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Exposure, a Dark Fic!

Chapter 1

Standard Disclaimer:

Bob walked stiffly out onto the stage. He wore a strange device on top of his head that whirred and made a clinking sound. Atop the device sat a 10 meter satellite dish.

Alyx cackled with glee and she punched some buttons on a small keyboard. Almost immediately Bob started tap dancing and singing a song about how great Alan Rickman was.

Punching more buttons, Bob stopped and waited patiently for the new instructions to download.

"Welcome to yet another rabid plot bunny, inspired in part by a review someone left for Mutant Storm. As always we do not own Harry Potter or the Potter Universe. That belongs to JK Rowling who we all know passed away before she could complete books six and seven. Those books were really stolen works of fan fiction."

Bob paused and Alyx furiously punched more buttons.

"Now that this is done, I am going to turn my creative juices to a million word Snapefest starring Alyx as a Marysue love interest."

Bob blinked and smoke wafted up from his unusual headpiece. He calmly took it off and threw it to the floor before turning to glare at Alyx.

She gulped and tried to look innocent.

"A million word Snapefest," Bob said between gritted teeth. He reached into his handy magical bag of tricks and pulled out a power drill.

Alyx shrieked and ran from the stage.

Bob paused and looked at the audience. "Please enjoy this little departure from our usual fare of happy stories. This is decidedly darker and some characters are really OOC. If that bothers anyone, screw you! No... forget I said that. If it bothers you, don't read it."

Bob turned away from the audience and revved the drill a few times. "Oh Alyx," he crooned. "I'm coming for you! Use Gnomish Engineering on me will you?"

Exposure, A Dark Fic!

"Is this the house?" She looked at the posted address, then consulted something written on the parchment in her hand. "Yes, this is it. Marie Anderson, age 11. Muggle born and she's already sent back a refusal."

"Tell me again why we're doing this so late, Hermione?"

She shook her head and looked at the man beside her. "I'm not entirely sure, Ron. The registry book seemed to act almost as if someone had cast a confundus on it. It kept spitting out different names and addresses. Albus had to spend nearly two weeks breaking down the charms on the book before he could get it to work properly again. By the time we got her response we were a nearly a full week into the term."

Ron scowled. The Hogwarts registry was sacrosanct! If that was disturbing enough, the girl turning down her Hogwarts letter was. It made things so much more difficult. Now, rather than the usual midnight visit to the parents, they needed to take the girl by force.

The girl had no right to refuse to attend the school, and there were now laws in place that allowed him to enforce her attendance.

She laid a hand on his arm and he calmed slightly. "I will try talking to her parents first, Ron. If I can't make them see reason, then you can take her. If I can convince them to allow her to attend, we can send the Obliviators back later."

"You know we're supposed to just take her, Hermione. Her parents aren't to be told," he said cautiously. Despite her involvement in discovering the problem in the first place, Hermione was, at best, a reluctant follower of the policy she had helped formulate.

She sighed. "Please? Let's just try it this time. It always causes such a terrible scene to simply show up and take their children."

He looked down at his companion and nodded. Once again he wondered where he had gone wrong with her. They had come very close to getting married, but she had suddenly decided that her career as a teacher was more important than marrying him. It had been a painful episode in his life and took many years before their friendship was even partially repaired.

Hermione stepped up to the door and knocked.

The door opened and a black haired, green eyed girl peeked out. Her eyes widened at their garb, then she slammed the door shut in their faces.

"MOM!"

They heard the little girl scream from behind the door. Ron frowned and began to reach for his wand when he suddenly felt a cold sensation pass through him. "Did you feel that?" he asked.

Hermione shivered and nodded. She wasn't sure why, but she felt that this was not going to turn out well at all. She was certain that the sensation she had felt was magic based, but it was unlike anything she had ever heard about.

Ron looked at her for a moment longer, then he pulled his wand from his holster and with a quiet word and a flick, blew the door in.

"Ron!" admonished Hermione. "You could hurt someone that way!"

Hermione turned to face the open doorway and wasn't surprised to see an older woman holding the little girl. It looked like they were moving towards the back of the house. As soon as the woman spotted them, she started mumbling something under her breath.

Ron's wand and hand flashed to white hot flame and he screamed. Hermione pulled her own wand and hit the woman with a stunner. The mother collapsed against the wall, releasing her daughter. At the same time the flames on Ron's arm went out, but the damage was done.

"Mom!" screamed the little girl, then she turned to glare at Hermione. "When my Daddy finds out what you've done, he will kill you!"

Hermione ignored the little girl while she frantically cast healing spells on her friend. The damage, however, was severe. Most of his fingers were simply vaporized. Not even magic could fix that.

When she was done casting spells on Ron, she turned her attention to the girl.

"Cast the spell, Hermione. I give you permission," Ron ground out between clenched teeth.

Looking decidedly unhappy, Hermione lifted her wand. "I'm sorry," she whispered, "but you must come with us. *Imperio*!"

The little girl froze for a moment and stood up, then she pivoted and grabbed a vase. With unerring accuracy, she threw the vase and it shattered against Hermione's forehead, causing her to stumble back.

"You bitch!" screamed the little girl.

Hermione blinked and tried to wipe the blood streaming from her forehead out of her eyes.

"*Stupefy*!" Ron said, using his spare wand and his other hand.

The little girl crumpled to the ground. The air behind the girl roiled for a brief moment, then settled down again. The girl's guardian had no clear cut instructions for situations like this. It decided to wait until it could receive new instructions before acting. Considering it's limited mental abilities, it was a very advanced decision for the guardian to make.

Hermione turned to Ron and in a measure of her agitation shouted. "What the hell was that? And how could she fight that spell?"

"I don't know and I don't care right now. Let's get her out of here and her mother obliviated before anyone else shows up," he hissed. "Balls up, bloody balls up missions," he added with a moan.

She realized he was in terrible pain. Even her best pain numbing charms were only for small wounds, not third degree burns and loss of fingers. She was a Professor of Runes, not a healer.

With a twirl of her wand, she summoned every photograph in the house to a pile and banished them. In her rush, she never noticed who the man was in the photos. Had she done so, she would have been running for the nearest hole to hide in.

Once the damage was repaired and the mother obliviated, they left via portkey, leaving the mother laying on the couch as if she had dozed off. Hermione never knew about the third person still in the house, or the concealed camera pickups that had recorded the entire event.

A little over an hour later the door slammed open and a tall black haired man entered the room. He was breathing heavily as if he had run a great distance. One look around the house was enough to make his shoulders sag. He was too late.

A quick check of his wife showed she was sleeping off the effects of a stunner, so he left her on the couch for the moment while he searched the rest of the house, praying he would find both of his children.

He was sorely disappointed.

The only good point in the whole affair was that Jacob, his six year old son, was safe in their panic room and Cyndi was unhurt. The panic room was heavily warded and undetectable to most magic users. To his immense relief, it had allowed little Jake to hide safely until help arrived. He sent Jacob to his room with a small snack and a stern warning to stay there until he or his mother came for him.

He was a good lad and had been taught that certain parental commands were not to be disobeyed. Just the tone of his father's voice told him this was one of them.

Kneeling down next to Cyndi, he caressed her cheek gently. She groaned slightly and her eyelids fluttered open. "Hi," she whispered. "I thought you were still in Washington?"

"I got called back. It finally happened," he said tensely.

She looked at him in alarm, then sat up and looked around the room. At first glance nothing appeared different, until she noticed places on the wall where photographs used to hang. "Why don't I...?"

"You've been obliterated," he replied with suppressed anger. "Can I restore your memory?"

She nodded and looked up at him with frightened eyes as though she was afraid of what she might have forgotten. She was also afraid for her husband, who she knew had to be struggling with a towering rage. It was bad enough to be angry at what they had done, but he had the ability and the connections to make them pay for their arrogance.

He placed his hands to her temples. "Restorato," he whispered softly.

Her eyes closed and tears began to slide down her cheeks. "Marie," she moaned and choked back a sob.

"Taken," he replied with a growl. "But not for long."

He stood and reached into his pocket to remove a mobile phone. With a quick push of a button, the unit connected to his office.

Cyndi watched him as he paced angrily in the room, the phone plastered to his ear.

"Dispatch, this is Anderson. Connect me to Dame Agatha." When Harry married, the department decided it would be best if he used Cyndi's maiden name as an alias for most of his official business. It gave an extra level of security to him and his family.

"Hello? Yes, I know, Ma'am. I left the conference early and without permission, but it's happened again."

Cyndi couldn't make out the words, but she could tell Harry's boss was not pleased with him at the moment. She was shouting loud enough for her to hear her voice.

She watched her husband for a long moment as he listened and she relaxed a little as she saw some of the tension bleed off him. He was still enraged, but at least he was thinking now. She intimately knew his history and understood how much the loss of Marie would affect him. Everything now hinged on what his immediate boss was telling him.

"Yes, Ma'am, but they took Marie!" he said in an anguished tone. Cyndi saw him struggling to stop tears from falling and she wanted to go to him, but not until this call was done. It was just too important.

There was a moment of silence from the phone, then Cyndi could hear a softer reply from the speaker and Harry appeared to settle down, slipping into his professional mode. She couldn't tell what Agatha was telling him, but he was clearly calming down.

Cyndi had first met him over fifteen years ago, when he had attended a conference as a freshly hired aide and consultant to Dame Agatha, the head of Department Six, British Ministry of Defense. She was struck by how unchanged he was from when they first met. And she would be extremely surprised to know that others would say the same about her.

She was an expert in Shamanism and very adept at conjuring imps, small demons and some nature spirits to do her bidding. She had been working as a psychologist and magical consultant to the American Department of Homeland Security at the time of the conference.

It had been the Americans who had called for a secret conference of the major powers. They had noticed a number of children being taken over several years and hadn't really connected it all together until a squib went to work in the data center for the Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

He had noticed that a number of the children missing came from either known squib families, or from muggles who had experienced at least one case of accidental magic in their home. In many cases, the families had not alerted the authorities to the loss of a child, which only confused matters. Most of the cases came to light when the children failed to appear in school as expected. Someone was taking the children and wiping the memories of the parents. Unfortunately, they failed to remove the other numerous traces of the children.

Inexplicably, the squib was killed shortly after he reported his suspicions to his superior, but his data and notes had all been contained on the center's mainframe and overlooked by his killers. It was enough for the Americans to realize that there was a conspiracy to remove these children from their families. To what end, no one knew. They simply vanished and were never heard from again. The problem was forwarded to the FBI as a criminal investigation, but it wasn't meant to stay that way.

When the Americans asked the British for information, the British found a similar situation under their own noses. From that instant on, it became a matter of national security. Something was operating on an international scale against every nation they checked with.

One of the first actions the governments did was to try to find allies among the disaffected of the magical world. For the British, a squib suggested they find Harry Potter, who had left the British wizarding world after nearly single handedly destroying it.

Dame Agatha found Harry working in a bookstore and taking night courses in electrical engineering. He was struggling to maintain a strictly muggle lifestyle and keep his bills paid when the department hired him on. Initially, he didn't want anything to do with them, but the offer to pick up his schooling was just too attractive to pass by.

The fact that Harry was nearly done with his schooling and was in a field that the department was interested in was an added bonus. They needed his knowledge of wizarding society and his skill as an engineer to help research ways of negating the advantages the wizards held over muggles.

To say he was unhappy with the wizarding world would have been a gross understatement. He had left that world after he had been forced into combat with a mortal enemy and, having defeated him, was then looked at as a potential danger, better locked away.

He had killed nearly half their auror force and was systematically dismantling their infrastructure when the British Ministry sued for peace. It was agreed that he would be allowed to live his life unfettered by the wizarding world. In exchange, he would leave them alone.

Up until today, that agreement had been the only thing holding back the British Ministry of Defense from unleashing Harry on the hidden government with their whole hearted approval. Until today, he had been actively working against the wizarding world, but never thought he would personally have to enter that world again. He had been training others to do so and working on special research.

However, all that changed with the abduction of his daughter.

Harry had just finished basic training for Department Six when he was asked to attend the American conference as Dame Agatha's aide. Most of the other governments had brought magical consultants, and everyone knew of Harry Potter, the world's only living Magus. He was the man every magical government feared.

At that conference, his eye was drawn to the black haired woman sitting with the representative from the Department of Homeland Security. She was nearly his height and her eyes were the most amazing violet color. The attraction between them was mutual and intense. By the end of the day they were planning to dine together every night of the conference.

They had connected in a way that surprised everyone who knew them. They came from opposite magical arenas and had little in common, except a deep feeling that they had been just waiting to meet each other. Within a month, they were talking about getting engaged. Cyndi managed to get a transfer to the American Embassy in London and eventually she applied for British citizenship. With Harry's help, she became another member of Department Six's special branch of operations.

Less than a year from their meeting, they were married. She came to learn all the sordid details from Harry's past, and how the friends he thought of as family joined in the betrayal that turned him against the wizarding world. He learned how a girl that was half Italian and half native American had discovered she had an ability that defied description. She had no magic of her own as Harry knew magic, but she had the ability to command spirits, demons and other entities to do her bidding.

Cyndi shook her head and focused again on Harry, who was finishing up his conversation. "I understand, Ma'am. We'll be ready."

He pressed a button on the phone and closed it, then heaved a heavy sigh.

"Harry?" she asked breathlessly. "Are they going to do anything about it?"

He looked at her and nodded grimly. "They know they have to. In fact, Agatha says they planned for this possibility. They always knew that if any of my children were touched, I'd burn that world to the ground, with or without their help. Rather than allowing that to happen, they're initiating Take Down earlier than expected. We go in four days."

"Four Days! But Marie!" she exclaimed unhappily. "Who knows what they can do to her in four days!"

"I know!" he snapped, then he looked sheepishly at her. "I'm sorry. Look, Cyn, Marie is smart and well protected. She can do my wandless and your Shamanistic magic. They can hold her, but none of their mind magics will work against her. She's been taught to defend herself and her guardian will kill to defend her. I don't like it any more that you do, but you don't start a world wide war overnight. They need time to assemble the forces."

Cyndi slumped back on the couch and nodded tiredly.

"Mommy?" called a small voice from the top of the stairs. "Is it alright to come downstairs now?"

Instantly, she was up and moving. Jacob moved down the stairs and she swept him into her arms, holding him tight. He didn't understand what was happening and his mother's tears frightened him. "Mommy?"

"It's alright, Jake," Harry said softly. "Mom's just upset right now."

He placed a hand on Cyndi's shoulder. "Let's pack some stuff for Jake and see if your parents can take him for a week or two. Agatha has plans for both of us next week. She wants us out of the house by eight tonight. A clean up detail from special branch will be here within the hour to start packing everything."

Cyndi turned and looked at him through teary eyes, then she straightened and her expression became steely. Yes, they had taken their daughter, but she'd be a part of the effort to bring her home again. They'd bring them all home.

Harry nodded. He didn't need to hear her words, he knew what she was thinking and he agreed wholeheartedly.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, D-Day Minus 4...

Albus Dumbledore looked up when the knock came at his door. "Come!" he called.

He smiled when he saw Hermione Granger enter. She was one of his professors and a shining example of value of their new policy towards muggle born students. Her parents had been obliviated and Hermione herself had agreed to a memory charm, convincing her that her parents were dead.

Hermione was a unique case. She had been one of the people to discover that the muggle born leaving their world was killing them off slowly. She

had discovered the rapidly shrinking gene pool was resulting in more squibs and weaker and weaker wizards being born. In only a few generations, there would be more magical people living in the muggle world than the magical one. In less than ten generations, the magical world would be gone entirely.

In response, the Ministry had authorized the kidnapping of muggle born children who were then given over to magical families. Mild compulsion charms and potions were sometimes given to the children to help ease their passage into the wizarding world. In most cases, like Hermione's, the parents were obliviated, causing them to forget they ever had a child. Hermione had taken it a step further and volunteered for a memory charm that would leave her thinking her parents were long dead.

Dumbledore thought Hermione was a wonderful witch, but she had one serious flaw. Despite knowing that they needed new blood, she had failed to marry Ron Weasley as Dumbledore had originally planned. He was sure that someday she would realize her error and correct it, but for now she was showing no interest in any man and was selfishly keeping her much needed bloodline to herself.

"Professor Granger, come in! How was your jaunt out from behind our walls?" he asked congenially.

Hermione sat and looked at her mentor with troubled eyes. "It was disturbing, Headmaster. We ended up having to stun the girl and Ron was seriously injured by the mother."

Dumbledore frowned and leaned forward in his chair. The fact that Weasley was injured was mildly troubling, but he was an Auror and that came with the job.

"Injured? How?"

She shook her head. "I'm not sure. She was mumbling something and Ron's hand and wand burst into flames. I don't think he'll ever hold a wand again in that hand. I... I... I was forced to use an Imperius on the girl."

Dumbledore nodded knowingly. *Now we come to the heart of the matter*, he thought. *She was forced to put the girl under an Unforgivable.*

"I daresay no one will hold you responsible for that, Hermione," he said kindly. "Ron was there to witness the event. He can testify, if needed, that it was necessary."

"Headmaster, you don't understand!" Hermione protested. "She shook off the curse like it was a light tickling hex and threw a vase at me!"

Dumbledore blinked. "Really now? Interesting. The last student we had capable of shaking off such a curse was..."

"Harry Potter," Hermione said with a shudder. Suddenly she felt a cold chill run up her spine and she shuddered again. This was feeling more and more wrong to her. Taking this girl was a mistake.

Dumbledore scowled. Potter was a very sore point with him. He had deliberately kept the boy untrained and ignorant in the hopes that once he was dead, killing Voldemort would be easy. When Voldemort had attacked the castle, he'd had Harry pushed out the front gates. Harry had begged not to be forced out, but his pleas fell on deaf ears.

His own friends turned their back on him that day. While they hid behind stone walls that had never been conquered, Harry was literally thrown out the gate to meet his fate.

When the sound of combat stopped two hours later, Dumbledore released the lock down on the castle, expecting to see a weakened and vulnerable Voldemort. He expected to stride out onto that battlefield and kill an exhausted Dark Lord.

Instead, what he saw astounded him. Harry stood alone on the field of battle, surrounded by hundreds of dead Death Eaters. He glowed with the bright purple aura of a full fledged Magus.

It was at that point that Dumbledore realized the magnitude of his mistake. The last known Magus had decimated an army of wizards sent against him by the European Confederation. Despite that being centuries in the past, every government feared the emergence of a new Magus.

And here one stood, just outside of the gates of Hogwarts and he was seriously pissed off.

Dumbledore shivered in remembrance of the cold glare Harry sent him. It spoke directly to his soul and it told him exactly who would be responsible for his death. The silent battle of wills would have continued on that battlefield, but then the unthinkable happened, Cornelius Fudge pushed past Dumbledore and ordered his Aurors to arrest Harry. Fully half of the Auror force died that day. Cornelius Fudge was levitated straight up off the battlefield and was never seen again. Dumbledore had no doubt in his mind that the speed at which Fudge had been traveling had sent the man into orbit.

Harry vanished from the killing field and over the next several days proceeded to destroy key wizarding places. Diagon Alley was nearly burned to the ground, Grimmauld Place and the Burrow were leveled. Malfoy Manor and Riddle Manor were flattened by freak tornadoes. One by one, Harry was killing off the members of the Wizengamot and the Order of the Phoenix.

Mundungus Fletcher was in Knockturn Alley when he exploded. The blast leveled several buildings, including a pub with sixty people inside. Hestia Jones sent an owl to Dumbledore saying she was taking a vacation on the moon. That was the last anyone had seen of her. By that point most of the Order had retreated to Hogwarts which, like the Ministry building, so far remained untouched.

And whenever he attacked, he always left a message addressed to Dumbledore. It simply said, "All you care for will be destroyed before I finally come for you."

Those days were a nightmare for Dumbledore. He consumed large quantities of calming draught and lemon drops.

Finally, an owl got through to Harry from the temporary Minister of Magic, Dirk Cresswell. On behalf of the Ministry, Cresswell surrendered and offered Harry terms that said each side would leave the other alone to live in peace.

The Ministry had been between a rock and a hard place. When it became known that the British had uncovered and seriously pissed off a full fledged Magus, every Ministry in the world rushed to disassociate themselves from the British. No one wanted the Magus' anger turned to them when he was done destroying Britain.

To everyone's surprise, Harry returned the owl in one piece and had agreed to the proposal. The magical world breathed a sigh of relief and Harry Potter vanished from sight. Several proposals were put forward in the Wizengamot to find him, to track him, but they were always defeated. If Harry Potter wanted to be hidden and turn his back on the magical world, that was just fine with them. Potter hadn't been seen or heard from for nearly seventeen years.

Harry Potter had been both Dumbledore's finest accomplishment and his greatest failure. The fact that a Magus had been lost to the wizarding world bothered him greatly. It had been centuries since the last Magus. Had it been up to Dumbledore, he would have lined up every witch under the age of fifty for Harry to get children off of. If only his ability hadn't waited until that fateful battle to manifest itself!

Dumbledore shook himself from his reverie and refocused on Hermione.

"I don't know, Headmaster. I'm willing to do my civic duty in helping bring the children to the school, where they belong, but something feels really wrong about this one. This girl is dangerous," she said.

He frowned. Hermione usually had good instincts. "I will ask Mister Zabini to keep her sedated until tomorrow, when I have the chance to speak with her myself."

Hermione nodded with a slight grimace. She didn't care for Blaise Zabini, who had replaced Madam Pomfrey when she retired. He always made her feel slightly dirty when he looked at her.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, D-Day Minus 3...

Marie moaned slightly and turned in her bed. She knew immediately she wasn't in her own bed. She also remembered exactly what had happened. For a brief moment, panic threatened to overwhelm her. Then she remembered what her Daddy had taught her. She also knew that Daddy would come for her.

She was the daughter of a Shaman High Priestess and a Magus. She didn't have Harry's power, but she did and could work wandless, as well as shamanistic, magic. Marie had to fight to suppress her smirk. They had no clue what she was capable of or what her father had told her to do if she was ever taken.

"I know you're awake, my dear," said a benign voice.

She cracked open an eye and looked for the source of the voice. Then she spotted the old man with the flowing white beard. He looked like a cross between father time and a hippy. She didn't need an introduction, Daddy had described this man in exacting detail. She knew this man was probably the most dangerous man she'd meet in the wizarding world and not to be trusted under any circumstances.

Dumbledore tried to repress his frown. The girl looked up at him with an intense hatred, despite the trusting charms he had placed on her bed before she awoke. And if that wasn't bad enough, he could not get a read from her at all. He didn't detect any Occlumency shields, but there was nothing where her mind should have been. It was just a void!

She sat up and threw her legs over the edge of the bed. "When my Daddy finds me you are going to be in so much trouble. If you know what's good for you, you'll send me home right now."

Dumbledore smiled softly, hoping to calm the child. "I'm afraid that is not going to happen, my dear. You see, we need you to help us and your parents aren't capable of giving you the help you need. That's why we had to take you from them. In time, you'll come to understand and see just how lucky you are to be away from them."

He smiled at her.

"Shove it up your ass, dickhead! My Daddy is going to destroy you," she snarled. Marie smiled inwardly. She had never been able to use such language at home, but she often heard her mother call her father such names after he had done something which she felt was stupid. Like that time he jumped out of an airplane without a parachute, choosing instead to ride his broom down from 10,000 feet. Mommy was quite angry with him over that!

Marie sent a command to her guardian, telling it that they were now in a dangerous situation, which released several bindings on its behavior. Then she turned her attention back to the old man in front of her.

He frowned and stood, giving him what he felt was a menacing appearance by towering over her. "My dear, such language is not appropriate. It appears that we removed you from your muggle parents just in time. Such influence can not be allowed to continue."

He reached for his wand; a mistake. He had intended to cast a simple spanking hex, but Marie's guardian had other ideas.

Dumbledore suddenly made a strangled noise as he found himself lifted off the ground. She smiled sweetly at him, knowing he had no idea what was happening. Her guardian Djinn had lifted Dumbledore off the ground in warning.

"If you know what's good for you, you'll send me home right now. But Daddy says you and your kind are too stupid to understand. He says you're too set in your ways and too blind to the rest of the world. When he comes for me, you'll pay. He's going to bring a world of whoop ass down on your heads."

Dumbledore dropped to the floor in a heap and he stared at the little girl in amazement. It was one of the most powerful cases of accidental magic he had ever seen! They had gotten to this girl in the nick of time!

He climbed to his feet and groggily shook his head. Behind him, an audience was slowly growing, watching the confrontation between Marie and Dumbledore. He could sense several teachers watching with growing alarm. He sighed and tried another tack. He really didn't want to hex the girl, especially if she was prone to powerful accidental magic.

"My dear girl, give us some time and you'll see just how wonderful this place can be. We are going to teach you to do magic, real magic. In time, we'll find you a new family that will love you and take you in as their own child."

Marie glared at him for a long moment, then she looked away. Dumbledore smiled to himself, seeing that he had finally managed to get through to her.

Marie, however, began to mumble an incantation that was more prayer and plea than magical words.

Dumbledore folded his arms and waited for the girl to come to grips with her situation. Finally, she turned back to him and looked over his shoulder. "Is something on fire over there?" she asked innocently, pointing at the window.

Dumbledore continued to look at the girl until someone behind him gasped. "The Quidditch pitch!"

He whirled and looked out the window. To his utter dismay, the pitch was fully engulfed in flames. As he watched, the Hufflepuff stands tilted to the right and collapsed to the ground with a shower of sparks.

"Mister Zabini, keep her in the infirmary! Teachers, follow me!" Dumbledore shouted.

Marie watched them leave with a smirk, then she turned to Blaise and eyed him warily.

"My Daddy will kill you too, you know. In fact, you don't look so well. You might even die before he gets here," she told him smugly.

In truth, Zabini didn't look well. He was staring at the girl in consternation. Something about her reminded him of someone, but he couldn't put a finger on who. It wasn't helping that he had a massive headache building.

If he had known that the little girl in bed seven was responsible for his headache, he would have been terrified.

Marie laid back down and closed her eyes. In her mind, she reviewed the instructions that her parents had given her time and time again. She knew that asking her Djinn to set fire to the Quidditch pitch was childish, but it provided the distraction she needed. Her father had told her that if she was ever taken away, to cooperate, up to a point.

She thought about the last time she'd seen her father and squeezed her eyes closed, trying to stop the flow of tears. She missed her parents greatly, and despite her outward appearance, she was very very scared.

"Pumpkin?" Harry said softly.

Marie looked up from her desk where she was manipulating a cube of light using both magic and a summoned imp. Marie had managed to go beyond both her parents in that regard. Neither of them were capable of performing the other's magic.

"Yes, Daddy?"

"You know I'm going to be away for a few weeks in America."

She nodded and watched him carefully. He smiled and sat on the edge of the bed, patting the spot next to him. With a smile, she waved a hand, banishing the cube and the imp back to the ether, then went and sat next to her father.

Harry slipped an arm around her and hugged her to him. "I want you to remember what Mom and I told you, in case they come for you. They know you exist now that your letter has arrived, and they won't take your refusal well. Hopefully, your mom can hold them off if they show up."

Harry bit back a sigh. As much as he loved Cyndi, her form of magic was time intensive and usually took too long for anything to happen. In an emergency, it could literally take minutes for her to summon help, minutes she might not have.

"I remember," Marie said in a tired tone of a preteen who had repeated these instructions too often. "I will not let them know about my magic. I will not let them know about you and Mommy. I will only use my magic when they can't see or prove it was me. I will pretend to go along with them, while causing as much trouble as I can without getting caught."

"And?" Harry prompted, hiding a smile.

"I will only directly use my magic against someone if I think my life is in danger."

Harry hugged her again and kissed the top of her head. "That's my girl. Now for the important stuff. What do you want me to bring you back from America?"

She looked up at him. "A pony?" she asked hopefully.

He laughed. "I don't think your Mom would approve of having a pony in the house. But I might be able to talk her into letting you take riding lessons. How about a kitten instead?"

She nodded and threw her arms around his neck. He laughed and hugged her tightly before kissing her forehead.

"Half an hour before bed time, pumpkin," he said, releasing her.

She stood and smiled at him. "All right, Daddy."

Harry stood and walked to the door.

"Daddy?"

"Yes, pumpkin?"

"I love you," she said softly.

Harry's eyes lit up and he smiled. "I love you too, Marie."

Despite her best efforts, the tears still fell. Now she was alone, but she knew her father was coming for her.

Four hours later, the teachers and seventh year students trudged back into the castle. The Quidditch pitch was a total loss. Despite their best efforts, they had been unable to put out the blaze until the pitch was totally destroyed. Most of their time had been spent trying to contain the fire. At that time, Hagrid's hut had been badly damaged and the animal pens destroyed when several of the larger animals panicked and broke out.

Dumbledore gathered the staff in the Teacher's lounge.

"I'd like to thank everyone for their help this afternoon, I'm just sorry that we weren't able to save the pitch. Until something can be done about it, I'm afraid we'll have to cancel the Quidditch season."

He held up a hand against the loud protests. "I'm sorry. I share your disappointment, but the simple fact is, we do not have the budget to replace the pitch without help from the Ministry and the Board of Governors."

Dumbledore paused, then he turned to Professors Sprout and Granger. "Professors, I think I might have managed to reach Miss Anderson. I'd like you both to spend some time with the girl. Help her acclimate to our world. Tomorrow we'll have a special feast to celebrate her arrival and her sorting into a house. At breakfast, I'll announce the feast and ask that everyone wear their dress uniform. I'd like to set a good first impression on this young lady. She demonstrated a powerful accidental magic ability earlier today."

Hermione cringed slightly and nodded unhappily at her boss. She really didn't want anything to do with the strange girl she had brought into the school. She had heard from Ron and wasn't pleased to find that they had been unable to fully repair his hand. He would always suffer from a disability now and she still didn't know how it was accomplished!

Although healed, Ron would never be able to function as a full fledged Auror again. As a result, he had been reassigned to the Minister's protective detail as a coordinator.

"Headmaster, is it true that an Auror was severely injured bringing this girl in?" asked Professor Vector.

"Yes. Mister Ronald Weasley was hurt by means as yet unknown. A secondary team of six Aurors was sent back to the address to investigate the following day, but they reported that the house empty. All of the furniture and personal items had been removed and it looked as though no one had ever lived there."

Snape leaned forward in his chair. "Everything was gone?" he asked incredulously. "What kind of family were they? Even if the obliviate didn't take, they shouldn't have left that quickly."

Dumbledore gestured to Hermione. She never liked Snape, but she respected his position and the fact that he was one of the premiere potion masters in the world. When she had finally graduated, she had been torn between going for a potions mastery or her runes mastery. Only the idea of additional study under Snape turned her off from the idea.

Hermione wrapped her arms around herself and looked down. "They appeared to be completely muggle from what I could see. Nothing about the home or the mother seemed magical. And yet, there were instances of magic that I can't explain. What happened to Ron, for example. It wasn't any kind of magic that I know about. The mother was mumbling some nonsense in a language I didn't understand or recognize, then his wand and his hand simply burst into flame."

She looked up and stared at Dumbledore. "I'll only say that the longer she's here, the more danger we are all in."

Minerva leaned forward and eyed Hermione carefully. "I didn't think you took to divination Hermione," she said gently.

Hermione shook her head and turned to Minerva. "It's not divination, it's just a feeling that we've brought trouble down on us. I can't explain it, it just feels... wrong."

Dumbledore frowned. He had hoped that Hermione would be able to reach out to the girl, considering their similar backgrounds. "Perhaps it would be best then if Professor Sprout and Professor Springle meet with her tomorrow. Also, professors, it might help us if you can get any information possible about her parents. Miss Anderson has made several comments about her father, indicating a possible link to the wizarding world. The DMLE wants to know about them, but they have been unable to turn up anything. They couldn't even find a record of the family among the muggles, which has them very confused. This girl might be able to give us the answers they want."

Hermione nodded gratefully at the Headmaster. She really didn't want to be exposed to that girl anymore.

Springle looked up with pleasure. It was the first time the Headmaster had tapped her for anything of any importance. She was as new to the school as Hermione; a Canadian who had taken over the job of Divination from Sybil Trelawney. Sybil had been shopping in Diagon Alley when Harry Potter had burned the place down. While she survived, her nerves were so shot she only lasted a few more years before retiring to a small cottage in the uplands.

Minerva had finally laid to rest her long standing complaints about Divination when she saw how Springle approached the topic. Third years were tested for the ability and those that tested positive were given appropriate instruction, while the others took the class as an overview of the techniques involved. She also introduced scrying to the class, which had been a fading art until Springle revived it. She had even taught the DMLE and the Department of Mysteries how to scry.

Dumbledore nodded kindly to the Divination Professor then stood and walked out, signaling the end of the meeting. Minerva sat calmly and sipped her tea as the others filed out. She waited until everyone else was gone before turning to Hermione, who seemed lost in her thoughts.

"What troubles you, Hermione? Is it this new girl?"

Hermione blinked and looked up in surprise. She had been unaware that Minerva had not left the room.

"I'm sure she's a part of it, Minerva, but I can't help feeling as if something bigger is approaching. We take these children away from their rightful families. We've gotten away with it for years, but now I'm not so sure it was the right thing to do."

Minerva leaned forward and nodded. "I, too, had my reservations about the policy. But so far it's been a total success and every Ministry is using a version of it. You were part of the original group that discovered the problem in the first place. You know where we'd be without it."

"I know," she said, gesturing wildly with a hand. "But maybe we should have tried to bring the families in."

"You know as well as I do that the old families would not stand for bringing in hundreds of Muggles. Even those that accept the invitation to come to the school never return to their families. We need them too badly."

Hermione sighed. "I don't know. Maybe I'm just imagining things." She pushed her chair out and stood up.

"You're just tired. Why don't you relax and join Pomona and myself tonight for a nightcap? We often have a simple drink and talk about our days. It helps ease the tension."

Hermione smiled. "Thanks, I think I will. I'll see you later."

She walked out of the room, leaving Minerva alone with her thoughts.

British Ministry of Defense, D-Day Minus 2...

A pair of hands covered her eyes.

"Guess who?" whispered a voice.

She sagged in relief. "Harry," she whispered.

His arms wrapped around her and pulled her against him tightly. "Right in one." He could feel the tension in her body almost as if she were a wire thrumming in the wind. "Love, it will be all right. Everything is going according to schedule. In fact, Agatha says they are ahead of schedule by a few hours. I think they're afraid I'll jump the gun early, so they're pushing everyone hard."

She turned in his arms and nodded her head against his chest. "I miss her so much," she whispered.

"I do, too, but we'll get her back, Cyn. We'll get them all back," he replied fervently. "Every last one of them."

She looked up into her husband's eyes, searching for reassurance. At times like this, his eyes lost their brilliant emerald shine, dulling into a hard jade. It reminded her of a time when he had led a training mission that resulted in the loss of several people when a helicopter crashed. He hadn't been present when the crash happened, but he still blamed himself for those deaths.

His eyes hardened then too, determined to never let that sort of thing happen again if he could prevent it.

Has there been any change in the plans?" she asked.

He shook his head. "No, no change. And I looked over the video feed from what happened. I recognized both of the people present. One didn't surprise me, the other has fallen so far from her ideals. But I guess that was to be expected. She did turn her back on me that day in the Entrance Hall."

He shook his head sadly. Once he called them family, then betrayers. Now they had an official name, enemy combatants. D-Day would kick off soon with precision targeting, and his old friends could no longer rely on any relationship he once had with them. They took his daughter. They were the enemy. They would pay.

"What will you do with them?"

"What do you think? You know what we're authorized to do. That authorization came from the PM and her Majesty directly."

Cyndi reached up and cupped his cheek forcing him to look at her directly. "Promise me you'll be careful, Marie and Jake need their Daddy. I need you. I know you weren't originally supposed to be this involved."

He smiled gently at the woman in his arms. "I'll be careful. Besides I err... might have promised Marie I'd get her a pony."

Cyndi blinked and stared up at her husband in dismay. "Oh, Harry, you didn't fall for her puppy dog eyes again, did you?"

His ears colored slightly and he nodded. "Look, it's not that bad. I managed to distract her by saying that maybe we could get her riding lessons first... and a kitten."

Cyndi looked off in the distance, her eyes calculating. "Well, lessons aren't that bad and a kitten is more normal than that guardian of hers. I swear she treats that Djinn as her own personal pet at times."

Harry nodded. He was content that he had managed to ease her worries some. Afterwards, when it came time to relax, he'd turn to her again, only this time so he could release some of the tension he was feeling.

She stepped out of his arms and turned back to the ritual circle she was preparing. She was proofing the room against magic. It was expected that many of the older children would be suffering from Stockholm Syndrome and they needed to be ready for that.

As a psychologist, she was one of the people that would be there to help receive the children recovered from the British wizarding world. Around the world, every country had set up similar receiving centers. Theirs was the tougher job. They had to bring the kidnapped children back into their original world and reunite them with families, whose memories of their children had been erased. In some cases, they would be reuniting adults, stolen as children, who'd grown up in wizarding society.

He stepped back and watched her work for a moment, shaking his head in amazement. As far as he was concerned, she had no real magic, and yet here, in front of his eyes, was the proof. Several half foot high imps appeared in response to her prayer and they started bathing the large room with light.

She watched the imps for a moment longer, then muttered something in her native Arapaho. It was just one of the many languages she used, borrowing pieces from multiple cultures to work her summonings.

She looked back over her shoulder and smiled at her husband, who nodded once before walking out of the room. Both of them had jobs to do.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, D-Day Minus 2...

Marie waited in the small room just off of the main dining hall and smirked. For the first time today, she was alone and could relax a little. All day long she and her guardian had been causing no end of mishaps for the two Professors who had been assigned to 'assist' her.

The woman that had come to the castle to measure her for her uniform had knelt down, placing her knee firmly on top of the pin cushion her guardian had moved. She screeched and jumped up with the pins firmly embedded in her knee cap. In her panic, she knocked over the stack of textbooks from the table and several fell into the fire place. In the confusion surrounding Madam Malkin's injury, no one noticed the books burning until they were beyond repair.

Then, an apprentice of Ollivander's ran through forty seven wands before they found one that didn't explode when she touched it. She gave the wand a wave and the young man who had been helping her select a wand suddenly found himself unable to speak. Healer Zabini still hadn't come up with a way of fixing the problem.

Marie's smirk broadened into a grin when she thought about Healer Zabini. His headache had only worsened since yesterday and nothing he could do seemed to help. If he knew about the imp that was causing his headache, she was sure he'd flee in terror. Originally, the imp wanted to see if it could make his brains spurt out of his ears, but she had made the little spirit attack in a gentler manner.

She had deflected all questions about her parents with a simple threat that her Daddy would come for her and then they'd be in trouble. In fact, even the ever patient Sprout was getting annoyed by the little girl who refused to answer any questions about magic or her parents. Sprout was sure Marie knew more about magic than she was saying, but she wanted to get the girl to trust her, so she hadn't pressed her too hard.

The most interesting event of the day had happened on the way to this little anteroom. She had been escorted by the two professors and along the way they had run into Peeves. Professor Sprout had warned her that the castle contained ghosts, but she hadn't mentioned anything about a free

floating ifrit someone had forgotten to banish back to the ether when they were done with it.

Peeves had taken one look at Marie and dropped the ink filled water balloon he had been preparing to throw. The poltergeist screamed in terror, recognizing Marie for what she was and fled the corridor. In his flight, he collided with an older, sallow faced man, knocking him over the stairway railing. Fortunately, he fell only a few feet, but Marie couldn't help but laugh out loud, earning her an angry glare from the sallow faced man. She knew exactly who this man was and knew he could be dangerous if she allowed him. She had no intention of giving him that opportunity.

Snape stalked up to Marie in anger and she hid behind Sprout, clutching at her robe. Sprout pulled her wand and warned Snape off. He glared again at Marie and then turned, his robe billowing out behind him and stomped off.

Now she sat waiting to be sorted. Outside the door she could hear shouts of alarm and screams of panic. A moment later, her guardian entered the room and sent her an image that nearly caused her to fall from her chair in laughter. She had given the guardian instructions to find their sorting hat and destroy it. Unfortunately, the very literal Djinn couldn't tell one hat from another, so it shredded every hat it could find in the room. Unfortunately, it seemed that a hat was part of their dress uniforms.

In a blinding explosion of fabric, every hat in the room, and there were quite a lot of them, exploded, showering the students and staff with debris. Some of the material had gone high enough to catch fire from the floating candles, causing hot embers to rain down on the now unprotected heads.

Somewhere out there in the Great Hall lay the remains of a priceless, irreplaceable artifact and it didn't bother Marie one bit that a thousand years of tradition had been lost. Her Djinn was pleased to finally be able to do something. It had been itching to start dismantling the castle one stone at a time and dropping the stones on the bearded one's head, but Marie was holding it back for now.

Considering the amount of noise coming from the other side of the door, Marie settled down for what she figured would be a long wait. To pass the time, she communed with her guardian, giving it instructions to seek out the ifrit and pass along her commands. The ifrit, if it wanted to remain in this plane of existence, would know to follow her instructions or she would banish it back to the ether.

Finally, the door opened and Professor Sprout motioned for her to stand and follow her. "I'm sorry, dear, but we had a spot of trouble out here. It's been decided that you can go into my house, Hufflepuff. I'll show you where our table is, then you can join us in the feast."

All noise in the hall ceased when she entered the room and she could see Dumbledore up at the head table, looking furious over the loss of the priceless relic. He had just finished giving a lecture to the student body about how he would punish the prankster when he discovered who was responsible. Finally, he turned a benign smile to Professor Sprout and the little girl next to her. He motioned with one hand, waving them toward a table.

Marie let the woman lead her over to a long table filled with children with only a few that appeared to be her age. She couldn't help but notice that two of the girls seemed to be unhappy about being there. It was a sure sign in her mind of two others who had been taken from their homes. She made a beeline straight for these two girls and sat down across from them.

"I'm Marie," she said softly.

One of the girls, a blond girl looked her and smiled wanly. "Cally, and this is Katy. You're new here."

Katy blinked and looked around worriedly, then she nudged Cally in the ribs. "Shut it!" she hissed. "They'll hear, you know we're not allowed to talk about that."

Marie nodded knowingly. "I was taken a few days ago," she said softly. "Don't give up hope. My Daddy is coming for me."

"No one is coming for us," Katy replied in a whisper laced with despair. "They told me my parents don't even know who I am anymore." She bowed her head and her long brown hair fell forward, concealing her face.

Cally leaned closer to her friend, who tried to hide her tears. She looked over at Marie. "Really? Your Daddy is coming? Will he take us home, too?"

Marie nodded and glanced around before turning back to her new found friends. "Just be strong for now. I know he's coming. He promised."

Katy looked up at Marie and smiled weakly at her. "I'll try," she whispered.

Marie reached for a roll. "So, tell me about our House."

"It's not too bad," Cally offered. "Most of the people are nice and Professor Sprout seems to care, but she says we can't contact our families."

Marie nodded and allowed the conversation to drift into topics about the House and classes. She had found some friends, so she no longer felt so alone.

Up at the head table, the Headmaster eyed Miss Anderson with intense curiosity. He still couldn't get any sort of reading off her, but Miss Preston, sitting opposite her, was busy telling their newest witch about their classes. It was enough to make him relax a little. Perhaps her transition would be easier, now that she had made some friends.

A number of odd things had happened today, but nothing that he could say Miss Anderson was responsible for. Despite his belief in fate and magic, he also firmly believed in coincidence.

Dumbledore sat at his desk surrounded by ancient books. The loss of the sorting hat remained an unexplained mystery and he was faced with the equally daunting task of trying to figure out how to replace it. So far in every book he's examined, he's found no mention or clue as to how the hat was created.

A detailed examination of the Great Hall after last night's feast had revealed little. There were magical traces, but he didn't recognize the spell. And even more troubling, the traces had a dimensional aspect to them which baffled him entirely. It was as though the magic had happened in another plane of existence and the destruction of the hats was only a slight bleed over from that other place.

"Headmaster? Are you there?"

Dumbledore looked up to see Amos Diggory in the fireplace. He was the current Minister of Magic, but he had won only by a narrow margin. His chief competition had come from Arthur Greengrass, who was backed mainly by the Malfoy fortune and several other old pureblood families. Draco and his mother had not been present for the battle in which Voldemort was killed. As such, he had managed to slip into his father's government role with a minimum of fuss. Now days, he kept a very low profile, preferring to influence things from the shadows.

Arthur Greengrass was one such individual that the Malfoy's supported. Currently, Greengrass held the distinction of being the head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. He also had enough political clout behind him that Amos couldn't dismiss the man without an airtight reason.

"Amos!" he exclaimed with a smile. "What can Hogwarts do for you?"

"Nothing, I'm afraid. I'm calling to talk to you in your Wizengamot role, not as Headmaster," Amos said seriously.

Dumbledore arched an eyebrow. "Really now? Would you like to come through?"

Amos nodded and with a wand wave from Dumbledore he stepped through the fireplace into the office. He took a seat at Dumbledore's offer.

"So, Amos, what can I do for you?" Dumbledore asked.

"Something strange is happening, Albus. Yesterday, we started getting sporadic reports that the people we had in the Muggle Ministries were disappearing. Mostly the reports came from other Ministries, but this morning, six of our people did not turn up for work and we can't contact them. Even scrying didn't help!"

Dumbledore frowned. Scrying always worked, unless the person they were looking for was hidden behind very powerful wards... or dead.

"What does Greengrass have to say about it?"

"Him? He's still denying it's happening, but Shackbolt told me in confidence this morning that they suspect we have a new Dark Lord rising, one who plans on attacking the muggles and taking them over before taking us on. Shackbolt told me that the Director has been covering up news that some of their operations have gone very wrong for no reason they can determine."

Dumbledore nodded and thought for a moment. "Have all of our people in the Muggle Ministry vanished?"

Amos blinked and looked surprised. "No. We've managed to contact the remaining five and they all say everything seems normal. There's no disruption of the Muggle Ministry that they can see."

Dumbledore stroked his beard for a minute. His eyes were focused elsewhere while he pondered that bit of news. "I think," he said slowly, "that we may, indeed, be looking at a new threat from a Dark Wizard. If the muggles were up to something, they wouldn't have left some of our people in place."

It never occurred to Dumbledore that wizards and squibs might be willing to work with the Muggles against the wizarding world.

Amos managed to convey the impression of being relieved and alarmed at the same time. "You don't think that Potter..."

"No, he wouldn't. That much I'm certain of. We've left him alone. As long as we continue to do so, he'll leave us alone," Dumbledore said with confidence.

Amos stood and looked down at Dumbledore. "Well, we know how to deal with Dark Lords. I'll return to my office and start working on legislation to increase the auror force. We can't rely on another Magus showing up and I doubt Potter is willing to help us. No, this one we'll need to do ourselves. I just hate beefing up the DMLE while Greengrass has his claws in it. The man has enough power as it is."

Diggory had been angry with Dumbledore over his treatment of Potter. Ever since the boy had returned the body of his son at great personal risk he had admired the boy. It was perhaps the only point of contention between the two men.

Dumbledore nodded sagely. "Perhaps we can kill two birds with one stone. Instead of beefing up the Auror force, why not increase the number of unspeakables? When the Aurors fail, you could use the unspeakables to take down this new Dark Lord and sink Greengrass' political career forever."

Amos grinned broadly at him. "Excellent idea! Thanks, Albus."

He turned and entered the floo, vanishing from sight.

Dumbledore stared at the empty fireplace for a moment longer. "Another Dark Lord," he said with a heavy sigh. He debated calling for a teacher

conference, but then decided against it. There were too many unknowns and enough real facts. Telling the Professors now would alarm them.

Elsewhere in the castle, Marie was about to enter the classroom of her first class - Transfiguration with Professor McGonagall.

Marie stood near a desk in the back and watched Cally and Katy go up to the teacher's desk to get their wands. Unlike the wizard born students, they were not allowed to keep their wands with them all the time. They turned them in at the end of the last class of the day and picked them up again in the first class the next day.

They wouldn't be allowed to keep their wands full time until they turned thirteen and were old enough to be able to give a magical promise to obey the law.

Cally motioned to Marie and she set the shoulders, then marched up to the desk. McGonagall watched the girl who had become one of the hottest topics of the teacher's lounge with interest. Marie glanced up at the aging witch and then picked up her wand with reluctance. She hated the thing. Using it for magic felt like trying to swim with a heavy rubber rain coat on.

Minerva suppressed a shiver. The little girl's glance had been devoid of human warmth. It was as if she were little more than a bug and Marie planned to step on her. Minerva had heard the claims the girl had made about her 'Daddy' and there was some cause for concern there. The father had not been present in the home to obliterate, and now with the family missing, the Ministry was trying to find him in order to complete the job.

"Miss Anderson, you arrived late to school and are behind. I will be working with you shortly to help you catch up with your peers. Fortunately, you're only a week behind them. Please take your seat and wait while I give the rest of the class their assignment," Minerva said.

Marie's eyes flashed angrily, but she nodded, then she turned and walked to the desk in the back of the room.

"Class, we will begin today by reviewing the transformation of a stick into a quill. We do this particular transformation because the two items are similar in size and occasionally you will find yourself in need of a quill," Minerva said, handing out sticks cut to the right size. "As we learned, the incantation is 'Transverto' followed by a anti-clockwise twirl. Remember to keep your wand firmly pointed at your subject! Visualization is critical to the success of your transformation, so make sure you have a firm picture of the quill in your mind before attempting the spell."

Marie leaned back on her chair and hid a smirk. One of the other students pointed his wand at the stick and muttered the incantation. At the last second, Peeves appeared and pushed the wand until it was pointing directly at Professor McGonagall. She gasped and suddenly collapsed to the floor. As she fell, she changed, sprouting feathers and her head sharpened to a fine point.

Peeves cackled with glee and flew through the nearest wall, leaving behind a shocked class of first year students. The pesky spirit had been given instructions, via Marie's Djinn, and was enjoying himself immensely.

"I'd say class has been canceled," Marie commented dryly.

Cally shot her a grin and started to pack up her books.

"Shouldn't we get someone?" asked another first year.

Marie shrugged. "Don't look at me. She's still breathing. She'll come out of it eventually."

"That's mean!" said a first year, wizard born Gryffindor.

Marie whirled on the boy. "Mean?" she exclaimed, her eyes flaring with anger. "I'll tell you what's mean. Stealing me from my family. As far as I'm concerned, this witch can lay here all damn day. I'll not help her."

Two other Gryffindor boys blinked in shocked surprise and then one nodded. "She's right. I want to go home."

Several others spoke up softly and Marie quickly realized that the taken students outnumbered the wizarding ones. She wasn't the only one to realize they were outnumbered. The wizarding students suddenly looked afraid.

McGonagall's eyes bulged. She was frozen in place on the cold floor, but she could clearly hear everything that was being said.

"What can we do?" asked one of the Gryffindor students.

"Wait," Marie said smugly. "My Daddy is coming for me. He'll take us all home."

"What can your Dad do? Mine doesn't even remember me!" asked a girl who looked close to tears.

Marie moved closer to the girl and placed hand on her shoulder. "He's coming, I know he is," she said with conviction.

"They'll tell," Cally said, pointing at the three wizarding students cowering in the corner and the immobile Professor. "They know too much."

Marie looked down at the elder witch and could see the panic in her eyes. The three regular students had backed themselves into a corner by McGonagall's desk, watching the others fearfully.

Marie knew Cally was right. She was certain her father would come soon, but she needed to keep these four quiet somehow. She looked down at McGonagall for a long moment, thinking hard. As she did, McGonagall's eyes widened. She finally figured out where she had seen those eyes before. She sucked in her breath, causing Marie to examine her even more closely.

Marie knelt down next to the Professor. "You know, don't you?" she said too softly for the others to hear. "I'm sorry, but I can't let you tell anyone. Don't worry, this won't hurt in the least."

Marie stood and lifted one hand. She muttered something under her breath and McGonagall stiffened as several summoned imps appeared. The imps stood motionless for a second then flashed away, entering each of the students and McGonagall. The three students slid to the floor unconscious and McGonagall closed her eyes.

"That was way cool!" Cally exclaimed.

"You didn't kill them, did you?" asked one of the Gryffindor boys.

Marie shook her head. "Nope. They'll wake up in a day or two and be fine."

"Won't they tell on us?" asked Katy fearfully.

Marie grinned. "Yep they will, but not in any language people around here understand. No one here speaks Arapaho besides me."

She looked around at the grinning faces. And then looked surprised as a number of Djinn entered the room through a wall. She looked over to her Djinn and it conveyed the notion that these were guardians for her new friends. They would protect them from the wizards and their mind magics like her Djinn protected her. Her guardian had taken it upon itself to summon them here for the children.

It was a surprising move from the normally subservient being.

"I suppose we should get another Professor?" asked Cally.

Marie nodded. The three students and the Professor would sleep for a day or two while the imps rewired their language centers. After that, they'd need an interpreter to figure out what they were saying. She hoped that her father would arrive first.

Over the North Sea, D-Day (0015)...

The pilot's eyes never stopped scanning his instrument panel.

"Coming up on IP," said his weapons officer from the back seat.

He clicked his microphone once in acknowledgment then he blinked his wing lights to signal the rest of the flight to get into formation. Three other planes slipped in neatly behind his craft.

"Stable, Stable, this is Can Opener 1. We are at IP and commencing our run," he said tensely into the microphone.

"Can Opener 1, Stable, you are weapons free," replied a voice in his headset.

He flicked a switch on his stick, changing frequencies. "Can Openers, weapons free. Beginning our run."

It wasn't a complex mission, but the target was hardened in a way that they had never dealt with before. The massive fortress had been built nearly eight hundred years ago and had been continually upgraded since. With walls of granite nearly 10 meters thick, the building far exceeded any modern hardening with the exception, perhaps, of Cheyenne Mountain in Colorado. And that had a mountain on top of it.

The plan was simple. The Four RAF aircraft would hit the fortress first, dropping the very latest in bunker busting bombs. Each of the hardened munitions was designed to penetrate 25 feet of steel reinforced concrete before exploding.

Can Opener was merely one flight of five groups, totalling twenty aircraft, each dropping two bunker busters, in the hopes of peeling away the massive stone and exposing the interior of the fortress.

The second part of the mission was surprisingly low tech. On the heels of the bombers, two Hercules C-130 aircraft came in and released a Fuel Air Explosive, one of the largest non nuclear weapons in the NATO arsenal.

Less than two minutes later, the parachute retarded bombs exploded, tearing apart the fortress prison of Azkaban. Nothing survived the intense heat and pressure wave. It was a text book mission and the first shot for the British in the war against the Wizarding World.

It would later be determined that the Dementors were unable to withstand the intense heat and over pressures generated by the FAEs.

Around the world, nearly fifty other Wizarding installations ceased to exist under similar circumstances as a world wide offensive began.

Ministry of Magic, London, D-Day (0115)...

The man checked his map and then consulted a portable GPS unit. Another looked up from the listening device he held against the wall and gave him a thumbs up. Seeing that, the first man turned to his commander.

"This is the spot, sir," he said.

Colonel Harding nodded and folded the hand drawn map that had been provided to them by a squib who worked in the Ministry's maintenance

department. He stepped away from the wall and returned to one of his lieutenants. The man waved forward a squad of engineers and they carefully placed the shaped charges and primer cord on the wall.

"Final equipment check, Sergeant," Harding said softly.

"Check your gear," whispered the older man. He was a veteran who'd seen a lot of action, but this was a unique experience. He had never imagined he would be fighting on his own home soil.

Harding moved a hundred feet down the sewer tunnel, then turned to watch his men place the explosives. Far above him, buildings around this particular building were being evacuated. The London Fire Department had been told that there was a massive gas main break under the building and they needed to move people fast.

The Ministry of Magic sat below a regular office building in a section of London that contain a mix of apartments and businesses. Three hours earlier, the fire department had begun evacuating everyone from the surrounding buildings. Unlike Azkaban, the Ministry wanted this building taken. The building above was wholly muggle, making it unsuitable for destruction.

"Signal from topside, sir. They've completed the evacuation," someone murmured.

Harding nodded his thanks to his radio operator. "Are we set, Lieutenant?" he asked in a soft voice.

The Lieutenant nodded. "All set sir."

"Very well, you may proceed," Harding ordered.

A moment later there was a roaring explosion up the tunnel and one section of the wall collapsed, revealing a long corridor lit by gas torches.

Following the explosion, a group of men ran for the opening. "First squad forward," shouted one of the non-commissioned officers. Several machine guns barked and a grenade went off.

Harding turned to his radio operator. "Inform command that we're going in now," then he turned and trotted forward with several men following him closely.

The battle for the Ministry of Magic had begun. Surprise would be only one of the weapons employed by the muggles. The wizards were simply outgunned and poorly suited for close infighting against trained troops armed with anti-magic weapons.

Number 10 Downing Street, London, D-Day (0300)...

Of all the places that Harry had visited in his life, he'd never expected that he would be visiting the home of the British Prime Minister. And if that wasn't unusual enough, he was visiting at three o'clock in the morning!

Harry entered the outer office and an aide offered to take his coat.

"Ah, Harry, good you're here," said a voice.

He looked up to see his boss, Lady Agatha Millsworth. "Dame Agatha, I came as quickly as I could. Is there a problem?" he asked worriedly. He had been waiting for this day for long time. With the abduction of Marie, it had become more important than ever.

When the call came pulling him off the tarmac where he had been waiting for his transport, he immediately began to worry that something had gone terribly wrong.

She smiled and shook her head. "No. The PM himself wanted to speak to you about today."

Harry nodded and followed his boss into another room. It was huge and contained enormous video screens against one wall. All around the room, people bustled about in quiet activity. Harry glanced up at the various screens, noting their designations. Some were satellite feeds, others showed tarmacs with hundreds of mechanics working on helicopters and aircraft. Several screens showed operations in progress. The first shots had been fired just past midnight and as yet, most of the Wizards still didn't know they were at war.

One wall held a huge electronic map of Britain, with key areas highlighted in red. He noted the Ministry and Diagon Alley were lit up in red. He had heard that the Diagon Alley assault team had met heavy resistance and had finally called for armored support.

He shook his head in amusement. The PM's office of Public Affairs was already spinning a tale about a terrorist cell resisting arrest and forcing the government to call out troops to suppress them. Diagon Alley would be a smoking ruin by morning.

Agatha led him to a tall man who looked as though he'd not slept, or shaved, in several days. This was a far cry from the neatly trimmed man he'd seen on television.

"Sir, may I introduce Harry Potter?" Agatha asked. Harry started at that. He had been told his department was planning on dropping his alias but he hadn't been told when they would do so.

"Mister Potter," said Prime Minister, offering his hand. "I'm sorry we're meeting under such difficult circumstances. Agatha has had only good things to say about you since this mess first started. Her Majesty and I both would like you to accept our deepest wishes for the safe return of your daughter."

Harry numbly shook the offered hand and mumbled a thank you. This experience had a surrealistic effect and he was waiting for someone to tell him the bad news.

"Mister Potter, the queen has asked that I tell you that the return of our children is paramount. There are others who are tasked with suppressing any possible problems. Your job is to hit that school and bring our children home. You are authorized to use any force necessary, should those people try to stop you."

Harry straightened and nodded. "I understand, sir." He breathed a mental sigh of relief. It looked like things were still on track.

The Prime Minister smiled. "Agatha tells me you've been key to our efforts. I know the Queen and I look forward to meeting you and your family under less trying circumstances. I hear you have a very extraordinary family."

Harry colored slightly. "I think they are, sir."

The PM smiled his perfect television smile at him. "Good man. When you get to that school, deliver the note and bring them out."

"I'll bring them home, sir."

"Excellent. I won't keep you further. Agatha, there's a helicopter waiting to take your man back to his staging area. Better hustle, Mister Potter. You don't want to miss the kick off, do you?"

Harry shook his head and stepped back. Agatha latched onto his arm and pulled him from the room. "Harry," she said quietly, "you're authorized to kill if you need to keep yourself and the children safe. Your team will be just outside the castle when you deliver the note. If you need them, call them in."

She stopped him just outside the door and he looked down at the woman. "Be safe, Harry. Your family needs you to come back in one piece."

He nodded with a tight smile and turned away. He barely noticed the armed Marines setting up a security station in front of the building, or the machine gun nests now sighting in their weapons from the surrounding rooftops.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, D-Day (0800)...

Albus Dumbledore sat at the head table and scowled at his breakfast. His Deputy and three students had been injured in a classroom accident, or so the story went. He wasn't sure what to believe. What he knew for certain was that Peeves had interrupted a casting and several students, plus his Deputy, had been knocked unconscious. Minerva also suffered a partial transfiguration, but that had been quickly remedied. Why the students had been affected was a total mystery.

What else he knew, and what disturbed him even more, was that every student he had interviewed yesterday were now as unreadable as Marie Anderson. As much as he wanted to explore that problem, Peeves had interfered with a number of other castings yesterday, wreaking havoc throughout the castle. He had spent a bulk of his time yesterday trying to catch and contain the pesky poltergeist, but he hadn't been able to find him.

Dumbledore couldn't put a finger on it, but something was seriously wrong and he didn't know what. That bothered him more than twelve first year students suddenly becoming immune to legilimency.

The door to the Great Hall burst open and nearly forty people rushed in, led by Amos Diggory, the Minister of Magic. Several of the people with him appeared to be injured.

Hermione noted that Ron seemed to be helping an injured woman, although he was limping as well. He sent her a friendly look, then turned his attention back to the Minister. He had been assigned to the Minister's protective detail mostly in an administrative capacity.

"Minister?" asked an alarmed Dumbledore. He stood, while Zabini jumped up from his chair and ran around the table to help with the wounded.

Amos strode up to the head table and stopped there. His robes were torn and singed and he was breathing heavily. "Albus," he gasped. "We were attacked. The Ministry building has been taken over by strange men in silvery suits. We barely managed to escape as it is. I think they were muggles!"

Dumbledore sat back down and stared at the Minister, while a buzz arose in the hall. The Minister had been loud enough to be heard by everyone.

Dumbledore tore his eyes away from Amos and glanced to the students. He chilled when he saw Marie grinning at him. Tearing his gaze away from the girl, he connected to the schools wards and ordered the school into lock down. Then he brought up all of the wards to full intensity. The last time such measures had been taken, he had just pushed Harry Potter out the main doors of the castle.

A loud grinding noise echoed in the hall as the castle prepared itself for attack. The doors to the Great Hall swung shut and several iron bars slid across them. Dumbledore was confident that whatever happened at the Ministry would not happen here. Hogwarts had never been taken in its one thousand year history and that would not change on his watch!

"I'm locking down the building, Amos. Once that's done, we'll talk about what happened. In the meantime, I'd suggest you get your injured up to our hospital wing," Dumbledore said, pointing towards the fireplace. It was now the only exit/entrance to the Great Hall and it was password protected.

Amos gestured and several aurors conjured stretchers for his wounded, then waited patiently while Healer Zabini checked them over. With that

done, he turned his attention back to Dumbledore.

"I'd just arrived at the Ministry with my normal detachment of security. We apparated into the building and found the Atrium to be a complete wreck, with wounded and dead everywhere."

Amos looked at Dumbledore with worried eyes. "I stood there in shock and several more Aurors joined us, then a group of ten men appeared from one of the corridors. Albus, I think they were muggles! They wore a strange uniform and used muggle guns. None of our spells worked against them, unless we got a head shot. Any hit on that silvery uniform caused the magic to rebound! And their guns! The bullets went right through our shields!"

Dumbledore nodded worriedly, then turned to Snape, who had rushed up to him and was waiting for the Minister to finish his tale.

"Yes, Severus?"

"Headmaster, the floo network is completely down. I can't even reach Hogsmeade. Only the castle floo is still working," replied the sallow faced potions master.

A girl laughed and Dumbledore's head whipped around. Marie was sitting with several other girls from Hufflepuff and they were all giggling happily. It struck Dumbledore as odd, since that group of girls had all been taken from their families. It seemed almost as if they were celebrating!

"I think it's time to get some answers," he said with narrowing eyes. "Severus, escort Miss Anderson up to the head table. I think she knows more than she lets on."

Amos blinked in surprise. "Miss Anderson? She's just a child! What can she know?" He was familiar with the DMLE's efforts to find her family. They had mysteriously vanished after the girl had been removed from her home.

Severus nodded grimly and stalked over to the Hufflepuff table. He reached down and grabbed Marie by her arm, then yanked hard on it, pulling her from her seat. Marie let out a yelp of pain and that was all it took. Her Djinn manifested itself in front of Snape. He was tall, taller than Hagrid and bright orange.

Snape released Marie's arm in fear and stepped back. The Djinn reached down and picked up the potions master and squeezed him. His scream bounced off the walls of the hall, as did the chilling, snapping sound as bones were broken as easily as twigs. Snape was quickly reduced to whimpering as most of his rib cage was crushed.

One of the Aurors in the room fired off a spell that passed right through the Djinn that held the potions master.

The spell continued on toward the Gryffindor table and another young student. Another Djinn appeared and blocked the spell from hitting its charge, then it flowed over the tables and engulfed the auror in its orange form. The man screamed as if the very hordes of hell itself were consuming him, then his screams faded into silence.

"Hold your fire!" thundered Dumbledore. He didn't know what these creatures were, but they were obviously powerful and not affected by magic. Continuing to fire at them would only decimate the few fighters they had left.

Marie's Djinn released Snape and he slid limply to the ground. It was obvious that Snape had been severely, perhaps mortally, injured. He lay motionless on the floor with Marie's Djinn standing only a foot or two away from him. No one wanted to approach the injured professor, as that meant getting close to the strange being.

The other Djinn flowed back over the tables, causing students and Aurors to scramble out of its way. It took up position right next to a first year Gryffindor. Dumbledore absently noted that he was another muggle born student.

The Great Hall descended into panic as a number of students tried to move away from the tall orange beings with burning red eyes. Dumbledore fired off a cannon blast charm, causing everyone to turn their attention to him.

"Everyone please be seated and we'll try to figure out what is happening. Mister Zabini, please see to Professor Snape," he said in a commanding tone.

Zabini swallowed and his complexion paled considerably. He shuffled forward, his eyes firmly fixed on the eighteen foot tall Djinn that was slowly clenching its fists.

"Still have a headache, Mister Zabini?" Marie said, then she giggled. Zabini jumped as if he had been kicked and slowed his pace even more.

"Miss Anderson," Dumbledore called. "Would you explain these creatures?"

Marie looked up at the head table and opened her mouth to say something, when her Djinn gestured. She followed the pointing arm and grinned wildly.

"I told you my Daddy would come for me," Marie crowed. "You're in trouble now!"

"Headmaster!" Hermione gasped. She pointed to the fabled ceiling which showed the sky above the castle. Only now the sky was literally thrumming with aircraft. A flight of attack helicopters flew in low over the castle and the huge structure shook from the sound. Behind them, a squadron of VTOL Ospreys banked hard and came to a hover in a field near the lake, then they lowered below the view of the skylight charm.

"It's not possible!" gasped Amos. "Aurors! Guard the doors!"

The Aurors moved to take up position, while Dumbledore watched with fascination at the sight of military transports and attack helicopters orbiting his castle. He couldn't see the flight of jets providing air cover and, if necessary, bombing support.

Finally, he shook himself away from the mesmerizing sight and turned back to Marie.

"Just who are you?" he demanded loudly.

Marie stared back at him defiantly. She opened her mouth, then changed her mind. Her eyes flickered over Dumbledore's shoulder and he was deeply tempted to turn around. He was afraid he'd turn to discover another red eyed creature staring him down.

"Lilian Marie Anderson-Potter, sit down," said a soft voice.

Then the voice changed, becoming harder, and much, much colder. "Dumbledore," the voice said, causing the old man to shudder. He whirled to see a man dressed in a silvery uniform standing behind him. While the Aurors guarded the door, this man had found his way into the Hall unnoticed! "You and your kind have gone too far this time. Your world ends, now."

"Potter!" exclaimed Diggory, stumbling back from the table and staring at Harry fearfully. A number of the Aurors blanched at Diggory's exclamation. Here was the Magus and they were terrified of him.

"Daddy!" screamed Marie from her seat. Next to her, two little girls looked up in shock, then happiness filled their expressions. Marie had been telling the truth. For the first time since they had been kidnapped, they had hope that they would be going home and it showed on their faces.

Around the hall, every first year that had been in Marie's class looked at Harry with hope. They didn't understand what was happening, but they knew this man wasn't supposed to be here, and the wizards were afraid of him.

Harry's hard expression softened for a split second as he mentally whispered a prayer of thanks, then he signaled to Marie to stay where she was for the moment. He noted her Djinn was visible and knew instinctively that her guardian had taken that drastic step in her defense. He had arrived just in time, it seemed.

The other Djinn at the Gryffindor table was a surprise, but Harry couldn't worry about it now.

Dumbledore looked at Marie, then at Harry. His gaze shifted back and forth several times, finally noticing the family resemblances. "Harry Potter and his daughter," he whispered in utter dismay. In the split second of realization, he understood. They had crossed the line and broken the agreement they had with Potter. They had taken his daughter.

Hermione stood and turned to look at the man. 'Daddy' was none other than her former best friend, the man she'd betrayed. She fainted to the floor.

Harry glanced at Hermione and smirked with satisfaction. The castle rumbled and shook and the skylight charm flickered and went out. Dumbledore groaned in pain as his connection to the castle's wards was torn apart. He pitched to his knees and fought the urge to vomit as the wards were literally destroyed.

Harry's team was draining the wards and the castle of its stored magical energies. It would only take a few minutes for the flux capacitors to finish the job.

Dumbledore stood shakily and stared at Harry in disbelief.

Harry sneered at the old man, then his eyes flickered to Diggory. Originally, he had been told to deliver the note to Dumbledore, but Diggory's presence changed that.

"Good, you're here, Mister Diggory. We were a little concerned when we didn't find your body among the Ministry casualties," he said.. He reached into a pocket and removed a folded note.

He glanced over to the head table and noted Hermione was still out. *That won't do*, he thought with a bit of malice. *Let's make sure she's awake to see what she has sown.*

Suddenly Hermione was deluged with freezing cold water and she sputtered awake. She sat up and looked around in bewilderment before her eyes locked on Harry again. Professor Vector reached down and helped her to her feet.

Harry unfolded the note and began to read. "At midnight last night, the British Government, backed by the approval of her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the second, declared war on all elements of the wizarding world that exist within its borders. By order of the Government, the illegal government called the Ministry of Magic is hereby disbanded and all its employees are to surrender to the legal forces of the rightful government of Britain. Failure to surrender will be dealt with harshly.

"The British government considers all Britons participating in the wizarding world to be guilty of treason against the crown and against the nation."

Harry paused as the doors to the Great Hall flared around the edges. Thermite charges laid by his team were burning away the doors so that they could enter the hall. He could have easily vanished the doors, but it was felt that doing it this way would provide a distraction and divide their attention. He knew from experience that Wizards were easily distracted.

One Auror raised a wand and Harry frowned, then he did something he did not want to do. He gestured and the man slumped soundlessly to the floor, dead. He had hoped that he would not have to kill, especially in front of his daughter, but he couldn't allow that Auror to fire off a spell. Not in a room full of children.

"The next man to lift a wand will suffer the same fate," Harry growled. "Now let me finish reading this."

He looked down at the paper and started to read again. "You are commanded to disarm immediately. Drop your wands and remove any magical objects you might have upon your person. You will also surrender all of the children in the school known as Hogwarts. The children will be taken to a receiving center, where they will be examined and returned to their rightful families."

The flaring and sputtering of sparks around the doors stopped and then the doors toppled inwards almost as if in slow motion. Twenty men in silvery suits entered holding machine guns on the crowd. Immediately behind the first group, another, smaller group, entered, also wearing silvery suits. These people were unarmed medics, waiting for a signal from Potter before moving among the children. They were there to take the children out to the transports.

Harry carefully folded the note and looked up. "Even as I speak, every magical Ministry in the world has been attacked. By nightfall, most will have fallen. Dumstrang fell three hours ago after a battle that left half their staff and students dead. We are prepared to do the same here, if necessary."

"Harry, you can't," Hermione said in anguish.

Harry looked at her contemptuously. "Do not presume to tell me what I can and cannot do, Granger. Your own parents had their memories restored to them yesterday. I can't begin to tell you just how upset your father, a DSC holder, is to discover his daughter is to be charged and tried for treason and kidnapping. I would remind you that treason in times of war is the only time our government allows for the execution of prisoners."

Hermione turned sheet white and she slipped to her knees. "Alive?" she whispered. "They're alive?"

"Pathetic," Harry spat. "They said you had the greatest intellect since Ravenclaw, but you couldn't tell that kidnapping was wrong? We have you taking my daughter on video, Granger. You do remember what video is, don't you, you stupid cow? You and Weasley will stand trial for your crimes."

Hermione wept brokenly on her knees, crushed by the realization of what she had done, what she had allowed to happen. Both to her parents and to others.

Harry sneered at her and turned his attention back on Diggory.

"Mister Diggory, will you order your people to surrender?" Harry refused to give the man any honor by using his illegal title.

Diggory stared at Harry defiantly for a long moment and the tension levels in the Great Hall rose as the two men stared at each other.

"Minister, you can't be seriously considering this!" Ron shouted, then he turned and glared at Marie. "This is all your fault! None of this would have happened if you had just accepted your position in the school!"

Marie cringed back in her seat and her Djinn moved forward, putting itself between Ron and Marie. The tall creature stared at Ron and he quailed under its gaze.

"Weasley," Harry said softly. "As you can plainly see, my daughter is more than capable of defending herself. If she allowed it, her guardian would tear the castle apart one stone at a time and spread the stones across all of Britain at her command. She isn't the cause of your problems. You narrow minded fools caused this all by yourselves."

Ron looked at Harry with hate filled eyes and his good hand twitched towards his wand.

"Reach for it, Weasley, and I will finish the job my wife started when she burned your fingers away. I, however, won't stop at a few pesky digits."

Ron paled and he stepped back, relaxing his hand. He had no desire to lose his other hand, or worse. Considering the look that Potter gave him he knew with certainty that he could expect no mercy from his former best friend.

Harry nodded to himself, then he turned back to Diggory. "Well? You have one minute to decide. After that, my men will disarm your people using whatever force is necessary, up to and including your deaths."

Diggory glared angrily at Harry for a moment, then he sent an appealing look to Dumbledore, who had been watching all of these events in shock. Behind Diggory, one of the Aurors pulled out his wand. "Avada..."

Three shots rang out and echoed in the Great Hall. The Auror fell bonelessly to the floor, dead from three rounds to the head at close range. The body twitched and blood pooled around it. A number of the younger students started weeping in fright and Harry knew he had to end this now before the children were damaged any further.

"Thirty seconds," Harry said coldly as the rest of his team lifted their weapons. Just to emphasize his point, he slipped loose the controls on his magic and his purple aura flared to life. Diggory stared at the glowing man, his eyes bulging in fear. The magic he felt coming off of Potter was immense.

"Disarm! Drop your wands everyone," Diggory gasped out, then he slumped to the floor, his own wand rolling from his numb fingers. He never thought he'd see this day... defeated by muggles... He shook and nearly broke into tears from the shame he felt.

For a moment the sound of wands hitting the floor and the clink of other discarded objects filled the hall.

Harry nodded with a grim smile. "Excellent. Now, if things went according to plan, we'll escort you to the Wizarding Wireless station where you can issue those same instructions to your people. Sergeant, escort Mister Diggory to his transportation."

One of Harry's team nodded, then gestured to two others. The man identified as the Sergeant kicked the wand away from Diggory while the other man pushed Diggory roughly to the ground. The third man covered both warily while Diggory was placed in handcuffs, then fitted with a magic suppressing collar.

Dumbledore shook himself from the shock he had been in and he looked at Harry. "Harry, you can not..."

"Shut up," Harry said with a sneer that would have made Snape proud. "Look around you, you blind, moronic fool! Hogwarts is conquered. Your Ministry building is now occupied by the Royal Marines. Diagon Alley is a smoking ruin and Hogsmeade is being patrolled by more Royal Marines. Every wizard that is seen is forced to disarm. If they don't, they are shot. The same thing is being repeated in every country in the world and you brought it on yourselves."

Dumbledore's expression twisted in anger and he reached for his wand. Before he could cast, he dropped his wand with a cry of pain and fell to his knees, clutching his now blistered hand. He looked up at Harry, who glowed softly in that eerie purple that marked him as the most powerful magic user on the planet. "You've become evil," Dumbledore spat.

Harry shrugged. "If I did, then I learned it from you." He gestured and two more men moved forward to place handcuffs on Dumbledore. Just as they completed that task, there was a flash of light and several guns barked. The light flashed again and Harry walked over to the ash pile that sat next to Dumbledore.

"Fawkes," he murmured. "Stupid bird! You shouldn't have interfered."

He brushed away the ashes and was unsurprised to find a baby phoenix chirping weakly in the hot ash. The amount of magic on the baby bird was impressive, and not of the bird's doing. Without thinking Harry dispelled the magic and the bird shook violently for a moment before chirping loudly at him.

Harry sat down on the floor in astonishment. "Really?" he asked breathlessly.

The bird chirped again. He grinned and carefully scooped up the tiny bird.

"Lilian Marie?" he called.

Marie grinned and ran up the aisle to reach her father. Harry wisely lifted his hand, holding Fawkes out of reach and let his daughter collide with him. He reached down and caressed her head with his free hand. "I've missed you, pumpkin," he said softly.

She choked back a sob. "I missed you, too."

"Hold out your hands," he instructed.

She cupped her hands and Harry deposited Fawkes into them. "This is Fawkes. He's a very special bird, a phoenix. The Headmaster used an evil spell to force him to stay with him and now that he's free, he says he wants to stay with you."

Marie blinked in surprise and looked up at her father. Harry ignored the gasps from the teachers and other adults. It was a long held tradition that using any spell against a phoenix without the phoenix's permission was as good as casting an Unforgivable.

"Really?" she asked breathlessly.

Harry nodded and his heart swelled with pride for his daughter. *Cyndi was going to be over the moon about this*, he thought. A phoenix was a powerful talisman in the Shaman arts. Only the very purest and best practitioners ever saw one and none had bound themselves to a Shaman in centuries.

"Really," Harry replied.

"This is so much cooler than a pony," she whispered in awe.

He breathed a sigh of relief. That was one problem solved without ending up sleeping on the couch!

"Yes, it is," he replied to her.

Harry turned his attention back to the other adults who were milling around in confusion and fear. "This is not going to be a repeat of the witch hunts of the past. As you each prove yourselves capable of acting as responsible members of society, your wand will be returned to you. The wizarding children will be allowed to keep their wands and they will be allowed to continue to learn magic. But they will also learn that they are part of a bigger picture; that we are all humans and we need to work together to solve our problems.

"Some of you, especially those that took part in the kidnapping of the children, will stand trial. Kidnapping and treason are just some of the charges you face, but you will receive a just and fair trial, where you will have adequate representation," he added, looking at Ron and Hermione. Both hung their heads in shame.

"For far too many years the Wizarding world has taken what it needed from the muggles without thought of the ramifications. It was likely that this could have continued for a number of years still, until you started taking our children."

He looked down and caressed Marie's head. She had her attention fixed on the small bird in her hands and it seemed that the two were holding a conversation.

He looked up and his expression hardened. "Your world is now exposed to the light of day. Within a few days, or weeks at the most, the governments of the world will release information concerning the Wizarding World to the world press. At the same time, we will also take steps to protect you and prevent you from being abused. Each of you will undergo a short course in what life is like as a muggle. That is another reason your wands are being confiscated, so that you will experience it first hand.

"I will warn you now. There is no room for bigotry here. We will not stand for it. If you are unwilling to change, your wand will be destroyed and you will be fitted with a collar that will suppress your magic for the rest of your life."

Harry stepped back and nodded to his Sergeant, who grinned and motioned to the others. They moved among the shocked adults, checking them for hidden objects, then they were cuffed and led away.

As that happened, the medics spread out, singling the youngest looking children first, talking to them trying to get their names. It was time to find their families and restore their memories, then reunite the children with their parents.

Harry tore his gaze from watching his men work and looked at his daughter. She now had two other little girls standing next to her and they were all cooing at Fawkes, who seemed to be preening under their attention.

He moved closer and Marie looked up at him. "Daddy, this is Cally and Katy," she said.

"Hello girls," he replied smiling gently at them.

"Are you really going to let us go home?" asked Katy tearfully. "The professors said if the muggles knew about us, they'd cut us up to see how magic worked." She looked at Harry with huge eyes and her lower lip quivered.

Harry knelt down and wiped a tear from Katy's cheek. "No one is going to hurt you, sweetheart. First, we're going to take an airplane ride to a place where Marie's mom is waiting for us. Once there, we're going to find out as much as we can about your parents and we're going to find them. After that, we're going to give them back their memories and bring them to you," he said with a smile. "If I had to guess, you will probably see your parents in a day or two. In the meantime, Marie will be with you, as will her mum and I. We'll make sure nothing bad happens to you."

"See? What did I tell you?" asked Marie. "I said my Daddy would come for us all."

The two girls nodded and looked at Harry with awe.

Harry stood and conjured a small carrying cage for Fawkes. He handed the cage to Marie and she carefully placed the little bird inside.

"Come on girls, let's go home," he said softly.

Marie took his hand and Cally took his other hand, while holding on to Katy's. Harry led them from the Great Hall as a company of Royal Marines moved in to occupy the building. The war wasn't over, but his part of it was. He had rescued his daughter and the others and that was all that mattered.

In the days that followed, pockets of resistance were ruthlessly crushed, but they were few and far between. The British Wizarding World had suffered a terrible blow when the muggles had stormed Hogwarts and taken their children. Many parents gave up without a fight because former Minister Diggory told them that if they wanted to be reunited with their children, they would have to surrender.

Most of the children were returned to their parents in very tearful reunions. For Marie, she had found lifelong friends in Cally and Katy. It came as a complete surprise to everyone when Cyndi discovered that Marie was teaching Cally and Katy Shamanism, and they were capable of performing the magic.

Before a month had passed, the war was over and the press was buzzing about the magical folk that had hidden themselves away from the rest of the world. Britain passed several strict laws concerning the use of magic and the treatment of magical people. With the laws in place, it was possible to prevent the expected backlash against the wizards.

This isn't to say that everything went smoothly everywhere. It didn't and human nature reared it's ugly head on several occasions. But on the whole, the integration of muggle and magical went smoother than anyone could have suspected.

Harry Potter never returned to Hogwarts in his lifetime. Knighted by the crown, he eventually became the Royal Wizard and Headmaster of the Royal Academy of Magic and Science. He and Cyndi went on to have one more child, another daughter. Together, they worked tirelessly to ensure that magical children received a balanced education.

Thanks to his powers, he had control over both his and Cyndi's lifespan. In time and with her agreement, they withdrew from the public's view and waited to go on their next great adventure. They had been together for nearly one hundred and sixty years and no longer wanted to watch their children and grandchildren go on before them.

Albus Dumbledore and Lord Voldemort became minor footnotes in the history of Harry James Potter, the first real Royal Wizard since Merlin. His fame would pass into legend and, despite his wishes, his tale would continue down through the ages. Harry had achieved the immortality that Voldemort craved.

History would record the war between the muggles and the wizards as the Great Unification. There was no doubt that both sides benefited greatly once the war was over.

FINI