

The Final Lesson

Crouch seemed to be in an impossibly good mood when you arrive. After Avalon, you narrowly avoiding either death or a life sentence in Nurmengard due to some Ancient magic bullshit Merlin had, of course, stashed in his little hidey hole and the fact that none of what you did could be *directly* traced to you any longer. And Brighton, your rival, who stood up for you when Potter confronted you. Still a prat, but one with a good heart under all the dickhead. When Potter asked why his time turner no longer worked, you had simply asked “What time turner?”.

But after going through that, having to find good excuses for why Apollo needed half his wand hand regrown, why Linda had multiple concussions and now called her self Raven again, and Arty now had a thin, long scar from her cheek to eyebrow? Dealing with your left eye being a familiar blue and that everyone believed was always like that aside from you, your allies, and Potter? Making it out alive from that monstrous place? You were on edge.

The fact he had on the cleanest set of robes you had seen him in and had a small pot steaming on the ancient iron stove did not to sooth your paranoia. After what you found down there in the bowels of the Earth, you had that a lot. Paranoia. You and Arty both had your wands in hand before Crouch had even spoken.

“Can I interest you in tea, little birdies? Last bit I have left.”, he says with an odd smile. One with only the barest hints of madness. An almost *sane* smile.

“I wouldn’t take something from you even if it was the last bit of tea in the world, period.”

“Hahahaha. Fair enough. I wouldn’t do it if I were you either. Just wanted to be hospitable to my two favorite students on a cold rainy night before we get started. Well, my one favorite student and the stupid little whore he likes get his dick wet in. Haha!”, Barty cackled out, and both you and Arty’s wands raise up, ready to send a barrage of spells for that insult. After what Arty went through in Avalon, you would not let *anyone* insult her. Helga’s strength was ready to pour through you and after what happened to your eye, you could channel it without them going black and in an instant if you wished. Benefit of your connection being so strong since you had all but tied her to your soul with ropes when she was nearly ripped away to once more fuel one of Merlin’s despicable plans, down in a place that no longer existed.

“None of that. Not quite yet. Uncle Crouch is sorry about what he said about the little girl. Her new scar is very fetching. Would be even more so it was deep enough to take a pretty eye out. But oh well. There is always today. Now, center of the room and stretches. Haha.”

As angry as you are, as furious as Arty looked, both of you reluctantly agreed. Crouch circled around like a shark, criticizing every flaw in your forms like normal. And then there is a terrible barely sane laugh. When you spin to look back, he was smiling wide with his rotten, disgusting teeth on full display.

“Crouch what the hell ar-“, and you stop in your tracks, a terrible shiver running up your spine. He had the modified wand Potter gave him in both his hands. And he *snaped* it. Cold terrible dread fills you as Helga lends you her power before you can even ask for it. And then Bartimus Crouch Jr. brought his arms down and a far different looking wand slid into his hand.

Almost faster than you can follow he *rips* through the air with a complex motion and screams out something you can't hear as reality seems to shatter and rearrange, feeling like cold water splashing over you. Besides you, Arty's eyes are wide with shock and horror. A maniacal laugh follows, enough for the bravest girl you knew to take a step back.

“There we go little birdies. No getting in or out now. No Apparation or portkeys till I die and this wears off. Brooms gonna take quite a while to make it out this far. No Potter jumping in at the last minute to save you. Only one who can do that is you. Let's see if you are worthy to continue the Work or just two more bodies for the pile. Don't look so scared! If you die, it will at least be with a wand in your hand and not like most of the people I've killed. Best graduation present I could give to you and your slut.”, Crouch says before advancing, then going into a stance and casting as fast as you had ever seen, sending a blade of magic force toward you and Arty.

Even Potter, when you had sparred, might struggle to match him in regards to speed. You could probably dodge the *diffindo* with Helga's strengthened connection; Arty how ever had no chance. With your heighten perception, you see her beginning the movements for a shield; slow. Far to slow and weak to stop the spell heading at the both of you.

Only one choice. With a lightning-fast twirl, wand moving even before it finished, you put your self in front of her and screamed out *protego maxima!* Even pouring your power into the greater shielding spell, the impact rocks you, knocks you back a step. Even the shattered remains of the blade of force were enough to gouge the stone and cut through the wooden wall. Arty had put her hand against your back to stabilize you after you jumped in front of the spell; a small comfort in the face of certainty, irrefutable fact.

He was going to kill you both.

No. *Not if you had a damn thing to say.*

You did *not* go through hell and back just to be murdered on some no name rock.

After this long, after fighting for her life beside you in an Ancient forgotten place, you and the small girl functioned as one. Her will to live was strong as yours. Stronger even since you had discovered the hints to restoring her lifespan, healing her scarred magic.

The second you ended you *protego*, Arty was already to your side to fire off a spell.

“Bombarda!”

Crouch, fast as he was forced to stop the spell his *diffindo* was flowing into to defend, and the crazy bastard actually parries and deflects Arty’s own, sending it upward where it detonated against the shack’s ceiling, blowing a large hole in it allowing the cold rain to come in. It took incredible skill to actually parry a spell instead of just blocking it. Knowing exactly how much magic was needed to match the incoming attack, perfect timing. And a death wish to try it on a spell which would explode right in your face if you fucked up at all.

Barty may have been weakened by 20 years of being denied his magic, being starved, alone on a desolate little island or in cell, but he was still terrifying. You strongly suspect in his prime he would give Potter a run for his money. But as he was now, you and Arty had a chance.

You began moving, Arty staying close, knowing her shields would shatter from a single incanted spell from him, relying on your protection so she could tie him up and give you a chance to attack. The pair of you worked together, firing off a stream of stunners and hexes, conserving your strength with simple spells. If you lost your powers to cast, no amount of his muggle martial arts or raw violence would keep you and your lover from dying in this place.

Crouch avoided most of yours with contemptable easy, blocking the ones Arty sent, not even bothering to dodge those, all while sending his own stream of curses back with terrifying speed, strength, and

precision. You and Arty focused on dodging while making sure she was close enough that you and her could put up overlapping shields if something nasty came that you couldn't get away from. While some of these spells were being spoken, many were silent with wand movements you did not recognize so you and her moved unless absolutely required to meet the spell and stop it.

Crouch wasn't running but still moving fast, like a cat playing with its prey. Still, you had positioned him with your return fire in a place where you could maybe carve out an opening to begin pushing him back. A quick glance in her blue eyes and then to what was behind Crouch; she knew instantly the plan. Two souls in love, fighting as one was a powerful thing indeed, especially when Helga's rage at you and Arty being in danger was added to the mix.

"Carpe retractum!"

"Depulso!"

The whip of yellow light headed straight toward Crouch's wand arm this time as opposed to his leg like you had before. But he had seen this trick, easily shifting to the side his body already about to duck under the high *depulso* which was coming after. Crouch *was* smart, even insane as he was.

However...

The first rule of war was deception, as your best friend told you more than a few times. You had never intended for the whip to catch his arm. No, it was the thing behind it you wrapped the magic around, yanking with all the strength and skill Helga could lend you. Very kind to keep that pot of water on the burner so he could enjoy tea after murdering you and your future wife.

The pot of boiling water sailed past him before hitting the *depulso* and heading right back towards his face. Already in the movement to just avoid a spell aimed at his torso, he fell back, somehow keeping his feet planted despite bending almost 90 degrees; he would clear the steaming pot with ease. You had already known that; Helga accelerating your thoughts and reactions so much to be near super human. Unfortunately, Crouch *didn't* know what your favorite movie series was. That your dad had bought you a small whip to play with when you got out of the hospital after touching a transformer on a substation. And that you had practiced with it every afternoon after school, despite mom insisting you would take your eye out.

You couldn't see his eyes but would like to think they were full of shock when the pot he was sure he dodged shifted directions, was now upside down, slammed against his abdomen and torso. You were aiming for the face but seems your skills at doing whip tricks like Indiana Jones were rusty.

As resistant to pain he must be, Crouch couldn't help but lose his footing and fall. The next part of the strategy was iffy but still.

"Arty! Right!" you shout, locking eye and looking toward the left, making sure it is loud enough for Crouch to hear over the wind and rain. Naturally when Arty sends a red bolt left while Crouch was already rolling to the right while your bolt hit the ground where he just was.

You raise your wand high which the small girl mirrors, breaking away from your side, further than you could cover her, to box in the mad man. A dueling style suited to all out offence. One which gave up the chance for effective defense totally to give you more strength and speed; a form Flitwick said you should *never* use when you convinced him to show you and Arty a few things. You knew it was risky, but if this could work, you could finish the fight or at least weaken him enough no more clever plans would be needed.

Barty leapt back to his feet with an *acendio* as you position yourselves, firing a spell while in the air which you dodge as narrowly as you can, to keep your angle on him. Then you and Arty unleash hell on him. The quickest spells you knew, simple ones, and silent ones. The scald was distracting him just a bit, his response is slowed enough a couple clip him though none of them would disable the man. Bolt after bolt rain down from you and the tiny girl's wands and, the man snarling he is pushed back just a hair. More than enough; you draw on Helga's power to keep up the assault. Arty did her part to keep him from moving any direction but backwards. And then his defense gave and he cast a Prismatic shield to catch his breath and plan.

You know even the most powerful *Laggan* you or her could push out wouldn't to crack a shield cast by someone like Crouch. *But* there is another spell, one uniquely suited to destroying shields. And if a drenched man standing in a pool of water takes it? You can't help but smile. Potter may be a bastard and Brighton still an asshole but you were more than happy to learn from them. You make a tiny lightning bolt sign subtly in Arty's direction. And she moves back beside you, wand down lower so she could stun and hopefully revive you if Helga wasn't able to help you tame the power of the sky gods of old.

This was dangerous, risky, but you could already feel the exhaustion setting in and Arty was sweating and breathing too hard. Neither of you could keep this up. And if one of you went down, the chances of you two surviving this went from slim to nonexistent. And you had *faith* in the girl once known as Faith.

“You can’t stay in there and hide forever Crouch! Potter is probably almost here with a dozen Aurors to do what he should have 20 years ago, put you down like the rabid beast you are!”, Arty shouts, buying you a moment to down a Maxima and place a Girding potion in her pocket.

“Hahaha. Elliot’s slut has teeth. Hope they don’t hit the shaft when you are sucking him off! I’m not hiding, just planning on how to make this more fun. Should I kill him first and make you watch? Other way around? I truly am blessed by my Lord to have such choices, *little dead girl.*”, Crouch belts out, almost recovered by his steady voice.

“Not dead yet! I hate men who can’t fulfill promises!”, Arty cries out, trying to give you a moment more.

Now or never. You pool your magic, hold it in so you can release it in a flood to destroy your enemy; Crouch would regret being such a good teacher. Fool, never give someone the means to defeat you. You weren’t sure where that was from but Linda was a strong proponent of it; so were you at this point.

“MULFULGAR!”

The fist of an angry god flies from your wand with a sound matching the thunder outside, blue and purple and terrible. It is probably the most power you have ever put into a single cast, the potion and Helga strengthening it far beyond what should be possible, even as it quickly burns through the Maxima and begins eating into your stores of power like a hungry beast; a living writhing serpent of destruction. It almost wants to push you back but instead you advance forward in inches.

The beam crackles, dancing over the powerful shield, arcs reflecting off in every direct but backwards. Lightning would not allow itself to return to where it came from. The smell of ozone intensifies, you endure the drain, Helga propping you up.

Finally, after several seconds, the shell cracks and then shatters, stream punching through right toward Crouch; he was impossibly fast but not faster than an arc of plasma like this. It strikes the sopping wet man standing in a pool of rainwater right in the chest, holding on to him for a moment before blowing him backward several feet and then continuing to pour out. Arty’s wand is right next to your chest as sweat pours from your brow as you attempt to tame the beast you set loose. It takes Helga and all your will to finally force your hand down and shut the gates of your magic. When the spell breaks, you are panting and dripping cold sweat.

“Did...did we get him Arty... is he?” , you choke out.

“He isn’t moving Elliot, I can’t tell if his chest is rising. But he hasn’t gotten back up. He just took a lightning bolt to the chest... How could he be... but I’ll go and check.”, Arty says looking a bit less exhausted due to the Girding Potion she had chugged while you were busy tossing the wrath of God at the man now on the floor.

“Arty, no, just give me a second and I will-“

“No. You need to recover. I know what that spell can do. That was the most magic I have ever seen you use at one time. And you gave me your potion. I’ve already put this asshole on the ground twice. Just watch my back, okay?”, Arty says planting a sweaty, grimy kiss on your lips, then walking toward what you hope is the corpse of Barty and hitting him with a Stunner in his lower abdomen.

You can’t argue with Arty. She is strong. You trust her. So you just follow behind, wand covering her. When she makes it to his unmoving body, she warily taps it a few times with her foot and turns towards you.

“I think we got him, he isn- Ahhhh!” she screams out, Crouch’s body suddenly comes to life, hand wrapping around her ankle and yanking, putting Arty on the ground. You react as quickly as your tired body and magic allow, firing a *depulso*, not at him but her to get Arty away from the madman. She skids a few feet away out of his grasp; by the time your focus returns to him he is already halfway up, wand pointed at you.

“Haha, very good birdie, controlling a spell like that. But always confirm your kill. Unless- **AVADA KEDAVRA!**”, he yelled and a sickly green bolt is heading towards you. The only thing that saves you is Helga, tired as she is pulling a leg from under you so the bolt sails over your head.

By the time you can get back on your feet, bring your wand to bear, a *stupefy* burning in your mind ready to return fire with, Crouch was already behind Arty, struggling with her; with them moving like this, there was no way you could get a shot off. All you could do was watch, wand at the ready. All you could do was watch when wand still in hand, he twisted and ripped your girlfriend’s wrist in a way that forced her to let go of her wand before the sadistic monster went further and a sickening wet crack sounded in the partially destroyed shack, and Arty’s hand was now in an abnormal position while Crouch just laughed.

Arty was brave, braver than you by far. And she was tough, even if her body was more frail than a witch's should be. You had rarely heard more than a hiss or grunt of pain from her even when in her battles she had been tossed against trees, hit with fire, sliced with blades of razor-sharp force.

Now? She *screamed*.

Stunned from having her wrist broken in half, Crouch simply brought his wand right against her neck.

"Impedimenta majoris!"

Your tiny witch's struggles stopped almost entirely, she could still shift her arms and legs, just a hair, turn her head some but those movements were weak as a new born kitten's. This wasn't a spell that locked the body up like *petrificus*... this spell was for a man who wanted his victim to be able to *squirm* while he killed them. Arty was strong, you knew that but her eyes were filled with fear now.

"This is going to be my last meal, Ellie-loo. So I intent to enjoy it. Torture this stupid whore while you watch. Kill her right in front of you. Then move on to you, birdie. We should still have plenty of time before anyone can reach my humble abode, enough for me to get my fill. *Hahahahaha!*" Crouch said, wand never leaving Arty, left arm holding her tight in a foul parody of the way you had embraced her in the past.

"Crouch! Get your filthy fucking hands off her you monster! Fight me like a man! Now!", you scream, beginning to slowly advance toward him, Helga's fury in the back of your mind, pushing more and more power into you. Sharpening your skills like a knife so you could use it to save your tiny, fierce love from this mad man.

"Aah, aah. Keep your wand raised if you think it would help. But one more step and I cut her throat and let all that beautiful crimson flow across little girl's body. 30 seconds to bleed out from a slit throat. Or I just blow her brains all over you, no open casket then! Who knows, maybe Potter-boy will get here faster than I think? Could rush in and save both of you? But for now, enjoy the show. I truly am kind to give you entertainment before you *die*.", he says, wand now close the side of her chest.

"Elliot- help, please...", your lover says, voice weak from the spell.

*“Crucio! Crucio! **Crucio!**”*

She howled. Screamed. Cried out in utter agony, even weak as her voice was. Her limbs jerked weakly and her blue eyes went to pinpricks before rolling up in her head slightly. A small pool of yellow liquid began to form between her legs, as she screamed between the spells.

“No! Arty! Hang on, please!”, you shouted, horrified. Horrified and *enraged*, Helga’s own fury and disgust joining together with yours as she looked on, helpless as you, while Arty was tortured again and again for minutes, paralyzed with the knowledge Barty could just as easily turn that curse into a green bolt instead of the red lightning he was using.

He stopped after using the Torture Curse again and again, instead placing the tip of his wand directly over Arty’s chest and using a silent spell with a sick yellow tint to the burst of power, one you couldn’t recognize by sight. And for a brief moment it looked like some melting spell, some acid conjuration which would eat through her as she cried, shaking weakly; it was almost worse.

From the point of his wand, Arty’s clothes began to fall apart, rotting away, turning into dust as it spread to every item touching the one it originated on. You screamed, and tried to get a single line of sight on him but he held Arty like a shield in front of him. Crouch pointed his wand at his left hand while it was across Arty’s throat and it grew the same claws he had give you 4 scars with across your chest with, while your girlfriend had her clothes were destroyed.

The spell on Arty spread quickly, taking everything it could including her bright green bra and matching underwear, until she was completely exposed in Crouch’s arms. He brought his talon’d left hand down, across her chest, and grabbed onto her small breast and began squeezing again and twisting, pushing his claws into the skin until small lines of red began forming, as Arty fought weakly and cried out as loud as she could.

“No, no- stop please stop please Im-please no... Elliot! Help m- augh. No not ag- Stop! I don’t want- no no, it hurts, it hurts!” she screams out as loudly as her body will let her, going almost limp.

Your knees weaken for a moment, almost shifting you from the stance you were holding, the one which could be the most accurate with spells; the only one you could think of which might let you out speed the giggling manic and let you save Arty, if you could get even a small opening.

“Crouch! Don’t! Stop doing that to her! Stop it you cowardly worm!”, you call out.

“No. *I don’t think I will.* You know, seeing this little birdie in clothes, I thought you might have just been a pederast and she was just pretending to be a girl, Ellie-loo, but it turns out little girl has tits and a cunt after all, *hahaha!* And I did promise a show before killing you, little birdie.”

A minute of continuing to brutalize Arty’s small breast with his wand back up point at you now and her going almost catatonic from pain, with tears running down her face, his clawed hand shifts downward, sharp filth encrusted nails carving red lines that stretched from her already bruising breast across her chest, down to past her navel. Arty was suddenly struggling once again, tear filled eyes widening as her flesh was carved into. His hand went between her legs. Arty was trying and failing to move, close her legs any at all to stop him. You had to look on as his disgusting clawed fingers wrapped around and down. And then there was a scream worse than when the tiny girl had been crucio’d as he roughly forced them in to her and back out again over and over, blood pouring out, cackling all the while.

And then?

Something snapped then. In *you*. A sound, a feeling like crystal shattering on the ground again and again forever echoed in your mind. Like a steel girder being rent in half. Like the world shattering. And your rage, hotter than even when Taylor was killed by Salazar from seeing Arty hurt, tortured, violated by the insane filthy man; it crystalizes for you. No, not a *man*. Not a *wizard*. Not a *human*. Less than that. The tears falling down your face silently ceased. They wouldn’t fix a damn thing would they? Why even shed them? The tension in every part of you disappeared, replace with something else. Understanding washed over you. What had to be and *would* be done. Icy hate had filled your veins, clearing your mind to make it colder, crueller, sharper.

Many things were about to happen very quickly and yet, seeing your beautiful Hufflepuff Fury’s eyes glaze over, your tiny badger give up hope, suffering like this? It was far, far too slow as well.

“Helga. I need you. Help me. Guide my wand. Force the threads of fate through a key hole, the same as you had tried when trying to predict McGonagall’s moves before. Force my body to move faster, better like at the rink. Everything and anything. I don’t care how much it might damage me. And if you will never aid me again after this? I will pay the price in full.”, you say mentally, quickly as your already accelerated thoughts would allow. Because even another second meant your one true love being harmed more, more pain and humiliation and helplessness. The chance Crouch would just get bored and kill her growing every moment.

“Elliot! *No!* I know what you plan on doing... I know how bad she is hurting! But if we just hold out Potter will make it here. I know... this is horrid, disgusting...I want to take your body, maybe I could make it before he killed her, but I can't. I want this to stop! No one... no one deserves this... what is happening... I... We can find another way! Please don't ask this of me, you don't understand what it will do to you. Arty is strong, she can endure, she will recover! We can stall, try to use another spell, goad him, get him away from her and fight... something...anything.”, She says pleading, sick. She could see what was being done to the bloody, scared, and screaming girl. Shared your eyes, looking on as reality became *horror*. As *terror* turned into truth.

“**No.** This ends here. Not a second fucking more than I need to stop this. Not another moment of her being hurt like this. Not a second more of him *existing*, Helga. I will not allow it! **Elliot Hallaster will not allow it!**”, you mentally shout, voice in your mind cold but filled with fury hotter than *fiendfyre*. Harder than goblin silver. Colder than the dark space between stars; far, far colder than even the void.

And the hatred you feel flows endlessly, as if a dam inside you had broken.

“I-I am so sorry, Elliot. Arty-what you are going to do. I... will help you, put all the power I can into this but... I *have* used it too. I know what it will do to your soul forever... I am so sorry, Elliot. Tell me what you need. So, so sorry...”

“Where his head will be in a few seconds. Where he will aim his own spell. If Arty will shift to the left or right. And all the speed and power you can lend me.”, you tell the woman sharing part of your very soul, calmly in spite of the rage, even as Arty is screaming and begging.

“Nooooo! Noo...please no more, it hurts, please... please it hurts, stop... not again, not again, I'll be good, I will do what you want! Don't do this, don't make me again, make it stop, no, no! Oww, ahhh hah...”, she says sobbing, head stooped over, barely even trying to fight any more, blood pouring from between her legs, before looking up weakly, meeting your eyes, one green the other blue. Both now cold and focused.

Crouch briefly puts his wand back against her, touching Arty's ribs and whispering *crucio* once more and her pleas are replaced with screams from a throat that can barely function, a mouth hardly able to form words any more.

“Elliot..... Uhg....Elliot...please, make it stop... please... kill me... make it stop, please. I... love y-you, but please make it stop.”, Arty begs, panting and sobbing in a tone you will never, not in a 1000 years let her use again.

“No. Look at me. **Look at me.**”, you tell her. When Crouch shifts his head, wand pointed towards you, you nod downwards. Extend three fingers on your left hand. Move your own wand from its high position just barely. Lock eyes with her, and mouth three simple words. Your connection, the bond you shared with the bruised, tear and blood soaked girl... she knew what to do. And the faraway look and terror in her beautiful blue eyes fades just some even while the monster behind her keeps abusing her in the most hideous of ways with his free hand; Arty nods slightly, just enough.

Slowly, your fingers curl back up. One by one...

“Arty is going to collapse forward in two seconds, in two and a half, Crouch’s head will be 16 inches to his right, three inches back, turned towards you 13 degrees. He will use a silent spell, aimed directly towards your heart... Let me guide your...your wand Elliot.”, the kindest woman in the world says with a barely contained sob.

“Guide my wand Helga. Even if after this, it will be the last time. And I am sorry too. But I have to make it stop.”

As your last finger retracts, Arty is already falling forward, the remnants of her struggles ceased completely and any tension in her back gone, body weight yielding to gravity, trust complete. Crouch reacts immediately seeing you in motion; he is quicker with the spell but it doesn’t matter. You had a head start, were moving before Arty’s fall even began. He shifted his head and torso away, believing he knew where you would aim. Should *have* aimed. His own spell was aimed where you *should* have been, could only have been in any in *every* possible timeline. But it didn’t matter; you had altered what should have been already with Helga’s help. And when your cast turned part way through into a dancer’s half spin, you were not there anymore and the green bolt would miss by centimeters. As your own spell flew, his head was already moving inexorably to where it was going. Even as his unnatural reflexes tried to stop the movement as he saw the bolt flying towards him, all they did was cause him to be exactly where you wanted. Time and fate had *twisted*. *Were* twisted by you and Helga. Possibility, however faint, had become **certainty** by your hand.

“AVADA KEDAVRA!”

The emerald bolt slams into Crouch's face, rocking it and he instantly goes limp, remaining upright for just a moment before toppling backwards. Arty was too weak from his spell to move from her folded over position, besides the small sobs and twitching from her limbs. Some soft cries. As soon as you recover from the drain of the Killing Curse, you reach into your pack. You didn't have any more Gridding potions but a Strengthening would help some; you knocked it back while moving, tossing the bottle away to the sound of glass shattering in a corner of the freezing, damp shack.

The second you made it to Arty, confirmed Crouch was still and silent, you forced out the strongest *Finite Incantatem* you could as Helga's power still trickled through you and broke the horrid spell he had used to keep her from struggling *too* much. Her first response was to grab on to her broken, dislocated wrist and cry out, louder than before. Your first response was picking her up in a bridal carry, moving slowly, then quickly away from Crouch's corpse, stopping briefly to allow Arty to grab her wand which had been tossed away. She held onto the simple piece of wood tightly, holding it instead of her savaged wrist, so hard her knuckles were white. You kept your wand trained on the body of Bartemus Crouch Jr. until you made it across the shack, near the small iron stove where you set your trembling girlfriend down.

With a quick *accio* you gathered up a few small pieces of wood which you placed in the stove, turning the small flame into a fair-sized blaze and removed your robe so you could drape it over the shivering bleeding body of your love. Crouch...

He had survived a bolt of elemental fury hitting him in the chest. Been unaffected by a stunner... you had seen that one before fighting Salazar. Who said he couldn't survive the Killing Curse due to some bullshit, like Potter had done?

"Arty, here. I... have to fix your wrist before I can start healing you, give you a Wigenweld... If I don't it could start to mend wrong... they would have to break it again to fix it right... this should help with the pain, okay? Alright?", you saw as she shrinks in and gives a quite mewling sob when you mentioned her wrist. Stupid Elliot. Another part of you shatters when she flinches away.

You reached down to nearly the bottom of your pouch with shaking fingers and brought out a small vial with a pair of leaves rolled together and held in place with a small drop of sap. Something you very much should not have, a gift Brighton had given you, taken from the restricted, secret part of the green houses. A powerful and very addictive analgesic, ingredients you had planned on using to brew an enhanced healing draught. But they worked well enough for pain on their own, assuming you didn't take enough to stop your breathing.

“Arty, you need to chew these, keep them in your cheek. It will help when I fix you up, make you feel better. Can you do that for me?”

All you get from the traumatized young girl are a few soft squeaks while she tries to curl up closer to the stove, deeper into your robe.

“It’s okay. We got this. I will do it for you. All you have to do is not swallow them, okay? Help is on the way, Arty. Its going to be okay, we will go to St. Mungo’s together, it will all be okay.” you say to reassure her, even if you only halfway believed yourself. Depending on a few things, you might end up committing another murder tonight, when Potter got here. Might be the victim of one.

You placed the leaves in you own mouth, crushing them between your teeth for a second; even that was enough for them to have some effect, southing the bruises and strains from the fight. A full dose should make healing Arty’s wounds somewhat tolerable at least. Kneeling down, you gently shifted her head, comforted her slightly and kissed her. She almost fought if before stopping herself as you pushed the slightly macerated leaves into her mouth. They were bitter and both of your mouths would be blue tinged from the juices for a day but still Arty accepted it. Raising back up, you once more warned her to not swallow them.

“I’ll be right back, okay Arty? Just a few moments, alright I-“, you began then stopped as a small left hand still clutching a wand grabbed onto your pants leg.

“No... please... please don’t go, I’m scared. Please.”

“I-“, and words fail. Looking down, Arty’s small body shaking. A small trickle of blood pooling between her legs even though your robe is far too large, large enough it almost swallows her. Her pained, frightened look.

All you can do is just hold her hand, tiny and far colder than it should be for a moment, before moving it, detaching it from your pant’s leg. She didn’t even fight back. And your hatred once more crystalized.

Crouch, he had done something to the only girl you would ever love to make her like this. Small, weak, frightened, desperate. Hurt her, humiliated her. Made the fiercest Witch you knew, the bravest seem so small...

Lord Hallaster wouldn't fix this. Neither could Dark Lord Hallaster or Bright Lord Hallaster. Childish nick names for what was always there. The one who would fix this. Only *Elliot Hallaster* could do what was required in the end. *Elliot Hallaster* would be the one to make sure a monster in human skin was dead. To make sure Arty would be okay; hurt her to fix her. He would be the only one there when Potter shot a 16 year old boy in the head for using the Killing Curse. And he would be the one who gave him the finger the entire time.

"Arty, Arty... I will be back in a few seconds. I have to make sure he is down for good. Okay? But I need you to watch my back, keep your wand up, cover my six, okay? I trust you; I know you can do it. Don't move your right arm, just keep your wand up okay? And then... we can start fixing you up, alright? Help is coming, we will go to the hospital together, get all patched up. See if we can't share one of the oversized beds they have for especially fat wizards, haha.", you tell her, laugh hollow. Ice in your chest.

"O-okay. Please come back please I need you..."

"Yeah, yeah I will. I love you, Arty. Just be strong for a bit longer.", you tell her as Arty grips her wand as well as she can with her off hand; casting with your non dominate had was difficult in the best of times and hurt as badly as your she was? It was just to give her something to do, something to focus on besides the pain and being violated by the old Death Eater. Used as a human shield. Used to hurt someone she loved with her own suffering.

After a few steps, you allowed the hate to take you once more. While your fury burned so hot you though it might scald you, *that* part was still cold as ice. *Perfectly* cold.

"AVADA KEDAVRA".

The sickly green bolt hit the body on the floor and it didn't even jerk. Still as you approached you used it again, nearly swaying from the magical expenditure.

"AVADA KEDAVRA."

The first time, it had been hard to cast. The second time, easy. The third? Easier still. It was just as you looked down at Crouch's smiling face, prepared to use it a fourth time that a sobbing voice echoed in the back of your mind and stopped you.

“Elliot! Stop! Please... He is dead. Please stop. Arty is hurt, she needs you. Don’t waste your magic on a dead man. Please, please stop.”, Helga begs, voice tinged with tears.

“Hahaha...Yeah. Yeah you are right, Helga. And besides, Potter did say something about using spells when muggle means would suffice.”, you reply, while reaching down and grabbing the wand still lying next to Crouch in your left hand. Taking in the fact his robes and shirt seemed to be lined with leather. *No*. Hide. Troll. Dragon? Graphorn? Who knew? But he was wearing the wizard equivalent of body armor and that is why a lightning bolt to the chest didn’t stop him. Why Arty’s stunner didn’t work.

For a moment you just stared. Taking it in, his wand. Old, well used. Nothing like the brand-new gimped wands Potter had given him. His expensive yet soiled robes and shirt. Interesting facts.

And then you drove the ten inches of hardened wood down with all the strength you had, all the power your potion still lent you, straight through Bartemus Crouch Jr.’s right eye.

It took a moment; to break through the orbital bones but then? You felt it snap off at the tip as it hit the back of his skull. You *swirled*. And laughed. The ice, it had given you a certain clarity. You were about to throw a large portion of your remaining reserves into a blade of dark force, to take his head off, make sure the job was done when your body jerked away; Helga pushing her power to the limit to stop you.

“*Stop!* Please... go to Arty. Help her. Defacing the body of this monster isn’t going to do anything other than make you feel better. And I don’t think, no, I *know* it wouldn’t even do that.”

“I... fuck. Yeah. We got him. Yeah, I need to be there, get back to her. Sorry.”, you say with in your mind, the ice once more melting, painfully until only the shard left in your heart was all that remained. Helga doesn’t respond, as you rush back to the small girl. She still has her wand up but its tip is shaking terribly. Along the way you had grabbed a couple of small pieces of shattered wood, roughly equal in size. You were not great at transfiguration and exhausted; the closer to the final form the better.

Tapping each of the rotten wooden planks with your wand and muttering a simple spell, you kneeled before Arty. Pulled out the last Wigenweld from your pouch. Took off you tie and belt, setting them to the side.

“A-are you feeling any better? I’m sorry. So sorry I had to leave you alone. And... This-this is going to hurt, Arty. A lot. I have to put your arm back in position, use a charm to set your wrist. Then I can give

you a potion, try and work on the other wounds...”, you say hating every word. What you are going to have to do to help her.

All you get is a tiny nod of affirmation, a small word you can't quite make out but sounds like 'Okay'.

“Alright. This will work. B-bite down on the belt. Try and stay relaxed. I will do it on three. Try not to swallow the leaves, okay? One, two,” and you yank her arm forward with a sick pop as Arty screams through the leather and hold it there with one hand and brought your wand close.

“Brackium Emendo!”

As fast as you can you position the pair of now identical pieces of wood on the top and bottom of her wrist, holding them tight while your other hand begins to loop your tie around the make-shift splint. It takes more than a few seconds but you manage to get the tiny girl's wrist stabilized; enough you can take out the belt and pour a Wiggeweld potion between her lips. Even as you cradled her swollen and bruised wrist in your off hand. As you are sick with yourself at hurting her like this. But it was necessary to help her. How many villains in history had motivations that were similar? You would laugh if not for the small girl enduring agony in front of you. So instead, you just hold her for a few moments, until she had calmed down from having her wrist and arm messily fixed by a boy who knew next to nothing about field medicine.

“I'm sorry, so sorry Arty. It, it should feel better soon. Start to mend with the potion. I-I need to open the robes up some, check on the other injuries. We can't heal them all the way; I am not a trained doctor... If I mess up, there will be scars. They can't fix something already healed. So all I can do is some first aid... I am so sorry.”, you tell her one hand rubbing her back gently and the other holding her non-broken hand as it held on for dear life to her wand.

What you saw... it wasn't pretty. Her right breast was a mess of bruises and small punctures from Crouch's talons, ones that still leaked blood. Going down from there, four bright red lines, trying to heal; you strongly suspected the spell he used to turn his hand into that monstrous claw might have a dark component. The fact your own wounds had scarred so much was a testament to that fact.

Beyond that... Arty's inner thighs were covered in partially dried blood, lacerations still visible, a small fresh trickle of blood still leaking from her vagina. If... if you hadn't seen true horror before, met what could only be called a demon before, you think at that moment, you would have vomited. Frozen up. But you had and so did not. You assessed. Planned and began acting.

“O-okay. Its fine. Help is on the way. Don’t-don’t stare too much. It isn’t as bad as it looks. You aren’t going to die from any of this. I-I can put a band-aid on this, make them not hurt so much. Keep you warm. When we get to the hospital, they can fix you up all the way. Like it never happened”.

“Vulnera Sanentur.”

“Vulnera Sanentur.”

“Episky.”

“I don’t have any Dittany... I cant heal them more. I don’t even know if that is the best spell to use... Fuck, fuck...”, you say, trying to stay strong in front of Arty.

“Should have tried to intern with Pomfrey. Fuck me, fuck me. Stupid, stupid.”, your magic burning, heart heavy and feeling like it was icing over.

And then a small hand touched one of your own. One that was now warm, and soft even as it still clutched a hard piece of wood between a few fingers. When you looked up, there were still beautiful blue eyes looking up, even beyond the tears that threatened to begin once more.

They almost began to run down your cheeks at meeting Arty’s eyes. Almost.

But the tears, they wouldn’t fix a thing, would they?

You moved almost robotically after that. Cleaning up areas the blood still stained. Applying a few more weak healing charms. Pushing out a weak enervate when Arty began closing her eyes. And the just holding her in front of the small stove to try and keep her warm.

You couldn’t tell, truly, if it had been hours or minutes. The latter was more likely but... it felt more like the former.

And then a beautiful woman blew off half of the ceiling and came barreling in. You had about half a second of warning before a *reducio* destroyed much of the top of the shack’s roof and a broom came screaming in like a meteor, it’s rider having already dismounted and following it behind as it crashed

into a wall. And the woman who looked far too much like a girl who was removed from time came up from her roll in a low stance scanning the room.

“Where is he!?”

“Other side of the room. Dead. He is dead.”, you say as a pair of brown eyes meet your own, once Ginerva Potter spotted you and Arty.

“What? How... no never mind.”, she says as she began to move slowly towards Crouch’s corpse, having spotted him a moment after you spoke.

“No, please... I got him. I made sure... She, Arty needs help. She was... hurt. Please, I can promise you Crouch is dead. He used a jinx, something. To block apparition. Portkeys; I already tried the one she had, that your husband gave use.”, you say almost pleading. You had hoped the spell Crouch used had died with him but some spells could linger for hours after the caster died; apparently this was one of them.

“I-alright. If he is really dead... *Trasare travarte!*”, followed by a few spells you can’t recognize.

“Damn. Fu-frick. Okay. So this isn’t a spell I recognize. The Death Eaters, they had spells... old and new they used to isolate their victims in the past. Harry, he should know the counter charm, probably, and he shouldn’t be that far behind me. Let me see what is wrong with Miss Pertinger.”, she says. You cant tell if it is sweat or just rain water dripping down the side of her face.

“Alright. It... it is.... I healed her as much as I could, but the places injured are not ones you want to be poorly mended. So, please, don’t do to much?”

You slightly rub on your small love’s uninjured wrist, leaned in some, and told her that you had to show the older, much more experienced witch where she had been hurt. Apologized again and again softly, as you opened up the robes you had pulled over her.

“I set her wrist, I think. But... he could transfigure these horrible claws. Wound from them don’t heal very well, I have one... she has had a Wiggerweld. I gave her something for the pain too... can you do anything else? With out it interfering with what the healers will have to do, ma’am?”

“Let me see, I’ve had to patch up Harry more than a few times, here... Oh, Merlin. Oh God.”, the pretty red-head spits out. Makes a sign you have seen very few in the magical community use across her chest. Fail slightly where you had succeeded, and turn her head a way for a moment.

“Hey, hey Arty! Its fine. Just worse then it looks, and you heard Miss Ginny, Potter is on his way too. We will be over at St. Mungo’s before you know and I can introduce you to a very interesting man in one of the wards. Have ice cream for breakfast. The strawberry is... its pretty good.”, you vomit out while Ginny goes through a small, fancy looking pouch at her waist, pulling out a familiar potion and an unfamiliar jar of cream.

“Sorry... Just been a while since I have had to deal with more than a few cuts or skinned knees. Elliot is right, Artemis. Here knock back one more of these. I am going to put some salve on, use a couple of small spells. I, ah it might be better for you to go guard... the body now Elliot.”

You react half on instinct, half on just the desire to lop the old Death Eater’s head off now that your magic burned less, standing up. Then a small hand, a broken one grabbed you.

“No. Stop. Don’t go away again. I-its fine. He already saw it.”

And another part of you shatters as you kneel back down and just adjust yourself, placing yourself behind the tiny girl swallowed in your robe.

“Are you sure? I need to put this on... sensitive places.”, the somewhat older woman asks.

All you can tell from Arty is that she nodded her head some and gave a quite murmur. It was all you could get while your head pressed against the back of her own.

Artemis Pertinger was far, far stronger than you in the end.

You could understand that most of why she wanted you here, asked for it at her lowest was for your sake alone. The tiny movements. Soft half spoken words as Ginny poured the potion into her mouth and began applying salve on her breast, chest, and lower still.

She was terribly Hufflepuff at times. And you were quite a poor Slytherin on occasion. You weren't sure if snakes shed tears, after all.

"That should help, Arty. It is meant to stop Dark Magic; just in case, heal things well aside. The salve. Fawkes, it had one of his last tears in it. He is gone now, I suppose, but... been saving that for a while. Just in case. Didn't think this would be how it got used, but life likes surprises. Haha.", she says with some false mirth.

"I... have a few pieces of chocolate in the pouch too. Just in case. Would you like one? Arty? Elliot? I think I shall be having one, regardless. But I get the one with almonds. The two of you can decide between crisped rice and caramel."

It is almost so ridiculous that you would sneer; and then she pulls out a pair of small bottles of water for you and your girlfriend, cracking them open as you unwrapped the caramel centered chocolate; moved it into Arty's good hand. It was insane really. Truly. The small girl next to you had been hurt... violated by a mad man who should have died 20 years ago. The first Lady of Magical Britain was handing out candy and bottles of water while dressed like she had just got out of bed and tossed a rain coat on.

You had just killed a man four times over.

It was almost enough to distract you. Almost enough when the *actual* Wrath of God descended, bright bolt of exploding light ahead of him and his broom.

Ginerva Potter may have been a Valkyrie, but Harry Potter was like Odin, Zues, and Perun touching down at once. Before the spots had even cleared from your eyes, a web of purple electricity had already hit the body of Crouch and three pillars of stone now protected you and the other two girls by you.

When you had "sparred", Potter had been fast. Almost too fast to follow. You thought Crouch could have maybe matched him, in that regard at least. But Crouch was only a killer. An incredibly skilled and intelligent one... but, Potter was something *else*. And you saw almost immediately, had come dressed for *war*. A trench coat that was not just muggle leather, a vest meant to stop large caliber rifle rounds. Rune encrusted revolver on one hip and not one or two spare wands on his other hip but *four* of them. It was almost inspiring, if it wasn't *terrifying*. While Ginny had risen almost immediately to go to his side, all you could do was curl up around Arty. As if your body could protect her. And yet, Arty had her wand pointed at him from the second he set down, a pained frown on her face; it took you a moment to even comprehend that.

She was more than you could ever deserve. Now especially, after what you had done.

“Harry! He got him, alright?”

“You checked, right Ginny?”, the dark haired man says even as he checks every corner, wand pointed towards the body, his other hand hovering above this pistol.

“He... Elliot said he made sure. There is also a wand jammed through his eye, Harry.”

“I’ve seen people come back from worse.”, he says mirthlessly but still relaxes his stance, turns away from Crouch at looks towards you and Arty. Uses a silent spell to turn the stone pillars into dust. Bores into you with bright green eyes.

“Alright, Ginny. Alright. I still need to look at the body. Stay with them for a bit.”, he says. Then you softly help Arty’s hand down so it is no longer pointing a wand toward the Boy-Who-Lived.

Ginerva Potter nodded and helped Arty with sipping her tiny bottle of water once the two of you had convinced your tiny girlfriend to lower her good arm and put down the wand.

Potter then cast a spell after a few seconds, one you could not hear the incantation for due to reality re-arranging itself, Crouch’s spell being undone. Time and space putting themselves back in order so that wizards could almost instantly teleport.

“Been a while since I have seen that one. But of course Barty would have known it.”, he says, turning briefly towards you with a rueful smile before beginning to inspect Crouch’s body.

It is maybe 30 or 40 seconds before the wizard dressed for war calls out for you. Maybe 10 seconds to disentangle yourself from Arty while Ginny soothes her.

So perhaps a minute till doom fell upon you; till the most famous man in the wizarding world killed you in front of your lover and his own wife.

You had no chance against Harry Potter, let alone him with his wife to back him up. You were strained. Tired. Exhausted, magically and physically. If you reached for a potion? You had no doubt there would be a spell or bullet straight in your chest before you could even pull it out. But you still marched forward, wand in hand. If you died, you would die fighting. And you would try and give the girl you loved a few more moments, in case he decided she needed to die as well. You walked toward Death itself, not with a fear. Just pure determination.

“Elliot. Can you explain this to me? What happened.”

You can feel Helga pushing the last portions of her power into you. If it was out of care for you or not wanting the world to end, you couldn't say. You strongly suspected it was both. These silly badger women had far too much love in their hearts.

“That, *Professor*, is the corpse of a man you locked me and Arty in with 4 times a week. Including after the last time turner, yours had broken and you could no long set up some bullshit time loop. The body of a man who managed to get a real wand and wizard body armor. I strongly suspect a certain house elf was involved.”, you spit out. Shard of ice blooming as you stared at the man how enabled your future wife to get hurt like this with his negligence and egotism.

“Elliot... that wand didn't kill him. No where near enough blood, dead beforehand. A lightning bolt to his chest didn't do it... I know what *did*. I am quite familiar with that spell. I know what it means to use it on another human, even one like Crouch.”, Potter says, hand creeping to the engraved, oversized revolver on his hip. Other hand binging his wand up. And you just stared him down; even at your best, not exhausted you weren't beating an armed and armored Potter; it had taken everything you had, every thing Arty had to take down Crouch. So your dark green eye just stayed locked to his brighter ones when he drew. And then a small comet with red-brown hair collided with him, a shot went wide, and with a quick spin, small warm arms wrapped around you. Small girl shielding you with a bruised body.

“Arty! No get back! Stop, g-get off!”, you screamed while being pulled down.

“No! Fuck you Potter! He saved me! Don't you dare point that thing at him!”

Ginny was only a few steps behind your girlfriend, stopped a few feet short. Pointed her wand up; not at you but her husband.

“Harry James Potter! Put that down! You saw what happened to her! She was *raped!* And I will not be married to a child killer!”, a voice you had only really her with kind tones shouted in true anger.

“Ginny! Elliot is *evil! Dark.* He cast the mark! He used *that* spell, can and will use it again. He has the same single blue eye Grindlewald had now for Merlin’s sake! For all I know... he did that to Arty himself! How long has he been hurting her, brainwashing her to be loyal like this?”, Potter says, revolver never leaving you, voiced raised but hesitating to raise his wand towards the mother of his children.

“Harry! *Listen* to yourself. *Look* at what you are doing. That is not the person I married! Not the kind boy who saved my life, undid Voldemort. *I will not let you do this.*”, the beautiful red head shouts back, raising her wand high and couching down, legs tensed like springs.

“Arty... please just let go... oh God no, you are bleeding again... no, no, no.”, you almost scream, seeing the blood running down the legs of your love, trying and failing to break the hug she had on you while she fought for dear life to hold it. Fought for your life, keeping herself in the way, softly crying.

“Together... till the end, remember? I... don’t want to die, not like this... but if it with you?”, Arty says softly, almost to soft to be heard over the rain pushing herself closer while you try to keep her shaking naked body covered with your cloak.

Something once more snaps in you and turns your face to steel while the Boy who Lived shifted his eyes between you and his wife.

“Harry... they need to go to the hospital. They-“

“He needs to *die!* Look at what happened to his first, most loyal follower! How much more damage will he do in the next century?”

“He had to protect her! Crouch should have been dead years ago.”, Ginny retorted, while Arty did what she could to keep her smaller body over your own crying softly.

“Co-come back over here okay, Artemis. Harry... Harry wont kill him, okay but... we need to get you to St. Mungo’s. That... there is a lot of blood and the sooner we get you proper treatment the less bad any long term scarring is going to be.”

“No.”

“What?”

“I said **NO**. I’m not leaving him, if I go, he goes too! If he dies I do too!”

“Arty... just walk away from him. I don’t know what he has told you, done to you... I promise, I will just stun him. Let him get his trial so he can explain, okay? How’s that?”, Harry offers lowering the god killer just a hair, trying to keep his voice level. And Artemis Peringer turned, still keeping you covered as she stares down a man who had killed enough Dark Lords that you would probably need a couple more arms and maybe an extra foot to keep count.

“Fuck you Potter. I will be dead by the time he gets out no matter how light the bullshit sentence. Not. Fucking. Leaving!”, your tiny Hufflepuff Fury yells back, bringing her shaking wand up. Then his wand just flies upward and something very much is not a stunner flies at you and her before being interrupted by a shimmering blue shield.

Ginerva Potter begins tossing out spells like mad as she pirouetted and dodged. Once more... many things happened at once; as he spun and sent a red bolt towards her, he got run down by Arty in a tackle, her hands behind his knees. And then... Potter used his revolver like a club and smashed you tiny, kind lover across the face hard enough you could hear something break. Sent her flying to the side where she could just lay softly crying, while he defended against a flurry of bolt from his wife and tried to level the gun at you.

You had believed everything in you that could break in you had already tonight had. *Fool*. Seeing Arty on the ground once more, crying and clutching at her shattered jaw? After all she had already endured? Ice became *fire* in you.

Helga had been lending you strength. Helped you countless times. Guided your wand, fought off Nimue with you. But you needed power, more than ever.

“I’m sorry PuffPuff... this is going to hurt...”, you said in a near instant thought.

“Wha-?”, and then just a scream. She had *given* you strength before. Now? Now you *ripped* it from her. Everything you could take. So much you could feel the web of scars open on your left arm, feel blood stream down from your left eye. Felt your heart become filled by molten lead.

If Potter truly wanted a Dark Lord? You would *provide*. Elliot Hallaster would make him regret touching a single hair on the girl you loved. Making her hurt, cry.

“Accendo! Fragorus Involvunt! Sectum Sempra!

And spells fly from you faster than you ever dreamed they could. Silver lines formed in the air speaking to you of what could be by your hand. When Potter had dodged, thrown up a wall of stone and you landed... the potions pouch which had served you so well was in the air covered in your blood before you pushed raw magic into the vials, enough to detonate what remained with enough force Ginny was knocked back several steps.

Potter emerged from a multicolored cloud of smoke, you saw the magic wrapping around his revolver and made reality twist and turn, told goblin black powder it was RDX, which exploded with a plosive bang in his hand.

Harry recovered from nearly losing a hand almost instantly, firing a tiny beam of pure white light towards your head, but reality had already been made to understand light would *not* travel straight, it would bend around you for a few moments. And so the Ancient Magic Helga could use 1000 years ago forced the universe to believe you, as you swiped your wand to the ground and the rotten floor erupted, tore it’s self to shreds in front of Potter so a dozen huge black and yellow badgers with monocled cobras for tails could pounce out.

A wall of Not Very Slow but Unusually Specific Destruction flashed out which you manage to throw a silver and green barrier against while all but one of the snadgers turn to ash; one already latched on to his leg lasted a few seconds longer, getting in bites with both ends before exploding in a shower of gore and a great serpent of purple fire is rushed towards you from the wand of a furious, panting Potter; it takes a lot but you twist the world, send the flames up and out of the hole in the roof. Cough up blood as you and Potter lock eyes and Ginny alternates keeping her wand on you or Potter.

“See, Ginny! He can’t be able to do this! Not with out steeping himself in the Dark! How many people did you need to kill to do this, Elliot! How much pain did you cause in exchange for power? We dueled before... you were just trying to make me underestimate you...”

“Fuck you professor.”

“Fuck you, *Dark Lord Hallaster.*” He spits before beginning to send more spells towards you, his wife standing over Arty to protect her while a force of nature clashed with someone using the kind of power that hadn’t been seen in more than a century. But you couldn’t keep this up; you were never meant to be able to wield this strength. It was killing you by inches... then you saw it. The wisps of silver rising towards the sky. And for the second time that night you stole lighting from the gods. Pulled down a bolt of brilliant silver-blue. He... was still standing though... but even as weak as you were growing... there was a combination of simple spells you knew by heart. Ones drilled into you by a girl who no longer existed. He dodged them, armored clothes still smoking, but you added your own flourish; a *flippendo* which tossed Potter into the air. A well-aimed *stupefy*. Bolt of concussive for which toss him into the wall hard enough the wood shattered. And once you saw he was down... you let go of Helga’s power. Took a knee and began throwing up bright red blood. Crawled in front of a shaking older red haired woman who reminded you so much of Lily... put your wand against Arty’s bruised face and forced out the last dregs of power so you could fix her. Laid on top of her and began crying, holding her tight.

“Arty... I’m sorry so sorry...”

“Elliot no, no. You are going to be fine... you protected me so hard... it will all be okay.”, she said, wrapping you up with the warm cloak you put over her, cradling your head even as blood dripped on her.

“Hallaster... what the fuck are you?”, Ginny muttered, a touch of fear dripping in to her voice.

“I-in love with the best girl in the world... no offence.”

“I see. I’m going to shove a bezoar in my husband’s throat, pour some anti-venom down. Take those wands. I-I can give you a Wigenweld in a second. Don’t know if it will help much... then I am Apparating all three of you to the hospital, okay. Going with so many people at once sucks... please try not to puke on my shoes, alright?”, she says gently.

“Why... the fuck...”

“Evil... it can't create. Can't love and I know... you can't cast the Killing Curse from anything but hatred. But if it is hatred because someone hurt the person you love... You didn't kill Harry, even with that chance just then. You don't hate him even with him wanting to shoot you, being willing to hurt Arty. I think... I think you are a 16 year old boy who should have never had to deal with all this, not a new Dark Lord. And this place? *It doesn't exist*. Crouch... there is a small grave next to his mother's own already; you can't kill a dead man with a green bolt. When Harry is back up... I am going to have a talk with him I suppose. We- I did bad things when Riddle was messing with my head, things those books never mentioned. So I can't make myself want to hurt you when you have been through this much, when Harry has killed, my mom has killed. When I have killed.”

You begin to pass out around then but you felt... safe; like this is what Lily would have been like if she didn't have a monster in her head. Kinda funny really... that she had nearly killed you and now her mom was helping to save you and Arty. You would have to have a very painful talk with her and Harry when this was all over. Haha. Then the darkness took you.

--

When you awoke, all you had on were light green hospital robes; you weren't hand cuffed to the bed, no Auror keeping watch. Arm was wrapped and beginning to not feel like glass shards had been shoved in it. Taste of a few potions still on your lips.

“Puf- Helga. You there?”

“Yeah, Elliot. Feel like shit but still alive. Or not quite dead I suppose, heh.”, a soft slightly pained voice echoes from your mind.

“I-am sorry. So sorry I used you like that, tore your power away to fight... had you help me use the curse. If you don't want to talk to me again, lend me strength, see my face... I get it.”

“Elliot... why are all the Slytherins I know smart but very dumb?”

“What?!”

"I will admit it was *not* very pleasant so let's *not* do that again. If you do it...you might really die next time from the strain. But I understand... you had to protect the person most dear to you. Went through all that. Were angry, desperate. I *don't* hate you, Elliot; I forgive you. Probably could never hate you honestly, with all we have done together. I *love* you. I never got to have kids, never had the time I thought, but you and Arty? Ha. Guess I should have just adopted while I was alive because I care for you both so much.", you hear and can almost see a small smile in your mind.

"Helga!"

"PuffPuff is fine. Only the people I care for can use that, so keep on."

"Fuck... fuck me running. I love you too... PuffPuff. Sorry for hurting you.", you say softly, ashamed.

"It is okay... people who are dear to each other do that to each other sometimes... if they weren't close, it would be rather hard to hurt them after all. I believe I saw something in your head about hedgehogs and dilemmas at one point. And if you can manage, you might want to open that curtain to the right in a moment."

Taking the kind woman's advice, you manage to sit and move the sheet to the side. In the next bed over, Arty is laying, awake with a small smile, looking a bit weak but healed in body at least. What had happened to her mentally would likely take much longer to fix, but you were going to be there every step. The ice in your heart might never fade, not truly given what you did, what the curse took in exchange, but... you knew Arty's warmth could keep it at bay. Not let it consume you.

"Hey boyfriend. Lover. Future father of our kids. Husband. Have a nice nap?"

"Hahaha.", the laughter is irresistible and so are a few happy tears.

"Are you... you *are* okay right, Arty?"

"Yeah, mostly. Sore in a lot of places, magic exhaustion. Gonna walk funny for a few days... but you and Mrs. Potter did a good job patching me up, healers say I won't have any long-term damage. You saved my life, Elliot."

“Saved mine too Arty.”

“Heh, guess we can call it even then. I’m sorry though, I know... I know what it is like to use one Unforgiveables... not yours... but I will be there. In *fact*, want to be there right now. Can you scoot over a bit?”, she says, slightly sad yet hopeful look in her amazing blue eyes.

“I don’t think the healers will approve of a couple of teens in the same bed.”

“Fuck ‘em. Now give me some room.”, she says slowly making her way to you and flopping over next to you.

“Best girl in the world. No offense, PuffPuff. Yeah sure, fuck them.”

And so you get to curl up along your tiny auburn haired Fury. An hour, or so; maybe more but you can’t see the clock from having her perched on your chest, handing out a soft kiss every once in a while, talking about nothing for a few minutes at a time. Put your index and thumb in a circle on Arty’s left ring finger, said you would get something better, and kissed her deeply. Then, of course, it gets ruined by a very grumpy looking Boy who Lived barging in with a slight limp and a cane.

“Hallaster. Pertinger.”

“Potter.”

“Asshole.”, Arty adds, arms locked around you and her perfect face turned to a sneer.

“Would the two of you like to know an interesting couple of facts? A day ago a place only a handful of people know exists was wiped off the map by terrible storms. A man with no name disappeared from Nurmengard. A certain boy’s wand, one which cast a certain spell was lost in the sea after he *helped* me to fight off a Death Eater who hurt a 5th year student and was injured in the process.”

“Sounds like a wild night, Professor.”

“Indeed.”

“You are both getting detention when you return to school.”

“Don’t threaten me with a good time, Professor.”

“It is being over seen by Binns.”

“Oh screw you.”

Potter pulled out a bumpy grey wand and for a second you think he is just going to try and finish the job before it hits your chest and bounces into your hand, thrumming with power; purring more like.

“Guess it is yours now. I know very well what happened to the last person who tried to use it with out being its master. All yours *Dark Lord Hallaster*. I *am* going to figure out how you did that, how you turned my wife against me, why a nice girl with a perfect track record aside from sleeping in the Forest on occasion agreed to follow you. *Why I have so many venomous spiders in my damn vents and closets.*”

“Professor... when this is all done, I am more than happy to tell you everything. Talk with you and Miss Ginny about somethings I know, which you should know as well. But if you *dare* try to throw a spell at my wife again... touch her...”, leaving the promise unfinished, Arty blowing a raspberry at him, making you chuckle.

“So be it. Now I have to go back and convince *my* wife to not make me sleep on the couch all summer. Get her to return my wands. See if I can get a glass of firewhiskey.”, he says with a very annoyed tone, turning away.

“Oh, yes and there is a giant murder bee waiting in the fucking lobby along with a small acromantula and a couple of concerned teens come to see your wife and you Elliot. The two deadly insects are apparently registered as service animals with the Ministry *somehow*, so yes, the healers have to let them in. Bee was sleeping on Raven’s head. How, how the fuck.”, one of the greatest wizards in the world says and massages his temples with the hand not wrapped around a cane.

“I knew that would come in handy! Hahahaha!”, Arty says with a very Dark Lady like cackle, almost insane but so beautiful it made you join in.

“How the fuck did I lose control of my life like this?”, he muttered.

You can't help but laugh a hair more. Giggle. Chuckle. Chortle, even.

“Guess being the “chosen one” sucks about as much as being the Boy of Prophecy; we can bond sometime about being lightning rods of doom.”

And so the Chosen One gave the Girl Who *Did* Live and her husband the middle finger as he limped from a hospital room about to be occupied by a large bee, spider, a pretty raven haired girl, and a slightly odd boy with curly blond hair. A bit later you and an auburn-haired terror would be visiting a strange man, eat some good ice cream. Probably come out of it with a painting and some more random trivia in your head. Request a larger bed for the room she had forced them to let you share.