

Speak of the Devil

Chapter 8

Hidden under the Fidelius that had been placed on the Rookery, Luna ripped open a large, manilla envelope that had been sent to her. She pulled out a picture, and a large smile spread across her pretty face. Her silvery eyes shined with delight. She found her headline story for the following day's edition of the Quibbler. Rushing over to her desk, she furiously scribbled down a rough draft she hoped her father would like. Luna had to work fast. There was a deadline to meet after all.

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"What the ...?" Neville Longbottom asked in confusion the following morning when he looked at the cover of the Quibbler. The picture of the front was obviously Voldemort, but beyond that, the picture was very ... odd.

Right in the middle of the cover, Voldemort stood in a heroic pose while wearing a Gryffindor school uniform that was fluttering in the wind. On his bald head was an obvious wig. It was blonde, messy, and sat precariously atop his head. The fake hair also fluttered in the breeze, though it appeared the wig was in danger of falling off his shiny, pale head. Voldemort's front teeth protruded a bit more than normal, giving him a buck-toothed look. The weirdest part was the lightning bolt scar located right in the middle of his forehead. Wanting to know more, Neville opened the magazine and read the article.

VOLDEMORT SUMMONED HIS INNER BOY WHO LIVED!

We at the Quibbler have received confirmation that the Dark Lord Voldemort has begun cosplaying as Neville Longbottom. Why, you may ask. The answer is simple. Voldemort has been terrorized by a new challenger ... one that has decimated his follower base. Many may have noticed the lack of Death Eater presence in Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade. You may have also noticed that the Dark Lord himself has stopped making his customary appearances to flex his magical muscles and strengthen his hold on the country through fear and intimidation. The answer as to why he suddenly pulled a disappearing act is also simple. Harry Potter. But who exactly is Harry Potter?

I have reached out to him for an interview, but I have yet to hear back from him. All I can do is give my theory, but first, this is what I know to be fact. Physically speaking, Harry Potter is a delicious sight to behold. He is tall and ruggedly handsome with muscles I dream of running my fingers over. He is powerful beyond belief, performing feats of magic that make Voldemort and Dumbledore seem like schoolchildren. He can appear and disappear at a moment's notice and is impossible to track down. I, of course, have tried. So what can we convey from this? My theory is that Harry Potter is one of the legendary Heliopath riders sent from the realm,

Gorgishmoor, to wreak havoc on the evil-doers who have infested our good land. In my humble opinion, he couldn't have come at a better time.

With such a legendary figure taking the battlefield, it only makes sense that Voldemort would reach deep inside himself and summon his own courage in the form of a legendary figure ... The Boy Who Lived. Now decked out as Neville Longbottom with the matching lightning bolt scar, I have no doubt we will soon witness a true Clash of the Titans. However, there is still one answer that escapes me. If you look closely at the picture of cosplaying Voldemort, you'll notice he's missing one of his pinky fingers. I have many theories ... each one as likely as the next. I have heard a rumor going around that he sacrificed it to the goddess Hygeia in an attempt to rid himself of a particularly bad case of athlete's foot ...

Neville heard snickering and snorting coming from his group of friends. Ron in particular seemed to find Luna's latest article amusing. The whole thing was too absurd not to chuckle. They weren't the only ones snickering and chuckling at Luna's absurdity.

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Harry tossed the magazine and smiled. Luna inspired him to go and fuck with Voldemort just a little bit more. Harry vanished and reappeared at a mid-sized manor he had never been to before. He knew that Voldemort was in there though. Harry could feel him inside. The pale, bony bastard was still asleep. It wasn't shocking in the slightest that he would leave the Parkinson's. To him, that place was compromised, and Harry was sure he didn't feel safe there anymore. This new house was packed to the brim with wards, curses, and every other magical security feature that one could imagine. Harry casually strolled by and ignored each one. He then fazed right through the walls and ended up in Voldemort's bedroom. Harry looked down at the sleeping idiot who was snoring through his thin nose slits. He saw that the lightning bolt was healed over but still scarred. Harry had made sure that the mark would forever remain on his forehead. At the moment, the raised scar tissue was angry red and painful-looking. Growing bored just standing there, Harry slapped him on the top of his bald head.

"Huh!" Voldemort sat up quickly, blinking his tired eyes. "Wuzhappening?" he asked in confusion, looking around wildly. Not seeing anyone, he rubbed his eyes and yawned. He then rubbed the sore spot on the top of his head before getting out of bed. Harry was very grateful that he didn't sleep in the buff. Now that he was up, Harry could have a bit of fun.

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Voldemort's grogginess lingered longer than normal. He had a slight headache from accidentally bumping his head against the headboard of his bed while sleeping. A small lump had formed on the crown of his scalp. When he looked in the mirror that morning, he growled in displeasure. The stupid lightning bolt cut on his forehead had healed with a bit of magic from him, but it remained in scar form. He poked at it gingerly and winced from the pain. He couldn't wait to get his hands on that Potter bastard. After finishing his morning routine, he left his bedroom to give

his followers their daily orders. As soon as he stepped through the door, he heard a quick snort and a snicker from some of his Death Eaters, but they soon stopped when he looked their way.

“Goyle ... I want you to go to that damn greenhouse and find out where my ingredients are. I don’t want any more excuses from those growers. Show them my displeasure,” he hissed. “Mulciber ... Keep looking for Lovegood and that whore daughter of his. I want them groveling at my feet soon. My patience is wearing thin.” He hadn’t yet seen that morning’s issue of the Quibbler, but it would do nothing to change his opinion of the Lovegoods.

“Lucius ... Our coffers are running low. Do what you must to fill them back up,” he ordered. Lucius bowed like the sycophant he was.

Voldemort noticed that everyone kept angling their eyes to look at the top of his head. Were they staring at his lump? Feeling a bit insecure with his appearance, he reached up to rub his temporarily misshapen head. That was when he felt hair.

“What in the world?” he asked in confusion. He ran his fingers through the luxurious locks that obviously didn’t belong to him. Grabbing the hair, he attempted to pull it from his head. “AHH!” he cried out when his scalp was painfully tugged right along with it. He hissed and tried to pull it again, though not as hard this time. It still wouldn’t come off.

“Will one of you useless idiots give me a damn mirror?!” he called out in anger. All of the Death Eaters nervously looked from one to another. None were dumb enough to get so close to the Dark Lord while having one of his fits. Thankfully, one brave soul stepped up.

“Here you go, My Lord!” one of his faithful chirped, walking up to him while holding a full-length mirror that hid his body from view. Voldemort looked at his reflection.

“AACK!” he cried out while taking a step back in revulsion. Perched atop his bald dome was a raggedy wig of dirty blonde hair. “How in the hell ...?” he muttered as he studied the repugnant intrusion. He then noticed something else. He stretched his lips to get a better look at his front teeth. Both were longer and wider than when he went to sleep last night. He growled angrily and gripped the wig again. He gave it a few tugs, but it just wouldn’t come off. “If this is some kind of sick prank, I’m going to ...” he began his threats when his loyal follower cut him off.

“Don’t worry, Master ... I’ll help you get it off!”

He carried the mirror around back of him and set it on the ground. Before Voldemort could say otherwise, the jackass grabbed a handful of hair and yanked hard. Voldemort’s head snapped back painfully. The wig didn’t budge. “OW! Watch it!” he hissed. His threat didn’t stop him from yanking it again.

“Sorry, Master ... But (yank) ... This (yank) ... Damn (yank) ... Thing (yank) ... Won’t (yank) ... Come (yank) ... Off (yank) ...”

“AAAaRRRRrGGGG!” Voldemort’s pained voice warbled. He was growing dizzy from his brain being violently sloshed around inside his skull. Then he was pushed down to his knees, and his top half was folded down. A heavy boot was placed in the middle of his back.

“I just need some leverage!” Voldemort heard his abuser say. Two hands gripped his wig, and the force with which his head was pulled back was nearly enough to snap his neck. He could hear the man grunting and straining with every mighty pull.

“S-STOP ... I SAID STOP!” the Dark Lord pleaded. “YOU’RE HURTING ME!” he cried out.

“Just a ... bit more ... HAH! GOT IT!” he said with one last tug. Voldemort heard what sounded like duct tape being ripped from someone’s taped-up mouth ... only it wasn’t his mouth ... and it wasn’t duct tape.

“YYYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRG!” Voldemort belted out a scream of agony as the offending wig was torn from his scalp. Tears of pain streaked down his pale cheeks as he clenched his eyes tightly shut. He was on his knees, breathing heavily while silently begging the pain to fade.

“Here you are, Master!” the soon-to-be deadman chirped happily as a hairpiece was dropped onto his upturned palms. Voldemort wasn’t sure how long he sat there on his knees silently seething while willing the pain away. When he was finally able to open his eyes, he looked down at the wig in his hands. He flipped it over and saw chunks of his skin still glued to the bottom of the hairpiece. He tossed the hair away in a rage and jumped to his feet, his new wand already in hand. Spinning around to face his abuser, he was met with an empty room. Spinning the other way to face his followers, he snarled, “Which one of you was it?” He glared daggers at the group while they stared at his patchy scalp.

All of his Death Eaters were looking on with wide eyes and open mouths. One brave Death Eater pointed with a shaky hand. “H-H-H...” he could barely get out.

“Speak fast!” Voldemort demanded as sparks shot out of the tip of his wand.

“H-Harry Potter, Master ... It was Harry Potter ... He was here,” he shakily stuttered.

“WHAT?!” Voldemort exploded. “Why didn’t you attack?!” He was met with complete silence. They all wore identical sheepish expressions. Screaming in rage, he began firing curses into the crowd, starting a stampede for the door. Once alone, he flicked his wand and levitated the mirror over to him. Studying his reflection, he saw that big hunks of skin were missing from the top of his scalp. The areas surrounding the wounds were puffy and red. Just then, Harry Potter’s reflection appeared right behind him, smiling and waving. The mirror dropped and shattered on the floor as Voldemort spun around, wand at the ready ... only there was no one there.

Immediately, his stomach dropped knowing the torment wouldn't end until one of them was dead.

Speak of the Devil

Fleur Delacour, now known as Mrs. Weasley to some people, was strolling through a back alley in Diagon Alley with several shopping bags in hand. Most would call her crazy for shopping during a time of unrest, but she had never considered herself normal. Of course, Bill didn't know about her excursion, but what he didn't know wouldn't hurt him. If he had known of her intention, he would've never let her go.

She had never been one to take orders. Even as a child, she was quite stubborn. There was always a risk when going out into a public space, but lately, things had been getting much safer. They all had Harry Potter to thank for that. It was that false sense of security that made her think it was okay to visit Madam Bordeaux's Boutique to buy some new lingerie. The sexy sleepwear she owned was getting old and stale. Bill had seen them all dozens of times, and lately, he had commented on them less and less. Fleur liked to keep things spicy in the bedroom, and it was a blow to her ego when her new husband stopped drooling at the mere sight of her in her underwear.

The last time she had been to the alley, it was almost a ghost town. Now there were a few dozen shoppers brave enough to venture forth and spend their hard-earned gold. She was very glad that things seemed to be getting back to normal, however slowly.

As she walked down the back alley that cut between an entire block of shops, her silvery golden hair bounced hypnotically with every step. Her happiness could clearly be seen on her beautiful face. Being part Veela, her Allure was tied to her emotions and was at its strongest when she was happy or aroused. As such, she was drawing unwanted and unseen attention while strolling through the alley. Fleur heard a noise behind her and stopped. Turning her head, she saw a backdoor to one of the shops open up. Out stepped a man in very familiar garb. Dressed in a black robe with a silver, skull-shaped mask partially hidden behind a hood, he first looked left and then turned his head to the right, looking directly at her. Fleur's body froze in shock, and her brain went momentarily blank. The Death Eater froze for a second as well but then started walking in her direction. His slow steps quickly turned into a jog. Coming to her senses, Fleur followed her most basic instinct and started running in the opposite direction. Had she been better prepared, she would have had her wand in her hand and ready to use. That, however, completely escaped her thoughts. None of her instincts were telling her to fight, only run.

Fleur huffed and puffed as she ran down the long alley. Fearfully looking over her shoulder, she saw the man quickly catching up to her. He was quite a bit taller than her and was much faster due to his longer strides. Fleur ran as fast as possible, but she rapidly found herself slowing down from tiredness. A stitch in her side had her wincing, and she looked back again just in time for his hand to grab her by the hair. Fleur screamed in terror and pain as he pulled her with all his strength. Her legs shot out from under her, and her back slammed painfully against the hard,

cobbled ground. The Death Eater was on her in an instant. Fleur tried to suck in a deep breath and scream, but the wind had been knocked out of her. Her attacker grabbed her, and while she did her best to defend herself, it was useless. Clawing at his face did nothing. His metal mask not only protected him from identification, but it also protected his face from her fingernails. Once she was able to catch her breath, Fleur screamed loudly while she was being dragged back toward the open door.

“Heh Hem,” she heard someone clear their throat from nearby. The Death Eater suddenly stopped dragging her body across the ground. She turned her head and saw Harry Potter leaning against the alley wall. He had a happy smile on his face.

“ ‘Arry!” she yelled out and reached for him, desperate for help. Her eyes were pleading, but his expression didn’t waver. He shot her a quick look that seemed more amused than anything.

“And just what do you think you’re doing?” he turned his attention to the Death Eater. Harry talked to him as though he was an unruly child.

“None of your damn business,” the Death Eater growled. “I suggest you fuck off before you get hurt,” he then threatened. Harry’s smile only got bigger. He loved when they didn’t know exactly who they were talking to. ‘This must be a newer recruit,’ Harry thought.

“Is that so?” Harry asked in a sing-song voice. “Perhaps you should take your own advice. I know she’s a hot piece of Veela ass, but she’s more trouble than you’ve bargained for.”

“Is that right?” the Death Eater asked menacingly, still roughly gripping her long hair.

“Yes,” Harry simply answered. “You see ... I have a contract with this little lady, and she hasn’t paid up yet. I don’t intend to lose my fee to a scrawny twerp like you,” Harry smirked with twinkling eyes. That was all it took.

The Death Eater whipped out his wand and flicked it toward Harry. The wand exploded in his hand with a deafening bang.

Fleur suddenly felt the hand holding her hair go slack as wails of agony filled her ears. Taking the opportunity, she scrambled away from him and began crawling over to Harry. Within a few seconds, she was sitting on her knees right beside his legs. Her chest hurt as she hyperventilated. Her adrenaline was running out, and the true terror of the situation was settling in. Fleur’s legs felt like jelly, and though she tried to stand, she found herself unable to. With nothing better to do, she looked at her attempted kidnapper.

She had never considered herself a violent person, and she rarely wished for bad things to happen to other people. But when she saw the man dancing around while holding his wrist with a bloody stump on top, well, she just couldn’t find it in herself to feel bad for him.

“Let’s see who you are ... shall we?” Harry asked the screaming man. With little more than a thought, Harry began heating the Death Eater’s metal mask. First, it grew warm ... then uncomfortably warm. When it grew hot, the Death Eater used his non-ruined hand to rip it from his face.

“Ah ... Theodore Nott. Why am I not surprised?” Harry chuckled as he saw the boy’s face. He looked the same as Harry remembered. He had always been a tall, weedy, rat-faced string bean. In response to the attack, Theodore did as he was taught and quickly yanked up the black sleeve of his robe and pressed his thumb against the Dark Mark. Instead of summoning his Master, however, his skin began sizzling.

Theodore cried out as his mark began to smoke. His head was swimming, and he was on the verge of passing out. The only thing left to do was run. He turned away from his tormentor and the Veela whore to run. He barely got a few steps away when he was magically pulled back.

The back of Nott’s neck smacked right into Harry’s waiting palm. His fingers closed around his neck, and Harry lifted him off of his feet. His legs swung and kicked as he tried to escape, but it was useless. He wasn’t going anywhere.

“On your feet, Fleur,” Harry ordered. Fleur shakily pushed herself up and stood wobbly on her feet.

Fleur finally got a good look at her attacker. She felt like such a fool for nearly getting taken by such a pathetic excuse for a boy. He looked so small and insignificant as his body dangled from Harry’s manly arm.

“His crime was against you,” Harry told her, looking serious. “You get to decide his punishment.”

Fleur froze. She didn’t know what to do. While she had never reveled in the pain and misery of others, this boy was a monster and deserved to be treated as such. But could she really be the one to order his death? It was true that they had summoned Harry to kill, but that was a group decision. The blood wasn’t on her hands ... at least not solely. She looked at the boy’s pitiful face and wondered if she could do what was necessary. Fleur looked up at Harry.

“Can you make it so that ‘e will never ‘urt anyone again?” she asked him. She felt this was a good compromise. He would no longer be a threat, and she wouldn’t have to order his death.

“Of course,” Harry said with an amused expression. The boy, Theodore Nott as Harry had called him, suddenly disappeared, leaving them alone in the alley. After disappearing, Fleur felt the weight of indecision leave her shoulders. She sighed in relief. Harry placed his hand on her lower back and walked her over to her dropped bags.

"I wouldn't recommend coming out here alone. Especially for something as frivolous as a shopping trip," Harry told her as he picked up her bags. "What was so important that you would risk your life?"

Harry opened one of her bags and reached in. Fleur opened her mouth to object, but it was too late. Harry pulled out a very short, see-through nightie. He held it open between his hands with a raised eyebrow. Fleur couldn't help but blush madly at the naughty discovery.

"I take back what I just said," Harry stated with a naughty smile on his handsome face. "It would definitely be worth the risk to see you in this," he chuckled happily. Fleur blushed even harder and snatched her lingerie from his grasp.

"But if you ever decide to go on another shopping trip, perhaps you should call for me first. It would be a shame if you never got the chance to wear these things," he told her while his eyes twinkled mischievously. He handed her the bags, which she gratefully took. Then he wrapped his arm around her thin waist and magically escorted her home.

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Later that night, Nott Sr. finally got home after a long day of Death Eating. When he walked through the door of his family manor, he wasn't expecting to hear the agonized cries of his only son. Pulling out his wand, he rushed toward the sound of the noise. When he saw the state of his son, he bent over and vomited. Theodore was in the wall. He wasn't trapped behind the wall or stuck in an opening. No, his body was part of the wall. It looked as though his skin had somehow melted into it. Only his face, his arms, and part of his stomach protruded from the wall. Even then, one of his hands was missing, replaced by a ragged, bloody stump. Theodore looked at him and moaned, tears streaming down his cheeks.

"Father!" he begged, reaching his good hand for him. Nott couldn't help but take a step back, repulsed by the ghastly sight. He did the only thing he could think of doing. He called on his Master for help.