

Drabble Challenges Something else from the back of the drawer

Okay, you know the drill.

Tell me who and what and I'll write a drabble - if I can.

I'll bite.

Neville, post-war, getting ready to start his new job (or if it makes it easier on you, at his first day on the job).

Knowing Harry Potter got him the interview at St. Luke's Botanicals, but having successfully propagated *Mimulus Mimbletonia* got him the job, something that he'd had mixed feelings about over the last thirty-nine days. He'd crossed the Atlantic Ocean, ridden in a Muggle airplane, paddled a canoe, waded in more swamps than he cared to recall at the moment, and fulfilled his quota for medicinal plants from the rain forests in South America with more than a fortnight to spare. His employer wasn't expecting him for another two weeks, but when they received the drop shipment of carefully packaged and preserved specimens, they'd get the hint that he was more capable than he appeared. A number of people had underestimated him during his nineteen years of life; a few of them didn't live to regret it, and one is spending the rest of her life in a very special cell in Azkaban, contemplating that mistake.

Those ghosts were quiet right now - he was back in England, marveling in the familiar smells and sounds, especially the sounds. Even the mumbling Liverpool accent of the Knight Bus driver (he did miss Stan, maybe he could look him up next week) was heart-warming. It was good to be home.

This warmth, however, paled in comparison when he let himself into the flat he'd built in Gran's basement. Lying on the table next to the front entrance was a stack of letters, all addressed in the same neat, feminine handwriting. From the size of the pile, it looked like she'd written every-other day.

Yes, it was good to be home.

Ah, that's nice. I guess he wasn't contactable by Owl in South America?

"No Owls?" Neville asked.

"No Owls," Montague replied. "You'll be working in areas where the natives don't care for them, and more than one worker has been tracked down by our competitors by imprudent use of owls. After you've spent some time in the field, you'll understand."

Harry and Luna discuss being friends.

A pick-me-up

After the fall of Voldemort, one of the regularly recurring unpleasant tasks in Harry's life was attending funerals. During the last year of the war, both sides engaged in targeted assassinations, some of which left a body to bury, while other people simply disappeared. He spotted her on the other side of the crowd, her dirty-blonde hair barely visible above the shoulders of the other mourners in attendance. Who else would be wearing earrings made out of nickel plated wing-nuts? As his mind wandered during the service, he'd look across the crowd, occasionally catching her eye, which garnered him a surreptitious wink. After a lengthy series of prayers, the body was lowered into the ground and the mourners were invited to toss in a handful of dirt onto the highly polished lid of the now subterranean casket. Looking over the crowd, Harry saw that Luna was beginning to bob from side to side. Although he couldn't hear her, he knew that she was probably humming under her breath.

He forced his way against the current of bodies, catching up to her just as her eyes rolled back into her head, leaving only a ghastly white expanse where her limpid blue should be. Shoving his hands underneath her arms he pulled her to him and Disapparated, leaving with whispering crackling sound.

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After finishing the Daily Prophet's crossword puzzle and two strong mugs of tea, Luna finally stirred into some semblance of being awake, rising slowly to a sitting position, her legs dangling over the edge of Harry's bed.

"How many times have I woken up in your bed, Harry?" Luna asked, her voice crackling a bit. She took the cup of tea that Harry proffered with a nod.

"Oh, I dunno, three or four times, if you don't count the times that we were out in the field," he replied.

"That was Hermione's bed," Luna said with a smile. "You couldn't conjure anything that didn't have mirrors on the headboard, and Hermione refused to step foot into a mirrored bed."

Harry snorted with laughter.

"You know, each time I wake up in your bed, I check my knickers," Luna said.

"Excuse me?" Harry asked incredulously.

"Well, I was just checking to see if I'd missed anything – it would give me incredible bragging rights – you know – in certain circles," Luna said, taking a long sip from her teacup.

Harry gave her an incredulous glare.

"Oh, fiddle faddle!" she exclaimed. "I was having you on. As attractive as I find you, I value our friendship, not to mention my friendship with Ginny, to muck it up with an illicit dalliance. How bad was it at the cemetery?"

"It wasn't too bad," Harry answered. "You didn't speak in tongues, you kept your clothes on, and you didn't try to mount anything."

"Oh, good," she replied, smiling as she looked about Harry's bedroom.

"That gets so tiresome to explain afterwards."

"You have to stop attending funerals," Harry said.

"I do, for the most part," Luna said.

"Was she a friend?" Harry asked.

"A friend? No, not hardly. She was a seventh year Ravenclaw when I was in second year – she was my tutor in Advanced Arithmancy. I felt a lingering sense of obligation, but it wasn't friendship," Luna said, looking meaningfully at Harry. "So, how long before she's back again?"

"Three days," Harry replied hastily.

"Not that you're counting or anything," Luna said, handing the now empty teacup and saucer back to Harry before hopping from the bed to the floor.

"How long's he been gone?" Harry asked.

"Thirty-one days – there are fifteen letters waiting for him at his flat. A goodly sized part of me wants to fetch them back – I'm sure I've written something in them that will give everything away," Luna said, examining the titles in Harry's bookshelf. "I don't think he has a clue."

"Do you want me to talk to him?" Harry asked.

"No, yes, I don't know, why would you do that?" Luna said, pacing in front of Harry's bedroom window.

"Because I'm your friend," Harry said. "Friends look out for each other."

"Yes, they do, don't they? Thank you, Harry," Luna said, bending down to peck his cheek before straightening up. "I'll let you know after he gets back."

Looking vacantly off to the side, Luna faded away, finally disappearing with a muted pop. Normal modes of Disapparation didn't apply, of course.

How about Luna's point of view during the Department of Mysteries run?

A letter from the hospital wing

Dear Daddy,

In response to your Owl, I'm writing this letter, sitting on the guest chair in the Hogwarts hospital wing. I'm fine, of course, although the last several hours have been exhilarating beyond compare. I imagine that this is what it will feel like when we finally document the existence of the Crumple-horned Snorkack, but I digress.

The stories you heard about Voldemort (I'm not going to say 'you-know-who' as I find it to be both childish and annoying) and a break-in at the Ministry were more or less true. As you well know, Minister Fudge has been trying to stamp the school into his mould, using the High Inquisitor. Madam Umbridge (I refuse to honour her with the title of Professor) is both ignorant and irritating. I thought at first that she might have some bizarre neurological disorder, or some sort of Heliopath possession, but I'm afraid that it may succumb to a more mundane explanation. One of Harry's friends thinks that her knickers are too tight, but I've not had the opportunity to test out that theory beyond my own personal knowledge of how uncomfortable it is to wear knickers that I outgrew years ago, which would certainly put me in a bad mood if I were simultaneously attempting to harass and intimidate the students and faculty of the school.

We formed a lovely club towards the beginning of the year – it was Hermione's idea, but Harry Potter ended up teaching us all the useful things that

Madame Umbridge seemed to be afraid of. We called the club 'Dumbledore's Army' although the real name was the 'Defence Association.' Harry Potter has the most striking eyes – they resemble the deep green eyes that Mother's familiar had, although Harry can't lift up his leg and wash the inside of his thigh the way that Mittens could, although he is pretty flexible, I don't think he's that flexible.

But I digress again. One of my housemates informed Madame Umbridge of the existence of our now-banned club, which led to Professor Dumbledore's sacking, and pretty much ended the regular meetings of the Defence Association. Towards the end of the year, however, Harry got quite agitated, insisting that he had to get away from the school to rescue his godfather, who, it appears, was not fronting with Stubby Boardman's band, but instead was working underground against Voldemort. Did you know that I am Lord Voldemort is an anagram of Tom Marvolo Riddle? Oh, of course you did, I wrote that in the article, didn't I? Harry's need was desperate, so Neville and Ginny and I helped the trio rescue Sirius Black.

You do know that we call them the trio? Ronald Weasley, he has such fascinating blue eyes. I suspect that his freckles would taste quite yummy, but he's never reciprocated my interest in him, so I may have to put that down on my list of things-that-may-remain-unknown. Hermione Granger, of course, is the other member of the trio beyond Harry Potter, who has really amazing green eyes, but I already wrote about his eye colour already, didn't I?

We rode to London on Thestrals. I'd never had occasion to touch them apart from our classes with Professor Hagrid. Your supposition that they are telepathic is most likely correct. The Thestral I was riding on told me that her name was – well, it doesn't translate into human speech very well, but I think it means 'shadow,' although it could also translate as 'muffin,' so I wouldn't be too sure either way.

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Ginny looked up from over the edge of the seventeen page letter. "Did you really open your blouse to show Neville where Hermione's scar started and stopped?"

Luna nodded serenely.

"I don't think your father's going to appreciate knowing that," Ginny opined sagely.

"Neville didn't seem to mind," Luna replied.

"Yes, well, that's beside the point. If you nix that paragraph, I think you've covered it quite well – you have a gift for words," Ginny said.

"I just write what comes into my head," Luna said modestly.

Ginny nodded. "He really does have amazing eyes, but I don't want to think about him licking the inside of his thigh – that's somehow very, very wrong," she thought to herself.

Jasmine's one of my favorite character from TLOS, so I was wondering if you could do a drabble about Jasmine in training? :)

"You worthless wretch!" the voice snarled. A burst of something landed nearby, throwing up shards of hard-baked soil that stung the exposed portions of her body. She oozed into the ward, penetrating it just enough to overload one of the supporting beams. The ward collapsed with a bright flare of orange light. "Hmph," she said to herself. "That's new." She picked up the parcel, more than one hundred fifty pounds of dead weight, running full tilt across the unprotected field. There were no natural defences there, so she was scattering bursts of explosive energy with her battle wand in all directions, the type of burst that shattered the inanimate objects in the immediate vicinity, which usually prompted people to keep their heads down. All she needed was a few seconds before she was in position.

The snarling sound of Rhodesian Ridgebacks caused her to pause at the last moment. A quick burst from her wand got one, but the other managed to snag the fabric of her cargo pants as it lunged into her feint. A small blade managed to dissuade the second dog from thinking of her as either prey, or something that could be intimidated. The dog withdrew for a more auspicious day.

She'd made another twenty yards when the golem materialized behind her, a cold, clammy hand grabbing at her waist. She spun and kicked, not daring to put down her parcel. She'd die before she surrendered that burden. While the golem was catching its balance, a quick freezing charm followed by a bludgeoning spell shattered the unliving warrior.

She was outside the final ward. She burned a purifying ring around her position, guaranteed to sever any tracing magic or passive wards, and then Disapparated.

Mum was in the kitchen, holding a stopwatch. As Jasmine put the parcel down, Mum pushed the stop button.

"Not bad," Mrs. Paprikash said admiringly.

"Let me see that," Jasmine said in exasperation.

She'd shaved ten seconds off of her best time, a full two minutes from her time in a similar scenario during her final practicum at the Institute.

"Very satisfactory," Abelard said from the stool where she'd just deposited him.

"Thanks," Jasmine said, turning to look at her mum. "What's for lunch?"

Drabble idea: 20 yrs post Hogwarts. Ron becomes Minister of Magic

Ron Weasley paused after unlocking the door. Serita was flicking her wand at the pile of now-dry dishes on the counter, sending the dishes into the cupboard. She then picked up a dishtowel and wiped down the counters, an endearing mixture of Muggle and Magical technique.

Gabrielle waited behind him, placing her hand knowingly on his shoulder.

Ron stood watching a while longer.

"I know you're there, and no, I don't look like Mum," she said, banishing the now damp dishtowel upstairs to the laundry bin.

"Who said you did?" Ron asked cheerily.

"Every time you get that vacant look in your eyes when you're looking at me, you're thinking of mum and jump her bones as she comes in the door," Serita said knowingly.

"I do not 'jump her bones' as she comes in the door," Ron protested.

"It's sweet, in its own disgusting way," Serita said, noticing Gabrielle at last. "You wife-swapping with Uncle Harry, or did you have another one of those evenings?"

"As charming as your father may be," Gabrielle replied haughtily, "and he is charming, I might add. He's not my type."

"What?" Ron retorted. "You don't have a thing for one-armed sports announcers?"

Gabrielle winked at him before moving to the coffeepot on the counter, loading the top chamber with decaffeinated coffee.

"Yeah, it was one of those nights; mum got called into St. Mungo's for some horrendous accident, and then Harry got called away to an emergency session of the Wizengamot – they must have forgotten how to call out for pizza again," Ron said sardonically.

"So your father gallantly suggested that we attend the cinema without our spouses," Gabrielle said. "It was fun – I haven't seen a Muggle movie in a while. So, where's Janine?"

Serita motioned with her head towards the stairs. "We played rock-paper-scissors and she lost – I got to clean up the dishes, she got to put the monsters to bed."

Gabrielle looked at her watch. "Shouldn't she be done with bedtime stories by now?" she asked.

Serita arched one eyebrow. "Either she's fallen asleep with them, or she's telling them the unexpurgated story of how Magdalen saved Uncle Harry – after very nearly killing him of course," she said dramatically.

"She wasn't even born when that happened!" Gabrielle said incredulously.

"Yeah, but who was her babysitters for years?" Serita asked in reply.

"Point well taken – Eskarne did love to tell that story," Gabrielle replied. She wrinkled her nose briefly as if picking up an elusive scent. "Harry's coming – he'll be here in a minute." She busied herself preparing four mugs of coffee.

"I still can't get over how she can do that," Serita said before heading up the stairs.

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The wards at Ron's house were keyed to allow a select list of individuals to Apparate and Disapparate at will, the only restriction being that anyone who was not a Weasley was announced with a gentle chiming sound. In Harry's case, it was the opening signature of "Lord Vader's March" by the American composer, John Williams.

Harry appeared in the kitchen beside Gabrielle, who embraced him briefly before giving him his mug of coffee.

"So," Ron said, "how bad was it?"

Padma Weasley appeared in the kitchen with a gentle "snick" of a crack.

"Do you want the good news, or the bad news?" she asked, kissing Ron taking a mug of coffee from Gabrielle.

"The bad news," Ron replied somberly.

"There was a vote of no confidence in the Wizengamot tonight; the government has fallen," Harry said calmly.

"Which explains why Drippy appeared all a-twitter, asking if you could come to the Ministry," Ron said drolly. "Why would they need you for that?"

"They were hoping that I could craft a compromise," Harry replied.

"Did it work?" Ron asked.

"After a fashion. Skarpella has stepped down, resigning before he could be sacked with style. The reformers didn't have the votes to install a new government in its place however. I was suggested as a compromise candidate," Harry said, making a sour face.

"I'd think they'd snap you up in a heartbeat," Ron said enthusiastically.

"The Purebloods didn't go for it," Padma interjected.

"How do you know? You were at ER receiving at St. Mungo's," Ron objected.

"It was broadcast on the WWW," Padma replied with a smile.

"What?" Ron replied. "I've been trying to get them to open up their proceedings for years!"

"Yeah, well, I did manage to get an obscure technical motion passed, which had the effect of turning on microphones," Harry said with a grin.

"So, what was the Pureblood's problem?" Ron asked.

"Allow me, Harry," Padma replied, "You'll pull your punches. Sillington-Smythe objected to the notion of 'a half-blood shackled up with a half-breed.'"

"We are not shackled up," Gabrielle objected. "He made me wait for weeks for a proper wedding!"

"And you're not still sore about it, are you?" Ron asked. "Well, I don't think Mr. and Mrs. John Q. Wizard are going to take kindly to that remark."

"That was the point," Harry replied with a grin.

"So, who's going to be running the government?" Ron asked, his journalist instincts aroused at last.

"It's not official yet," Harry said conspiratorially.

"C'mon, you can tell me," Ron whinged.

"It's a he – he's a Hogwarts grad," Harry began.

"Of course," Ron said.

"Pureblood – married into an extremely old magical family," Harry said.

"Yeah, guess we have to accept that," Ron said half-heartedly.

"Decorated war veteran," Harry said, ticking the characteristics off on his fingers.

"Stubbed his toe escaping from Death Eaters, I suppose," Ron grumbled.

"Okay, sounds like he's going to be fireproof – who's the lucky stiff?"

Harry looked at Padma, who was stifling a giggle.

"You are."

"Bugger me!" Ron exclaimed.

"Harry doesn't care for that," Gabrielle said impishly. "He prefers..."

Ron reached out to place a finger on Gabrielle's lip. "I so don't want to hear you finish that sentence."

"Hey, there's some of us here who want to know, Dad!" Serita called from upstairs.

Ron pulled a face and placed a privacy zone around the kitchen. "It's not April Fool's day, is it?"

"No dear," Padma replied. "You've been well and truly snookered. Every red-blooded Quidditch fan in the English speaking world knows your name, and most of them love you."

"cepting the Falmouth Falcon fans, they still haven't forgiven you for that interview last season – it cost them their Chaser," Gabrielle interjected.

"I'm not qualified," Ron objected.

"Oh pish-posh!" Padma declared. Her expression was equal parts amusement and pride. "You always have an opinion of what the Ministry should be

doing after you read the morning papers."

"That's different – it's one thing to be a critic, it's another thing to be the bloke who has to drive the bus!" Ron replied.

"Other than Harry," Gabrielle began, "is there anyone in the Wizengamot that you particularly trust?"

No," Ron answered.

"Well, there you have it," Gabrielle replied. Giving Harry a smoldering look, her voice dropped half an octave. "Take me home, husband. I think Padma want to take the next Minister to bed. Goodnight, Weasleys."

"Goodnight Potters," Padma replied. "Think you can get a bottle of wine chilled before I finish my shower?"

"I think I can manage," Ron said as Padma canceled the privacy zone and walked up the stairs. "Yeah, I think I can manage."

Drabble Challenges From behind the couch...

Can you give us a scene with Jasmine after TLOS?

Jasmine didn't care for London, it was too cold. Things with Beckman, however, were quite warm, which made London a few steps above bearable. She was a witch with a tidy Gringotts account, a bright future, and she was in love. Notwithstanding all of this fluff, she still found number twelve Grimmauld Place to be cold, stale and depressing. "Depression in a can," was the phrase the Ginny had used when they first discussed it. She couldn't wait to get out of there, so she picked up her cloak, fastening it in the style currently in vogue with young witches, and pushed the door open.

A hook-nosed man with long, stringy hair looked up from where he was leaning against the opposite wall. He ran his eyes over her, stopping in the places men usually stopped when appraising her physical charms. "It's about time," he drawled with impatience. Whatever conversations were ongoing in the library ceased. Whatever privileges Severus Snape may have enjoyed with the Headmaster, they did not extend to this particular project.

Looking squarely at him, she murmured, "Good day," and pushed towards the door. That was when she felt the touch on the outer rim of her consciousness. She twirled, grabbing his hair in one hand, pulling his neck back and placing her blade against his larynx. "I dress as a modest woman, Severus, and I'm quite used to men looking at me, but my mind is my own. If you try that again you will part with your voice-box. Have I made myself clear?" she whispered in a voice that only he could hear.

Severus nodded. Jasmine released him, wiping her hand upon her cloak, and then pushing the front door open with a bang.

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"Quite clear, Miss Kadakia," Snape murmured to no one in particular before going into the Library for the next meeting. He would have to seek some other avenue to discover what this project was all about.

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Can you write something Canon?

Starting at Page 750 (American Edition)

It was no surprise to anyone that after leaving the Headmaster's office, Harry slept for more than 20 hours. The linchpin to this feat was putting one weary foot in front of the other, climbing the stairs up to the seventh-year dormitory in Gryffindor Tower. Once he finally awoke, he found his glasses on the nightstand, along with his watch. He didn't remember getting into bed, actually, so this was a bit of a surprise. Coming back from the bathroom, he noticed Kreacher, who nodded gravely. Kreacher was wearing what looked, at first glance, to be the usual Hogwarts tea-towel, but Harry noticed that instead of the Hogwarts crest, the towel was marked with the Black emblem. He could not fail to notice that the faux-Horcrux locket gleamed in the dim light, polished as if it were the crown jewel of a minor nation.

"Master Harry's clothes are spread out upon the bed. Kreacher will dress Master Harry if the master desires assistance, but Kreacher knows that Master Harry cares not for this sort of thing. Master Harry's friends are in the Great Hall, but Kreacher is sorry to say that dinner is over. Master Harry, of course, knows that he will be fed well upon arriving at the kitchens." Kreacher then returned to the bed, pulling one pair of trousers from the wardrobe to replace the pair that were already on the bed.

"Thank you, Kreacher," Harry said.

Kreacher continued to mutter to himself, folding and refolding the shirt that was next to the trousers.

Harry figured that he was in one of his hard-of-hearing moods, so he repeated his thanks.

Kreacher drew himself up straight, but did not turn around.

"Kreacher heard Master Harry the first time, but if Kreacher was but a young elf, Kreacher could not live long enough to thank Master Harry enough for what he has done," he grumbled. Kreacher then took a deep breath and turned around. There were tear streaks on his dark, wrinkled face.

Harry nodded, which evidently was the right thing to do.

"If Master Harry wishes to see his consort, Kreacher will make sure that the youngest Weasley will be waiting in the kitchens when he arrives," Kreacher intoned gravely. He stood there, stock still.

Harry eventually twigged to the notion that Kreacher was waiting for a reply.

“Yeah, yeah, I’d like that a lot,” Harry finally replied.

The faintest flicker of a smile passed over Kreacher’s face before he turned again to leave the dormitory. “Kreacher has kept the secrets of the Ancient and Honourable House of Black for four generations. Now Kreacher keeps the secrets of the Ancient and Honourable House of Potter, but Master Harry had best not dally if he expects Kreacher to serve the next generation.”

Harry goggled at this, and then laughed.

Kreacher’s time may be limited, but Harry knew that he now had all the time in the world, which meant that he wasn’t going to waste a moment of it.

Can you write something from Ever After?

The list

All of Hermione’s life now fit neatly into two categories – before “that day” and after. Ginny had scheduled a week in advance for a luncheon date – not all that unusual. Now that the children were, for the most part, grown and launched, the relationship they’d started back when they were mere slips of girls at Hogwarts continued to set down roots. They could go a month or more without seeing the other and restart a conversation as if it had been a mere matter of minutes. Ginny had seemed out of sorts, but that wasn’t all that unusual; she’d been out of sorts most of the year, starting sometime shortly after Christmas. When she arrived, the house was tidy and the table already set. She paid no particular attention to the fact that the Floo was deactivated, and a number of charms were activated that would make their conversation difficult, if not impossible to interrupt.

Ginny began to talk, the words pouring out of her like an overflowing rain barrel. She explained a number of things that Hermione had always known in some way, but they’d never discussed which in hindsight made perfect sense. Then she tackled the real story, breaking down several times until she got through the recriminations, the confessions, the absolutions and the assurances. Ginny had slightly more than a year left to live; Ron had a similar amount of time. No, she wasn’t sick; she was in good health, actually, notwithstanding the contextual depression she’d been weathering. Learning that your husband is soon going to become a widower tends to take the bloom off of the rose, don’t you know.

Hermione cycled through the usual stages, trying at first to reckon this like a particularly stout puzzle, but in the end, she accepted it. Before that day, her relationship with Ron had slid into a lazy groove, each of them living their lives in parallel, checking in from time to time to a familiar comfort. That wasn’t good enough anymore.

Ron hadn’t minded – once she got her head around the new reality after that day the sex was terrific. She would tear away from school (not particularly difficult during the summer holidays) and ambush him at work. Ron started coming home on time; even leaving early so they could catch a show, or have dinner with friends. Ron put his finger on it succinctly: “When you know that you can only put so many things on the list, you dare not put junk on it.”

And so she’d been living with a short list. It was bittersweet when Autumn came – knowing that by this time next year, she’d be a widow; but Ron took more leave from work that year than he’d taken in the prior five years. They made the most of the time. She’d considered taking a Sabbatical year, but Ron sensibly pointed out that she loved teaching almost as much as she loved him; so now she could teach like she was living with a short list.

Spring was the usual sweet and sour combination of rain and crocuses; but she saw both with new eyes, now that she was living with a short list. June and July had been crowded and hectic, but the first of August came with the realization that summer was almost over.

She had a tingle of regret when she went away on a day trip to Switzerland for a educator’s conference, knowing with awful clarity just what the jangling of her bracelet meant when the terrier began to glow with a terrible red light. The charm next to the terrier was a portkey, prepared in advance for the occasion. She wasn’t surprised in the least when the portkey opened up into the shock-trauma ward at St. Mungo’s. She was surprised, however by the cold glare she received from Harry on her arrival.

“I’m sorry,” he said, meeting her eyes for a moment before looking away. “He passed quickly – but not so quick that he didn’t have time to remind me to tell you on his behalf that he loved you.”

What little light remaining in Harry’s face extinguished as he said those words. He bit his lips, nodded to her as to a vague acquaintance, and then left the room.

It was only then that she realized how alone she was in the world. She’d reached the end of the short list.

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What happened when Jasmine and Beckman got together?

Basic Black

She’d given a lot of thought into what she was going to wear. Beckman Gupta was in London now, and it was cool in London this time of year, so that meant wool. Looking up in the mirror, she inspected how she looked in the third choice, a black cashmere sweater, three-quarter length sleeve, accompanying a black pleated skirt and black pumps. The fitted skirt would have looked better, but it hindered her movements, and a lifetime of

training made her value mobility over style, every time. Her hair was piled up behind her head, held in place with two sticks. Only the closest of inspections would reveal that one stick was her bamboo wand, while the other was a sheathed stiletto. She decided that her look was too funereal, so she picked up her black silk shawl, charming a scalloped scarlet border to relieve the black-on-black monotony.

Mrs. Paprikash gave her a knowing look as she walked through the kitchen on her way to the garden.

Her stomach gave an odd flip as she passed through non-space into the International Apparation point and then onto the public Apparation point near Langham Place. His flat had been easy enough to find, just a bit north of the Oxford Circus. She cocked her arm to knock on the door, pulled her hand away, and then condemning herself for cowardice, rapped on the door firmly.

The look on Beckman's face when he opened the door was priceless. The smile that followed melted something inside of her and drove all of the rehearsed lines from her short-term memory.

"I've missed you, Jaz," he breathed, softly, so as to not scare her away.

"And I, you," she replied earnestly. How he ended up pulling her hand from the doorframe she missed somehow, the thought possibly being washed away when he turned her hand over to kiss her palm.

"I thought I'd hear back from Ravi," Beckman said and he pulled away, beckoning with one hand for her to come in.

"Ravi doesn't like you as much as I do," Jasmine replied.

"How convenient, I prefer your company to his," Beckman replied glibly.

"I'm not to let my feelings run away with me this time," Jasmine warned.

"And I'm not going to let you get away, either," Beckman said firmly.

Whatever had she been thinking? It was way too warm in here for wool.

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What happens "the next day" at the Burrow in Cold Fusion.

I'm going to decline this drabble, but I will tell you what happens. They return to the Burrow - there's a Prodigal style feast for the Trio. Harry and Ginny finally get some time alone to sort things out. They emerge with a slightly clearer understanding (seasoned with some snogage). The trio then mount an assault on Voldemort's hideout, accompanied by the Order. So the story ends, compliant with HBP, but not with HPDH - no Deathly Hallows, for one thing.

Lost and Found – how did Hermione get the chocolate sauce?

Neville received the message from the District Superintendent while Hermione was in the shower. He related the gist of the conversation to her as he made their breakfast, pausing to give a passable, if implausible impression of a French Veela conducting a fire-call.

Once he'd left for the day, she determined to do what she could to move things along.

"It's funny how missing something can make you value what's been lost," Hermione mused to herself as she walked along High Street in Edinburgh. She was attired in Muggle clothes, suitable for a married woman in her late twenties; respectable, adult, but not dowdy. The only dowdy thing was the cane, which she still carried because she would still tire after an afternoon on her feet, and the cane allowed her mobility and independence – both things that she'd lost. She had walked through several confection shops before finding the dark chocolate brick she'd remembered from a foraging expedition during the Horcrux hunt, a memory from her prior life, before she'd been hospitalized and given up by most of the Wizarding world as nearly dead, beyond hope.

In the bag along with the brick was a kilo of sugar, a kilo of butter and a half litre of vanilla extract. The brick was destined to melt in her cooking cauldron at home this evening after her return; the remaining ingredients, along with some water, would be added before it cooled, and then it would be decanted into two glass jars, one of which she planned on sending away to Marseilles while it was still warm.

The other bottle was going to live on the nightstand on Neville's side of the bed.

That was a thought that kept her warm all the way home.

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I'd like to ask a question of Lily Evans from 'The Unexpected Horcrux', if Harry wouldn't mind turning control over to his mum for a moment.

Actually the question is from Rita Skeeter; she asked me to act as her proxy, since she's a bit nervous around Harry, particularly if 'that Granger girl' is nearby.

Dear Lily ... Kokopelli's readers couldn't help but note some tension between you and Ginevra Weasley. Can you tell us what you thought of Miss Weasley? Do you approve of your son's match? We hear that the wedding is scheduled for this summer, once Miss Weasley has graduated from Hogwarts. Had you anyone else in mind as a paramour for Harry?

Your readers also noted that Ginny had a '*very* smug' smile on her face after a long heart-to-heart with you. What went on in that conversation? Why was Weasley so pleased after the interrogation by her boyfriend's mother that she'd been seemingly dreading?

No, it wasn't just the passage of time that made this a weird-fest, it was being dead, and then being alive again, in a body not my own, added to the weird environment my son was living in, etc.

It's a marvel that I didn't lose it more often than I did.

You've got to look at things from my perspective – one day I'm a young married woman in my twenties with a little tot of a boy, still in nappies, and the next day, after a sixteen year nap, I'm awake, in the body of my seventeen year old son. Oh, by the way, in the interval between these two days, my husband and I were murdered.

So I'm alive again, after a fashion, in a body that looks familiar, but I don't quite recognize it. Add to the total weirdness of this is the fact that I was born a woman, but now I'm in a body that's not. It was good to see RJ (Remus John Lupin) again, but everyone else around me was a stranger.

My son should be in school, but instead he's on the run from the madman who killed my husband and then killed me. He's apparently living with two other teenagers, a boy and a girl – Ron and Hermione.

Ron was pretty easy to figure out – he was Harry's best friend – but what of this Hermione? She was apparently very familiar and comfortable with Harry, but she was equally familiar with Ron.

After a few blunt questions, and some explanations from Hermione and RJ as to just what the hell had happened after I died, I got a fair picture of the present. The stories fit together, but RJ's story was far more sketchy than the information I gained from this girl Hermione, which validated my hunch that she was best friend material, not a future Mrs. Potter.

RJ then dissolved a small layer of the magic that was separating my remaining essence from my son's soul, which made things rather weird – or weirder, if that's a word. For the prior sixteen years, I'd been asleep – in a dream state as it were. I caught glimpse of a few things, mainly times when Harry was in great peril, but it was distant. Now, after RJ's meddling, I was inside my son's head in a different way – at least when he was dreaming. My teenage years were pretty recent in my perspective, and I'm aware that from about fourteen on, lads are thinking of lassies pretty much most of the time, but this didn't prepare me for Harry's dreams.

Let's just say that they were very, very explicit, and all involved a thin slip of a girl with brilliant red hair. I knew that some of them were just dreams, as I don't think he'd really go at it on a broomstick, above the Quidditch pitch, during a match, but there was enough corroborating evidence that I had to wonder.

And so I began my inquiry into just who this Ginny Weasley was, and what her intentions were towards my son.

At my request, she was brought to our little working sanctuary. Harry got first crack at her, which was only right. From what Hermione had told me, they'd been apart for quite a while, and he was missing her something fierce. On the next day, I got a chance to interview her. She looked like a duck going out to lunch with a mink – she wasn't going to enjoy the process, and she wasn't likely to survive it either.

I suppose I did everything but tie her to a tree and interrogate her under Veritaserum. I did consider using Legilimency to validate her answers, but even I have my limits.

It turned out that she wasn't a little bint trying to trap the scion of an Ancient and Noble house – you don't want to know how many of the vapid cows I went to school with who shamelessly ran after the pureblood heirs, hoping that they could catch one by hook or by crook. A number of these cows chased after James during his sixth and seventh years at school, but he eventually caught on – but I'm digressing, aren't I?

Ginny's okay – more than okay, really. She loves Harry, not for his fame, or for his name or what's sitting in his Gringotts vault, but she really cares for the boy I rocked to sleep sixteen years ago. From what I knew about Harry, he reciprocated her feelings. After a rocky start (okay, truth be told, a wretched start) we made a truce and started over.

As to whether or not Ginny had a "smug" expression on her face when we returned to the cottage, I couldn't say. That's probably how Hermione interpreted it, but if I had to guess, I'd say that she was more relieved than smug – she'd gone walking with a slightly mad dragon and lived to tell the tale.

Dear me, what were your other questions? Do I approve of Harry's match – I can't say that I was ever asked about it, but if Harry had come to me, I think that I would have eventually given my blessing. Ginny is awfully young, and still has immature fits of temper. I would have preferred that they have a very long engagement – say more than a year, but by that time, I was no longer in their world.

Anyone else in mind? It's not like I had a very clear view of the field of candidates. I like Hermione, once I got past her I-have-to-be-a-swot nature, but I can't say that I would have tried to throw them together if I'd been alive at the time. Not enough data, I guess.

Thanks for asking, and give my regards to Rita. Is she still colouring her hair? She's not a real blonde, you know.

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Making Change - WHAT WAS HARRY'S DECISION?

Oh yeah, I remember that moment. One of three times at Hogwarts when I was certain I was going to wet my pants – the other two being my

personal encounters with the Mountain Troll and Umbridge, but I digress.

We walked in silence through the halls, not close, not touching, not looking any different than any of the other students walking the halls. Harry led me out onto the grounds, cutting behind the greenhouses and through a copse of trees that I never knew were on the grounds until we were on a small, plain field, away from prying eyes and listening ears.

"I can't bear the thought of losing you as a friend, Hermione," Harry began.

I tossed my hair back, quickly capturing it in an elastic I'd dug up from my pocket.

"You're stuck with me, Harry," I replied.

"I've thought it out," he said after a long silence walking together. "I've decided."

Then he froze.

I've known Harry for years.

He's brave, but he's not fearless.

On the Quidditch pitch he's simply insane – nothing else can explain the risks he takes to grab that little winged sphere.

Off the pitch, if someone's in danger the people-saving-thing kicks in and he's off in a flash, but if that behavioral button hasn't been pushed, I've seen him lock up any number of times. It's as if he were standing on the roof of a building, pondering if he really can jump across to the adjoining building's roof.

He was trying to talk, really he was. He'd probably rehearsed what he was going to say, but now that I was standing there in front of him, his soliloquy either sounded really stupid, or it had vanished like morning dew on a sunny day.

"Would it help if I turned my back, or if you shut your eyes?" I asked mischievously.

"Probably not," he replied.

I stood there smiling at him. It was unworthy, but I was enjoying his discomfort, just a little, for all the anxiety I'd burned in the last two weeks.

"You know, you're really not helping this," he said.

I reached for his face, cradling his cheek in my hand. I adjusted the tilt of his head a bit – Harry's short for a guy, but he's still taller than I am.

"There's nothing you can do that will ever make me leave you, Harry," I said, knowing what it was that he needed to hear.

He took a deep breath and relaxed a bit – he wasn't on the precipice any more.

"Kiss me, Harry," I instructed.

He did, and that was that.

It is said that love, enduring love, is friendship that's caught fire. I haven't enough data to pass judgment on that hypothesis, but that's the day that our friendship caught on fire.

That was twenty-seven years ago; we've been married twenty five years. There have been moments since then that I've wanted to beat him with a Beater's bat, but on the whole, it's been worth it.