

Chapter 34

“Get ready,” Moody said, leveling his wand at the doorway.

Just outside the room, they could hear the sound of dozens of footsteps as Avery and the other Death Eaters surrounded the room. One tried to dart across to the other side of the doorway, but Moody and Connie reacted the moment they saw a flutter of robes. The man was hit with two Bludgeoning Hexes that folded him in half and sent him flying across. With a crash, he hit the living room wall and fell to the ground unconscious.

“Idiots,” Avery muttered.

They heard a hiss, and the doorway started to fill with thick grey smoke. Everyone tensed as they heard people rush around to get into position. Moody gazed around the room until he laid eyes on a wooden chair sitting against the wall. Levitating it, he moved it in front of the doorway before banishing it lightly. Just as the chair vanished into the smoke, Moody hit it with a bright red curse.

A loud, vicious explosion ripped the chair apart and sent splinters in all directions. Connie and Dorea put up a shield to protect the office, but the Death Eaters weren't so lucky. No one could see what had happened, but they could hear the screams ring out from the living room.

“My leg!” one of them yelled, bringing a smirk to Moody's lips.

“Shut up!” Avery barked. “You're running out of tricks, old man! Surrender now, and the Dark Lord will give you a quick death!”

Moody laughed loudly, his bright blue eyes gleaming.

“I’m just getting’ started, lass!” he yelled back. “You’ve still gotta come through this door!”

As he spoke, the smoke cleared from the doorway. Narcissa’s eyes narrowed when she spotted the tip of a shoe poking out from around the door frame. Leveling her wand, there was a yellow flash a moment before a flaming arrow embedded itself through the shoe. The Death Eater screamed and cursed, and she could hear them fall over in their haste to get out of the way.

“Give up or I’ll set this place on fire and burn you out!” Avery shouted furiously.

“Go ahead,” Moody chuckled. “You’ll burn before we do. You think we weren’t prepared for this?”

Charlus turned to him in alarm and leaned close.

“Alastor, the charms we used aren’t that strong,” he whispered.

“But they don’t know that,” Moody whispered with a grin.

Suddenly, there was a loud crash as the front door burst open. Everyone turned to the doorway and froze. For a moment, they all feared that Harry had fallen.

“What the hell happened to you?” Yaxley asked.

“It was Potter,” A man said weakly. “Not him, the kid. He’s here. The crazy bastard set fire to the rain, then just stood there and watched while we all burned. I’ve never seen anything like it.”

“Did you kill him?” Avery asked eagerly.

“Are you mad!?” the man shouted. “Look at me! I can barely stand! He’s out there dueling the Dark Lord!”

“What about the others that were with you?” Avery asked.

“Are you deaf!?” the other Death Eater growled angrily. “He. Set. Us. On. Fire! All of us! Half of them Disappeared once we put ourselves out, and the other half are trying not to get hit by stray spells!”

While the Death Eaters continued to bicker, Moody looked at Charlus and gestured toward the mirror. Nodding in understanding, Charlus walked over.

“David, did you hear that?” he whispered.

“No,” David replied. “What’s happening?”

“Harry took out the fifty Death Eaters that were out front, and now he’s dueling Voldemort,” Charlus told him. “The ones in the house came from the backyard. I don’t know how many, but I’d say at least twenty. Maybe more. I’d tell your Aurors to avoid Apparating onto the front lawn.”

“Got it,” David said, passing along orders while the young Auror next to him blinked and mouthed the word ‘fifty?’ incredulously.

“And, please, hurry,” Charlus said. “We’re fine, but I don’t like the idea of Harry fighting that monster alone.”

“We’ll be there in just a couple of minutes,” David said. “I’m just waiting on our warders.”

Nodding, Charlus turned and walked back to his position.

“Sounds like you’re the ones that should surrender!” Moody yelled with a chuckle.

“Alastor, do you have to antagonize them?” Dorea asked.

“Do you want them to fight us or go back outside to help Voldemort?” Moody growled softly.

Dorea paused and shared a look with Charlus.

“It is quite disappointing, isn’t it?” she asked loudly. “One teenager is able to take out fifty Death Eaters and Voldemort? I thought we were supposed to be scared of them.”

“Give them a break, love,” Charlus grinned. “They’re obviously not the smartest lot. They did fall for the old charmed Wellington gag.”

“Their kids aren’t that bright either,” James added. “Remember that time we tricked Nott and Avery into sitting next to the Whomping Willow?”

“Oh, yeah,” Sirius grinned. “Flung them straight into the lake. Too bad the Giant Squid helped them out.”

Charlus smiled at the boys just as Avery let out a rage-filled scream. Dorea and Connie threw up a shield just in time to stop the Exploding Hex she tried to send into the room. It detonated just outside the room, causing the Death Eaters near the doorway to shout at her angrily.

“Shut up and get in there, or you can be the one to tell the Dark Lord we failed!” she screamed.

A moment later, two masked figures jumped in front of the doorway. The one in the front cast a glowing blue shield while the other lobbed hexes and curses into the office around it. Dorea was forced to duck back behind her bookcase for cover as the spells slammed into it. The others in the room rained down a hail of powerful hexes and curses of their own in return. The man holding the shield managed to stop a few before it broke. When it did, he was hit by several spells, leaving him motionless and bleeding on the floor. The witch behind him took a grazing Cutting Curse to the side as she tried to dive out of the way.

“Merlin, there’s a fucking dozen of them in there,” she told the other Death Eaters, hissing in pain. “We’re never going to get through.”

“Charlus, we’re coming,” David called out from the mirror.

Moody and Charlus turned to look back just as a wand poked around the doorframe and let loose a bright silver spell. Narcissa hit the wand with a Cutting Curse, severing it in half, but it was already too late. Before anyone could call out, the spell rocketed across the room and blasted through the stone bookcase in front of Moody. It penetrated Moody’s ankle with a sickening crunch and caused his foot to bend at an unnatural angle as he collapsed to the ground with a yell.

“Alastor!” Dorea shouted.

While the others hurled dangerous and explosive curses through the doorway in retaliation, she ran over and knelt beside him. A flick of her wand ripped the leg of his trousers up to the knee and revealed the gruesome wound underneath. Moody’s ankle was shattered, his foot dangling by the flesh as blood poured from the wound. Slowly, tendrils of silver crept up his leg under the skin.

“Bone-Exploding Curse,” Dorea told him heavily. “I’m sorry Alastor, I have to-”

“Do it,” Moody barked.

Nodding, Dorea set her jaw and slashed her wand downwards. Moody grunted and grimaced as she removed his leg just below the knee before the silver tendril could reach it. With a flick of her wand, she threw the detached limb out of the room. It landed with a wet thump, the tendrils continuing to spread live veins of quicksilver under the skin. Just as the veins reached the end of the leg, it trembled and exploded, showering the Death Eaters in shards of bone.

Dorea ignored it and worked quickly to stem the loss of blood. Once it was stopped, she levitated Moody and started moving him towards the corner where her bag was set up. Looking around to make sure no one else was hurt, she noticed James and Sirius staring at her with wide eyes and pale faces. It broke her heart that they had to see something that horrific so young.

Setting Moody down gently on the conjured mattress, Dorea started cleaning and treating his wound.

“Don’t bother with anything fancy,” Moody muttered. “Just get me in good enough shape to fight.”

“Alastor, you can’t even walk,” Dorea said, wrapping bandages around his stump.

“I can hop,” he grumbled.

“Oh, you stubborn man,” she sighed, shaking her head.

“Charlus!” David called from the mirror.

"He's busy, what is it?" Dorea asked.

"We're out back," David told her. "The Death Eaters outside are fleeing. We'll be inside in a minute."

"Good, Alastor's hurt," Dorea told him. "Everyone else is fine for now."

"We need to get ready," Moody grunted. "If we push out when the Aurors move in, we can catch the ones inside in a crossfire."

Sitting up, he twirled his wand and conjured a crude crutch. Dorea huffed and threw her arms in the air helplessly as he tried to get to his feet. Giving in, she helped him stand and hobble back over to the bookcase.

"Alright, Alastor?" Charlus asked, flinging spells at anything that moved.

"I'll live," Moody muttered.

"If it's any consolation, I think Yaxley lost an eye to part of your shin," he said with a smile.

"Serves the bastard right," Moody smirked.

"Shit, Aurors!" a Death Eater yelled. "Get out!"

"Damn it," Moody growled.

The Death Eaters started making a mass exodus out the front door. Charlus moved to leave the office, but Moody reached out to stop him.

“We need to wait for the Aurors,” he said.

“But they’re heading straight for Harry,” Charlus said urgently.

“And we can’t help him if we’re dead,” Moody growled. “I don’t want those bastards escaping anymore than you do, but we have to play this right.”

Charlus growled in frustration and slammed his fist into the bookcase. Stepping next to him, Dorea rubbed his back soothingly. It was a short but agonizing minute as they waited for the Aurors to make it to the house.

“Charlus!” Kingsley called out.

“In the office,” Charlus called back.

Keeping his wand down, he walked out of the room, carefully followed by the others.

“I’ll get Moody to St. Mungo’s,” Elizabeth said, reaching into her robes.

“That can wait,” Moody growled. “We need to get out front. Potter’s dueling Voldemort and what’s left of his Death Eaters just ran that way.”

“Let’s go,” Kingsley nodded.

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Harry felt the Death Eaters rush out of the house behind him as he grunted under the force of blocking one of Voldemort's curses. The man in front of him laughed, a thin, sinister grin stretching his lips.

"It's over, boy! Your family is dead!" He yelled over the pouring rain with a cackle.

Harry gritted his teeth angrily and spread his arms open. He knew Voldemort was just trying to get to him, but that didn't help the knot of worry in his stomach. With his brow furrowed in concentration, he froze the rain as it fell and levitated it in place. Turning the sharp points of the raindrops to face away from him like ten thousand tiny spears, Harry clapped his hands together.

With a growl, Voldemort raised a shield. The frozen droplets shattered on impact, turning into tiny flakes of ice in the air. But instead of bouncing back, they flowed around the shield, clinging to the Dark Lord's soaked robe. His red eyes widened in alarm as his robe froze while more ice continued to impact his shield.

"My Lord, Aurors!" one of the Death Eaters shouted.

"Kill the boy!" a woman yelled. "Avada Kedavra!"

As Harry felt the curse racing towards his back, he twisted out of the way. Voldemort's eyes filled with fear as it continued straight towards his chest. Harry's spell stopped pelting his shield, and he desperately jumped out of the way, his icy robes cracking. The move made the Killing Curse miss him by just millimeters and put him directly in the path of Harry's hastily cast Piercing Hex.

“Ahh!” Voldemort screamed as the writhing red hex penetrated his abdomen.

The Death Eaters gasped in shock as Voldemort fell to one knee, blood pouring from between his fingers as he held his stomach. Looking up at Harry with a seething red glare, he Disapparated out of the way of the far more deadly curse heading his way. Just behind where he had been, the sodden earth exploded.

“Leave!” someone shouted.

Behind him, Harry could hear fighting between the arriving Aurors and the remaining Death Eaters, but he ignored it. Voldemort was still close. He could feel it.

Voldemort reappeared behind him, unleashing a dark and powerful Exploding Curse at the house that Harry’s friends, family, and the Aurors were still pouring out of. In the blink of an eye, Harry Apparated in front of the curse, a shield already forming from the tip of his wand. Voldemort appeared next to him a moment later, a triumphant smirk on his face and his wand leveled at his chest.

“Avada Kedavra!”

Several voices shouted out his name in fear as Harry deflected the orange Exploding Curse upwards and extended his hand toward the Killing Curse. The spell feared around the world shattered against his palm harmlessly. Pieces of the curse fell around him, burning bright green despite the damp ground.

Voldemort took a step back fearfully, the tip of his wand trembling.

“Who are you?” he asked.

“Death,” Harry hissed.

Voldemort’s eyes widened. Harry whipped his wand forward, a fiery whip extending from the tip. A split second before it reached him, Voldemort vanished, and Harry could sense that, this time, he wasn’t coming back. Lowering his wand, he turned and breathed a sigh of relief when he saw everyone rushing towards him.

“Is everyone alright?” he asked just as Lily slammed into him and hugged him tightly.

“Alastor’s hurt, but the rest of us are fine,” Dorea told him.

“How bad?” Harry asked, giving Bellatrix and Narcissa brief hugs before making his way over.

Spotting Moody in the crowd with his crutch, he looked down and frowned at the sight of his missing leg.

“It’s just a scratch,” Moody shrugged.

Harry flicked his wand towards the sky, and the rain stopped. As the Aurors bustled about under David’s orders, securing the Death Eaters they’d managed to capture, he knelt in front of Alastor to examine his leg. Waving his wand over the air where the rest of his leg should have been, silver poured from the tip, giving him the same kind of limb Voldemort had given Pettigrew in the Graveyard.

Moody grunted in surprise and tested it gingerly. His eyebrows raised in surprise when he was able to wiggle his toes.

“I’ll be damned,” he said, dropping his crutch to the ground. “It feels real.”

"I've never heard of a spell like that," Dorea said in awe, examining it closely.

Bending down, she poked the tip of her wand to the top of the foot and looked up when Moody grunted in surprise.

"You felt that?" she asked, amazed. "This is incredible. Harry, where did you learn this?"

"I'll tell you later," Harry said.

He had no intention of letting the paranoid old Auror know that it was possible to curse this kind of limb. David joined them a moment later with a troubled look on his face.

"You alright, Harry?" he asked.

"I'm fine," Harry nodded.

"Good," David said. "Unfortunately, most of the Death Eaters got away. We only arrested eleven, and none of them are anyone important. You didn't happen to catch any names or see any faces, did you?"

Harry shook his head.

"We did," Moody said. "Imelda Avery, Corbin Yaxley, Marion Crabbe, Harold Goyle, and someone named Gibbon."

“Gibbon?” David asked, pulling a notepad out of his pocket and writing down the names. “I’ll get warrants issued for their arrest as soon as I can. Some of them might be hard to get. Avery, Crabbe, and Goyle have a lot of connections in the Wizengamot.”

“I’m sure it’ll work out,” Harry said as they shared a look.

“Harry, you should go get some rest,” Charlus said. “I’m sure the Wizengamot will call an emergency meeting in the morning.”

“I wish I could, but we arrested Malfoy and about two dozen Werewolves at the Den earlier tonight,” Harry sighed.

“What happened?” Dorea asked worriedly.

“Malfoy threatened one of our guards into using Ward-Breaking Stones,” Harry told her. “They brought down the Wards, and then the Werewolves tried to attack. It’s fine, though. They didn’t get through. After he showed up with those Stones months ago, I set up multiple layers of Wards. We trapped the Werewolves and convinced Malfoy to confess.”

“Not sure if convince is the word I’d use,” David muttered with a smirk. “Will the Werewolves be safe until morning?”

“Yeah,” Harry nodded.

“Good,” David replied. “I’ll send Kingsley over to take custody of Malfoy, and we’ll pick up the rest at daybreak. Charlus, do you want the Warders to set up some basic protections for the night?”

"The Wards are still intact," Charlus told him. "Harry had me bring them down right before they broke. I could use a hand with repairs if you don't mind."

"I'll let them know," David nodded. "Anything else?"

"No," Dorea said. "Thank you, David. We appreciate all of your help tonight."

"Just doing my job," he said with a smile. "I just wish we could've gotten here sooner. If we had that mirror..."

"Oh, I'll be having a word with Crouch about that tomorrow," Charlus said stonily. "That man put my family in danger for petty reasons."

"We should get back to the Wolf's Den," Harry said. "I'll see if we can get those Communication Mirrors out on the market sooner than we planned. If this keeps up, we're going to need them."

"You girls make sure he gets some sleep," Dorea said, turning to Lily, Narcissa, and Bellatrix.

"We'll try," Lily promised.

While they took turns hugging the older woman, Charlus clapped Harry on the shoulder. Waving goodbye, they made their way back into the office and stepped through the mirror into the Wolf's Den.

"Could one of you go check on Sylvia and Amanda for me?" Harry asked.

"I will," Narcissa volunteered.

Giving him a kiss on the cheek, she disappeared downstairs. Tiredly, Harry, Lily, and Bellatrix made their way back outside.

“Harry?” Bellatrix asked. “Why didn’t you try harder to kill Voldemort? You must know deadlier spells than a Piercing Hex.”

Sighing, Harry erected a Muffliato Charm with a wave of his hand.

“I didn’t want to kill him,” Harry said. “Until I know how to finish him for good, all it will do is buy us time.”

“Isn’t that a good thing?” Lily asked, her brow furrowed in confusion.

“Not necessarily,” he told her. “It didn’t last time. Everyone just acted like everything went back to normal. I mean, yeah, that situation was different. We were on the verge of losing completely. Things aren’t ideal right now, but I don’t think they’ll ever be. If Voldemort disappeared today, most of his Death Eaters go free, and we wait around for years for him to come back. And he gets to pick the time and place. No, I think it’s better to keep him alive. Right now, we have the momentum.”

“You’re right,” Bellatrix nodded.

Lily sighed and wrapped her arm around Harry’s waist.

“I don’t like it, but I understand,” she said with a pout.

“I don’t like it either,” Harry said, rubbing her back.

As they approached an expectant McGonagall and Dumbledore, Harry prayed he was making the right choice. He needed to find a way to deal with the Horcruxes, and he needed to do it soon.