably.

Not the start that we wanted, dammit, she thought. *None of us wanted anyone to die, least of all a child*. She shook her head and walked to Harry, who was being comforted by Luna. He was beside himself with grief.

"Harry?" she asked, kneeling beside him. "What happened?"

"They did!" he snarled, pointing at the columns of Gringott's.

She looked at the columns and saw nothing until she saw a tiny streak of red sliding down one. Following the streak, she found herself faced with a team of Aurors at least fifty feet off the crowd, held in similar angles to what Malfoy's followers had been when they had gotten to Malfoy Manor.

Harry was no longer crying, and Amelia found herself almost wishing that he was, because his rage was rolling off him in waves of power. "If these *idiots* had been able to hold off firing into the crowd, there wouldn't have been a rush to get away that left a young boy dead!"

"You need to let them down, Harry," she said softly. His answer was to simply unloose them from the columns, and they fell heavily to the ground. At least one break was heard.

The lead Auror got to his feet and stormed over. "Harry Potter, I am arresting you for your attack on a team of Aurors. Are you going to come quietly?"

Amelia Bones drew herself to full height and opened her mouth to speak when she was stopped short by Harry's simple "Yes. I will come quietly." He looked over to Luna and his eyes twinkled. "It's up to my wives to make me come any other way."

"Harry?" Albus asked.

"Simple. He's right. The panic started by the Aurors was finished by the time that I sent them flying. Whether or not the law that they were following was rescinded even before they began to pick children up, I sent them flying into the columns of Gringott's." He pulled his wand and handed it to Albus Dumbledore. "I can't be certain that an 'accident' might not happen with it, so I would prefer it if you were to hold it, sir?"

"I am honoured," he replied. "It shall be returned in pristine condition."

Harry chuckled. "Perhaps I should have handed it to Luna. I think I prefer my wives checking into my wand health."

"Enough," the Auror said. "Put your hands behind your back."

"He's been rather cooperative," Amelia said, ending her comment with the unspoken request for the Auror's name.

"Blytheville, ma'am. Heathcliffe Blytheville."

"We'll be having a long talk back at the Ministry about certain things going on recently, Blytheville," she said. "Count on it."

She followed the team to the Ministry, as did both Luna and Dumbledore, and watched as Harry was processed.

Harry was processed through the system and asked the others not to interfere with the process at all. "That' part of the problem, you see," he said, not caring if the other Aurors overheard. "If you have friends in high places in the Ministry, you can get all sorts of perks, including getting various charges to go missing. I believe that the attack had mitigating circumstances, but I did attack them."

He went to his cell, listening to various complaints coming from the link from his wives. *We knew this could happen*, he finally sent back through to them. *I was prepared for this. Besides, if they do what I expect them to, any extra shielding should prevent a successful Obliviation.*

What are you expecting? Hermione asked. He could feel her eyes narrowing in suspicion.

To be beaten slightly, enough to know 'who's boss' and then some healing to hide it, and an Obliviation to lose the memory, so that I can't complain about it later, he replied simply. *If Umbridge could do it and climb in the Ministry, then it's an old established unwritten rule. She didn't even have to Obliviate anyone, because she had the Ministry on her side to quash any complaints.*

That night, the cell opened and two Aurors came in. *I think it's about to begin*, he sent them.

"We were on that team you attacked today," one of them said simply before sending a Stinging Hex Harry's way.

Harry didn't even flinch as it hit. "Ow," he said as if he were reading it from a script. "That hurt. Stop it."

"You won't think it's quite so funny in a little while, clown," the other one said.

The next hour was a study in tactics to humiliate and harass and hurt a person. The nudity, the beatings, and even the cracking of a single rib would likely have begun the process of tearing another inmate apart, but Harry had been made numb to such things by years at the hands of the Dursleys and then from Voldemort.

At the end of the hour, he stood bleeding and bruised, facing his attackers. "You are aware that you will pay for this someday?" he asked quietly, and in a voice that made one of them shiver slightly.

The other one smirked. "Jan, heal him." The one that had reacted to his voice came over and cast several spells, even fixing the cracked rib. Once that was done, the smirking one said, "It's not likely that you'll remember this, 'friend'. *Obliviate!*"

Harry had been prepared for that, and had his shields up. He also thanked his wives for the added strength as the memory modification spell washed over him. He schooled his face into the blank look that Lockhart had on his face when his spell backfired. The smirking one said, "When we leave the room, you'll think that you just woke up for some unknown reason, and will go back to sleep."

They left the cell and turned out the lights, and Harry grinned in the darkness. "That's what you think, sucker."

This treatment continued for a week, every night different tortures happening to him. He and his wives had to admit that their effort made the night before his trial was a classic, though, and he knew that they'd all remember the girl.

She looked as if someone had taken all the best about Harry's wives and tossed in Cho and the Patil twins for an exotic look. The girl obviously had no problems getting dates, especially if she was willing to dress in public the way she was dressed under her Auror cloak. Or not dressed, as the case may be.

I don't know, loves – is the idea to make me cheat on you ladies or to give me a raging case of blue balls?

Cheat, I think, Luna said through the link. *To have the evidence in hand in case you manage to do something to them, they have something that they can use to humiliate you with.*

Well, if you mention it in the trial, Hermione said, *it tends to defuse the ability of that faction to use it as evidence. Especially since they'll be expecting you not to remember it, and then they can use it at their discretion.*

Since he's sort of stuck there, why don't we give permission? Pansy said. *Then we can use the link and ... well, I'd imagine the skills of five people who have given the subject a great deal of study just might give the young woman pause.*

Or an orgasm it'll take all of tomorrow to recover from, Susan finished with a giggle. *And we also know that any of us can get telepathic flashes from the person we're making love to.*

Sneaky, Harry said. *Sex as a spying tool is an ancient tradition, but we're not doing it in quite the same way.*

With that, Harry 'succumbed' to the ladies charms. He was a little surprised by what he found, other than a partner a lot more eager to do this than he would have expected. She was fresh out of the Academy, and had been told that Harry was a revolutionary who was going to topple the Ministry. They didn't like to ask her to do it, but ...

She had been a fifth year Hufflepuff the year that Harry had been in his seventh at Hogwarts. He had a vague recollection of her fending boys off due to her looks, and he detected from her the intense jealousy that she'd had for a while that *Susan* had gotten to him first, not that she could blame Harry for falling for a girl with an arse that perfect ...

The girl was the epitome of Hufflepuff – strong, loyal, and with a strong sense of justice. She wasn't entirely sure that this was the right way to deal with the situation, but her superiors insisted with great sincerity that Harry was likely working for the fall of the wizarding world.

In response to this, they gently sent to her mind some things that might make her doubt her convictions – the law having been scuttled before the child pick-ups began; the honesty (or lack thereof) involved in sending an Auror in to prostitute herself with a prisoner; the beatings that they made her believe that she'd heard about somewhere.

As the two lay in the afterglow of a very pleasant diversion, he sent to his wives, *I thank you for being with me. I wouldn't have felt right doing this*

otherwise, and probably wouldn't have. After a pause, Does that little thing with the tongue really drive you four that insane? His only response was a series of giggles.

A bell chimed and Auror Isabella Honeyspear stood and slowly dressed. He was quite sure that she'd be walking a little sorely later on, but there hadn't been any complaints from her at the time. *With just you making love to her she'd likely be walking that way, but with all five of us?* said Pansy with a mental smirk. Isabella knocked on the door and was released, followed about five minutes later by one of the male Aurors. "Pity you won't remember anything about this," he said before the usual spell-work.

The day came for his trial before the Wizengamot, and he smiled. The Auror department was not going to be happy with what they were about to learn.

He was led to the all too familiar chair, although this one seemed to be a replacement for the one that he had been in the last time he'd been there. *Guess I broke the last one,* he said in a mock-sorrowful mental voice to his wives. As usual, the chains wrapped around him, although not tightly.

Careful, Harry, Hermione replied. *This could go quite well for you, or it could go quite badly.*

I'm not terribly worried. At worst I'll get a short stint in Azkaban, which will not sit well with the people. After a momentary pause, he added, *besides, you've always got Gabrielle and Isabella to console yourselves with.*

Gabrielle? Susan asked. *Making a motion to include her?*

Must have been too busy to try to approach you. Fleur said that she wanted to be wife number five, and Gabrielle, who was there at the time, didn't argue. I told her that I had to get to know her as more than a stunningly beautiful young woman on the outside – I need to see if her inner beauty was the same. Plus, she has to pass your muster. Ah, the trial's about to start.

The chains dropped. "Please rise. This is the Ministry of Magic versus Harry Potter, regarding the incident of one week ago. In this case, how does the defendant plea?"

Harry stood straight and met the eyes of the lead judge. "Guilty, but with mitigating circumstances."

He couldn't tell which surprised the watching crowd more – his guilty plea, or the fact that he claimed cause. There was low level pandemonium for a long moment before the lead judge brought it under control. Harry was intrigued to note Scrimgeour on the panel, but not doing a Fudge and running the show.

"You claim extenuating or mitigating circumstances. Explain."

"May I stand?" Harry asked. "I talk better on my feet." At the lead judge nod, he stood. *Moron,* he thought to his wives. *They all forget that I'm rather passable at the wandless stuff.*

Pretty good with your wand too, purred Hermione through the link. *Miss Honeyspear had no complaints.*

Minx. "We all remember what was happening a week ago. For some reason, the crowds in Diagon Alley were angry over something. I had arrived with one of my wives – Luna, to be precise – and with Hogwarts Headmaster Albus Dumbledore. We had found that they seemed to be angry over the disappearance of a large number of children, and were talking as if the Ministry had been doing the abductions. Many of them reported that those who did it flashed Auror badges."

He sighed. "The talking seemed to be working when a team of Aurors arrived to break up the illegal gathering, as they called it. It was just after the lead Auror admitted that they were grabbing children due to a law that had already been struck down that one of the Aurors apparently fired off some sparks to try to contain the crowd. This led to a stampede of people trying to escape. When the dust settled, there was a dead boy in the square, killed by the panic that the Ministry Aurors had caused in their ineptitude."

Scrimgeour stood. "I ran the Aurors for quite some time, and I can tell you that they are not inept, and I take great offence at such an intimation."

"Then standard procedure when you have a crowd that is on edge is to fire sparks at them and make it seem as though they are about to be attacked? At the point that your Aurors showed up, it seemed as if they might be willing to calm down. Both Luna and Albus – sorry, Headmaster Dumbledore – report seeing sparks aimed toward the crowd. They don't know who they came from, but they were certainly there. Which means that the Aurors fired them and caused the panic."

He grinned. "For that matter, are they given the training that will lead to a court case against pretty much the entire Auror department, brought by me?" Before anyone could react to that statement, he said, "That's neither here nor there. After an Auror-caused panic, a young child was dead. I simply turned and threw my hands toward the Aurors. You can ask the Headmaster about some of the situations that I got into in my last two years of school, when I would do things such as that during times of great stress." He grimaced. "I hate to wake the dead, so to speak, but I did something quite similar to William and Charles Weasley during a very stressful situation that has since been dealt with." He could see the Weasley family (minus Charlie) wincing, and sent an apologetic look their way.

"This is true," Albus said from the gallery. "Under the form of stress that he refers to, he has done things of that nature before."

"You are more powerful than he and you kept your temper," one of the other judges said.

"I argue the first sentiment, and point out in regards to the second that not only am I roughly eight times his senior and have had many more years at

curbing my temper, but I did not spend all my formative years knowing that I had a Dark wizard actively searching for my death. All but the first fifteen months and the last five years of his life have been under a cloud of worry.” He stood. “Already he shows an ability to hold his temper. Had this incident happened during his seventh year at Hogwarts, when the wizarding world seemed quite willing to vilify him for all that they could, it is likely that several of your Aurors would still be hospitalised. The wounds taken by the team from seven days ago are purely impact wounds, and were healed immediately, I understand.”

“They might have been hurt far worse than that,” Scrimgeour exclaimed angrily.

“And they *might* have been blasted to Scotland,” Harry replied. “I am not on trial for what *might* have happened; only for what did. I lost my head upon seeing that a child had died due to the actions of the Aurors, and basically threw them to where I wouldn’t have to see them until I could calm down.”

Amelia stood. “As the first on the scene after the incident, I can tell you that he was still extremely angry, yet his only other action toward them was to release them from their Sticking Charms.”

“They could have been killed!” Scrimgeour yelled.

“From a fall of fifty feet?” Harry scoffed. “I fell further than that while unconscious in Hogwarts Quidditch games, and I think my wives and children can tell you that I didn’t die!” There was a titter of lascivious laughter that went around the room at that, which was partially why he had phrased it that way.

The judges disappeared back into their chambers and some people came down to visit him. “I expect to be sentenced to Azkaban for a time,” he said. “Scrimgeour doesn’t like me since the conversation in his office, and I insulted his Aurors as well. When word comes out about this last week, he’s going to be out of office one way or another, because that will reflect back onto him.”

He turned to Bill. “I’m sorry about -”

“You go right ahead. If it helps lessen your sentence at all, then you can blame me for everything. After all, Charlie and I are the reasons why there isn’t a Weasley-Potter amongst your children.”

“No, I take blame for it as well,” Ginny said. “Remember, I could have told you all that Harry wouldn’t do that. If I’d known him as well as I do now ...” She looked at him. “Have I ever told you just how damned lucky your wives are?”

“No they’re not,” Harry said with a small chuckle. “They have to deal with me.”

“He’s got a point there,” Pansy said.

“And a pretty good one at that,” Susan replied.

“Ah, my own personal ego-busting squad,” he interrupted, before the other two could join in. Luna stuck her tongue out at him. “Ah, making promises just before I go to jail. You’re evil, I tell you.”

“And you wouldn’t have me any other way,” she replied sweetly.

He was trying to decide several comments, from the mildly suggestive to the flat out raunchy, when the Wizengamot judges exited their chambers and took their seat. Scrimgeour was smiling, so Harry took the wind from their sails. “Since I see the Minister smiling, my only question is this – how long am I sentenced to Azkaban for?”

A gasp shot around the courtroom, which was quickly silenced by the lead judge. “You are correct as to your sentence. Since testimony from Albus Dumbledore and Amelia Bones both speak to your state of mind and what you *could* have done, we have been lenient. You are to be remanded to the custody of the Aurors that you may be taken to Azkaban, where you will spend the next thirty days.”

Cries of protest rose throughout the gallery, and what surprised everyone, including the judges, was that it was Harry who shouted “Silence!” to the gallery. None not closely connected to him knew that he’d added a mild *Sonorus* to the shout. “The verdict was fair. I was accused of attacking Aurors. Had I not had the mitigating factor of my emotional state, I likely would be there for a very long time, rather than thirty days. So please calm down, everyone.”

He smirked internally. *I’m letting out my Slytherin side. You knowword of this will get out, and those that were there will be talking about this verdict. Scrimgeour won’t stand a chance of remaining in office once I sue them for their abuse.* “Before I go to Azkaban, may I please speak with Madam Bones to give testimony in an upcoming trial? I can be there under the guard of whatever Aurors she may choose.”

The judges looked to each other and then looked back and nodded. Amelia Bones called forth Tonks and Shackbolt, who led him to her office.

“What evidence do you have?” Amelia asked once the door was closed.

“Pensieve memories of a number of the Aurors abusing me in the cell I was in for the last week, including their attempts at Obliviation.”

The silence was painful. “Oh, one thing. Go easy on Auror Honeyspear. Her superiors played on the fact that she’s the perfect Hufflepuff, and convinced her that I’m evil and trying to throw the wizarding world into anarchy.”

“What did she do?” Tonks asked with narrowed eyes.

“With the permission of Susan and the others, I let her seduce me. I can perform Legilimency by touch when I’m that intimate with someone, and

they ... well, Honeyspear looks like the very best of my wives, with a little bit of Cho and the Patil girls tossed in.” He blushed a little bit.

Amelia sat there for a long moment, looking angry. Harry called Susan and company to the office just in case. “It’s bad enough that they’re abusing prisoners and making them forget the abuse, but to prostitute my Aurors to gather blackmail material?”

“They chose well. She really believed that she was doing it for a good cause. Amusingly enough, they were partially right – I do intend to change things here.”

“Let’s get the testimony out of the way so that you can begin your sentence,” Amelia growled. This led to two hours of Harry describing what had happened and giving her copies of his memories. When he was finally finished, he was given over to the Aurors that were to take him to Azkaban, but not before he could kiss his wives goodbye.

At Azkaban, they took what few possessions that remained, including his wedding ring. For the first time in five years, he was completely alone. He had been placed in the short-term incarceration wing, since he had a term of less than a year.

Even knowing that he’d be released in thirty days, being completely alone brought back some very bad memories for him, and he lost track of the time fairly quickly. The Dementors hadn’t guarded the prison in more than seven years, but the place still seemed to hold a miasma of their foul presence within these walls in the cool damp stone walls and the general feeling of hopelessness. The fact of it being in the middle of the cold and dangerous North Sea didn’t help very much either. Smart prisoners did *not* want a window seat, as it were.

It didn’t help that he knew that he had lost Amelia Bones’ respect. *She was the closest I had to a real aunt, and now she’ll have nothing to do with me when I leave. Will she try to fight me in my attempts to improve things?*

He sat in his cell day after day as the dankness and darkness seemed to creep into his bones. No one talked to him at all, and he found himself wondering if that was normal, or Amelia Bones’ request. *I should have at least apologised for disappointing her.*

Maybe she’ll convince the others that it was a bad idea to have married me. No one has come to visit, after all. I can’t say that she’d be wrong, either. I shouldn’t have done that with Honeyspear. It’s probably cost me everything.

Faster than he thought, but still far too slowly, his thirty days were over. His wedding ring was returned to him, and he stared at it for a long moment before slipping it into his pocket, rather than slipping it on. He was led to the small boat that would take him from the island to the mainland, and he climbed in silently, both in his steps and in his demeanour.

He kept his head down during the slow, wet trip, thinking about what he had left to do. He still had a revolution to deal with, but his heart had gone out of the process.

The boat came to a stop at the dock and he climbed from it. He stepped from dock to dry land and watched as five people stepped from the building – his wives and Albus Dumbledore. They stepped toward him, worry evident on their faces.

“I’m sorry,” he said.

“What happened to your ring?” Hermione asked as she caught sight of his hand.

“I’ve been afraid to put it back on,” he admitted. “No one visited me, and when I left Madam Bones, she was so terribly angry at me for the Honeyspear incident, I thought that she might have convinced the four of you that -”

He got no further, because he suddenly had four women holding him tightly. “Put your ring back on, Harry,” Susan said softly. “Feel what we really feel about you.”

He reached into his pocket, pulled out the brilliant grey-white metal ring and just looked at it for a moment. Susan reached over after several seconds of his indecision and took the ring, sliding it onto his left hand.

He was suddenly assailed with the emotions and sensations of four women, and the strongest of all of them was the intense love that they still felt for him, followed closely by the relief at his release. After a month of no connection, and worries that they would have been convinced that being with him was a bad idea, this was too much for him, and he crashed to his knees, crying as hard as he had for the dead boy five weeks earlier.

They held him again, rocking with him as he cried out his relief and the pain of separation that had finally completely struck him, even though that separation was ended. Once he had finished his outburst, they helped him to his feet and took him back to Potter Manor.

He was met by the rest of his revolutionary crew, with the addition of Auror Honeyspear. “Thank you for your kind words, Mr Potter,” she said. “They used me. I quit the Aurors because of that.”

“I’m sorry for the loss of your job, Miss Honeyspear,” he said quite honestly.

“That’s all right,” she said. “I’ve been with this group for a little while, and they’ve helped me out.” She blushed as she said that, which made Harry turn and look at his wives. Pansy mouthed “Later” at him, so he nodded.

Amelia Bones approached. “I’m glad you’re back, Harry.”

“I’m glad to be out, Madam Bones,” he replied. Changing the subject, he said, “I have been in a single cell for a month, with very little chance to keep clean. If you all don’t mind, I think I’ll go up and get a shower before coming down to get a progress report.”

He walked up the stairs, hearing behind him, “He used to call me Aunt. What happened?”

As he disappeared, he could hear Susan starting to speak, "Well, Aunt Amelia -" in a very angry voice. He shook his head in puzzlement. *What's going on? Her anger at me was fairly evident. What changed her mind?*

The water had only been running for a few moments when the door opened and he felt bare skin against his. "Welcome home love," Hermione whispered in his ear. "Let's get you properly clean." When they left a while later, he was quite clean, and happier than he'd been when he entered the shower.

He re-entered the room that seemed to have become their war room, and was immediately met by Amelia again. "I am so sorry!" she exclaimed, far more worried than he had ever seen the woman before. "I was angry at the Aurors under my command, and I didn't realise that you might take my anger at them as anger at you. I understand the link, and understand that they gave you permission."

"You don't hate me?" he asked, cursing the 'little boy' quality he could hear creep in.

She swept him into a hug. "You've made my Susan so happy over these years. How could I hate you?"

"Easily," he said. "My relatives hated me because I existed. You would have had a *real* reason to hate me."

"Well I don't, so let's go past that, and get to the meeting. We'll talk later, and I'll try to make up for my mistake." She led him to his seat at the head of the table and hugged him tightly again before letting him sit.

He shook his head, smiling and looking at his wedding ring for a moment, smiling at the feeling of completeness once more. "Okay, what's happening out there?"

Bill spoke first. "We've gotten the Quibbler moved to the new site and got the wards up. I was serious about that when we spoke, by the way. It would take a warder from the team that laid the wards about an hour to drop them, and that's knowing how they went up. The Ministry trying anything against them is going to leave the Ministry warders in pain to say the very least." At Harry's questioning look, he explained. "The wards are set up in layers. At no point are they intentionally lethal, but they will give several layers of response, first announcing that a breach attempt is being made." He grinned. "There are two ways of getting around that announcement, and the better one is the route that only a goblin-trained warder would take. Most everyone else is going to try a different route, and that route will set off silent alarms. As they get deeper and set off other wards, it becomes non-silent, and then starts giving warning shots, so to speak – no danger, but annoying. If they keep pushing, it will get nastier, until the point where it's offering a severe shock to the team. None of it is fatal, but it is damned annoying."

"Good. How about protecting the other families?"

"The Parkinsons and the Grangers have been moved for the time being," Albus replied. "Alonso and Aldonza have once again taken over the dower cottage on the property, and Keith and Dorothy opted to move in here, into one of the spare bedrooms."

"How's the situation on the street?"

Lawrence spoke up. "Ugly. The people know that you were in jail, and they don't like it. You're seen as having gone to jail for them, and have become a hero. Someone got a photograph of you crying over that little boy, and ... I hope you'll forgive me, but I used it for some publicity for our cause."

Luna giggled. "It was a beautiful editorial, too – asking whether this was the mark of a cruel and heartless anarchist, right next to the photo."

"Is there a leader amongst the people that we can talk to?" he asked.

A few people winced before Lawrence spoke again. "Actually, they seemed to have been waiting for you to get out of jail. You've stood up to the Ministry before, and went to jail even. They show every sign of wanting you as their leader."

Harry grimaced. "And my suit against many of the Aurors isn't going to make that seem any less of a good idea."

"Especially with an ex-Auror testifying for you," Honeyspear said.

"I want this fight as bloodless as possible. If the people are going to decide that I'm their leader, then they are going to listen to that important point," Harry said to the assembled group.

"Harry, we agree with you, but how on earth can you manage to think politics at a time like this?" Susan asked as she slid up his body.

"Well, we may all be naked, but no one was doing anything about it," he said softly just before kissing her lips. "I take it that the official welcome home orgy is about to begin?" Oddly, that comment caused each of the girls to wince. "all right, what happened while I was gone?"

Pansy looked pensive for a long moment. "Well, while you were gone, we ended up having an orgy. All female, but with more than just the four of us."

"Ah, Gabrielle finally made her move?" he asked with a grin.

"So did Miss Honeyspear," Hermione said. "When we explained what had happened, she asked for another chance, this time without the man in the middle." She giggled. "Not that she had any complaints about the man, she moaned rather forcefully. She apparently has a *very* good memory, and sometimes remembers sensations."

Pansy stood up again. "Well, we were all sitting around drinking, unhappy that we couldn't feel you in our heads, and ... well, one thing led to another, and we all ended up naked and having sex."

"Where's the problem?" he asked. "You trusted everyone enough to make love with them, so why would I be angry?"

"Because I looked down at one point to find a redhead making love to me," Hermione said softly, "and Susan was in an odd conglomeration with Luna and Gabrielle, while Pansy was being 'tortured' by Isabella."

The image that it brought to mind caused him to take several seconds before piecing together what they were saying. "Okay, since I know for a fact that it wasn't Daphne for various reasons, the main one being that she's delightedly monogamous with Ron, and it sure as hell wouldn't have been *Molly* Weasley, that leaves one other Weasley female." He blinked for a moment and said, with no inflection whatsoever, "No. How could you. With her." He looked at them with greater animation next. "So, how was that?"

They were looking at him in surprise. "What? We've all grown up, and I know that alcohol doesn't make you do things you don't want to, so I'd imagine that in these last five years, Hermione, you've gotten to *really* like the new Ginny." He wiggled his eyebrows.

"Harry, it's Ginny," Hermione said.

"Is there some reason that we all have to decide if she's to be admitted to our little family right at this moment?" he asked. They shook their head in the negative. "Okay. So we worry about what might be a non-issue after everything is said and done. A much more adult Ginny being in an orgy with you ladies is the least of my worries right now, okay?" They nodded, and the night continued to the enjoyment of all.

Harry Apparated to the Ministry with Amelia to begin the process of levelling charges against multiple Aurors. He also began the process of finding out whether or not the children that had been abducted had been returned to their families yet.

Rufus Scrimgeour showed up in the middle of Harry's swearing out complaints against the Aurors, all of whom had names now, thanks to the memories he had left for Amelia. He had sworn out the one against Isabella grudgingly, before Scrimgeour arrived, and blushed as he had to admit that he certainly had had no complaints at the time.

"What will it take to get you to stop this foolishness, Potter?" Scrimgeour asked.

"Ensure that every child that was taken is returned to their parent or parents and agree that the Ministry needs to be rebuilt from the ground up."

"You're talking about a coup!" was the Minister's outraged response.

"We're talking about a group of people who know that there's no taxation on the rich, and who have had a sign that the Ministry as it currently stands can literally tear their homes apart with no remorse for the act. Your vaunted Aurors are mostly thugs and bullies, with some notable exceptions."

"Yes, Miss Honeyspear," Scrimgeour said snidely.

"Actually no," Harry said. "I was thinking of some different people; people with honour and pride in their job, who are rather offended at the concept of Aurors being allowed to torture inmates in the holding cells."

He glared at the Minister. "I blame this on you, sir," he said angrily. "You were in charge of the Aurors for a while, and this is something that strikes me as being around for a while. The body is only as healthy as the head is, and if the body is showing signs of decay ..."

Scrimgeour rose to his full height. "Don't think that this is over by any stretch of the imagination, Potter," he snarled, once more enforcing the leonine aura that he gave off.

"I caution you the same, sir," Harry replied sharply. He was about to say more when someone burst into the office.

"We have Aurors in trouble, ma'am!" the out of breath Auror said to Amelia Bones.

"Well send 'em reinforcements!" Scrimgeour said.

"Explain the situation in ten words or less, Auror," Amelia said sharply.

"Auror went to pick up a child," he panted. "Family fighting back."

"You've *still* got people picking up children, Rufus?" Harry asked. "Illegally?"

"There's nothing written that rescinds it, Potter."

"It's a unjust and bigoted law, and you know it." He spun on the Auror. "Where is it?"

"It's up in Fife, a farm family."

"What are you telling a civilian for?" Scrimgeour yelled.

"I'm gone," Harry said. "Maybe I can keep some of his goons from killing any more innocents." With that, Harry ran from the room, shouldering aside Scrimgeour when the man tried to block him.

He arrived at the Apparation point to find a number of Aurors heading out. He slipped a quick tracer on one of them just as they disappeared, and then followed it, calling to his wives as he did.

He arrived with the team of Aurors, and found that the situation was going to rapidly get out of hand. The Auror team was gearing up to storm them, but both the adults were holding firearms, and at least one Auror that Harry could see was on the ground, being seen to by his team. He stepped away from the team and walked up to the family, but not before placing a strong shield between the Aurors and the family. "Hi," he said simply.

"You came with them," the man said with distrust.

"Only way I could find where 'here' was. I was in the Ministry when I heard about the Aurors illegally picking up a child, and thought that I could stop it." He suddenly grinned as he got word from his wives. "In about fifteen seconds, another group of people are going to show up here, and they'll be on our side."

Right on schedule, Hermione, Luna, Susan, Ginny, Daphne and Ron appeared, with Albus, Bill, Isabella Honeyspear, both Delacours and both Alorkin and Griphook appearing seconds behind them. "They were at the meeting," Hermione said sweetly, "and thought that they'd offer their assistance in keeping the children safe."

"Okay," Harry said to the Aurors. "You've got us fourteen, almost all of whom have fought Voldemort, versus you guys. Do you really want to push this one?"

Burning Day The End of the Beginning

Disclaimer: I own nothing. Except maybe some lust over what I'm sure Emma Watson is going to look like at eighteen. Yow!

Well, Isabella Honeyspear is mine, and a few of the others that have shown up from time to time. But it's not like I can use 'em anywhere else.

Note: I haven't read any real reviews for the last chapter as of the writing of this note, but in regards to the Ginny bit in the last chapter, be aware that people can grow up a lot in five years. And that's all I'm going to say on that matter in the notes.

The face-off was tense, to say the least. With sixteen people facing off against a group of twelve standing Aurors (one was being healed, and another was doing the healing), the tension was rising. "Look," Harry said. "This child isn't leaving without a fight, and I don't think any of you are skilled enough to take us all on. Voldemort, remember? I'm the guy who had to kill him for you guys. Five of these people were right there with me when it happened, fighting him as well. None of us want bloodshed, but none of us are going to allow you to take this child because of an evil law that favours purebloods and that was also struck down well over a month ago."

"It's the law," one of them exclaimed. "We uphold the law, and we can't pick and choose which ones we enforce."

"Understood. You'd best get a superior here, though, and see how we can work this out. We don't want to fire, believe me we don't, but we will to protect a child from being taken from his family."

"But the law -" stated another.

"- is intentionally breaking up families!" he yelled. "This child has two parents, and yet he's being taken! Why? To be with a pureblooded family? Or because the idiots in charge can't get their thumbs out of their ... posteriors long enough to look through the Wizengamot records to see that the Wizengamot verbally struck down Umbridge's edict? I was there when it was done! Was it an Umbridge crony who added in the clause that allows Muggleborns and half-bloods to be taken from their families?"

Scrimgeour arrived, with Amelia with him. Both looked furious, and quickly met up with their respective sides. "Rufus, I think it would be an excellent idea if you took these people back to the Ministry, and look through the Wizengamot records for the day that Umbridge found herself abruptly out of a job. You will find the head of the Wizengamot stating that the edict that your people are acting under was rescinded. It would behoove you to make sure that it's in writing and backdate the little beggar, because all the children are returning to their families." The last was delivered as a statement of fact, not a request.

"Who do you think you are, ordering me around?" Scrimgeour yelled.

"The guy who's getting pretty damned sick of all the incompetence running rampant through the Ministry!" Harry yelled back. "Who do you think has public opinion on his side right now, Rufus? Even with you guys owning the Ministry Mouthpiece, they know otherwise. How are you spinning the child kidnappings, or are you pulling a Fudge and ignoring it, hoping it'll go away, the way he did with Voldemort?" He snarled at the Minister. "Like Moldie, this problem isn't going to go away any time soon!" He took a deep breath before continuing in a calmer voice, "Minister Scrimgeour, the has spiralled out of your hands by now. The question is no longer whether or not you can avoid it, but whether or not you can avoid the violence that comes from people trying to change the way that their government works."

"They will not find it so easy to topple the Ministry, Potter."

"Nor will you find it easy to stop them from fighting you every step of the way, Minister."

They stared at each other for a long moment before Scrimgeour said, "Fine," and began to lower his wand. As Harry's team slowly did the same, he suddenly yelled, "Manoeuvre Delta!" and began firing toward the group. He was joined almost immediately by concentrated wand fire from the rest of the Aurors.

So that's how you're playing it? Harry thought with no little anger as their wand fire began to batter his shield. *Ladies, we fought Tom*, he thought at them. *Shall we show Rufi how it's done?* He felt grins of agreement from them, and knew that they were now tapping Ron and Ginny. He knew that they agreed when he heard a barked, "Ha!" of laughter from Ron, and it was definitely *not* a sound of derision.

It might have been five years, but Harry noted that none of the Aurors seemed to have improved during the down time. *Focus fire on the effective Aurors*, he thought. *Make the others protect the group.*

Harry's group began to return fire, and he noted that an irate Amelia was aiming at Scrimgeour. He found himself somewhat depressed that the their group, five years out of practice, seemed to be able to hold their own – and even win – against the supposedly well-trained Aurors.

After several minutes of spell-fire from both sides, Harry had enough. He motioned to Amelia and Isabella, then the same to Ron and Ginny. He was amused to note that Albus understood the Quidditch signals he sent to the two of them. He counted down wordlessly and then, just as he let his shield drop, fired off a wide spray Stunner that knocked almost every single Auror out, as well as Scrimgeour. Those that weren't out had gotten a shield up in time, but they were certainly slowed severely, long enough to be knocked out completely in the next hail of Stunners. Those people disappeared immediately.

He looked to Honeyspear. "Do you guys carry Portkeys to get back to headquarters?"

"Yes. I'd imagine that your Stunner overloaded the ones who are still here. We should be able to activate them, though." She looked to him for instructions, and he nodded. She sent a gentle pulse at each of them, and they disappeared. "We learn that little trick as a just in case," she said. "Sort of 'waking up' the Portkey."

"Okay – Bill, Alorkin, can you get some quick and dirty wards up on this place? They might lose it anyway, but I want to give them every chance to keep it. The rest of us will stay here in case they come back." He looked at the family. "Thank you for not getting involved in the fighting. Could have been more difficult that way. Get your stuff packed, because we're going to move you somewhere a little safer for a while."

They looked at him for a moment before heading into the house. Bill and Alorkin began to mark off some places to start. "I don't know your warding skills; that's why I didn't ask you."

Griphook merely smiled. "Were I a warder, I would not be in the front offices. I took no offence."

"Okay everyone – we need to be prepared. They'll *Ennervate* the group shortly, and they'll either reappear quickly, or decide that we got the family out of here as soon as they left. I'm hoping for the second choice, myself, but it does unfortunately lead to them coming back and trying something against the place. It depends on how they're feeling."

The family came out a few tense minutes later with three trunks. "I shrank as many clothes as we might need and put them in one," the mother said, "shrank the things we simply can't lose and put them in another, and left one for other things like some of our favourite things."

"Good," Harry said. "I'll be sending you to a temporary place right now, and we'll try to find you more permanent temporary housing, if you understand me," he finished with a small laugh. They chuckled nervously in response. "I'm hoping to get you back here permanently fairly quickly."

"What ... what was that about?" the husband finally asked.

"To be honest, you got caught in the middle of a revolution in the midst of beginning. What they're trying to do with your son is the thing that set it off."

"Someone finally got sick of the Ministry corruption?" the mother asked.

"Yeah, me," Harry replied. "Especially after being on the receiving end of it a few times."

"Sucks to be you," their child said.

Harry grinned and looked at his wives. "Nah. There's a lot that makes up for the crud that the Ministry has done; that makes it all worthwhile."

Bill and Alorkin arrived back to the group a few minutes later. After waving his wand over the family, he said "All right. The wards are quick and dirty, and can probably be dropped fairly fast, so we decided to get a little harsh in the response. If someone comes here that isn't part of this group, the wards will lash out at them. They'll root the person to the spot that they Apparated or Portkeyed in and then hit them with some nasty jinxes and curses. The only way they'll be able to do anything about it is if they show up a distance away and come in slowly. I don't think they'll put in that effort, to be honest."

"So it'll slap *anyone* that's not us that arrives, right?" Hermione asked. At Alorkin's nod, she smiled. "Good. They can drop them, but they have to take some damage first."

"I may be wrong, but I'm betting that's more effort than they'll want to put in," Bill finished.

For reasons Harry could ever fathom later in life, the little fight at the farm got to be known historically as The Battle of Fife. "For one thing, it was more like a skirmish, and what's wrong with mentioning the town? Why just the county?" Hermione would just laugh softly when he started on these rants.

The Battle of Fife was only the first, however.

Scrimgeour showed that a person can be both canny and somewhat stupid at the same time. When the attempt in Fife failed, he went on the attack. The physical side of the attack was three pronged and hard-hitting. The somewhat more dangerous side came from the Daily Prophet, however.

Daily Prophet

Harry Potter: Menace or Saviour?

by Rita Skeeter

We all can remember five years ago and more, when You Know Who was still running around, causing problems for the citizens of this country. It was a time of terror and pain, brought to an end by the actions of one man, still but a boy at the time. Harry Potter, the Boy Who Lived. We have had five years of peace and quiet, for which we all are glad.

But now a different side of the Boy Who Lived rears its head. He has been seen walking the halls of the Ministry these past months, and never seems happy when he is there. He is the reason the old Minister, Dolores Umbridge, is now in Azkaban, although this reporter was unable to discover the reason why she went to prison. He is at odds with our current Minister.

And he and the late Cornelius Fudge had a long unpleasant history. Make of the information what you will, but recall that Cornelius Fudge was found murdered.

Word has come to this intrepid reporter that he may now be attempting a takeover of the lawful government. He has been heard voicing complaints about the way that things run, and speaks as if he thinks that he can do a much better job than those currently in power.

Are we seeing the birthing of a new Dark Lord?

Interviews with valiant Aurors injured in Gringott's Riot – page 3

Examination of Harry Potter's history – page 5

In depth examination of the women in Harry Potter's life – pages 7 through 20

The problems that Harry faced began to ramp up at that point. Oddly, most people did not seem to be believing the Daily Prophet as much as they once did, but it still caused him problems. His greater problems came from the Ministry itself.

First came the fact that since the reversal of the edict had never actually seen print, his marriage was once more deemed to be illegal, and it was stated that he needed to give his children to the Ministry, as per the law.

His answer was to move the children and several friends back to his island, where the Ministry had no jurisdiction.

Next came the arrest of Severus Snape on charges of being an as yet uncaught Death Eater. Protestations of his friendship with Harry fell on deaf ears, and he was placed on trial and sentenced to life in Azkaban.

Harry himself was declared to be an outlaw and was to be detained immediately upon sighting him. The same went for Susan, Pansy, Luna and Hermione.

The Quibbler

Daily Prophet: Ministry Mouthpiece or Real News?

An editorial by Lawrence Lovegood

We at the Quibbler have seen the reaction of the Ministry and the wizarding world toward our saviour, Harry Potter, and frankly, we're a little disgusted.

Not at you, gentle reader, but at the rag out there that tries to pass itself off as a real newspaper.

The Daily Prophet has for years quoted just what the Ministry has wished them to. Now that Harry Potter chooses to fight the valiant fight against Ministry corruption and bigotry, they do just as their puppet masters motion them to do – flay the man in the press.

The Ministry doesn't want you to know about the Dark Lord that really rose, and how Harry Potter came to be back in England. Well, I know, because I was unwillingly made a part of it by the very Ministry that now vilifies him.

It is no secret that one of his wives is my daughter Luna. My granddaughter visits quite regularly. So regularly that certain members of the Ministry were able to discern the pattern. One day, while she visited, people broke into my home and kidnapped my little granddaughter.

Aurors.

Yes, you read that right. There is proof of this, but the guilty have still not been punished for the invasion of my property. But that is for another time.

We later found the reasoning behind her abduction from my home. Dolores Umbridge had her kidnapped so that one of her fingers could be sent to Harry Potter, to convince him to return.

"This makes no sense!" I hear you cry. I agree, if it were as straightforward as it reads above. Instead, the Ministry had been hiding the emergence of a new Dark Lord, calling himself Lord Basileus. The note with the finger was sent in the name of this so-called Lord, who proved to be none other than a major financial contributor to the Ministry upper echelon, Draco Malfoy.

Malfoy was met and rapidly defeated, solely by Harry Potter. It was quickly discovered that he did not have the child. By this point, I had

recognised one of the Aurors, who when she found what had happened – how Dolores Umbridge had conned her into grabbing Lorelei and handing her over to Umbridge.

Now put yourself in our shoes for a moment. More precisely, put yourself in Harry's shoes. Or to phrase it the most precisely of all – put yourself in the shoes of a parent. Your daughter has been kidnapped, and her finger has been sent to you. Now you find that it was your own government that did it. What do you do?

Well, he actually didn't, because your Ministry has remained standing. Remember that we are talking about the man who killed the worst Dark Lord in over a century. How does the Ministry repay him? By enacting a law making his marriages null and void, and ordering him to turn over his children to the Ministry.

With some help, it was discovered that Dolores Umbridge had concocted that edict that she wrote or the sole purpose of making his marriages illegal. She was caught at it, and sentenced to Azkaban, and the law she enacted overturned. That's not the worst of it, though. She put us all through untold mental anguish for nothing, because Lorelei was unharmed. No missing finger at all.

But the worst is yet to come. We still reap the foul wind of her law, because in it she stated that all illegitimate children were to be given over to the custody of the Ministry. In true bureaucratic fashion, a new money-wasting department was created to house the children.

And the Aurors are going out and picking them up still, even though the Wizengamot overturned the law. Why? Because the rescinding of Umbridge's law has yet to be put to paper for some odd reason, so they don't consider it officially done with.

Scrimgeour himself has been to a site where a pick up was to be done. As was Harry. Harry was there to prevent it, because he knows that you must fight injustice to prevent further injustices.

And now they have declared Harry and his wives to be criminals. His good friend Severus Snape has been sentenced to Azkaban, despite a known history as a spy for the side of Light.

Why has this happened? Because Harry and his wives don't like the rampant corruption in the current system, and are paying the price for complaining.

And neither should you.

An American Muggle wrote some interesting words that we all should consider. He wrote them over two hundred years ago, and they sadly are quite relevant today.

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the consent of the governed, - That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government.

While we are not a colony of the wizarding world, think long on these words. Why does our Ministry seem to treat us as their vassals?

Think hard on those words. Make of them what you will.

Lawrence Lovegood giggled semi-maniacally as he stepped from the fireplace. "Well, I'm a traitor to the wizarding world and all that!" he said finally. "After printing that Declaration of Jefferson's, it appears that some miscreant may have fire-bombed the Quibbler offices. The Ministry couldn't get there in time to prevent the complete and utter ruin of the interior of the premises, but they certainly worked to keep the fire from spreading." Harry raised an eyebrow at the reaction of his father-in-law. "Pity for them that I'd already moved the offices to the building you found me."

"We'll never prove that the Ministry was behind the bombing, will we?" Luna asked.

"Not likely," Lawrence said. "I'm not worried, though. The important stuff was already moved, and the building itself was owned by one of Scrimgeour's cronies, so I don't really have any worries about liability."

"That's not the end of it, you know," Harry said. "They want me, and they've shown a willingness to do whatever it takes. Amelia's running several risks staying where she is, but she's got several Aurors on her side, and they're doing bodyguard work on a rotating schedule. The ones I worry about are Hermione's and Pansy's parents. They've shown a willingness to destroy buildings; are they willing to kill people to make the point?"

We all know the answer to that," Hermione said softly.

"Then get your parents here yesterday," he said suddenly. "I don't care about their house. Save them and anything that they feel that they can't live without. Use a Time Turner and do it, if you have to. Same with Alonso and Aldonza. Buildings can be rebuilt. Dead is dead."

Albus came into the room with most of the Weasley clan behind him. "I agree completely with your assessment," he said. "Buildings can be replaced, but life is too precious for that." Smiling, he said, "We have some good news for you, Harry. We now know where Charles is."

"You found Charlie?" Harry asked happily. "Where is he?"

"Right now, he's at the Burrow," Arthur said, "recovering from a five year long drunk."

"How did you find him?" Hermione asked.

"When the Ministry was dealing with the Quibbler offices – I'm sorry, by the way – they rather rudely shoved people aside. Percy happened to be in the Alley at that time, having worked late, and recognised the slurred voice of one of the displaced people. He's drying out at home."

"I'm glad we know where he is. I hope he gets better soon," Harry said.

"I just hope that they don't decide that the drunks in the Alley set the fire with their Firewhisky," Arthur replied.

"Well, if it looks like they might try to blame it on him in some way, bring him here and we'll keep him as safe as we can," Harry added. Arthur nodded.

With that, Hermione and Pansy left to talk to their respective parents.

Daily Prophet

Harry Potter: Madman or Dark Lord?

by Rita Skeeter

In the weeks since the rash of attacks on the Ministry began, we at the Daily Prophet have curious what goes through the mind of the one-time saviour of the wizarding world.

Harry Potter was once a respected individual, yet now he roams he attacks the Ministry and its employees with startling regularity. We have word that several employees have gone completely missing: Michaela Pamir, Janice Bardstone and Isabella Honeyspear to name three.

We find it interesting that all the missing employees are female, and that two of them are said to be young and very attractive.

Is this one-time saviour building a bigger harem? Is he kidnapping them for nefarious purposes?

Either way, we need to worry about the young man's sanity, and work harder to bring his children from such a dangerous environment into the wizarding world where they can be cared for properly.

No child deserves to grow up in a home with no love, or with a father that is insane.

"You were right," Dorothy Granger said. "Our home is a total loss. Mind you, they've tried to leave evidence that it was you and your group that did it."

"Luckily we know better," Keith Granger said. "But the question now is – now what?"

A voice spoke from the doorway. "You've been doing what you accused us of doing during the Second Voldemort War. Reacting." They turned to see a much more sober Charlie Weasley standing there. This was the first time in a long time that he'd not been either drunk, in pain from withdrawal, or hallucinating, so they were glad to see the new improved (and upright) Charlie Weasley.

Charlie continued. "You have to take the fight to them." He scowled. "Do to them what Bill and I did to you six years ago. Destroy them."

"Charlie –" Harry started to say.

"Don't you dare tell me that you forgive me, Harry," he said. "I don't deserve it. I'm glad I'm dried out now, because I'm done with hiding from my part in it all. But I won't accept forgiveness when I've done nothing to earn it."

"Except try to drink yourself to death," Harry said. "Why was that?"

"Because I knew what I'd done to my sister and to you. I was trying to hide from my part in it."

"Seems like you've been punishing yourself rather well. Why should I continue?" He grinned at Charlie. "Besides, isn't that the harshest revenge of all on you right now? Forgiving you when you *know* that you don't deserve it?"

Charlie raised an eyebrow at Harry and then shook his head. "I can't stop you, that's for sure. Let's talk about what needs to be done."

The Quibbler

Finding Out the Truth

by Ginny Weasley

This is time for something that the Ministry won't give you these days – the truth. There are articles in the Ministry Mouthpiece – oh, I'm sorry – the Daily Prophet about the attacks throughout wizarding England, and how they're being blamed on Harry Potter, trying to make him out to be another Dark Lord.

Ballocks.

Get someone who saw some of the fights between Harry's people and the Ministry, if they haven't been arrested on some trumped up charge. Ask them to catalogue the spells. Ask who's throwing around the spells that are killing and maiming people, and who's throwing the shielding to try to save those same people?

The Mouthpiece carefully ignores that little bit of information.

Do the research for yourself. Find out who owns the Daily Prophet, and then see how much you can trust what they say about anyone or anything that disagrees with the Ministry.

Find how much you can trust the Ministry or their Mouthpiece.

But do what the Ministry doesn't want you to – discover the truth for yourself.

They were meeting on the island when a call came from the Ministry. "Harry! They're on their way to Potter Manor!" Percy's call was suddenly cut off.

"Wonderful. Another supporter in Azkaban before the week is out, if I understand that cut-off correctly," Harry growled. "I'm sick of this. We've been gentle about it. What has gentle gotten us? Destroyed homes and businesses, and damaged reputations. No more Mr Nice Guy, I think the saying goes."

"Are we going to Potter Manor, then?" Hermione asked.

"I'm going to. I know it's just property, but I think we need to take a stand. Do the rest of you agree?"

"Yes," Keith Granger said. "We're not worried about our house, to be honest. It's gone, and we'd gotten everything we wanted to keep, out. We were thinking of moving here to your island, since it's certainly large enough and you *had* offered. We're wealthy, due to good money management before and after meeting a certain son-in-law. But you're talking your ancestral home. You need to protect it. And your Minister has made the fight personal now, much to his stupidity."

"So who's coming with me?" he asked.

Luna made a great sacrifice at this point and didn't make a joke. "I'm with you," she said instead.

Harry arrived at Godric's Hollow to a madhouse. There was an Auror strike team attempting to get into the house, and another trying to damage the dower cottage where he'd spent the last few months before being thrust upon the Dursleys. He literally saw red a few moments later, however, when he saw a team of Aurors damaging the cemetery on the Potter lands.

He was about to go barrelling into a fire-fight when a cadre of goblins arrived, with Ragnok at the lead, Griphook and Alorkin flanking him. "Wait, Harry, and we shall teach these people a lesson. Remember that what are in that place are but shells – that which was your mother and your father is not there. Their real crime is desecrating a place of solitude, where you go to remember those who have gone before."

"I bow to your decision, Ragnok."

"Are you against causing actual damage to them?"

"No. I don't want them dead, but I'm not going to fight like crazy to prevent it. What happens, happens."

Ragnok smiled a toothy smile, and motioned to Griphook and Alorkin. Without a word, both split away and headed for a group of Aurors, taking some of Harry's people with each group. This left Ragnok, Harry and his small team, which quickly sped toward the desecration team.

It was a small team of Aurors, only about five, and they were laughing. "Can you imagine the look on that little prick's face when he sees what we did?" one of them said.

"I think it was a little over the top," one of the others said, "but it should serve the purpose."

"Personally, I think you're all sick," the tallest one said. "If I knew that you'd done that to my family's cemetery, they'd never find all the pieces of you little fuckers. I feel dirty having been part of this."

"Ah, you're just a bloody pussy about it," the first speaker replied. "He's a Dark Lord. Fuck him."

"No, why don't we have a little chat?" Harry growled as he cast a Silencing Charm silently and with no wand. "He looked to the goblins. "I want to see what they did. Feel free to toy with them, but try to leave them alive, in you can." Ragnok smacked his gauntleted fist against his breast in salute.

Inside the fencing, Harry found broken stones and the like, and general defacement. It was when he reached the gravestones of his parents that he felt the strongest killing rage that he had ever felt, even stronger than the one that he had felt for Riddle.

The reason was what would have been a fine piece of animated Transfiguration had the subject matter not been chosen to offend him. Rather than seeing the pleasant silver-white marble that once had been there, he instead found an animated statue. The person in question had either known his mother or seen pictures recently, because her face was correct, and contorted in what he believed was supposed to be pleasure as his father's Animagus form performed certain sexual acts on her.

He turned slowly and walked back toward the group. The Aurors, save the one who had registered disgust, were on the ground with swords at their throats. "You want a Dark Lord?" Harry whispered in a voice that they had no problems hearing. "Do you really want me to give in to my darker side and deal with you the way you deserve to be treated?" He motioned to the goblins. "Release them, but keep them from leaving. They're big, tough, strong Aurors; they should be able to take on just one of me."

The goblins stepped away. "Oh yeah, this should be good," the first speaker said as he climbed to his feet. "Little Dark Lord wannabe thinks he can take on five Aurors? We can deal with him and then the little goblin freaks."

The tallest speaker simply stepped away from the other four. "You arseholes are on your own."

"Don't think we'll forget this," another one snarled.

"You won't live to," Harry growled as he jabbed his wand toward the speaker. The guy had been paying so much attention to threatening the other Auror that he had no chance to raise a shield in time, not that it would have helped. The spell struck the man, and the effect was as if Harry had struck him with a brick wall moving several hundred miles per hour. He was a wet sack of dead meat almost instantly. The other three stared wide-eyed for a moment, giving Harry time to down a second one with a Blasting Curse that tore a hole that a small child could climb through in another one's chest and throw up a skin-level shield.

The remaining two began to fire rather nasty curses at that point. Harry felt an acid yellow one glance off his shield, and it caromed off toward the main house. He responded with a shout of "Telargentum!," which caused a silver spear to explode from his wand. It likely would have been an arrow for any other caster, but he had considerably more power to call upon. This spear exploded through one of the men's shields and went straight through the man's chest, actually exiting the other side and spearing a tree. Wide-eyed, the man looked down before falling flat on his face. Harry spun to the last man, who was firing spells that were clearly Dark in nature, based on the results – organ boiling; skin eating; explosion of organic material – and simply screamed "Expeliarmus!" at him. The final fighting Auror's wand exploded from the man's hand despite his tight grip and sailed well over Harry's head.

"So I'm disarmed," the man said, still being surprisingly snide, despite obviously being on the losing side. "You're too much of a goodie-two-shoes to kill me in cold blood."

Harry grinned. "That tells me more about the Ministry than you could ever know, my idiotic friend. And you're right. I won't kill you with my wand. Now we get to go hand to hand." He tossed his wand to Ragnok, who caught it with ease. The two men began to circle each other, and Harry was impressed when the man lunged and actually caught his jaw. He hadn't properly studied fighting, though, because he left himself open for Harry's punch to his ribs. Harry also wasn't admitting that he was using his magic to augment his punches, so the feeling of ribs giving way slightly didn't surprise Harry in the slightest.

This was followed by several quick kidney punches from the man, and even a solid jab to Harry's ribs. The man was not a hand to hand fighter, however, because he kept offering Harry options that a trained fighter wouldn't have, such as the one that Harry used to end the fight – and the man's life. A quick rabbit punch to the back of the man's neck and it was all over.

When he had finished, and turned to face the last man, he found him holding his wand out toward Harry, handle first. "I might think that you're going about fighting the Ministry the wrong way, but I wanted no part of that shit in there. Knocking over a headstone that magic can just as easily repair? While I think it's less than proper, maybe it'll make a point. But that ... I won't fight you over them."

Harry turned to face the rest of the fight after the goblins had taken the man into their custody, and found that the rest of the fighting was over. There were another eleven Aurors dead. Two of them, it turned out, had died because of Harry's fight. One had been struck by that acid yellow curse and had promptly had half his body melt away, while the second had died when a wand shot out of nowhere and buried itself deeply in his neck.

There had been minimal damage to the two houses – the house elves were already working to fix it now that the fighting was over – leaving only the cemetery to fix. They had more than thirty Aurors in custody.

Daily Prophet

Potter's True Colours Exposed!

by Rita Skeeter

Yesterday, Harry Potter, the Dark Lord Who Lived, showed his true colours. In a mission to bring him in for questioning the brave Auror team

went to his home in Godric's Hollow.

They were met there by savagery unheard of since You KnowWho and Grindlewald.

Fifteen Aurors lost their lives fighting against this ... this monstrosity that we once supported. Fifteen brave people who should be remembered forever for their stance against the unmitigated evil that is Harry Potter. And at least thirty more languish in whatever prison this creature has forced them into.

We opened our hearts to this boy, and he repays us like this. Were it in my power, I would have his name struck from the history books, referred to only as an unknown who helped bring down You KnowWho.

Potter and the women ... no, the harlots, the scarlet women that have allied themselves with him should be sentenced to the Dementor's Kiss when they are finally brought to justice.

And I will be there to report it, I promise you.

The Quibbler

A Clarification

by Lawrence Lovegood

By this time, you've doubtless read the story that the Ministry Mouthpiece wants you to read, about fifteen Aurors who lost their lives at Potter Manor. It passes as news, but it missed some important facts, and as a real journalist, I find that I can not in good conscience continue to call myself a newspaperman without giving you all the information that you need.

First, let us start with what was done. There were three teams that struck that night. One hit the main Manor home, another hit the house on the property that Harry grew up in. The third team, which had one survivor, hit the most heinous target – the family cemetery.

Now, destruction of a cemetery is bad enough, but the Aurors weren't happy with that. No, they had to be cruel in their vandalism. Harry walked in to find that the simple marker, the one that marked the final resting place of the parents that he never really knew – a marker beautiful in its simplicity – had been altered to a lewd image of his parents. It was animated as well.

They had desecrated his parents' graves.

The only survivor from that team had been the only one to register disgust at the rest of his team.

Two of the other eleven died because of the fight that Harry was in – a fight for his life. The ones who desecrated the Potter cemetery threw everything they could at him, including their wands, if the death of one Auror is to be believed, found with a fellow Auror's wand through his neck. The other was literally melted from a dangerous curse thrown wild.

But the Mouthpiece won't ever tell you that.

Because Scrimgeour acts like the King.

Just like Fudge did, and we all know the depths he took us to.

“Horrible. Just horrible,” Harry said, shedding a crocodile tear as he watched the flames reach the sky. The Daily Prophet had just ceased being a going concern as a newspaper.

After making sure that their spells to ensure that the flames went no further than the Prophet's printing facility, he turned to the others. “Are we clear on our mission?”

“All or nothing,” Michaela Pamir said. “We try to take over the Ministry as best we can. Between Madam Bones and Aurors Shacklebolt, Tonks and Honeyspear, as well as about thirty others who came out of the woodwork for us, we should be able to close off access to the majority of the facility.”

“I've word from some of grandfather's contacts in the Unspeakables that no action will be taken by them,” Harry added. “Officially, they are on the Ministry's side. Unofficially, if they could have acted around their oaths, they would have done this ages ago.”

“We with Apparation access to the Ministry will jump in when you've begin the descent,” Amelia said. Kingsley Shacklebolt was in the process of agreeing when his Muggle beeper went off. He was nearly shot by several people before he found it and checked it. “It's nine pm! What's the PM want?” He rolled his eyes. “I'll be back as soon as possible.”

“You'll likely be joining a rebellion already in progress,” Hermione said in an announcer voice.

“Get back as soon as you can,” Harry said. Shacklebolt nodded and Disapparated away.

The group approached the telephone booth in Muggle London, and Harry asked Amelia, “Is the garbage in that tip real, or just some sort of illusion?”

"don't think it's changed in seven years, since I had to come be put on trial for protecting myself."

"It certainly smells real," one of the team gagged.

Harry squeezed into the telephone booth along with his wives and dialled the number – 6-2-4-4-2 – and the voice asked the usual question. "Purpose for visiting the Ministry and name?"

"Overthrow of a corrupt government," Harry said with a laugh. "Harry Potter." The others echoed his comments, and moments later they all had their silver badges as the lift dropped. Harry laughed as he read 'Harry Potter – Government overthrow', while Luna brayed her laugh at being described as 'Minion' on hers.

The doors opened and they spilled out, Susan looking sharply at the group, who all looked quite innocent. "Somebody pinched my bum," she said dangerously, although there was a twinkle in her eyes.

Eric Munch sat at the security desk, as it seemed that he always did. "Are you a real person, Eric?" Harry asked. "Or do you literally live in that chair?"

"Nah," he said. "You've just managed to arrive when I'm on duty. Odds are against that sorta thing, but it happens. By the way, just to let you know? I haven't seen you, if you get my meaning."

"Thanks," was Harry's heartfelt reply. "Is the Minister still here?"

"As far as I know." They nodded to the man and headed to the lifts.

"He surprises me," Harry said as the lift rose. "Then again, they also serve who stand and wait."

The lift opened on the top floor, and it opened to show a large waiting room. There was no one in the room, but there was a light coming from beneath the Minister's door.

"Time to check that spell that Bill taught me," Harry murmured. "Hope we're not walking into too big of a balls-up." He walked silently to the door and cast the spell that could be said to have begun the series of events that had led to this very moment. The door became transparent, and showed Rufus Scrimgeour sitting inside with six Aurors.

"I heard the lifts, so they're probably here," he said. "That Potter bastard's a canny one, though. Oh, remind me to fire Munch in the morning."

"Something's not right," Harry whispered. "There's got to be another exit from that room."

"There is," an Auror said from behind him. "Pity you were too fucking stupid to think of it before venturing out here. We've got him, Minister!" Several men stepped forward and held the small group at wandpoint. The one who had been speaking took Harry's wand as he jabbed his rather hard in Harry's neck.

Scrimgeour stepped out of his office. "It's been a fun little rebellion, Mr Potter, but it's time you give up your little game and realise who the winner is, and always will be. It's a pity the way that things are going to turn out, though."

"Ah. Here's where you apologise, but since I'm a figurehead, there's no other real verdict for myself and my wives –"

"You aren't married to them, Potter. Don't you remember?"

"- wives," Harry insisted harshly, "we'll of course be sentenced to death. Is it the kind death of the Veil, the death of the Dementor's Kiss, or will it be the death that was given to Guy Fawkes?"

"Hmm, that sounds like an option," Rufus said with a pensive look. "Remember, remember, the Fifth of November; gunpowder treason and plot. I see no reason why gunpowder treason should ever be forgot." He focused on Harry and his eyes went dark. "I think you've hit it precisely, young Potter. The other methods of killing the five of you are too quick, and too likely to be forgotten. But we want people to know that you do not ever turn on the Ministry. Treason of this degree deserves a return to the old punishments."

"You're a vile man," Hermione spat at him. One of the Aurors guarding her slapped her hard enough to draw blood.

"I'd watch my tongue, little lady," Scrimgeour said amicably. "If you're nice, I'll see to it that you die by hanging before they actually start the drawing and quartering."

He was answered by the surprisingly loud sound of a large number of mechanical clacks happening in the room. They looked to see what Harry and his wives recognised as military weaponry. *You ladies still remember the physical shield?* At the feeling of assent, he threw up his, and felt them do the same. "Feel free to open fire, guys," Harry said. "We're protected from gunfire."

Kingsley Shacklebolt stepped forward. "Minister Rufus Scrimgeour, I am requesting that you and your men stand down before we are forced to open fire on you. And we will, if necessary."

There was the sound of wands clattering to the floor. "Accio ," murmured Amelia Bones.

A few minutes later, with all the Aurors under control, Harry, his wives, Amelia Bones, Albus Dumbledore, and Rufus Scrimgeour found themselves in a boardroom facing both the Prime Minister and Queen Elizabeth II. "We know that the current administration has to be changed," she stated. "Threatening to hang, draw and quarter them? I think not, Mr Scrimgeour."

"They were threatening the stability of the wizarding world!" he exclaimed.

"We've got a better view of what's going on in here than you think, Rufus," the Prime Minister said. "The last several of you have ended up treating the position as if you had been elected King or something. That is going to stop."

Luna raised her hand to be noticed. "Yes?" he asked, both amused at the schoolgirl quality of her action, and impressed that she was actually trying to be noticed.

"How can you stop it? They'll just start this all over again."

"I think that, for a time, we'll need to take over the reins of governing the wizarding world ourselves, while we look at methods of giving you back the ability to govern yourselves."

"May I suggest something?" Harry asked respectfully.

"You may, Mr Potter," he replied. "Don't think that we'll automatically listen to your suggestion. We aren't entirely happy with your performance here either."

"Nor am I. What I wish to suggest is that you contact a certain individual living in Philadelphia, in the United States, and ask for his input. It would be both amusing and enlightening, in for more ways than any of us could imagine."

"And who might this man be?" the Queen asked.

"Benjamin Franklin," he replied. "I spoke with him within the last few months. If he's still alive, then he just might be willing to help."

"We just might do that," the PM said. "Now to the meat of the matter. What do we do with you people?"

"Jail for him," Rufus Scrimgeour said. "Treason is treason."

"And so it is," Amelia said. "I was there for that ruling that you seemed so eager to ignore. You knew quite well that the entirety of the law was struck down, yet you intentionally acted as if it weren't. Sounds like a case could be made for treason there as well. Using the government for a personal vendetta?"

Scrimgeour growled at her, but remained silent.

"I don't know," Harry said. "In a way, he's right. I was actively fighting the Ministry, but I was trying to put into place a better system. But it's still treasonous as it stands. I'll miss seeing my children grow up, but I don't think that there's any real choice but to arrest both Rufus and I and throw us in jail, or banish us, or something."

"You would willingly go to jail for your part in this?" the Queen asked, an interesting look in her eyes.

"Yes, Your Majesty. My rebellion was illegal."

"Unless we declare that it was legal," she replied. "After all, as the Prime Minister stated, we are quite aware of what has happened here. Until the attack upon your family's cemetery plot, where the abominable desecration happened, you made every effort not to kill, while it seemed that the 'legal' Ministry had no such qualms." She looked to the PM for a long moment before turning back to Harry. "You are hereby pardoned for your part in this, on one condition. Since you had the drive and the belief as to what needed to be changed, you are hereby charged with rebuilding the government of wizarding Britain. You will meet with us on a weekly basis. By us, I mean both the Prime Minister and myself. You are permitted to contact this Mr Franklin to see if he might be interested in helping you." She smiled a very small smile.

Harry looked stunned, and then pushed back his chair and dropped to one knee, head down. "It shall be as you command, Your Majesty," he said, and all knew that there was no ridicule in it.

"Your Majesty?" Susan asked in a very quiet voice.

"Yes?" asked the surprised monarch.

"Might Harry be permitted to make polygamous marriage legal again? I don't ... I'd prefer it if our son James Edgar wasn't considered a bas ... uh, illegitimate." She tried to meet the monarch's eyes, but couldn't for very long.

"Yes, he is permitted to do so," she replied with a smile. "In fact, the laws that should be in place should remain in place until such point as a new government can be formed. Therefore, you are still married, since ex-Minister Scrimgeour was ignoring the rescinding of an illegal law." She looked sharply at the leonine man. She stood, obviously declaring the meeting at an end.

"I'll expect to see you for our first meeting on Monday," the Prime Minister said to Harry just before he left. "When we meet, I'll tell you when your first meeting with Her will be." Harry nodded, still in shock. Scrimgeour was carted away with the military men, to be placed in special confinement until they could decide what to do with him.

"So, it's over," Hermione said.

"That's what you think," Harry said, a little green. "I was hoping to get someone else to take the reins of government, but they decided that I'm the

best guy for it.”

“So what happens now, Harry?” Albus asked.

“We get on with living, and turning this government around, what else?”