

Lord Voldemort and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

Lord Voldemort resisted the urge to groan. He felt as if he had, in the poetic phrase of one of his younger Death Eaters, been dragged backwards through an imphole.

Was there an attack I do not recall? Or perhaps one I was not aware of? I must be cautious. My Horcruxes will keep me only from death, not from pain.

He opened his eyes. A vaulted stone ceiling soared overhead, and several tall windows shed light onto the desks and chairs below, where students at Hogwarts robes were filing in, casting curious glances upwards at him.

Upwards?

He transferred his attention to his own surroundings. A translucent shell of power englobed him, holding him in its center. When he reached for it, trying to touch it and gain a better understanding of its composition, it shifted away.

You will not balk me so easily. He reached into his robes, then froze.

His wand was missing.

"All right, ladies and gentlemen, let's begin," said a man's voice from below. "Today's Advanced Defense topic is containment spells. The usual approach to teaching this topic is for me to list off the various types of spells along with what makes them similar and different, have you recite it back to me, and test you on it. But I thought you might find that a bit dull. So instead, I have prepared four different types of containment spells for you to identify."

A ripple of interest ran through the assembled students.

"Here they are." The teacher, a tall man with silver threads through his black hair, waved his wand twice above his head, and three smaller globes joined Voldemort's as it floated down to the floor of the classroom. "You have an hour to observe and test all four spells. Use anything you think may help you, including your classmates. Your professor, unfortunately for you, is not a valid reference for this exercise."

The class chuckled, then got to their collective feet and came crowding around the globes, peering at the things within them—a gray-striped cat washing a paw, a house-elf mending a torn set of

robes, a grindy low gnashing its teeth at them through the water that filled its globe, and Voldemort.

Two can play at this game. Voldemort matched the stare of the first boy to look directly at him, a brown-haired, round-faced young man with a Hufflepuff crest on his robes. As brown eyes met red, Voldemort pushed his own mind into the boy's, to see precisely where he was and who had done this to him—

Or tried to. The connection failed to open.

I have never heard of a containment spell which could block Legilimency...

"I wonder what sort of Dark creature he is," said a brown-skinned girl, studying Voldemort with a thoughtful frown.

"It looks like someone tried to cross humans with snakes." A red-haired girl started to plaster her nose against the spell, then stopped. "Professor, are these safe to touch?"

"For you, yes."

Voldemort looked up sharply at the warning in the tone. Over the girl's shoulder, the teacher was staring directly at him, his dark eyes radiating satisfaction. The look was somehow familiar, as though he'd seen it on a similar face to this long ago.

"Snakes, huh?" A taller, slimmer boy with brown curls slid between his classmates to come to the front of the class. "*Do you understand me?*" he said, speaking directly to Voldemort—

In Parseltongue. Which should not be possible.

"*I do. Name yourself.*" Voldemort glanced at the boy's robes. "*And tell me why, when you wear my ancestor's crest, you are not kneeling at the feet of his direct descendent and true Heir.*"

A snigger from behind him made him whip around. A girl with curls very like the boy's, only longer, and the Head Girl badge pinned beside that of a Ravenclaw prefect, smiled at him. "*Maybe because we descend from him too, and you're too ugly to kneel to,*" she suggested, also in Parseltongue. "*My twin is Reynard. I am Hermione.*"

Voldemort started to lunge forward, checking himself just in time as he recalled the spell. *Hermione—it is the name of one of Potter's friends—*

But Potter's friend is a Mudblood girl. She cannot possibly be an Heir of Slytherin. The name is a coincidence.

"Care to translate for the non-cognoscenti?"

Voldemort spun. This voice could not be mistaken, nor a coincidence.

Harry Potter stood with his hands shoved casually into his pockets, looking at Voldemort without a trace of fear in his eyes.

"Just talking about bloodlines," Hermione said. "Oh, and he wants us to kneel in front of him. Whatever he is, he's got delusions of grandeur like you wouldn't believe."

Voldemort glowered. *I do not have delusions of grandeur. I am grand.*

When I find the weakness in this spell, you will all know it.

Then a discrepancy occurred to him.

Potter asked for a translation of our converse in Parseltongue. But he is himself a Parselmouth, due to the connection between us. The connection that seems to center on his ever-so-famous scar.

Slowly, he lifted his eyes to Potter's forehead.

It was unmarked by anything other than adolescent blemishes, and looked as if it had always been so.

"Everyone come look," called a blonde girl, standing up from beyond the spell containing the cat. "I think we've found a focus point for this one!"

The class stampeded towards her, leaving Voldemort staring after them. The strange things which had been niggling at him since he had awakened finally found time to register with his mind.

This is obviously Hogwarts.

Just as obviously, that man is not Amycus Carrow.

But I do know him. I cannot bring his name to mind, but I feel as though we knew one another well, a long time ago...

"You still don't know who I am, do you?" said a hissing voice behind him. He turned.

The Defense professor stood at the very edge of the spell, his eyes alight. A wave of his wand produced a gray curtain between Voldemort and the children. *"They have no need to hear this. It is between you and me. Or should I say, between me and myself."*

The recognition snapped into focus.

I did not know this man.

I was this man.

Or I could have been, if I had not chosen the life I did.

"Yes, you've guessed it now," the other continued in English. "My name is Tom Marvolo Riddle. Named for my father and grandfather, against my father's better judgment. He thought the name sounded too much like a performer in a circus. But Mother insisted, and she always did get her way with him."

My mother? Get the better of my father? Not in any story I have ever heard...

"They should have seen it coming." Riddle laughed. "The up-and-coming nouveau riche Muggles, the Riddles, with their unending feud with the old wizarding landowners, the Gaunts. How else could it have ended, when the Riddles had a son and the Gaunts a daughter? Especially when Tom Riddle happened to ride past the Gaunts' home one day and heard a girl screaming inside."

He began to pace around the outside of the spell. "Few things work more powerfully on a man than the feeling of being someone's protector. My father was no exception. And once my mother had a chance to use magic to correct her minor cosmetic defects, which her father had always forbidden..." He shook his head. "If Merope Gaunt had a failing, it was that she loved too much and too easily. And I find it hard to fault her for that. So I am named for both the man who tormented her and the man who saved her."

"No man saved my mother," Voldemort retorted. "She died an hour after my birth, rejected by all the world."

"And so you seek to destroy the world in her memory, is that it?" Riddle sneered. "Or do you only torture and kill because you can, because it proves you have power over others?"

"Power is all." Voldemort smiled slightly, recalling a similar conversation with a young Harry Potter. "And the world is divided into those who dare to grasp it and those who do not, and the former rule over the latter."

"I think you honestly believe that." Riddle looked at him with a strange expression. "What a way to live. You are and always will be completely alone—and you like it that way, don't you?"

Belatedly, Voldemort identified the expression.

It was one of pity.

Pity? Pity? I am the Dark Lord, I have plumbed the secrets of magic, I will live forever—how dare this insignificant teacher pity me?

"I do prefer solitude to the incessant mewling of my inferiors," he answered coldly. "Some few of them I can tolerate for longer periods of time, but even they grow tiresome after a short while."

"Good. Then you won't mind what I've got planned for you after class." Riddle grinned savagely. "Now, if you'll excuse me, said class must be taught."

A wave of his wand dismissed the curtain just in time for both of them to see a fair-haired boy come skidding through the door. "Sorry I'm late, Professor," he gasped. "Didn't get to sleep until

late last night..."

"Just don't make a habit of it, Draco," Riddle said.

Draco? Voldemort looked sharply at the boy, now pulling parchment and quill from his bag. Yes. That is Lucius's son. But how can I know if he is really the child who took my Mark, or another copy as these others seem to be?

The boy rolled up the sleeves of his Hogwarts robes, and Voldemort had his answer. The outline of the familiar skull and snake showed faintly on a pale-skinned forearm.

I am as good as freed. He can undo the binding on the spell under the guise of studying it, release me, and together we shall destroy this unnatural world before returning to our own—I will offer him whatever reward he wants, for this service he will merit it—

"Oh, and why don't you and Cecy come by my quarters tonight?" Riddle added. "I think I may finally have solved how to get that magic off you."

"Really, sir?" Draco looked up, eyes kindling with what appeared suspiciously like anticipation. "Permanently?"

"I think so." Riddle let his eyes travel towards Voldemort. Draco followed his line of sight and jumped, obviously startled.

I will, of course, have to erase his memories of seeing me this way, and of removing the spell—for what he can remove, he might be able to replace...

"Sir," Draco said slowly. "Are you sure this is safe?"

"Perfectly safe." Riddle sat down on the edge of his desk, a smile just touching his lips. "The shield gets its power from what the creature inside gives off naturally. I shouldn't be telling you this, it's part of the assignment, but I can assure you that these spells are completely unbreakable from the inside, as long as they're keyed to the right kind of creature."

Hermione made a soft noise of understanding. "That explains why you picked what you did to show us, Professor! Four kinds of creatures—combinations of intelligent and unintelligent, and good and evil—and the four spells that contain them!"

"Except I'm not sure this one will hold," added a tall, red-haired boy, pointing at the spell surrounding the cat, which was now grooming its tail. "If it's supposed to be for something that doesn't think like a person does."

"Good eyes," Riddle said, chuckling. "Ten points to Gryffindor. Anyone else?"

Three people tried to talk at once. Riddle pointed at one of them, the dark girl, and she launched into a theory about the relationship between the spells for the intelligent and unintelligent creatures.

Voldemort wasn't listening. His attention was focused on Draco. *Come, boy, we do not have all day... quickly, while he is not looking, free me, and we shall strike together...*

Draco regarded Voldemort for a long moment, a smile growing on his lips. Then he raised a hand to his face, thumbed his nose, and stuck out his tongue.

Insolent brat. For this, you die, and your parents before you—tortured slowly to death in the foulest ways I can imagine, until you scream your voices away and must beg with the ruins of your hands...

Deliberately, Draco turned his back on Voldemort and walked away to join the conversation, the set of his shoulders exuding confidence.

Misplaced confidence. What one man with my magic can make, another can break.

Voldemort set himself to examining the inside of his prison. He would find a way out, and make these impudent children and their perverted teacher pay in the same coin he would demand of the Malfoys.

Minerva, released from her erstwhile confinement, stretched her back and prowled over to the other spells, as Tom herded the students out the door. Draco cast a look over his shoulder, and Minerva took her human form to wink at him. *Never fear, boy, we'll handle this.*

"I know you," said a clear tenor from behind her, a voice that sounded frighteningly like her husband in one of his cold rages.

But even then, he still sounds human. This does not.

"You know a woman who looks like me," Minerva corrected, turning. The being she knew from Draco's stories as Lord Voldemort watched her through red, narrowed eyes. "Professor Minerva McGonagall, yes?"

"Yes."

"It is my name as well, but only because I married out of my clan." Minerva smiled wickedly. "Otherwise I would be Minerva Riddle."

Voldemort jerked backwards, as far as he could for the protections on the inside of the spell englobing him. His eyes were wide now, and the expression on his chalk-colored face was a mix of disbelief and horror.

"I'm afraid it's quite true," Tom said, coming to stand beside her. "It has been for fifty years."

"And if you were afraid, why did you never change it before now?" Minerva mock-scolded. "Of all the bird-brained men, Tom Riddle..."

"Silence, witch." Tom pulled her close to enforce his edict in the way best-loved by husbands.

The gurgling shriek from beside them was, Minerva thought, a welcome change from schoolchildren's disgusted cries of "Ew!" or "Gross!" or their own Morgan's exasperated "Must you?"

Because we must. Truly, we must.

When they separated, she looked askance at the limply dangling parody of a man within Tom's spell. "Is he..."

"I doubt dead. Remember, he cannot die." Tom flicked his wand at the spell, then nodded in satisfaction. "Not dead, only stupefied. With luck he will wake before tonight, so that I can explain to him what I plan to do."

"And if not, I'm sure you can leave it written on the inside of your spell in letters that provide their own light, so that he will see it when he does awaken." Minerva shuddered slightly. "Entombed alive under tons of rubble. Not an end I would wish on an enemy."

"It will not be his end." Tom's voice was cold indeed as he regarded his other self, but Minerva had heard this tone from him before and knew how bitterly he would weep, when none but she could hear, for the necessity of being cruel to even so evil a being as this. "He will live, without food or drink or comforts of any kind, as long as it takes the Harry Potter of Draco's world to find and destroy the Horcruxes I know he has made. Though..." He looked up at her, his face suddenly filled with whimsy. "Why should he die?"

"What?"

"Why should he die?" Tom repeated. "His existence opened the gate between our world and his. As long as he lives, that gate remains open. I think the two worlds could learn much from one another. Why should he die? Why not allow him to live a very long life indeed?"

"You are a wicked, wicked man." Minerva considered the proposition. "I admit I find it tempting to see what spells and techniques my counterpart may know that I do not."

Tom laughed. "And you wish to see the look on her face when you tell her your husband's name?"

"As hard as this may be for you to understand, not everything revolves around you..."

Voldemort, still in his shield, was sealed into Hogwarts's deepest dungeon. Draco triggered the charm that brought twenty tons of rock smashing down on top of the spell-ball. Professors Riddle and McGonagall and the extended Black family, without fear of repercussions from the Dark Mark's caster, were able to remove it from Draco safely, and he returned home with the spells needed to create and secure a permanent bridge between the two worlds.

All Voldemort's spells, including the Imperius Curses he had cast, started to fade after he'd been missing for a few weeks, and the Death Eaters began to panic. The Order of the Phoenix saw their chance, regrouped, and wiped out most of the committee which had been leading their enemies' side since the Dark Lord vanished, including Lucius Malfoy. Draco later thanked the Order members who had gone on this mission, individually and in person.

Once the Ministry was restored, Draco approached the new Minister of Magic, Kingsley Shacklebolt, and told his story, offering as proof his own journals of his experience in the otherworld and the photographs he'd taken to illustrate them. Kingsley assigned a team of Unspeakables to investigate the bridge, and they returned a verdict in under a month (lightning speed, for the Department of Mysteries): it was exactly what Draco had said it was. After a polite apology to Draco for doubting him, Kingsley sent word through the Ministry that he was looking for a volunteer to test the bridge, and got the one he'd expected.

Harry Potter was at first indignant that he hadn't had the chance to be a hero, but that passed as soon as his friends pointed out that he might actually live to be eighteen this way. In his capacity as Auror apprentice, he was the second person to cross the bridge between the worlds (Draco, obviously, had been the first) and didn't return for two full months, during which time very few otherworld Potters were seen or heard of. Ginny eventually crossed over to bring him home, but stayed for two weeks instead when she met the Potters.

Ron and Hermione followed Harry to the otherworld as well, and met their counterparts. Soon two sets of tall, freckled, red-haired young men and serious-faced, brown-curled young women could be seen about Hogwarts at all hours of the day and night. What no one had anticipated was that the Ron Weasley of the world which had spawned Voldemort would eventually marry Hermione Beauvoi (he claimed to find her temperament restful), and the Ron Weasley of the otherworld would woo and wed Hermione Granger (he said he was looking for excitement), but, three years to the day after Ron and Hermione's first crossing, that was how it happened. The theorists added it to the list of evidence for God having a sense of humor.

Abigail Beauvoi married Draco Malfoy on the day she left Hogwarts, thus restoring the blood of Slytherin to the Malfoy line. As Draco put it, "Finally, I can share her bed without her screaming at me!" Their wedding, being a cause of great joy to people of both worlds, was the day chosen for the strongest and happiest witches and wizards to come together and seal away the dementors, and this they did with more success than they had dreamed possible. Dementors would not be seen in that land for many long years.

Draco and Abby moved into Malfoy Manor with Narcissa Malfoy and Cecilia Black, who helped them raise their four children. These new Heirs of Slytherin, more than any others, lifted their ancestor's name from the dirt and set it again beside the other Founders' names in honor where it belonged. The occasional friendly confounding of someone surnamed Potter or Weasley was a bonus.

And they all lived, as much as was in their natures, happily ever after.