

The Boy Who Wasn't

Standard Disclaimer:

Alyx looked down from atop her Llama.

“Another one?” she groaned.

The Llama burped but otherwise remained indifferent.

“Just a plot bunny that wouldn't leave me alone. Besides, someone left a review asking for us to redo canon, this fulfills that request admirably. And I've managed to stuff a wonderful amount of cliches into limited space. A mark of a rabid plot bunny,” Bob replied proudly.

Alyx muttered angrily under her breath and the llama moved restlessly in response to her anger.

Bob eyed the llama warily. It had been acting funny ever since it visited Meg and came back in technicolor.

“Well? Aren't you going to give the disclaimer?” asked Alyx.

Bob looked at her and winked. “No.”

“No?”

“No. If they don't know we're not JKR and don't own Harry Potter by now, why should I tell them?”

The llama eyed Bob malevolently and moved a little closer.

Bob whipped out a pair of llama shears and waved them menacingly at the llama. The llama backed away fearfully.

“Fine,” Alyx huffed. When she huffed, interested things happened under her shirt and Bob watched her chest avidly. “Don't give the disclaimer. See if I care.”

She turned so she was sitting backwards on the llama facing away from Bob.

He snickered and turned to the audience. “Just a little tale to tell this time. We hope you enjoy it.”

The Boy Who Isn't.

Headmaster's Office, Hogwarts...

Albus Dumbledore sipped his tea and stared out the window of his office. His eyes were fixed on a point that only he could see. It was the end of another school year, an exhausting year at that. Today Neville Longbottom, the Boy-Who-Lived, would graduate from Hogwarts and begin his auror training.

Auror training, he thought with a disgusted snort. If we can drag him away from the green houses long enough to train him. The lad didn't want to be an auror, he wanted to be a herbologist, but I can't let that happen. He's the Boy-Who-Lived, for Merlin's sake! When will his abilities kick in?

Dumbledore frowned as another thought percolated up through his brain. There was always a chance that the other child could be the chosen one. But no, Voldemort would never pick a half blood like the Potter boy. No, he would have gone for the pure blooded Longbottom. Dumbledore was certain of that. A pure blood was surely considered more of a threat than a half blood.

The two boys had been together that fateful night. Their parents had been enjoying an evening of card playing until Voldemort had broke in and killed them. When Dumbledore arrived on the scene, there were two children in the nursery, and the bodies of Lily Potter, Alice Longbottom and Voldemort. Both children were understandably hysterical.

Dumbledore had surveyed the scene for a moment, then decided that Voldemort would have picked the pure blood, not the half blood. Decision made, he'd scooped up Neville and proclaimed him to be the defeater of the Dark Lord.

Neville had the special scar, the 'V', on his forehead, marking him as the chosen one. The Potter lad had a jagged thing that looked more like a lightning bolt. He was certain the 'V' stood for Voldemort and was a sign of prophecy.

Neville had been sent to live with his grandmother and Dumbledore had taken the time to become the boy's mentor from a very early age. At age

six, the headmaster working with Neville to help bring out his magic so he could be trained. He was in for a long and disappointing wait.

Come to think on it, Longbottom has been a disappointment throughout his school career, too, Dumbledore mused. He's come to Hogwarts as a bit of a braggart and arrogant, and his school career was nothing short of a disaster. All the little clues and nudges Dumbledore left for the boy went unnoticed most of the time. No matter how hard he tried, the boy lacked the adventurous spirit and sacrificing nature one would expect from the Boy-Who-Lived.

Dumbledore sighed and wondered again about the prophecy. In first year, a young muggle born witch was killed by a troll that he was sure Neville would have stopped. It nearly cost Dumbledore his career. In second year, Ginny Weasley was killed in the Chamber of Secrets. Again, he had been certain Neville would save her. The fool never even tried to find where the Chamber was hidden, despite the clues he had laid out for him! He had to call in nearly every favor owed to him to keep his job at that point.

Strangely enough, in both instances, whatever mischief Voldemort had been cooking up never materialized. He couldn't understand why he never appeared after obtaining the stone, or the purpose of opening the Chamber.

When Neville was entered into the Triwizard Tournament, he broke down in tears in front of the whole school. He never got past the first task and was unable to compete any further. Cedric Diggory did get to the cup, only to discover it was a portkey. They never did find his body or discover what happened. It would be nearly another year before rumors of Voldemort being back in a full body surfaced.

When Dumbledore had explained the prophecy to him at the end of fifth year, Neville fainted. Fainted! He had begun Neville's combat training at that point, but the lad had proven himself to be sadly lacking in both magic and drive.

And then there was the issue with Voldemort. He was making hit and run raids all across the British Isles. The one time he tried in France, his Death Eaters were caught and summarily executed over the protests of the British Ministry, which was still denying Voldemort's return.

It took Voldemort assaulting the Ministry to raid the Department of Mysteries for Dumbledore to convince the Ministry that he was back. Thankfully, in the assault, the prophecy had vanished before the Dark Lord could get his hands on it. It was later found, broken, in the Atrium.

He scowled and took another sip of his tea, then moved to sit behind his desk. He still had some final work to do. He was busy writing an appeal to the Headmaster of the Auror Academy to admit Neville, despite his poor grades and lack of proper NEWTS.

A knock came at his door and he nearly growled. "Come!" he called with a frown. His door had not warned him of anyone approaching.

The door opened admitting Harry Potter, Tracey Davis and Susan Bones.

His eyes flickered to Harry's scar, the only visible reminder of that fateful night. Unlike the large 'V' on Neville's forehead, Harry sported a lightning bolt shaped scar. He didn't know Neville's scar came from falling debris and not a killing curse that had rebounded.

He had very little interaction with Potter during his school years. The boy had been sorted into Slytherin, where he kept a fairly innocuous profile. His scores were among the best of the school, but he seemed to prefer keeping to the background.

In fact, he had only spoken with the boy once, near the end of his first year. The boy had complained that his family at home was mistreating him and asked the Headmaster for help. Dumbledore told him his hands were tied and there was nothing he could do about the problem.

Potter nodded and never spoke with him again after that.

He hid his frown behind a placid smile. "Yes? How can I help you three?"

"Headmaster," Harry said, in that soft spoken voice of his, "we understand that the graduation ceremony doesn't start until three, however, our portkeys are already in countdown and we were hoping to get our certificates early."

"Portkeys? To where?" It startled him to think any student would want to leave before receiving their certificate.

Something else was bothering him about this encounter. All three of his visitors wore medallions with a stone that seemed eerily familiar. For another, Potter was literally flowing with magic! More than he had ever felt from anyone before.

"Chicago Temporal Terminal," Susan said happily. Tracey arched an eyebrow and smirked at Dumbledore.

"You've joined the American Temporal Authority? But they only take married couples!" the Headmaster protested. For reasons he couldn't define, he was feeling increasingly uneasy about this conversation and these three students.

The three smiled. "Yes, we know," Tracey replied for all of them. "We eloped during the last Hogsmeade weekend. The bonuses and perks were attractive enough for all three of us to decide a three way marriage could work."

Harry, standing between them, reached for the hands of each girl. "I am a very lucky man," he said with a delighted smile.

"He's such a romantic at times," Susan said, as if she were telling a secret. "It's rather sweet."

"But the training alone will take five years. By the time you get back, more than a hundred years will have passed!"

"We're counting on it," Harry answered. "Things look a bit dicey for Britain in the near future. The other countries will contain Voldemort. I'll have time to train and you'll have time to realize your mistakes."

A cold knot of fear developed in Dumbledore's belly. "Mistakes?" he asked warily.

Harry leaned forward, his expression changing from smug to one full of disdain. "You. Chose. The. Wrong. Boy."

Dumbledore didn't hear the words the boy had just spoken. His eyes were riveted on the medallion around Harry's neck. It was the Sorcerer's Stone! They each had one! Then his words penetrated and he looked up to meet Harry's emerald gaze. "NO!" he exclaimed. "It can't be."

Harry smirked at him. "Oh, yes. You threw me into a home where I was hated, and where the only way I could protect myself was with my magic. By six, my uncle was terrified of me and never raised a hand to me again. Of course, starting so early did wonders for strengthening my abilities. Then, when I finally come to Hogwarts, you ignored me because I went into Slytherin."

He grinned at the stunned Headmaster.

Tracey began to laugh.

"I thought your little yearly tests for Longbottom were quite amusing and useful. It's a shame about the Weasley girl, but I couldn't get down to the Chamber in time to save her. And I do appreciate you blaming Voldemort for the loss of this," he said, caressing the medallion that lay against his chest.

"Nicholas Flamel was so grateful for the return of the stone that you stole, he was willing to share the formula with me. And I do wonder what the board of Governors would say if they knew you were responsible for Weasley's death, as well as Granger's?"

"And now, Headmaster, we'll take our certificates," Tracey said coldly. Of the two women, she was the least emotional in public. Over the course of seven years, however, she'd come to love Harry deeply and was fiercely protective of him. She hated Dumbledore for what he had done to Harry by placing him with the Dursleys.

"But, but, but... No, this can't be. If it's true, you have to stay!" Dumbledore stood and drew his wand.

"You can't keep us here, Dumbledore," Harry said calmly. "The TA portkeys are enchantments cast on our bodies, not a physical object you can take away. And unlike a normal portkey, the temporal aspects will allow us to easily slip out of the Hogwarts wards. Like it or not, they will trigger at the appointed time and nothing you can do will stop them."

"Ten minutes to portkey," Tracey said calmly.

"It wasn't a legal enlistment! You weren't graduated at the time," countered Dumbledore, grasping for straws. He had to keep Potter here!

"That doesn't really matter, you know," answered Susan. "We passed their entrance exams with some of the highest scores ever recorded."

"Hell, we passed Hogwarts with some of the highest scores on record, as well," Harry added.

"Oh, this is pointless! Why don't we just kill him and be done with it? You know you want to, Harry," wheedled Tracey.

"I do," Harry agreed. "But we're not yet authorized for terminations, love. You know that. If we were, the Dursleys would be pushing up daisies already." He conjured a ball of pure magic that floated above his hand, then it vanished in his closed fist.

Susan looked at Tracey, frowning. "Is that all you want to do? Kill Kill Kill! I swear, you need to relax more, Trace. Tell you what. You can have Harry to yourself tonight."

Susan was the gentler of the two women. Her calming effect often kept the trio from exploding at some perceived injustice. However gentle she might be, she was also a deeply passionate woman who cared about Harry and Tracey equally.

Harry grinned and turned back to Dumbledore. "You really messed up, old man, and I don't feel one bit sorry for you. First, you pick the wrong boy, then you send the right one to an abusive home and forget about him."

"Eight minutes," chimed Tracey.

"You do realize that, by joining the TA, you're leaving behind all your friends and family?" asked Dumbledore, struggling to find some way of reaching them.

"We're all orphans with no family ties here, so why not the TA?" Susan countered. "Besides, we'll make our own family."

Harry grinned and Tracey nodded. The Temporal Authority was very family oriented. They had built a city outside of the normal time stream and were actively recruiting people who were willing to come and bring their families with them. The TA had been interested in the trio when they took their tests. When the organization had learned of their three way marriage, they'd jumped in with a huge offer and signing bonuses. The three were exactly what the TA wanted.

"Harry, my dear boy, surely you'd like to reconsider? I mean what would your parents think of you abandoning..."

"Seven minutes," Tracey said, interrupting him.

Dumbledore shot her an angry look, then turned back to Harry. "What would your parents think?"

Harry buffed his nails on his shirt, then he looked up. "I wouldn't know. I don't know them and frankly the whole parent bit seems a bit dodgy to me."

The Dursleys certainly weren't the nurturing type. My wives remember their parents and they say they're going to help me learn how to be a good father, so I suppose that's all that matters. Besides, even if my parents did know, what would they think of your actions, old man?"

"Harry, don't be that way. You're going to be a great father," Susan said happily.

He lifted her hand to his lips and kissed it gently. "If I am, it's because I'll have you two helping me."

Susan blushed and smiled at him fondly.

Harry turned back to the Headmaster. "You know, aside from the stone, you've led Longbottom around on a leash all these years and he's still afraid to cast a stunner, let alone anything lethal. Shouldn't that have been enough of a clue for you?" he asked scornfully.

"B-b-but... I thought he was just a late bloomer and would come into his own in time," Dumbledore sputtered.

"Yeah, three minutes before Voldemort kicks his sorry ass to the curb," Tracey countered. "All the signs were there for all these years and you ignored them. I spotted Harry doing wandless magic in second year."

"And I caught him changing into one of his animagus forms in third year," added Susan, not to be outdone.

Harry shrugged. "Power and ability was never a problem. It took Tracey here to help me learn discretion."

"Don't be that way, Harry," Susan admonished. "You have more ability than anyone."

Dumbledore's eyes widened. So few were capable of wandless magic and the last recorded person to have been listed as a multiple animagus was Merlin!

Harry smiled softly. "They love to brag. It's really quite embarrassing."

Susan grinned. "Why shouldn't Tracey and I brag? We caught the most powerful wizard since Merlin and convinced him to marry us. We're going to make sure you're happy. It's not going to be anything like what you grew up with!"

"Five minutes," Tracey said softly, then she turned to Dumbledore. "May we please have our certificates?"

"Harry, my boy, I'm sure we can work something out. Perhaps I can speak to the TA as Chief Mugwump. I'm certain I can get you a deferment," Dumbledore pleaded. He had to find a way of reaching Potter. Without him, all hope was lost!

"A deferment? Why on earth would I want one, Headmaster? Voldemort is your problem, not mine. You made that abundantly clear to me when you refused to hear my tale about my Uncle abusing me after first year. In fact, that's why I never gave you back the stone. You refused to listen to me. You were too busy trying to coax little Longbottom out of his shell."

Tracey giggled. "I do believe I saw your Boy-Who-Lived out in the field picking daisies, Headmaster."

Dumbledore winced as if struck.

"Four minutes," Tracey announced.

He glared at her, then turned back to Harry, desperate to find some argument to get him to change his mind. "I'm afraid none of you will be joining the TA," he said, pointing his wand. "First off, it's illegal for a British subject to join a foreign military service like the TA, and I won't allow it."

Harry smirked at him and Susan, to his great dismay, giggled. How could she giggle when he, Albus Dumbledore, Supreme Mugwump, held them under arrest? He edged towards the fireplace hoping to call for Auror backup when something unusual happened. The office enlarged and kept enlarging until the fireplace seemed to be over a mile away.

He blinked and stared at the trio in shock.

Harry grinned back at him and put a finger to his nose in salute.

"Three minutes. Do you really think you can hold us here against our will?" Tracey asked with a sneer.

"Like I said, old bean, Voldemort is your problem, not ours. At best, he'll conquer Britain and be stopped at the borders. I know the Yanks are building up their military to keep him out and I heard the French Aurors are actually practicing again, all because of your little problem," Harry said.

Dumbledore quickly started muttering and casting, until he had the strongest anti-portkey ward in place on his office.

Susan suddenly began to giggle, then vanished with a soft pop.

"Oh! My watch must be off," Tracey announced.

Harry grinned at her and patted her hand. "I told you we each received the portkeys at different times."

She glared at him. "Listen mister. Rule number one for husbands around the world is don't remind the wife when she's wrong about something."

"But you're so rarely wrong! Besides, I'm still new to this. Most men only have to worry about one wife. I have to worry about two!" he countered with a wide grin.

Her expression softened. "Oh alrig..." She vanished, mid-word

Harry turned back to Dumbledore. "I guess you'll have to forward those certificates via the TA. Good bye, Headmaster. With a little luck, you'll be dead and forgotten by the time we get back."

Harry took one step back and nodded his head politely. Then he chuckled. "By the way, I've taken the liberty of letting Voldemort know about your little spy. I'm sure he'll be most interested in talking to him today."

Dumbledore blanched. Voldemort would kill Snape! He started to run towards the fireplace, then he remembered Snape had been called to Voldemort just after breakfast.

"Snape owes me for the lives of my parents and I'm calling in that debt," Harry snarled quietly.

Dumbledore whirled to face the boy, his expression furious. "But..."

Potter vanished and his office suddenly shrank back to normal size.

Albus lowered his wand and stood there, defeated. He had chosen the wrong boy and they would all pay for his hubris. It was too late to call back Severus, and too late to bring Potter back. He was out of reach and soon would be out of the normal time stream at the TA academy.

He stumbled over to his desk and sat down heavily. A knock came at his door and he looked up.

"Come!"

Neville Longbottom walked in, holding a bouquet of flowers. "I picked some flowers for your office, Headmaster. I thought it might cheer this place up a bit."

Dumbledore stared at him, then looked down to the letter to the Auror academy. He calmly picked it up and tore it in half. "Thank you, Neville. When you're done arranging your flowers, why don't you go see what Professor Sprout is up to?"

Neville nodded happily and left the office.

Dumbledore sagged in his chair and looked around his empty office with despair. "Oh, bugger!" he muttered. He was sure he could hear Potter laughing at him.

FINI

(And yes, we mean it's finished. NO SEQUEL SO DON'T ASK)