

Інформація

Адреса змісту:[https://www.fanfiction.net/s/13893841/153/A-Magical-](https://www.fanfiction.net/s/13893841/153/A-Magical-Journey)

Journey

Книги

>

Гарри Поттер

Волшебное путешествие

Автор:

FictionOnlyReader

Следуйте за Куинном Уэстом в его волшебном путешествии, который попадает в мир Гарри Поттера, но является ли мир, в который он попал, таким же, как тот, о котором он когда-то читал? Сможет ли он найти свой путь в этом новом мире? Сможет ли он когда-нибудь почувствовать себя здесь своим? Какую возможность предоставит ему магия этого мира? Прочтите, чтобы узнать...

[Реинкарнация] [SI OC] [Поздний роман]

Рейтинг:

Художественная литература M

- Английский - Приключения/Сверхъестественное - OC - Глав: 439 -

Слов: 1 287 317 - Обзоров:

5 434

- Избранное: 5 020 - Подписок: 4 892 - Обновлено:

27.08.2022, 20:58:38

- Опубликовано:

03.06.2021, 01:41:11

- Статус: завершено - идентификатор: 13893841

381. Chapter 381: Leaving The

Nest

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The heavy rain over the countryside had locked the people inside their houses on what should've been a lovely Sunday morning. The same went for the people living inside the West manor in Herefordshire, with the downpour showing no sign of stopping any time soon.

Even in the rain, the day seemed its own kind of perfect, with the wind a little cooler than usual, a gentle rain breeze that wafted through the house without bringing a humid quality in.

But for Quinn, it was less than perfect. . . it was as far as it could be from perfect. He placed his suitcase by the door, and when his fingers left the still pristine leather, the suitcase went invisible. He faced the door to the home office and took a breath as he smoothed the suit he had put on.

"Alright, let's do it."

Quinn knocked on the door, and the sounds of his heartbeat overshadowed the sound of the knocking. He uncurled his hand and found it to be a little sweaty— he couldn't remember the last time his hands were sweaty, and he had an excellent memory.

He stepped inside when the call to enter came from inside. Despite maintaining the AID office and another office inside his suitcase for years, he envied what his grandfather had built in his home office— every inch of the room sang pure English class with not a single thing out of place. Quinn remembered how much time he had spent in the office in the pre-Hogwarts days, thinking he would have something like this of his own.

As he was admiring the office, George walked in from another part of the office with two sheets of paper that he was comparing. "What is it, child? Give me a moment to sort this out, and then we shall talk," he asked and glanced up for a moment. "Is that a new suit? I haven't seen that one; did Taylor stitch that one for you?"

Quinn looked down at his sky blue suit. ". . . No, it is not from him. I . . . I made this on one on my own."

"Oh, did you. It looks great on you, dear. I would say that you have a talent for stitching. Sit down."

Quinn sat down and stared at the man who sat on top, arguably the biggest empire on the magical side of the world. He was sure that if one day he walked down the street to ask random people the question: Albus Dumbledore or George West, who would you like to be? He would be lucky to find someone who had remotely heard of the name George West. . . but Quinn was sure if they knew the two options well, most would choose to be his grandfather. It took something else to be chosen over Albus Dumbledore in the British Isles.

". . . talk about. . . Quinn? Quinn!"

Quinn snapped out of his thoughts when he saw George staring at him, calling his name. "Yes. . . my apologies, I was away for a moment," he said.

"Are you alright?"

"I'm alright."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I'm sure."

"Alright. What do you want to talk about?"

Quinn took a silent breath. He opened his mouth and found that he was at a loss for words. This was difficult, he thought. He had prepared the

words he was going to speak, but despite his Occlumency, he couldn't find them. It was like Karna's curse in Mahabharata— to forget all his knowledge at the moment he needed it the most. . . which had ultimately led to the hero's death.

"I ran into Dumbledore a few days back," said Quinn.

"Oh, where was that?" he asked without stopping his work. "What did you two talk about? I hope he didn't try to get you to include in some of his plans. He will be spinning some manipulations if he wants you involved; stay clear away from him."

Every time the topic of Dumbledore came between them, it got clear that there was love spared between George and him. Even the mention of Dumbledore sprung the usually taciturn man into a stretch about not trusting Dumbledore.

". . . That is right about what happened," said Quinn, making George stop and look up at him.

"What?"

"He wants to get me involved in one of his manipulations. He wants you to get involved in a web of his manipulations." Quinn chuckled with pursed lips, "Dumbledore was quite straightforward about it, didn't hide the fact that he was going to use both of us."

George reached for his wand, and with a swing, everything on his desk was tidied up and pushed aside or into its place, leaving behind an empty space between them. Quinn had his full attention.

"What did he want? Tell me what he said word for word; don't leave a single thing out."

Quinn shook his head with a semi-bowed head. That wasn't how he wanted the conversation to go. Dumbledore wasn't going to be the focus of this conversation. . . this was between him and his grandfather.

"He knows a weakness of mine," said Quinn with a bitter smile. "He's planning to exploit it to get to you. But don't worry, I have—"

"What weakness," George cut him short.

"First, let me finish—"

"What weakness?"

Quinn and George stared at each other, the latter's gaze much fiercer than the former.

For a moment, Quinn's hand trembled. A gush of panicked thoughts passed through his mind. They were alone in the room, which was covered with sound-dampening charms that Quinn had personally cast. Anything that happened in there wasn't going to get out. This was his chance to turn back what had been said and pretend the conversation hadn't started yet. Maybe there was some way else he could approach this where he didn't have to involve his grandfather. He could take Dumbledore; who knew, perhaps he could fight the master of the Elder wand and come out victorious. . . .

Quinn closed his eyes and leaned into the chair.

Who was he kidding? Taking on Dumbledore wasn't the answer. Lying to his grandfather once again wasn't the answer.

'I know the answer. . . there's no running from it.'

Quinn placed his hand over the table, hovering inches above the surface. He breathed out as a black substance effused out of his hand onto the table; it hardened to form a familiar black mask. . . familiar to him at least.

"What is this?" asked George, frowning. "How is this related to your weakness, Quinn. You are well aware that I do not like to beat around the bush or anything that isn't direct to the point, so get to the point."

The 'Invisible' in Invisible Vigilante still held true. Except for those in the

Aurors and the Hit Wizard, no one knew what the Invisible Vigilante's attire looked like. Even after the Ministry appearance, when his appearance collated from the hostages in the Ministry Atrium was published in the papers, it wasn't accurate due to the fear-addled brains of the people who gave the descriptions.

"This is my mask," Quinn tapped the conjured mask made from a special magical polymer that Quinn had blended on his own. . . and that was just the opening act of what he was about to reveal.

Under George's confused gaze, Quinn tapped his 'self-made' suit on the chest, and the light blue fabric turned into a thicker weave of black in a pulsating wave that traveled through his entire body. Gone was the stylish suit, replaced by the all-practical combative outfit.

"This is my gear," said Quinn, clenching and releasing his hand. "I call it the Noir adaptive gear. . . version seventeen." He picked up the mask and gently placed it on his face. There was radio silence before the usual distorted voice came from behind the mask, "I'm the Invisible Vigilante."

An elevated heartbeat was always part of the deal when he put on the Noir gear. Be it due to the exertion of hunting Death Eaters outside a Quidditch stadium, facing the most dangerous Werewolf in the country, saving Amelia Bones from the Dark Lord, or facing Fiendfyre cast the Dark Lord. But today, the heartbeat was louder and faster than ever; it felt like it would beat itself out before he could even speak a single word.

". . . What? No, no," George shook his head, "you are not. . . you can't be the Invisible Vigilante. . ."

"Grandfather—"

George slammed his fist onto the table. An immediate tension filled the room. He was fuming; Quinn hadn't seen fuming from George. "Remove that," he said.

Quinn complied. The mask melted into fumes, but the Noir gear stayed in the black combative form. George needed to see who his grandson really was— he had seen the good side, and now it was time to have the nasty side shining in his face.

". . . The Invisible Vigilante is accused of murder," said George, as if he couldn't get the words out.

"I am wanted for murder," said Quinn.

"You're not making this easier," said George, his voice on the edge of growling. "How did this happen, Quinn? Didn't I tell you that we are staying away?"

"I started long before that grandfather."

"Then you should've stopped when I told you to stop!" George leaned forward with his hands clenched over the table. "Do you think this is a game or one of those experiments of yours? This is real life, Quinn!" He pressed a finger into his temple, "You. . . You faced the Dark Lord in the Ministry. What were you thinking, child? You could've gotten yourself killed."

"Instead, I costed him an eye."

"That doesn't—"

"It wasn't the first time, anyway."

". . . What do you mean?" asked George, confused.

"I was the one who rescued Amelia Bones when her house was attacked by the Dark Lord," said Quinn. "I know what I am doing, grandfather. I know you're worried, but what is done is already done— dwelling on it won't change, so let's move forward."

"Move forward? No, no, this isn't—"

Quinn waved his hand, "Dumbledore knows I'm the Invisible Vigilante, and he has proof connecting that I'm indeed him." George looked like he

was about to burst again, but Quinn pressed forward. "He wants your resources in the war. He will hold whatever he has over your head into becoming a vault with an unlimited amount of coin. He will make you publicly oppose Voldemort and ensure that the most resourceful man in the country is working for him."

"Then I will give him whatever he wants," said George immediately, with no hesitation.

Quinn shook his head and kept his smile to himself. "No, that's the worst thing you can do, grandfather. If he had leverage on you, it wouldn't ever stop. First, it will be war, then it will be politics, and whatever he wants. . . . we don't want to give Dumbledore any leverage."

"Then we leave the country," said George with finality. "He can do whatever he wants, but if we leave, it won't matter to us. We can cut ties with the country and never return."

"That's called running, grandfather, and I'm no runner."

"Then what do you want me to do!" George raised his voice. "I do not want my grandson to be arrested by the Aurors!"

"I won't be arrested," said Quinn calmly, "What Dumbledore has won't work in the court of law, but if he presented it to the Aurors Office, they would start looking into me— and with only one person as a suspect, they will develop a tunnel vision towards me, especially with not finding any leads in such a long time. Rufus Scrimgeour doesn't like the Invisible Vigilante, grandfather. If he sets a target, he will do anything to ensure I'm punished—"

"You don't need to be worried about Scrimgeour," said George. "He's looking to sign a deal with me, and if I put that over him, he will stay quiet— choosing to ignore a lesser evil in favor of a greater one. He will make sure that everything is scrubbed, never to be brought up again."

Quinn smiled gently, but it wasn't a relieved smile. "No, grandfather.

Giving Dumbledore leverage is not good, but giving Scrimgeour isn't any better. He has big aspirations; wants to be the Minister of Magic and wants to stay in that position for long. He will use you every step of the way, grandfather. I don't want that."

"I don't mind helping if it keeps you out of trouble. You know that, child."

"I know; of course, I know. . . but I don't plan on stopping, grandfather."

George shook his head. "You promised," he stood up and walked around the table, "you promised you would do anything for me. I want you to stop. I want you to leave the country and leave everything to me.

Grandfather will sort all of it, child; please listen to me."

Quinn felt pain spike up inside him. It pained him to see his grandfather like this. However, this was bigger than both of them. "I can't leave it," he said and stood up. "I have to finish what I started."

George grabbed Quinn's wrist. He said, "I can't lose you; I have lost too much. . . I can't lose anymore."

Quinn took George's hand into his own, "You won't be losing me, grandfather." He kissed the hand, "Don't give anything to Dumbledore when you meet him, don't let him pull you into the public. I will handle him, but I didn't want you to know all of this from anyone else.

And even if I am not, you still have to follow the rule— stay away, grandfather."

He took out a small black puck and placed it on the table, "Tap it with your wand— only your wand will work— and it will give you everything you need in case Dumbledore comes to you. Don't let him exploit the Wests."

He pulled his hand out of George's grip and turned away, but George grabbed his hand again and said, "Where are you going? No! You're

staying here!"

Quinn shook his head. "I will see you soon, grandfather. Please call Lia home and tell her, and everyone else, everything," he didn't want George to go through this alone. He placed his hand on George's cheek, and before the man could speak another syllable, he was knocked by Quinn's magic. He transfigured the chairs into a comfy bed-cot and laid George on it.

"I'm sorry," he took in George's face. "Everything will be over soon."

Quinn stood up, and without taking another look, he walked out of the office. He feared that he wouldn't be able to leave if he looked back. He changed his combative outfit to the sky blue suit and picked up his suitcase.

It was time to leave home.

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Quinn West - MC - Truth is bitter.

George West - Grandfather - Sad to say, but this will affect his health.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - I don't like this chapter.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

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382. Chapter 382: I'm Not A Good

Person

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Yellow turned green.

Dumbledore left behind the roar of the fire and stepped into the noise of chatter happening around the bar floor of Three Broomsticks in Hogsmeade. He looked around the most popular inn in the village, which remained festivos round the year regardless of the season or time.

He stepped away from the fireplace and was immediately greeted by the sweet smell of butterbeer that lingered in the air, among other things that made the bar smell like a bar. He made his way to the bar with the occasional nod of the head accompanied with a smile to those who greeted him along the way.

"Dumbledore!" greeted the inn's hostess, Madam Rosmerta, from behind the bar. "You should've told me you were coming down; I would've booked a room for you. Give me two minutes; I'll have one readied for you right away."

"No, it is fine, Rosmerta. I'm meeting someone today." He looked around the bar, searching, "Do you know where I can find Quinn West?"

"Ah, so you're the one he's meeting," said Rosmerta, smiling. "Quinn said he was meeting someone. He's such a kind and charming young man, I offered him a room, but he declined," she sighed. "Are you meeting him to offer him a job, Dumbledore? If so, you should ask him if he wants to shift to a room."

Rosmerta pointed out a table in the seating area. Dumbledore followed her direction and found himself staring at a table right in the middle of the room, surrounded by other tables from all four directions. There he saw Quinn sitting with a plate of fries and a drink in front of him as the young man had his eyes reading a book in hand, unbothered by all the racket around him.

"Quinn," said Dumbledore as he approached the table.

Quinn looked up at Dumbledore, then his eyes moved around the bar, seemingly checking if Dumbledore had brought company. He closed his book and made it disappear inside his coat-jacket.

Quinn asked Dumbledore to sit down.

"What is this meeting all about, Quinn," asked Dumbledore. "If it is what it is I think about, then it would be better for us to shift to a private setting; Rosmerta has offered to clear a private room. . . if that is not alright with you, we can go to my office."

"Here is just fine."

Dumbledore pursed his lips behind his beard and looked around the bar before sitting opposite Quinn, who at that moment snapped his fingers for a thick blanket of magic to cover them.

Dumbledore observed the spell with a critical eye, but as he was doing so, he heard Quinn, "I hope you didn't want to order something."

"A private room is better than a privacy spell," and he could sense something mixed in, "and a confusion element to keep people away."

"If you say so," said Quinn. "Moving on, I called you here for a point, so let's get to the point. . . . You're not going to exploit my grandfather for anything. We are going to forget about the previous conversation and pretend that you never know that I was the Invisible Vigilante."

Dumbledore sighed, "This is why you called me here? Quinn, I'm the Headmaster of Hogwarts, among other various duties which keep me busy. I do not have time to take part in needless conversations." He stood up and turned to walk, but as just as he was about to exit the boundary of the magic. . .

"I guess you don't want to know about the Dark Lord's Horcrux."

Dumbledore's foot froze halfway outside the boundary. He slowly turned

back to Quinn, who picked up his glass and sipped on his straw while maintaining eye contact with Dumbledore.

". . . What?" asked Dumbledore, but he didn't take a seat just yet.

"You heard me; if you walk away right now, you won't get to know what I have to say about the Dark Lord's Horcrux," said Quinn as if he didn't care.

Dumbledore looked around the room.

"You're insulting my magic by looking around, Dumbledore," said Quinn, his voice distorting akin to the Invisible Vigilante.

Dumbledore wrinkled his brows and took his seat. Talking about the Invisible Vigilante and especially about Voldemort's Horcrux in such a densely populated setting wasn't something he appreciated. "There are no more of those, Quinn; the one you destroyed was the only one. And I'm working hard to remedy Harry's unfortunate situation."

Quinn shrugged, "Then why did you sit down? Do you take everyone other than yourselves for a fool, Dumbledore? Is it not enough to threaten my family, but you also undermine me by such a poor excuse of a bluff."

". . . You are angry."

"Excellent guess. Do you want me to give you some sour candy for it?" said Quinn, almost snarling. Dumbledore stared as Quinn's eyes burned a violent purple. "I had to tell my grandfather that I'm a cold-blooded killer. How do you think that affects a relationship? Because I don't know; I had to leave my home before getting to experience it!" He slammed his fist on the table. "Now, my family will know the ugly truth about myself that I have for obvious reasons though I would take to the grave. . . and if that was not enough, I have the great Albus Dumbledore trying to reveal it to the entire damned world! So yes. . . I am furious."

Quinn backed away with his eyes fading back to their original black. He picked up his glass; it developed a layer of white condensation as the carbonated drink cooled down inside before Quinn took a big sip from it. Dumbledore stayed silent. It was clear that today Quinn wasn't going to be happy with him speaking anything that he didn't want him to speak, so why agonize the young man by speaking the words that could be done without.

"Here's the deal," Quinn cleaned the corner of his mouth with a napkin. "I hold one of the Dark Lord's Horcrux, and if you don't agree to my demands, I will hide it, and you or anyone will never see the sight of it. So if you want to keep an undying maniac hanging around, then you can go ahead and walk away and blab your mouth to anyone you want to."

"I don't believe you," said Dumbledore. "How do I know you're not lying about possessing one. I don't think you have one, and this is just a desperate attempt disguised as a one-sided negotiation."

"Between the two of us, who do you think is more of an authority on Horcruxes," said Quinn. "Let me clear that up," he pointed towards Dumbledore, "you have destroyed zero Horcruxes," he pointed at himself, "I have destroyed two of them."

"Two of them?" Dumbledore wrinkled his brow.

"You already know about my work with the Diary, but did you know about the Marvolo Gaunt's Ring in the Gaunt Shack in Little Hangleton."

"That. . . that was you?"

"Of course, it was me. Who do you think is the authority to destroy immortality-granting soul containers between the two of us," Quinn scoffed condescendingly. "I'm not a one-trick pony who just destroyed the Diary by chance. I dug deep and went down the rabbit hole, and found a second one, destroyed it. . . and then found a third one, so Dumbledore,

tell me do you believe me now?"

That was a surprise. Dumbledore didn't think that Quinn was the one who destroyed the Ring he found in the Gaunt Shack. When he had called Quinn to talk about the Diary, he hadn't expected him to know about the Horcruxes, and after he had let out the secret to the Potter family, he hadn't anticipated that Quinn was still hiding another secret. After spending years not knowing who destroyed the Ring, the discovery of Regulus Black, and the fake Slytherin's Socket, he assumed that it was the younger Black brother who had gotten to the Locket as well. . .

though inside, Dumbledore always knew that his theory had holes because of the discrepancies between the notes. He simply didn't care about who destroyed the Horcrux, just that they were destroyed.

Looking at Quinn's mocking face, Dumbledore only had one question. "Why haven't you destroyed it yet?" With the small sample to draw from, Quinn had destroyed two of his two Horcrux finds; it was a statistics-driven assumption for him to assume that the third find would have the same fate. "You're saying that you will hide the third one away. . . but what if you have already destroyed it. . . what if you don't have anything in your hand."

Quinn's response was a small curl of his lips that stretched into a smile that opened up to a wide grin. "Do you want to risk that, Dumbledore?" asked Quinn, his voice backed by magic. "I may have already destroyed the Horcrux, I may not have destroyed it. . . or I may not even have it—but do you have the liberty of testing lady luck; can you know for certain that my threats are bogus— because if you're by chance wrong, and in future have this one chance where you can kill the Dark Lord, and you miraculously succeed." Quinn chuckled, "All that for him to return. And maybe by then, you're dead; who among your cohort do you think will

kill the Dark Lord. . . who Dumbledore has enough magical prowess other than you. Even if you're alive, Dumbledore, you're not growing younger, and with every passing year, your magic grows weaker, but the Dark Lord stays as powerful as he is—" he pointed near Dumbledore's waist "—and as powerful as that wand is. . . isn't all-powerful, so think about it. . . do you want to take the risk?"

The privacy spell dulled the incoming voice, but right now, it was as if the magic had sucked all the voice, leaving behind a vacuum between Dumbledore and Quinn.

". . . Why are you doing this?" Dumbledore asked, his voice laced with disappointment. "You have done some misdeeds, but I don't believe you to be a bad soul, Quinn. So why would you do something so important that it concerns the people of not only this country but many others as well? I don't believe you want to see people die. Do you know how I see you? I remember the young man passionate about magic; someone who wanted to pursue the depths of magic. . . Yes, I understand all of this is because of me pressurize you for the support I need to battle Voldemort, but for you to threaten so many lives to oppose this. . . why?"

Quinn turned his eye away from Dumbledore and fixed them towards a window that let in warm rays of sunlight that illuminated the specks of dust in their glow. "If there's something that can sway me away from magic, then it is the people I'm close to. For them, I'm willing to deviate from my goals. From all of those people, my family is the closet, and you threatened them. . . . I'm not a person with a just moral campus, Dumbledore. I'm willing to risk the lives of thousands, even millions, for my loved ones. . . . Will I be able to sleep at night with it. . . No, I think it will change me forever. But now with my family, I shall make it right. I am a terrible person and a hypocrite at that, so don't put me in that

category, Dumbledore. When I put my mind to a thing, I end up working towards it until I complete."

Quinn stayed silent and continued to stare at the window. It was clear that he was going to say another word without listening to the speaker.

"I agree; I shall not threaten your grandfather to go public," said

Dumbledore, "How're you going enforce it?"

"Easy, you will sign a magical contract."

Dumbledore pursed his lips, but after a lengthy back-and-forth he came to an agreement; he agreed as long as he was given a chance to read and question Quinn on it along with the legal counsel.

Quinn chuckled, "Very well, I shall guide, and you can take a thorough look before finally submitting it."

". . . What is the Horcrux's identity?" asked Dumbledore.

"It is the Hufflepuff's Cup, of course."

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Quinn West - MC - I have other plans.

Albus Dumbledore - Headmaster - Not how he saw the meeting going.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - No, Quinn hasn't gotten that one yet

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383. Chapter 383: Living

Independently

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a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

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It was early in the morning.

Quinn placed his dirty breakfast dishes into the sink. The cleaning utensils rose as the water spouted from the tap, and soap bubbled up in the sink. He shook his hands, and a scouring scrubbed his hands clean as he moved towards the condo's front door in Central London. The suitcase flew into his grip as he walked out to greet the new day.

"Good morning, John!"

As Quinn locked the door to his rental house, he heard a chirpy shrill voice. He looked to the left to see a plump, homely woman with a big red smile walking towards with the energy of a hundred suns. Even though he was wide awake, he found this neighbor of his to be too bright.

"Mrs. Carrott," he put on a smile, "a good morning to you as well. I hope you're doing well today."

"I'm chipper if nothing else. Off to work, dear?" she beamed. When Quinn nodded, she asked, "Have you given it a thought, dear? Angela is a sweet church-going girl and very beautiful. I'm sure you both will like each other. Should I set up a meeting?"

Quinn sighed inside. He was John. A twenty-something living alone in London, with parents in Liverpool. He had designed the looks of the current version of 'John' to be such that people wouldn't give him a second look— not attractive, but also unattractive enough to catch the eye. He was the image of mediocrity— just like he preferred. However, for some reason, Mrs. Carrott, his new neighbor, an idle housewife with nothing occupying her free time, fancied herself to be something of a matchmaker, and despite Quinn's current average features, she found him to be a target of her matchmaking.

All of it was because of the details he had put in his background. A college graduate working a corporate job in finance that he had given himself as it was easiest for him to pretend. That background seemed to be a big plus point in her eyes. Moreover, even with his current background, he wasn't able to leave behind his style of clothes— which were high-grade suits. . . and that ended up giving Mrs. Carrott the idea that he made good money. . . which while true, wasn't supposed to be a part of his disguise.

"I would've to pass, Mrs. Carrott. I'm currently not looking to be in a relationship," even though he was out, living under disguise, it didn't mean that he was untethered from his two very thriving relationships. "Right now, I'm trying to keep myself focused on my job. . . it would be unfair to Angela."

Quinn thought he had made his point, but it turned out he was wrong. Mrs. Carrott waved her hand in dismissal, "Oh, you don't need to overthink this. Meet her once, and if you still think it will be a problem, this old lady will give it a rest."

Quinn ticked his neck. He had been listening to this spiel for a few days now— the first thing when he left home and the last thing before he returned back— it was in small doses, but the irritation had pilled up.

"Mrs. Carrott. . . you're not a nice person."

". . . Pardon?"

"You barely know me. . . nowhere enough that you should be trying to set up your cousin's daughter with a stranger who you nothing of substance about."

Mrs. Carrott was stunned with the surprised eye, but the more she heard, the more offended she got. She burst open like a cap on a shaken-up soda. "Listen here, young man—"

Quinn raised his hand, and the woman went silent. "I didn't want to use magic, as it undermines my disguise and acting skills, but I think this will be the best for both of us." He gently nudged her broad wrinkled forehead, and her eyes turned white, "Let's make it so that you lose interest in your new neighbor," he planted some key suggestions, "and I will do you by not showing you my face for a while to let the suggestions set."

Quinn turned Mrs. Carrott around and pushed her towards her home with the final suggestion of going to sleep to cement his suggestions in her mind.

After he was done with the annoying neighbor problem, Quinn exited the condo building situated in a safer middle-class area. He looked around the silent residential block. For the first time in his life, he was living on his own in a place of his own— it was unlike Hogwarts, where he had roommates and was aided by a staff of house-elves under the eye of school professors— here, he had total freedom from everyone other than his house owner who he had to pay rent.

But he had to say, he wasn't expecting his first freedom living situation to come this way. Running away from home, hiding from all the parties that could be looking for him. He had thought this time would come after he had completed his apprenticeship with Alan because the old mind master had said that if Quinn wanted to learn, then he had to stay with him.

He looked up at the sky with sparse clouds. Living out of his suitcase in an empty studio apartment was yet another thing that his actions forced him to do.

"Time to go to work, I guess," he cleared his throat before apparating out of the empty street.

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It was a Hogsmeade weekend, and the students of Hogwarts were pouring down to the all-magical village. . . was what it would be like in any other year, but this year Dark Lord Voldemort had shown his face enough times that the much-anticipated outings were canceled, disappointing and frustrating many youths who looked forward to it. Hogwarts had been advertised as the safest place in the country, and the trip needed to go to maintain that image.

But not all could be kept inside like caged birds. They needed their free space, especially when they received an enticing call from the outside world.

One such person was Daphne Greengrass, who had received a message on her secret MagiFax-ID, which including her only two people knew existed. The blonde Slytherin followed the path that Recon had pointed out to her, taking steps echoing in anticipation and impatience as he exited a secret passageway leading outside the castle.

And there he was, standing in front of the passageway. . . looking the same as he did the last time she had seen him. "Quinn!" Daphne exclaimed as she ran to him and leaped into his arm.

Quinn hugged Daphne back and clutched her close. He closed his eyes and just enjoyed the moment for what it was. Long-distance relationships where they couldn't meet, with letters and the occasional face-to-face chat was the only point of contact, were tough.

"I missed you," he whispered as he pulled her into a deep kiss.

"I missed you too," she replied with a smile, but after a while, as Quinn didn't let go, Daphne asked if something was wrong, "Quinn, is something wrong?"

". . . I missed you," he said again. He finally pulled back and let her go but kept her eyes on the girl of his dreams.

"What is it?" she asked, worry splashing in her eyes.

For a moment, the cat got Quinn's tongue. His mind was at war with his heart about if he should reveal the secret to her. He had already told his family; it was only normal that he told his girlfriend that they might go after her if someone came after him.

"I have to tell you something," he said and then willingly opened the vault to his secret. "I am the Invisible Vigilante. . ."

The amount of time stern-faced Daphne's expression jumped may have been a personal record as she went through an entire range of emotions. By the end of it, she was on edge as the story that Quinn had told her only went up and up. He made sure to keep the information about the Horcrux out of the story as that wasn't a secret for him to share.

"You. . . you faced the Dark Lord twice!" her dainty fingers clutching his clothes until they turned white. "You could've died! I-I could've lost you. You were thirteen years old?! You-You-You—"

"I have killed people," said Quinn with his head down. "And I know if you wanted to not associate with me, that. . . would be fine with me. It would be better for you to not associate with me as it may bring you uninvited trouble." Quinn continued under Daphne's eye, who single-mindedly stared at him. "But don't worry, I will continue to treat Astoria. I've improved since we started, meaning if I wanted, I can switch it to one every two months while maintaining the safety standard; I think that'll be better for everyone. . . Daphne? Daphne?"

"I-I don't know how to feel about it," she said, and Quinn pulled away at those words, but Daphne pulled him back close, "but I know that I don't want to leave or have you leaving me. . . so don't talk about this

nonsense."

The words brought warmth to Quinn's heart. He was frightened that the blood on his hands would drive away. But here he was with his girlfriend, who had shown a reaction much more favorable than he could've ever imagined. He could see her hesitation and turmoil in her eyes, but he couldn't see fear while she stood close to him without—there was no revulsion about what he had told her.

It felt great. Ever since he left the house, his grandfather's reaction when he told him the truth dominated his mind; the fact that he had used magic against him bothered him like a splinter in the sole of his feet. Telling Daphne and seeing her reaction felt like he was in the healing room of the Aquatic vault but much-much better.

"Saying that, I don't like that you're going around who knows where hunting Death Eaters. It is dangerous, and I would rather you stop and let your grandfather take care of the mess with Dumbledore." Daphne sighed as she looked up at him, "But you're not going to stop, are you?"

Quinn shook his head. He had gone far too long to just hang the coat and return home.

"Just. . . Just try to be safe, okay? I-I wouldn't know what to do if you suddenly went missing." She clutched his arms tightly, "You have to talk to me every day. . ." She reached into her pocket and took out a pair of mirrors that looked awfully familiar to the ones that he and Ivy shared—but on a closer look, it was of a different design. "I made ones on my own; I want you to talk to me every day; I won't take no for an answer."

Quinn received the mirror and stared at the reflective surface. He could tell it was supposed to have the same function, but the magic used to create that functionality was different from Ivy's mirror.

". . . Thank you, this means a lot," he said.

"Have you told her?" she asked.

Quinn shook his head as he looked up at the castle. "Not yet. I have yet to meet or talk to her. . . it is going to be another challenge in its own way."

"Do you want me to put in a word?"

"No. . . it is fine. I will do it on my own."

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Quinn West - MC - Time for truth.

Daphne Greengrass - Comforting - Has learned to get things out of Quinn when needed.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the Bio!

384. Chapter 384: The Price Paid

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Link in the Bio/Profile

"No. . . it is fine. I will do it on my own."

. . .

That conversation started in a way that he wasn't expecting.

"You did the right thing," Ivy said, and there was a sense of pride in her words. "Those disgusting Death Eaters deserved their fate. You don't need to blame yourself for anything— who knows what would've happened if they were left alive, they would've gone after some Muggle-born or muggle. They might've even harmed the Aurors there. You did well."

Quinn stared at the girl. Like the different magic used in two pairs of two-way mirrors, both girls had their unique reactions. Daphne had been uncomfortable with his confession, and he knew that it would take some effort from his side to bring things back to normal, stronger than before. But Ivy didn't show any revulsion to his actions— it was definitely because of his victims, but the fact remained that she was ignoring that he was a killer.

". . . You're fine with me being the Invisible Vigilante?"

"Of course not!" she said, smacking his shoulder. It seemed he had thought too soon. "It is dangerous! The Death Eaters are trying to kill you. The Aurors and even the Hit Wizards are allowed to use substantial force against you. I'm afraid the next time you pop up in front of any one of those people, they'll try to take your head off. Do you think anyone's girlfriend would like that?"

"It is fine; as long as they don't get me in my sleep— or poison me— they won't get to me," said Quinn and got another smack from Ivy.

"Don't joke about that," she fixed him with a mock glare. Ivy sighed, "I can't believe Dumbledore tried to blackmail you," she looked revulsed.

"Just wait till I tell mum and dad— I could only imagine what the next Order meeting would be like."

"No-no, don't do that. I don't want this to go out more than it needs to. No offense to the Order of Phoenix; they stand for something important, but I don't trust the people I have never met, and there are so many Aurors in the secret group. . . that could only go one way."

Ivy pursed her lips in dissatisfaction before agreeing to keep quiet.

"You didn't tell me how you made Dumbledore stop from going to your grandfather?" she asked.

There it was. This was why he had gone to Daphne before Ivy. It was this

part of the talk that he wanted to avoid more than he wanted to avoid coming out to his family as the Invisible Vigilante.

"About that. . . because he blackmailed me, I held something he would care about hostage over his head," said Quinn, his voice softer than usual. For a moment, he didn't know what to do with his hand and what expression to make as Ivy listened to him attentively. A part of his mind was telling him to make another excuse and hope that it'd hold for a lifetime, but he knew that wouldn't work.

"I told him that if he didn't stop, I was going to hide one of the Dark Lord's Horcrux," the moment he said, Ivy's expression turned. The green eyes widened as her face twisted in red anger like her hair; her narrow shoulders trembled, and blood receded from her hand as she clutched a fist. "Ivy, listen, I'm sorry, I should've—"

He reached out to hold her only to get a tight slip in return.

"Y-You!" she breathed heavily. "I was expecting you to have secrets, you bastard! I knew that it would take time for you to open up to me; that you'd share them a little-by-little over time, and I didn't mind for it to happen this way. . . I was ready for it to slow because I knew it was going to be rewarding." She roughly pushed him, "But you do this!" she yelled.

"You know how important this is to me! To Harry; to my family! You knew this, didn't you?!"

"Y-Yes, but Ivy—."

"Then WHY?! Why did you hide this?!" She weakly staggered a step away from him, "Is this what it's going to be like, Quinn. . . being in a relationship with you? Finding these secrets of yours that keep hurting me?"

"No, of course not. I had to—"

Ivy shook her head distraughtly. "You had a Horcrux with you, Quinn!"

My brother's life depends on one of those. You knew that, of course! I wouldn't know about it otherwise. Why in the world would you hide it?"

"I didn't know if I could trust anyone with that knowledge. It was too dangerous."

"You're talking like Dumbledore," she scoffed.

"I am not!" Quinn protested. "Unlike Dumbledore, I have worked alone from the start. Even after I was revealed to be in knowledge of the Horcrux, I wasn't keen on working together with that old manipulative bastard. I couldn't tell you about the others because that would've meant you telling your family, who would've undoubtedly told it to Dumbledore — and then the manipulative Headmaster would've tried to spin some scheme that I didn't want any part of.

And if you don't remember, Quinn West wasn't associated with the Invisible Vigilante back then."

There was tension between the two. It was dawning on him that Ivy was going to take much more effort than Daphne. . . that is, if this relationship was salvageable after today.

"Why haven't you destroyed the Horcrux yet?" she asked. "If you have it, you should've destroyed it."

"I have my reasons," he said.

"And what might they be?"

'That I don't have the bloody Horcrux, that it is locked in a vault inside Gringotts, that's why?' he thought. But it wasn't something he could say.

"I can't tell you that," he said. "If I tell it to you, there's a good chance that Dumbledore would know about it."

"What, you think I will tattle to Dumbledore?" Ivy sounded offended.

"No, I don't think that," Quinn sighed. He pointed to his temple, "But I don't trust Dumbledore with your mind. I'm half sure that he knows of

our relationship— that man has an eye for people and human nature— and if I told you the specifics, I wouldn't put it past him to not try to pull that information out of your head. . . so no, I can't tell you."

He knew that it wasn't a good look and not in any way a solution to the problem. But he hoped that Ivy's logical mind would see his reasoning. . .

"I don't care, tell me," she said.

"Ivy. . ."

"I'm your girlfriend, and my brother is a living Horcrux. I don't care about Dumbledore or the game of schemes he's playing; I want to know," she said.

"It will put my family at risk," Quinn argued.

"I only wish to know why haven't you destroyed it yet. Can't you even tell that much?" she said, stepping closer to Quinn. "You're not the only one who cares about their family."

Quinn gritted his teeth. He turned away from Ivy; his hand went to his hair as he paced a few steps. He turned back to her with a look that said he wasn't pleased about what he was about to do, but with a sigh of resignation, he stepped closer to Ivy and pulled out a chain from around his neck with a triangular locket hanging from it.

"For an answer, I will only show you this," Quinn grabbed the locket in his fist, and when he opened it up, there was a black carved gemstone laid upon it. "Look at this design. . . yes, the triangle one. . . this is why I haven't destroyed the Horcrux."

"What is this?" she asked as Quinn placed the black stone on her palm.

"I want to rid the world of the Dark Lord. Horcrux makes him unkillable, and so to make him mortal, we destroy them— that much we already know. But after that, we still need a way to kill him and someone as powerful as the Dark Lord. Yes, we have Dumbledore; despite that, it is

in our best interest to weaken him. I'm trying to find a way we can accomplish that."

"And this will help you do that?"

Quinn curled his finger, and the black gemstone rose from Ivy's palm. "I think it will. . . I hope it will," he said, grabbing the stone.

"What exactly is it?" she asked, her eyes on Quinn's chest where the locket sat.

"That is for you to find," he said, confusing Ivy. "If you can find what it is, you will find the answer to what I'm trying to do."

"Why can't you tell me directly?!" she exclaimed, confused.

Quinn stepped close to Ivy and put a gentle hand on her cheek. She seemed to freeze as if she wanted to pull back but hesitated to do so. "I can't give you the entire truth because I fear that when you find the meaning, you will go out looking for trouble. So I give you this tiny sliver hoping that it will keep you busy until I have figured out what I wanted," he said.

". . . Is this all really necessary?" Ivy asked. "You don't want me to go in danger while you intend to go out there doing who knows what."

Quinn weakly chuckled, "Didn't I tell you a long time ago before we were even friends. . . I'm a hypocrite of the highest grade, Ivy. You knew what you were getting into," he paused, "do you regret it?"

"The feeling I have is not regret, but I don't know what is. . . . Want to take a look inside and tell me what they actually are?" she asked, leaning in closer. Quinn couldn't tell if she was tempting or daring him.

He pushed her away, "I don't use Legilimency on people close to me. You know that, Ivy."

Ivy pulled away and began stepping back towards the passageway where she had come from. "That's the problem, Quinn. Right now, I can't tell if

you're speaking the truth or lying because of something you can't tell me."

"Ivy, please. . ."

Ivy shook her head, and without saying a single word, she disappeared from his sight, leaving behind Quinn standing alone with clouds thundering above in the sky.

He clenched his fist hard enough to draw blood. It had been only a few days since Dumbledore had first approached him, and so much had changed— he had lost his home, the trust of his family, and had damaged his relationship with the two people he loved from the bottom of his heart— and now, in this moment, he couldn't even tell if they could be repaired.

Was all of this his fault? Having the knowledge of a possible future had made him get involved when there was no need for him to do so. Or was it the fault of the Dark Lord who was the root of all problems, who would not stop until he got the rule he wanted?

'This is all Voldemort's fault,' he thought. Quinn repeated it again inside his head to assure himself of his views, strengthening the feeling of hate and anger inside him.

However, despite all of that, he couldn't stop hating himself.

He felt something slide down the side of his face. He looked up as drizzle began falling from the overcast sky full of dark clouds. In moments, the heavens cried down on him, and he stood there taking what it gave.

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Quinn West - MC - ". . ."

Ivy Potter - Confronting - Has full intention of exploring what Quinn has given her.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

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385. Chapter 385: Another Hunt

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Link in the Bio/Profile

Quinn exited a dusty alleyway into a busy street of London. He joined the people and passed by everything from book shops and music stores to hamburger restaurants and cinemas, but none of them were his destination today.

He kept walking until he stopped to peer through the crowd of people going through their lives to the tiny, grubby-looking pub on the other side of the road. If not for him looking for it, he wouldn't have noticed it was there. The people hurrying by didn't glance at it. Their eyes slid from the big book shop on one side to the record shop on the other as if they couldn't see the building with the sign, Leaky Cauldron, at all.

For a famous place, it was very dark and shabby. A few old women were sitting in a corner, drinking tiny glasses of sherry. One of them was smoking a long pipe. A little man in a top hat was talking to the old bartender, who was quite bald and looked like a toothless walnut. No one paid him any mind as he entered and walked by. Quinn tipped his hat to Tom, the bartender, as he led himself through the bar and out into a small, walled courtyard, where there was nothing but a trash can and a few weeds.

Quinn looked over his shoulder to ensure he was alone before knocking three bricks with his knuckle.

The brick he had touched quivered — it wriggled — in the middle, a small hole appeared — it grew wider and wider — a second later, they were facing an archway large enough even for the tallest of individuals, an archway onto a cobbled street that twisted and turned out of sight. He stepped through it and glanced over his shoulder to ensure that it had shrunk instantly into the solid wall.

He walked through the semi-crowded street of Diagon Alley, glancing at the various shops doing business. He even passed by Weasley Wizarding Wheezes, his first investment in Diagon Alley, to arrive at the snowy white building that towered over the other little shops. Standing beside its burnished bronze doors, wearing a uniform of scarlet and gold, was a goblin.

Quinn snapped his fingers, and a burst of magic coursed out in a dome. Everyone around him, including the vigilant goblin guard's eyes, went hazy, and they didn't notice how the gangly, lanky middle-aged man with brown hair and hazel eyes turned into a fit young man with ink-black hair and stone-gray eyes.

He walked up the steps and walked by the goblin, who wasn't even half his height, and was thereafter greeted by the second pair of doors, silver this time, with the infamous engravings:

[
Enter, stranger, but take heed
Of what awaits the sin of greed,
For those who take, but do not earn,
Must pay most dearly in their turn.
So if you seek beneath our floors

A treasure that was never yours,
Thief, you have been warned, beware
Of finding more than treasure there.

]

"Well, not today," he muttered quietly.

A pair of goblins bowed him through the silver doors, and they were in a vast marble hall. About a hundred more goblins were sitting on high stools behind a long counter, scribbling in large ledgers, weighing coins in brass scales, examining precious stones through eyeglasses. There were too many doors to count leading off the hall, yet more goblins showed people in and out of these. No matter what time, money always flowed through hands. He made his way to the counter.

"Morning," said Quinn to the free goblin. "I've come here to meet Bogrod for some urgent business."

"Whom did you say?" asked the goblin teller, his slanted eyes narrowing.

"Bogrod."

"Director Bogrod?" asked the teller.

Quinn thought of the Bogrod he had met the last time, and from how the old goblin had been treated, he could definitely be a director, so he said yes. The teller, however, seemed skeptical; he asked, "Do you have an appointment?"

"No, I do not. But, I assure you, he would like to meet me."

"I'm sorry, but the director won't meet a hu— anyone without an appointment."

Quinn pursed his lips. He didn't think he would be able to directly get to Bogrod. 'Time to aim for somewhere low,' he thought. "Then can I meet Teller Riphook?" he said.

"Floor manager Riphook?"

"Floor manager Riphook it is," he smiled.

"I'm sorry, sir, I don't—" the teller stopped as his eyes trailed behind.

Quinn followed the teller's eyes. While most people wouldn't be able to distinguish between goblins, Quinn could clearly tell apart every single one. He immediately left the station, ignoring the teller's calls behind him.

"Riphook," called Quinn to the goblin, which he and the teller had spotted. The goblin with a swarthy, clever face, and a pointed beard, turned to his name being called. For a moment, the better-dressed goblin stared at Quinn as if trying to identify who the human was, but when it clicked, he exclaimed.

"Mr. West?!"

"Good, you recognized me," smiled Quinn. He looked Riphook up and down, "It might be late, but congratulations on the promotion." He had a strong intuition that the deal he had stuck all those years back was the reason for it.

"Thank you," said Riphook, surprise still lingering on his face.

"It's good that I found you, Riphook. I have some work that I need to take care of."

The goblin teller that Quinn had talked to came running on his long-yet-short feet. He said between huffs, "I tried to stop him, sir, but the wizard—" Riphook raised his hand and motioned the teller to go away. The teller looked to confirm before bowing and moving back to his station.

"What can I do for you today, Mr. West?" asked Riphook.

"I would like to meet Bogrod," Quinn got straight to the point. "I have a very attractive proposition for him. Know, I know that it is difficult for a person to meet, Director Bogrod, but if you could set up a meeting," he smiled, "I would surely put in a good word. . ."

The goblin's face twitched with emotions. He gulped, "I will see what I can do. For now, let's go to one of our lounges."

Quinn smiled, "That'd be perfect."

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It took half an hour after Riphook left Quinn alone in a posh lounge for him to get the meeting he wanted.

"Mr. West," walked in the old goblin with the wrinkliest skin he had seen on a goblin. "We haven't met since the time we made the exchange. . ."

"Ah yes, the time I sold you a thousand-year-old set of ancient Gringotts-minted coins. . . which I have to say was a bargain because those coins are a worth lot more as a set," smiled Quinn. "Then I generously gifted you another set of coins which you then leveraged to get your current position. I heard it is a big deal." He got straight to business.

"Which I remember was in exchange for the information about the cursed magic that you for some reason wanted to know more about, "Bogrod's cane clicked against the marble floor as he sat down in front of him.

"Bloodpike, your account manager, told me that you have an attractive proposition for me. Why don't we hear about it?"

"Good, let's get into it," Quinn put his hand into his suit and retrieved a long rectangle box of one and a half feet in length. "Today, I have brought you something of great importance to the goblin nation," he snapped open the locks, opened the lock, and smiled when he saw Bogrod lean forward, putting his weight on his cane. "I checked the age, and you'll be delighted to know that this is a hundred years old than the coins."

The way Bogrod sharply inhaled was like music to Quinn's ears. He

turned the box to face Bogrod and said, "I present to you. . . a goblin-crafted knight's dagger."

Bogrod's eyes glittered with gold from the gold inlaid into the grip. Quinn didn't have much practical experience with traditional blacksmithing, but when he had handled the knife, it was one of the better and more balanced knives he had held in his life. Bogrod picked up the dagger with his bony fingers and pulled the blade out of its sheath.

"The fuller is sturdy, the edges so sharp and smooth, and the central ridge flows right into the sold point," Bogrod's hand felt every part of the knife and even got up to swing the blade a couple times. "This is a masterpiece from the Ragnok Era. The craftsmanship with the metal is fabulous," he flicked the edge, and it produced a voice like a tuning fork. Quinn could feel magic in the sound magic. Bogrod sheathed the dagger, replaced it in the box, and said, "The dagger is the property of goblin; you must return it immediately."

"We both know that goblin and the human sense of ownership aren't the same," said Quinn, crossing his legs and resting his hands on his knees. To a goblin, the rightful and true master of any object was the maker, not the purchaser. All goblin-made objects were, in goblin eyes, rightfully theirs. When bought, it was considered to be rented by the one who paid the price. They had, however, great difficulty with the idea of goblin-made objects passing from human to human. For the goblins kind, the objects ought to have been returned to the goblins once the original purchaser died. They consider the "habit" of keeping goblin-made objects, passing them down to the family without further payment, little more than theft. Bogrod saw the dagger as the property of goblin because of the age of said dagger.

"I'm not going to just hand the dagger back to the goblin nation, and I'm

sure that you'll give me an exuberant amount of money in exchange for the money in exchange for it," said Quinn, making Bogrod's vein twitch and nostril flutter. "But if you remember, this is supposed to be an attractive deal, so if you want to listen, I have a deal I think you'll like." Quinn knew that Bogrod would feel as if a hundred ants were crawling over him if he asked for money in exchange for the dagger because in goblin-sensibility, the dagger wasn't his property, and even the possession of it was theft against the goblin nation. Offering an alternate deal was his way of making Bogrod not feel like he was interacting with a thief, or at least with a dishonest human. That, along with Quinn's previous generosity, was enough for Bogrod to listen without feeling massively offended.

"Speak," said the goblin, his eyes on the dagger.

"I have reliable information that one of your vaults is being misused. One of your esteemed clients has exposed the revered vaults of Gringotts to a terrible magic — something so evil that it would horrify the Gringotts goblins to their core," said Quinn, but his words confused Bogrod as much as he was concerned.

"What magic and vault?"

"I can tell you all. In return, I want the object on which the magic was cast intact. I will take it away from Gringotts, and no goblin shall ever again have to see its sight or feel its presence."

"No, that is against the rules," Bogrod thumped his cane on the ground,

"Gringotts can't give a vault's contents to another person without the owner's consent. If a cursed item in a vault violates Gringotts law, then we will destroy it and exact fines and penalties for the violation." A gleam in Bogrod's eyes said that Gringotts would extort the fines no matter what.

Quinn knew all of that; he had read every Gringotts contract he could get his hands on, and while he wasn't an expert at law, he had read enough and explored enough tangents to know that Gringotts wasn't going to let him barge into a vault and take things willy-nilly even if it was in great violation.

"I understand, and that's why I offer this dagger to Gringotts. . . or to you Bogrod. . . to make an exception. Gringotts can pretend that they expunged the dark object from their premise. . . just instead of destroying it, you give it to me," Quinn slightly pushed the box towards Bogrod with a smile. "I'm sure it will help some things up. . . but if you can't, we can always call off the deal," he gently pushed the lid, and with a finger twitch, the two locks snapped into their places. "So, what do you say, Director Bogrod?"

Bogrod stared at the knife with hunger in his eyes that even the hardened negotiator couldn't hide. The goblin-made knife was that much of a temptation.

". . . What is the terrible magic you talk about?" asked Bogrod.

"Oh, you know, we talked about it before."

"We talked about it before? When did we—" Bogrod's eyes almost popped out of their socket as he sought a wild confirmation in Quinn, who smiled with a shrug. Bogrod spoke the next word as if he were tasting every syllable on his tongue,

"A Horcrux?"

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Quinn West - MC - I grease some palms with metal.

Bogrod - Director - A possible opportunity of a lifetime, presents itself to him; will he take it, or. . .

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the synopsis!

386. Chapter 386: Fifth Capture

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"A Horcrux?" Bogrod's expression went through a journey from a journey from shocking-surprise to stern anger and finally ended on a negotiating poker face. "There's a Horcrux in a Gringotts vault? Mr. West, do you understand—" His pupils shrunk as his eyes widened; the goblin snarled and punched down his cane, sending a wave of magic out. "You knew! You knew there was a Horcrux in our vaults! That's why you asked. You were discerning Gringotts' attitude towards Horcrux! You cretin wizard!" Quinn took no offense at the harsh words. He lightly shrugged with a serene face and ran a hand through his hair ruffled by Bogrod's magic. "If that's how you want to put it, I won't deny it. But do you think it matters now? The fact remains that there may or may not be a soul container in a vault somewhere down underground."

"May or may not?"

"It depends on how would you like to proceed," said Quinn. Decline him cooperation, Gringotts could forget the Horcrux. "Gringotts can try to find the Horcrux on their own by searching every single vault, or you can barter my help and get the job done. . . which I'm bringing along with an incentive none could decline," he pointed at the dagger box. "What do

you say? How about we ink this deal in, and by the end of the day, both parties will be on their ways happy."

The goblin made no sign of encouragement, but continued to frown at Quinn as though he had never seen anything like him.

"I need to think about it. Give me a week—"

"No," Quinn shut that line of thought down, "this needs to happen now.

You need to make your decision right here, and we need to end the entire operation by the end of the day. I don't want this to get covered by red tape full of pointless discussions about Gringotts law and the cooperation between goblin and human— it will only serve to make things complicated and slow. Director Bogrod," he emphasized the title, "make the call— do you want to do it now or never."

Bogrod growled threateningly at Quinn, who sat still and unperturbed.

The way he had put it wasn't pretty, but it was the truth; if he let Bogrod sleep on the matter, the chances of this succeeding would plummet faster than a brick in the sky. He needed to green-light the deal before Bogrod stepped out of the room.

"If there was a wizard of whom I would believe that they did not seek personal gain," said Bogrod finally, "you would be the last person I think of, Quinn West. It is people like you who have kept the right to carry the wand away from goblins and refuse to share the secrets of wandlore with other magical beings; they deny us the possibility of extending our powers!"

Quinn raised both his hand and showed his palm. "I don't use wands, so I couldn't care less who gets to use a wand. And it's not like your kind is any better— goblins won't share any of their magic either; you won't tell us how to make swords and armor the way you do. Believe me, I have tried to find something that could stand up, but goblins know how to

work metal in a way I could kill for." He had consoled himself by reminding himself of the fact that he founded Aegis and created the entire product by himself, which was now giving goblin-made wards a competition.

Quinn shrugged.

Bogrod gave a nasty laugh. "It is against our code to speak of the secrets of Gringotts. We are the guardians of fabulous treasures. We have a duty to the objects placed in our care, which were, so often, wrought by our fingers." The goblin stroked the cane, and his black eyes roved over Quinn. "I will help you. I shall lead you to the vault, and you shall take away the Horcrux; in return, I get the goblin-made dagger."

"Excellent, a quick and simple deal, just the way I like it," Quinn smiled, but his smile drained from his face. "But beware goblin, try to cross me in any way, and the aftermath will not be desirable. . ."

His eyes turned purple, and an eruption of magic saturated the air in the room, and then it began overflowing, creating a suffocating atmosphere in the room. Bogrod started to breathe heavily as he stared at Quinn. He looked around the door as though expecting something.

"Don't expect the guards," said Quinn. "They will only come in if the wards are triggered," he shook his head, making Bogrod's eye tremble. The next second, the suffocating magic disappeared like it never existed, leaving behind a refreshing gust of wind, cooling down the room.

"I simply wish for a day on betrayals, but if I'm faced with a situation where I feel threatened, I shall try my hardest to damage Gringotts reputation of being the safest place in the country," he delivered flattery amongst the threat by sidelining Hogwarts from the competition. "Don't be greedy, Bogrod. Take whatever is being offered and be satisfied."

Quinn uncrossed his legs before folding them the other way. He put on a

polite smile, "Please tell me when you're ready. I can start anytime."

...

Bogrod led Quinn to the front hall with all the tellers. As they walked behind the long row of counters, the old goblins spoke, "I need to know the vault in question, so I can ask for the key for it."

Quinn gave Bogrod a studying glance before casually saying, "Bellatrix Lestrange." Bogrod's face twisted exactly the way Quinn was expecting. Bogrod stopped in his steps with the cane skidding a mark on the white marble; he looked at Quinn as though he was seeing a vampire allergic to blood.

No words were exchanged, and Bogrod resumed walking, but he had taken mere a couple of steps when he again came to a halt. Bogrod whipped his head towards Quinn and sputtered in disbelief, "A-Are you saying that it is. . . his?!" Even the goblins feared Voldemort not speaking his name while being inside Gringotts.

"It might or might not be," said Quinn

Bogrod made a grunt before continuing onto an office behind the counters. He knocked on the door with a door sign that said: Riphook, Floor Manager. Before they entered, Quinn stopped Bogrod and whispered, "Let's keep the conversation in English exclusively, shall we?" Bogrod glared at Quinn before opening the door. Riphook hastily stood up from his chair. "Sir, you didn't have to come down here; you could've called sent for me; I would've come to you."

"Riphook, I'm going to ask you to do something for me; I hope you can keep it a secret. Can you do that for me, Riphook?" asked Bogrod, getting straight to the point.

"Of course, sir. You have my tongue," said Riphook, with a warrior's look.

"Good man," Bogrod said proudly. "I want the Clankers to the Bellatrix

Lestrangle's vault—" Riphook furrowed his brow in confusion, but as he looked between Bogrod and Quinn, a shock painted his face, but as he was about to express his thoughts, Bogrod cut him off—" No questions asked, Riphook. This matter is of utmost importance and concerns greatly to Gringotts. . . the Clanker to Bellatrix Lestrangle's vault."

Riphook looked conflicted, but under the orders of his superior, so far above the chain, he couldn't refuse and retrieved a leather bag that seemed to be full of jangling metal, which he handed to Bogrod.

"Thank you, Riphook. You will have the Clankers within an hour," said Bogrod.

"Do you know how to work the vaults?" asked Quinn after they left Riphook's office.

"I started as the teller, Mr. West. I have made my career one ladder climb at a time."

The keys clanking, they hurried toward one of the many doors leading off the hall. Bogrod whistled to summon a little cart that came trundling along the tracks toward them out of the darkness, which they climbed into. With a jerk, the cart moved off, gathering speed, then the cart began twisting and turning through the labyrinthine passages, sloping downward all the time. Quinn could not hear anything over the rattling of the cart on the tracks: His hair flew behind him as they swerved between stalactites, flying ever deeper into the earth. He had never been down in the underground tunnels— his vault only had galleons, and most of the time, he paid and ordered money by check.

He leaned near Bogrod and yelled against the wind, but the goblin didn't hear. He facepalmed and quoted the iconic line that Ron Weasley had once said to Hermione Granger to himself— and then used magic to send his voice to Bogrod. "This is pretty exciting," he said. "Can we go faster?"

He got no response from Bogrod.

They were deeper than Quinn had ever been underground; they took a hairpin bend at speed and saw ahead of them, with seconds to spare, a waterfall pounding over the track. Quinn snapped his fingers to keep the water away, but unexpectedly, the water didn't obey and soaked him.

Then he heard Bogrod's voice in his ear, "The Thief's Downfall! It washes away all enchantment, all magical concealment! We entered the section that hosts Lestrangle, Black, Malfoy, Nott, among many other pureblood families' vaults — the waterfall is a requirement." His voice sounded as though he was trying to convince Quinn that he couldn't break into the vaults without his help

Quinn sighed and snapped his fingers again; this time, the water disappeared. He was of two minds to pull off a heist involving not vaults with human wealth but goblin wealth.

They turned a corner and saw the thing for which Quinn had been prepared, but it still made all of it seem insignificant. A gigantic dragon was tethered to the ground in front of them, barring access to four or five of the deepest vaults in the place. The beast's scales had turned pale and flaky during its long incarceration under the ground; its eyes were milkily pink; both rear legs bore heavy cuffs from which chains led to enormous pegs driven deep into the rocky floor. Its great spiked wings, folded close to its body, would have filled the chamber if it spread them, and when it turned its ugly head toward them, it roared with a noise that made the rock tremble, opened its mouth, and spat a jet of fire that sent them running back up the passageway.

Bogrod took out the leather bag. They advanced around the corner again, shaking the Clankers, and the noise echoed off the rocky walls, grossly magnified so that the inside of Quinn's skull seemed to vibrate with the

din. The dragon let out another hoarse roar, then retreated. Quinn could see it trembling, and as they drew nearer, he saw the scars made by vicious slashes across its face and guessed that it had been taught to fear hot swords when it heard the sound of the Clankers.

They were going even deeper now and gathering speed. The air became colder and colder as they hurtled round tight corners. They went rattling over an underground ravine and came to a stop in front of a vault without a keyhole.

"Stand back," said Bogrod. He stroked the door gently with one of his long fingers, and it simply melted away to reveal a cavelike opening crammed from floor to ceiling with golden coins and goblets, silver armor, the skins of strange creatures — some with long spines, others with drooping wings — potions in jeweled flasks, and a skull still wearing a crown.

"Does anyone have access to the vaults?"

"I'm the Director of Vaults; I have access to all vaults. . . Now enter and search fast!"

Quinn didn't step inside. He motioned for Bogrod to go in first. "I'm not going there alone. . . in case you trap me in there alone to die. Go on, Bogrod."

"You have no trust," Bogrod sneered.

"Of course not; our relationship is purely transactional," smiled Quinn.

Both of them stepped inside, and Quinn started searching for the Hufflepuff's Cup. He sent out various light orbs into the air and lit up the entire vault. He didn't have to search for long; Bellatrix had placed the Cup at a height like a prized possession. He tapped his feet, and the winds rose him up to the height of the shelf at which the Cup sat. Quinn stared at the little golden Cup that sparkled in a three-way spotlight: the

cup that had belonged to Helga Hufflepuff, which had passed into the possession of Hepzibah Smith, from whom it had been stolen by Tom Riddle.

He directed his magic towards the Cup and eradicated the Gemino and Flagrante curses laid on it externally. After confirming that it was safe to touch, he retrieved a glass box made from a unique material that could withstand Basilisk venom for some time. Usually, the Basilisk venom needs to be made inert to be stored or kept in preserved Basilisk venom sack. He conjured a pair of tongs, picked up the Cup, and carefully placed it inside the box before sealing it inside for later.

"That makes it five," he muttered to himself with a smile.

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Quinn West - MC - I should get a skull. . .

Bogrod - Director of Vaults - I don't believe I'm doing this.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - Going to college campus tomorrow.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the synopsis.

387. Chapter 387: Another Hunt?

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

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Link in the Bio/Profile

"Y-You can fly?"

Quinn secured the Horcrux into one of his pockets and turned to face the

shocked Bogrod who had just seen him float up to the Horcrux. Flight wasn't something explored in the magical world, and despite the planet's rich history, no supernatural species without the innate ability to fly had managed to take flight. As far as he knew, Voldemort was the only one who had managed to discover the magic of true, unaided flight. Even his wind magic wasn't considered true flight.

He wondered how he should respond to Bogrod. Flight was something he had ended up locking in for the Invisible Vigilante persona, and Quinn West person wasn't supposed to have. But after a moment of thought, he came to arrive at the thought that the Invisible Vigilante's flying capabilities weren't ever made public. If DMLE was to share that information with anyone, Gringotts and goblins would be way down the list.

"Possibility of extending our powers. . . that's what you said to me before, wasn't it," he spoke to the stunned goblin. "I wouldn't deny that magical foci created by the human race have allowed us to gain a certain level of dominance on the planet. . . but it is not an end of all solution. There's magic coursing inside every one of us, and with all that power, it opens the door to infinite possibility. It is only the question of who grabs the opportunity and makes the most of it." He patted Bogrod's shoulder as he walked out of the vault. "Your kind simply needs to find and aid the goblins capable and willing to chase after the infinite possibility— that's how you extend power, not by being bitter about another race's fruit of labor."

Quinn couldn't deny that even though he didn't like how his life was now, securing the fifth Horcrux and giving the rousing speech to Bogrod had put him in a jolly mood. The only way this day could be better was if Voldemort somehow surrendered his life.

Just as they came into the vaults, Quinn and Bogrod exited the deep underground— quietly and without any problem. No one except three souls knew what had happened.

"Give Riphook a promotion," said Quinn. He wasn't going to reveal what had happened today, and neither was Bogrod, as long as he didn't want to face the full wrath of his kind. "A promotion with increased authority and a pay bump will be enough incentive for him not to speak of today's another person. I think that'll be best for everyone, don't you think?"

Bogrod nodded, but his eyes were intently staring at Quinn. There was a mix of anticipation and threat in the black eyes, which differed from humans.

"You don't have to look at me like this," smiled Quinn. He took out the box storing the ancient dagger and handed it to the eager goblin. "I won't go back on our bargain. Today went as it was supposed to go— simple and without a fuss— and I have no intention to complicate and muddle it." But Bogrod was no longer listening; his entire being was taking in the ancient glory of his ancestors. The sight made Quinn chuckle.

After ensuring everything was in place, and no one had noticed something wrong, Quinn bade Bogrod farewell. He changed his back to the John persona appearance in the lounge and stepped out of Gringotts as a happy middle-aged man. However, by the time he had reached Leaky Cauldron, all the joy was gone, replaced by suspicion and vigilance.

He was being followed.

He was sure of it. In the short walk from the bank to the inn, he had a prickling intuition that someone was watching him. To confirm he had a tail, he stopped to get a bite to eat and stealthily scoured the area to find there were at least three people who were keeping note of him. One of

them even came to dine at the outdoor restaurant he was eating at; surely to keep a closer check.

'Who the hell are they?' he thought. He had sent out a Legilimency probe out to the nearest person, but the man had a strong enough Occlumency that there was a possibility of alerting him.

Quinn slowly ate his meal with his mind racing to figure out who these people were. As he finished the last bite, he had decided to find out who these people were, why they were following him, and everything else they could give him.

'They're following me, so be it.' He exited the restaurant and took the Leaky Cauldron exit to enter the non-magical London. He made sure to travel slowly and made it easier for them to follow after him. A map of London materialized in his mind. He knew the layout of major cities because of the Labyrinth project— the placement of doors had taken up an extensive amount of research— and a part of that research was to find areas with the least amount of non-magical activity.

Incidentally, one such candidate location was near Leaky Cauldron.

Quinn led the tail to a park that didn't see many visitors because of the bad state it was in. The only people that could be found there were hobos and people wanting a place to get high or drunk. He walked deep into the park, circled the area once before sitting on a bench with a book in hand. . . and waited for the playing field to set itself.

Slowly he dissipated magic into the air around and spread it out. He sucked in a sharp breath as he gained what felt like another sense— it was a great experience, but not something he was used to. His magic in the air sent back the rough location of the people around him. . .

'Twenty—' the number shocked him '— twenty people! What are they overcompensating for?' But it didn't matter; he could take all of them—

and the more there were, the more information he could get out. 'Time to get the party started. . . I have been feeling irritated; this will hit just the spot.'

He snapped his fingers, and the mini ward stone tied to a spatial locking ward that he carried around because of his work with the Snatchers came to life. He stood up, and he could feel the disturbance in the air as the twenty people felt the ward around them.

"People hiding around me, let's not be rude; why not you all show yourself, and we can talk like civilized people," said Quinn. 'John's' lanky frame straightened up like a ramrod with his hands behind his back. "We are all alone; no one will come here because of the wards— I'm sure this is what all of us want, correct? Come out— now."

Quinn roamed his eyes at the scene with ancient trees dotting the park with dry foliage covering the ground and paved paths in their fall colors. If not for the garbage that was thrown without care, it was almost picturesque. After a moment, he heard the rustle of leaves as people dressed in tan-brown attires stepped from behind trees while others dropped their invisibility spells. Soon, he had a dozen men and women surrounding him, with eight still hidden, but Quinn didn't call them out and let them think that he didn't know.

"What can I do for you all finely dressed people?" asked Quinn with confidence, but his eyes darted around with unhidden distrust. He had to put up a vigilant act to give them confidence.

"Quinn."

Hearing his name made Quinn purse his lips into a thin white line. He looked down at the ground near his shoes for a moment in silence before he released his magic, and the 'John' disguise melted away, leaving Quinn in his original appearance.

He turned back toward the person who called his name. "Are you from Gringotts? I told Bogrod I didn't want this to be messy—" He didn't need to continue for him to get the answer as it was staring him in the eye.

". . . Aksel Thorne," he said with unhidden surprise. Aksel Thorne, the co-founder of Limax Group, a "Private Security" firm sponsored by Quinn's father, Adam West, and later by George West after Adam's death. The man in front of him had been with Quinn in Denmark and Italy, both times acting as his guide and bodyguard. "If you're here, then that must mean he sent you. . ."

"Your grandfather wants you home, Quinn," said Aksel, the large, athletic, and militant man. "He and everyone in your family has been worried sick about whereabouts. You need to return home so that everyone rest can easy."

"And he sent you to get me home," Quinn looked around, "and you brought along all of this. . ."

"Please come with us; we don't want this to get ugly. We are in a no-maj area, and if this gets out of hand, we will get in trouble with the authorities. I'm sure, like us, you don't want to break the secrecy laws," said Aksel, keeping his voice and body language as non-threatening as he could.

"Yeah, kid, give this tomfoolery up and come back with us," came a voice from behind. Quinn turned and again faced some he recognized.

"Mr. Neil. . . you're here as well," said Quinn. The man who looked like a delinquent was another Limax co-founder. He had only met Neil once in Denmark. Quinn decided to pay attention to the faces of the people and was surprised that the third founder was present as well. "Even Mr. Lucas came . . . all three of you're here." Lucas, the taciturn of the three, waved his hand.

"Your grandfather made all three of us personally come here for you," said Neil, as if the entire interaction was a big bother. "The last time we got three got together for a mission was. . . I can't even remember when that was, that's how long it has been. That's why let's end this so we can get back to our lives. I left vacation to come here, kid. Don't make this more of a hassle than it already has been."

Quinn didn't reply to Neil; instead, he turned to Aksel and asked, "You brought both of them together without you—" he noticed something in Aksel's expression "— you didn't bring them. . . you were made to bring them. . . . What did grandfather told you, Mr. Aksel?"

"That you have run away from home for some reason and need to return home," said Aksel concisely.

"How did you even find me?"

"You might be nifty with magic, Quinn. But we have been doing this as a job for decades. It took a little effort, but it wasn't that difficult."

"Did he tell you why I ran away?"

"We asked, but he refused to divulge."

Quinn's eyes shined. This meant they didn't know his alternate identity. His grandfather had kept Limax in the dark and held back a lot of information that could've helped them. A smile broke out on Quinn's face — by keeping it hidden, his grandfather had given him an advantage. He turned his smile into a chuckle and pointed at all the people surrounding him. "All three founders along with so many people just to catch me? Don't you think this is going overboard? I have just finished schooling."

It was Neil who answered, "Your grandfather thinks you're dangerous because you took out a dozen Death Eaters. I saw the files on them—they were amateurs; I could've done that."

'This is good,' thought Quinn. 'This doesn't need to get messy.'

Quinn loosened his arms and shook his hand a little. He breathed in and out before saying,

"Sorry, but if anything, I'm not easy."

.

Quinn West - MC - No! I'm the only one who hunts! The other way around doesn't work!

Aksel Thorn - Limax - Let's go home, okay?

Neil - Limax - Come on, man! I'm missing ladies on the beach!

Lucas - Limax - *Wave.*

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the Bio!

388. Chapter 388: Let's Dance

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

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Link in the Bio/Profile

Quinn prepared his magic as he thought about the situation he was in.

Aksel Thorn's talk about the risk of breaking the secrecy laws was real.

Even though the park wasn't a popular population spot, it was still in

London, the most populated city in the country. Any commotion that

leaked out would reach the massive non-magical population, further

alerting the authorities. That snowball would roll down the slope to reach

the ears of DMLE for a team of Aurors, Hit Wizards, and Obliviators to

arrive at the scene to contain the mess. Which Quinn was sure neither he nor Limax wanted to happen— it was an element that'd get both of them in trouble they wouldn't even want to touch with a long stick.

The fight hadn't even started, but Quinn was already regretting his choice. This wasn't his previous brawls as the Invisible Vigilante, where he could create as much commotion as he wanted— he had to be careful to not attract attention. . . which meant that he had a paper ceiling above his head that was very easy to tear. It was better for him to be in a spacious place, away from curious eyes, where he could let his magic work freely. The current location was tilted in favor of the Limax group. 'It's okay; not all is bad,' Quinn thought, 'I have the element of surprise. . . and I'm a West.'

Without warning, Quinn broke into a sprint and ran towards the tree nearest to him, ducking just in time to have half a dozen spells miss him. He hid behind a tree and again regretted one of his decision to set up a spatial-locking ward; it would've been better to escape rather than fight them head-on. By the time that thought ended, half of the tree trunk had been turned into splinters about to break apart.

'Time to move.' He triggered body magic and rushed out, threw a zig-zag in his path, and ran towards the nearest person with a shield that took the brunt of three stunners and multiple anti-shield spells, which surprised Quinn— Limax was looking to really take him out quickly. His shield held up, and he continued to charge the nearest man. Quinn shot a disarming spell at the man— but surprisingly, the man countered it and shot a point-blank stunner in Quinn's face.

Red exploded in front of Quinn's eyes. The Limax member in front of Quinn smiled with victory, but the next second, the red spell shrunk down into a point between Quinn's hand. Quinn raised his foot, front

kicked the man a few steps back, and then returned the stunner back into the man's face, knocking him out cold. Before the man could even fall, Quinn used Empyrean ropes to pull him up and then used the body as a meat shield that took five stunners in the chest.

"Friendly fire?!" Quinn yelled as a taunt from behind the man's body. "I thought a mercenary group would be better than this."

Limax members' eyes followed as Quinn dropped the man to the ground, and when they looked up, Quinn was gone.

"He's still here; find him!" yelled Aksel to the team. Four members cast magic, and the entire area was flushed with a wave of blue. Aksel kept his eye peeled as he swept the area to find a momentary blur running towards a tree. "He's running East! Niel, the tree to your left!"

Neil turned to the tree with a savage smile. His wand vibrated with screaming magic that was unleashed towards the general area with a Latin incantation.

"Niel, don't— !" Aksel's attempt to stop was drowned by the loud crack of the tree being uprooted and then split in the middle, followed by being blasted into a grenade of splinters. "Neil! What the hell are you doing?!

We need him in one piece!" He hastily turned to Lucas, "The sound?"

Lucas nodded, and Aksel sighed in relief.

"He'll be fine; the kid is good with magic," Neil waved it off. The dust settled with the falling leaves and what left was the remnants of the once brutally murdered tree. . . but no sign of Quinn. "Is his Disillusionment somehow still on?" said Neil as he cast a spell to check. His expression changed faster than a Snitch on its wings; he yelled out, "He's not here! I didn't get him!"

All Limax members armed themselves with spells on the tip of their tongues. A silence passed through the fall leaves beneath them as twenty

veteran mercenaries scoured their surroundings. A crunching of leaves sounded out, and everyone turned to watch as a Limax member fell to the ground. Immediately, all tensed their nerves. . . they were two out.

"I want a reveal," commanded Aksel. On his order, bursts of the counter-illusion spell were sent out; however, unlike the last time, there was not even a blip of distorting movement on the ground.

"AaaaAhH!"

Everyone turned to see one of the Limax member's legs disappear into the red-yellow canopy of the tree. Aksel held his hand up in a fist to stop everyone from bombarding the tree. Lucas swung his wand, and every single leaf on the target tree fell. . . and along with it came tumbling the unconscious body. Everyone stared at the fall except Aksel, Neil, and Lucas, who flushed the tree with a gust of freezing winds that froze icicles on the naked tree top. There was no one there.

"Be attentive—"

A muffled groan was followed by a thump in the dry leaves. Eyes widened as they pointed their wands to their fallen comrade, who had been standing right in the middle of the formation. There wasn't need for an order for the surrounding people to riddle the area with a torrent of spells. . . alas, the magic just passed through.

"Where is the brat?" asked Neil heatedly. Unexpectedly, the answer arrived immediately.

"I'm here, don't worry. . . " The Limax team got startled as Quinn's voice sounded from seemingly everywhere. They looked around to no avail.

The voice continued, "Let's end this, Mr. Aksel. I can't return home, and I'm sure all of you have more important things to do—" Aksel gave a glance to Lucas, who nodded and stealthily began casting magic "— let's make a small commotion here; a contained explosion will do, and then

all of us leave— you can go back to grandfather and tell him that you found me, but because of the explosion, you lost sight of me and had to leave before non-magical eyes got here. . . after that spend a couple of days looking for until you declare that I can't be found. . . put some rookies on the busywork of trying to find me while the experienced squad can leave for more important work. How about that? Seems like a sound plan."

Lucas nodded to Aksel and got a nod back. "We can't do that, Quinn. It would undermine us in the eyes of your grandfather. We have a reputation to uphold. I have many people working under me who have mouths to feed; I can't have the firm's image be tarnished. So, please come out."

Aksel gave the signal. A spell escaped Lucas' wand and hit its target. The vacant spot suddenly had a wide-eyed Quinn facing multiple wands; he immediately raised his hands in surrender.

"Let's not make this more difficult than it has already been, Quinn," said Aksel, taking out a pair of thick cuffs from his vest. "I would rather have put these on instead of taking half a dozen stunners in the chest. Please believe me, taking any more than five takes a month and a half of complete bed rest and some nasty medicines to recover from."

Quinn wrinkled his nose, his raised hands clenched into fists as he struggled with the decision. He locked eyes with Aksel and softly shook his head. A split-second later, there was a spell in Quinn's hand, but before he could cast it, he was hit by multiple stunners.

Aksel sighed at Quinn's prone body on the ground. "Wands at ready." He stepped towards and crouched near Quinn's body, but when he raised his hand to touch Quinn, it passed through it as if Quinn was a ghost. Aksel's eyes widened as he stood up and turned to freeze.

At the very back of the group, Quinn was gazing at him. He stood behind one of the Limax members with one of his hands just beneath her nose, holding a vial of yellow potion that entered her body through the nose in the form of fumes, while his other hand was on her temple casting some magic.

Quinn let her go, stepped back, and vanished into thin air as if melding into the surroundings, all the while still staring at Aksel.

"Lira?" Aksel called to his subordinate, who had her head bowed. The woman named Lira raised her to reveal glazed-over, hazy eyes. She raised her wand up as the rest of the Limax team turned towards her. Aksel took in the scene for a moment before he yelled, "On guard—"

Lira, with all her power and skill as a veteran mercenary, cast magic on her teammates, who weren't expecting to be shot at by one of their own. In the mere ten seconds that she had before she was spelled down, Lira took out four of her teammates.

"Fuck!" spat Neil, whose spell knocked Lira out. "That's it, kid! Come out, and I'll only break a few of your bones!"

As if responding to his words, four red spells manifested in the air— right in the center of where the Limax members were standing. The four spell-lights zapped away and struck four people in their chest, sending them flying a couple feet. The initial spells hadn't even hit their target when four more appeared and launched themselves at yet another four Limax members.

Aksel, Neil, and Lucas, who hadn't been targeted, all immediately let out some severe spell-power to the origin of magic. A bright shield was immediately erected in response to their spell, but the Limax-founder's magic tore, ate, and shattered the shield to strike the caster.

Quinn immediately became visible, slapping his sleeve, which was on

fire. "Shit, shit, shit, I liked this suit," he said in a tone not suitable to the situation. He looked up at them and spoke, "Well, it's only four of us up now. Me and the original gang— reminds me of the afternoon in Denmark when we first met."

"What did you do to her?" asked Aksel with a tone void of any previous softness.

"Organized chaos," said Quinn, smiling proudly. "Potion of madness combined with some suggestions planted in the front of her mind. I pointed to a direction, and her honed instincts did the rest. . . don't worry, neither Ms. Lira nor I used any lethal spells; everyone will be up and running within a week of rest." He again raised his hands, "You don't have to look at me like that. You're here to arrest me against my will; I had to retaliate. . . Listen, I'm sorry that you had to be involved in this family dispute, and if it's any consolation, I think you're on the right side — it's just not the time for the wrong side to be defeated." Quinn pointed at the knocked-out bodies and continued, "Isn't this enough? This would be enough for grandfather to get off your back. Believe me, if you tell this exactly as it was— he'd thank you and tell you to rest."

Aksel shook his head and continued to do so for a moment. "We are taking you home today; there's no other way to it." Lucas stared at Quinn with a face that could be confused with a statue, while Neil looked like he wanted to kill and drink Quinn's blood.

Quinn rolled his shoulders and cracked his neck,

"Let's dance then."

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Quinn West - MC - I like to tango.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - NBA Final Game-5. 27-16 for GSW. End of Q1. I bet for GSW.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the Bio!

389. Chapter 389: COLD

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

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"You don't want to fight me, Mr. Aksel," said Quinn, in one final attempt to diffuse the situation. "Three of you can still call this off; take your injured companions for some much-needed treatment, and I'll make sure you cannot find me again." He kept an eye on three mercenaries who slowly walked around, forming a boundary that seemed to be some sort of formation.

The three had apparently decided on an answer as a flashing spell zapped from Lucas' wand. The magic made the invisible shield around Quinn light up in an electric blue. The shield's blue tinted Quinn's vision the same.

'Hmm?' Quinn furrowed as he sensed something, but before he could even pinpoint the cause, a spell corroded his shield, causing Quinn's breathing to flare as he felt a sledgehammer like force slam into him. As he flew back through the air, his thoughts fell into place. His eyes glanced at Aksel— the man had shot a blue-colored spell using the shield's tint as a camouflage.

Quinn was still surprised when he hit the ground, but the rib-rattling

impact that flared the pain snapped him out of it. His magic flowed into the ground beneath him, and the earth rose up to form a dome that was again immediately blasted into smithereens from the force of the spells. Quinn squeezed his eyes closed and hissed as some dirt from the explosion entered his eyes.

'I need to stop using earth as a cover,' he exclaimed while cleaning his eyes using magic. Just like before, he sensed some magic and hastily pulled up two layers of protective shield that came in use immediately as spells torpedoed into it, trying to drill through to reach him. The spells were one of the most powerful he had ever faced. . . but even the combined force was weaker than one of Voldemort's Fiendfyre whisks. He got into a one-knee kneel and steadied himself. He recognized that the current situation was more dangerous than the time he was pursued by the three Aurors. The veteran mercenaries in front of him were much more trained and experienced in the art of combative magic.

'They have years of experience over me.' He acknowledged the fact, but it didn't mean that he had nothing. 'I have magic on my side.' Listening to his command, Quinn's magic rushed forward to do his bidding. Quinn's shield disappeared, leaving an open passage for the Limax's spells— but they could even inch forward, a wave of power rippled out, ripping the magic apart. There was so much energy in the spherical wave that Limax three pulled up shields to not be blown away.

By the time the magic had passed, and the leaves had settled, Quinn was not to be found in his spot. "On guard," said Aksel, his eyes darting across the place. "He's still here. . . I can feel it."

"Is that the so-called seasoned veteran's intuition?" Quinn's voice echoed in their ears as it had done a few minutes prior. "If it is, spot-on; I'm still here. Though the real question is—"

"—where am—. . ."

Neil's wand twitched, and he abruptly-yet-preparedly turned to his right to stab Quinn with a conjured silver dagger that passed through his body as if he wasn't there and subsequently turned into mist.

"Oh, that was quick. . . your sense of magic fluctuations is good, Mr. Neil. You turned before I could surprise you with the whisper" Quinn's voice again echoed. "Let me share a fun fact about me. . ."

A sudden wind cutter whistled towards Lucas, who flicked his wand to counter it. The sharpness of the wind was taken away, but he couldn't stop a large gust of wind blowing in his face, pushing back his hair and cheeks.

". . . I'm not experienced in face-to-face fighting. . ."

A huge metal ore conjured over Neil's head that he immediately suspended in the air, but before he could cancel the conjuration, the ore turned molten, and Neil had to spring up a shield for protection. The molten ore dripped and sizzled down the shield until it suddenly cooled down into solid within a second. Neil canceled his shield only to be left surrounded by a strange metal ring.

". . .it's not my forte. As bad as it sounds. . ."

Two earthen hands sprung out of the ground and grabbed onto Aksel's feet, who in retaliation turned five feet of the land around into a crater, flattening the appendages into dust.

". . .attacking from the shadows is more in my forte."

The Limax three founders took in sharp breaths as they felt an obscene amount of magic flooding the vicinity. It was as if someone had opened the flood gates. Their instincts screamed at them to be vigilant; they immediately stabbed their wands into the earth to meld the earth into domes around their companions before taking an active stance. There

was a gust of wind here and a crunch of leaves there. . . but what bothered them was the unnatural silence that accompanied the overwhelming magic that prickled their skin; it was as if something was dampening the travel of sound through the air.

Then it started.

From all around the area, spells started to barrage over the Limax three. Magic with a real kick came from everywhere; even the sky wasn't spared as magic rained down upon them. The Limax three immediately got to work conjuring shields, countering the magic, and lending a hand to others, working like a well-oiled machine. If it was a movie, they'd be making comments like— 'It has been a while,' 'You're getting rusty,' 'Do you remember Baghdad'. . . but it wasn't a movie, and no unnecessary words were exchanged between the three as they defended against the magic.

"Aksel," spoke Lucas, "north, two."

Aksel didn't even think to confirm and turned to shoot a packed Bombarda towards the exact direction Lucas pointed to. The spell grew in size and burst near a tree, exploding and taking a bite out of the trunk. A figure darted out from within the smoke and dust, and Aksel shot two quick spells towards it, while Lucas didn't even look in that direction and aimed one explosive spell in the opposite direction.

"Spotted, eleven!" Lucas informed as his magic made contact with an invisible figure.

Quinn, the said invisible figure, dismissed his shield and shot three quick bone bruising spells towards the Limax three. He followed with an illusion that looked like a smoke bomb while himself slipping up into the sky. Quinn raced to think of his next attack when he noticed the state of the area. . . there was too much destruction, and he could even see white

smoke that had started to rise up. . . even with all parties holding back, it was only a matter of time when people would notice. He looked down and bit down on his lower lip in thought.

He watched as Lucas pointed toward him in the sky for Neil and Aksel to shoot at him. 'Was it worth the risk?' He wondered as he dodged and started to move around to not let them pinpoint his location. 'I wouldn't know if I don't try,' he decided and dropped down in the middle of the three.

"Are you giving up?" asked Aksel rhetorically as he shot a spell towards Quinn.

Quinn didn't reply. He swept his hand, and magic spread out. A ring of neon-red flames started to burn on the ground around Quinn. The Limax stepped back, not letting the flames touch them— leaving only Quinn inside the circle.

The flames were made from Empyrean. The most versatile magic in Quinn's magic arsenal.

"1927, Lestrange Mausoleum," announced Quinn, confusing the others, "Gellert Grindelwald used Protego Diabolica to test the loyalty of his followers and kill a number of his enemies, most of whom were Aurors trying to arrest him. He asked them to step through the circle— those who were loyal all passed through without harm, and those who weren't, perished— it was all very much poetic, step into the circle to prove if you were part of the Dark Lord's circle. . . but I digress. I can't case Protego Diabolica here for it would attract too much attention and destroy the park. . . and I myself don't have the confidence to contain the spell, I have only practiced it once, almost crisped myself to death. . ."

The red flames burned brighter; they grew as if someone had injected extra fuel into them. The flames tilted outwards as though the wisps

trying to like the Limax three, who were worriedly glancing at their companions. But if they looked closer, they would've noticed how the red-fire wasn't burning anything.

". . . But that doesn't mean I can't take inspiration," continued Quinn. "I cast this magic as a tribute to him. . . to his magical prowess, to his shrewdness, his charm, and everything that made him great. . . terrible, but great."

Empyrean was a magic of magical constructs that could take any property as long as the caster had the power and knowledge to make it happen. Until now, Quinn had used it as weapon and platforms. . . but today, he was going to try out the real potential. He breathed in cold air into his lungs, and the red flames rose up to seven feet.

Aksel readied his wand to cast magic and was shuffling through the spells in his repertoire when he felt. . . cold. He looked down at the base of his feet and saw a layer of ice wafer spreading out towards him. He looked to Lucas and Neil and saw them stepping back, noticing the ice on the ground. The air chilled, and the Limax three felt the cold penetrate their clothes.

Aksel's eyes widened when a wisp of flame sprung towards him. He swiped his wand to extinguish the fire. . . it didn't work; the fire, which was supposed to fizzle into sparks, continued forward and engulfed Aksel's arms. He watched in panic, expecting to feel the heat, but found his arm going numb and his face being bombarded with a cold gust. His pupils shrunk when he realized what was going and without hesitation, he cut off his jacket sleeve and cut off his glove. He jumped back away from the flames, all the while trying to bend his arm only to fail to even feel anything below his shoulder.

"Get rid of the affected clothes, quickly!" he yelled. Neil and Lucas

followed the advice and got rid of anything that had the flames, which emitted a chilling cold instead of heat. "Don't treat it like normal fire— it is some sort of cursed fire. It's cold—"

The cold flames grew like a wildfire, and within moments, the entire area was burning with the fire. All Aksel could see was red. He breathed out cold mist with his eyes trembling at the enormous amounts of magic that had come to occupy the space. It dominated all his senses. In his decades of experience in all sorts of places on the planet, he had never felt so much magic commanded by a single person. Then he had a glimpse as the fire parted for a moment, and he came face-to-face with purple eyes glowing. . . and unlike the red flames, the eyes burned hot.

And that was the last memory. . . purple eyes and the overwhelming feeling of cold with everything in his vision turning black. He went down not being able to even think properly. . . and hearing the faint voice, "It's okay. . . everything's going to be okay."

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Quinn West - MC - This won't kill you, but it ain't gonna tickle either.

Aksel Thorne - Limax - Too much magic!

Lucas - Limax - Master tracker.

Neil - Limax - C-Cold. . .

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the Bio!

390. Chapter 390: Another Assault

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

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In the embrace of nature in the country, a solitary flattened dirt road led to the iron-wrought gates of the West Manor.

The peace and quiet on the road were abruptly broken by twenty large black boxes suddenly appearing in the air and dropping to the ground with dull thumps. Twenty boxes in a grid of five by four. There was a pop, and Quinn appeared in between the boxes and the gates. He had changed out of his charred, torn, and dusty suit into a simple and comfortable white shirt and black pants.

The second he arrived, his eyes were glued to the house standing in the distance. He looked at his childhood and only home through the iron gates, wondering how easy it would be to open them and simply walk inside to reunite his family— facing the collective anger of Ms. Rosey, Lia, and his grandfather didn't seem so bad at the moment. . . and he couldn't even imagine an angry Elliot— but he knew it would be more horrible than he could imagine.

Unfortunately, fighting temptation when it was at the door was never his strong point. He quickly turned away from the West Manor, but then he came to gaze upon the fall forest trees; they brought along the thoughts of the trees in the London park— they weren't pretty. He had said that he wasn't proficient in Protego Diabolica, but he wasn't much better using his ACE flames— .Emperyeen flames. As the name suggested, the magic was a mix of Emperyeen and ice magic that tried to mimic Absolute Zero as much as Quinn could make it. Mimicking Absolute Zero, which was a legendary alchemic material, took a tremendous amounts of magic; it didn't help that Quinn hadn't only discovered the tip of the iceberg of

Absolute Zero— the difficulty of magic was off the charts for the current Quinn. . . and trying to control the flames around Aksel, Neil, and Lucas made him lose control over some wisps that ended up expanding into a wall of fire that ended up freezing an entire section of the park. It made Quinn wonder if he had unconsciously ended up taking Fienfyre as the inspiration for the flame-like properties.

There was no a frozen park could be sold to the non-magical populace any other way than a supernatural occurrence. . . or a government conspiracy, both he couldn't afford— so he set up a fire that engulfed everything that had been damaged and left no evidence behind of what had happened.

He sighed. The firefighters were going to have a hard time explaining the reason behind the problem.

Quinn knelt beside a box and tapped it. The box hissed as the lid rose up to reveal Aksel Thorne's body submerged in a liquid that glowed with only the front of his face out of the water infused in his magic, mimicking the healing in the Aquatic water. The boxes were designed to keep the bodies in stable condition and provide some first-aid before they got to proper care.

"Sorry about this," said Quinn, glancing at the Aksel's neck with a wrinkled nose. The injury was a dull grey from the cold; it was black when he had put Aksel into the box. "Don't worry; it is not cursed, so after they cut it out, it's not going to grow nice and strong."

Quinn kept the lid open on Aksel to make sure people knew what was inside the boxes, stood up, and again turned to the West Manor. A ball of yellow light wobbled over his palm. He squinted at the air around the West Manor and threw the yellow ball over the bricked boundaries. The ball of magic didn't make it over; instead, it hit the invisible ward over

the house and turned it into a shade of yellow. Every single ray of light that was going to pass through the ward was going to be colored yellow like a yellow light bulb. He raised his hand and then shot up a red flare that was going to look as much red as it was. The ward around the West Manor was an advanced version of Aegis half a decade ahead of the current version on the market; he could manipulate it to a certain degree from the outside.

He took a glance at the box before taking himself up to the air. The lenses in his eyes transfigured to far-seeing, and he could see the front door open up with George walking out with the rest of the family in tow. He gazed at them until he was sure they had spotted the boxes and then some before flying away slowly.

'Ah. . . this sucks,' he thought as he flew. The day had gone from a hundred to a negative hundred. He had started this day thinking it would be different than carefully and meticulously choosing spots to summon Snatchers and Death Eaters by triggering the Taboo, which was getting difficult by the day because he if didn't choose the correct location, the Snatchers had stopped heeding the Taboo summons. The smooth acquisition of the Hufflepuff's Cup was something he wasn't expecting to happen as plan-A never worked, and he didn't like his plan-B and he was sure Gringotts wouldn't like it either.

However, the day couldn't exit while still ahead. He had to fight with people who he liked enough and had injured enough to feel regret, and it didn't get any better than they were trying to hold back so as not to injure him. He had to burn down a park, causing problems for so many strangers. Then he had to deliver the entire Limax team in coffin-like boxes to his family, who he preferred seeing because it made things that much worse. He hadn't met with his friends in a while and instead was

spending time with total strangers making meaningless talk just to not feel completely lonely. On top of that, he was going through a rocky relationship with his girlfriends, and he couldn't even talk to them properly face-to-face to clear the air.

'Everything sucks,' he thought and then wondered if it was the Horcrux affecting his mood, making him say out loud, "Everything sucks. . . it sucks so much."

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The robes, black as death, fluttered near the ground but never touched it as Voldemort walked on a village road with tall trees covering the sides.

The deathly pale bald-headed Dark Lord, who seemed to be floating instead of walking, didn't suit the picturesque scene. However, there was no one around to object, and Voldemort couldn't care less.

Today was the first time after the Ministry fiasco he had stepped outside.

The fresh air on his face felt good enough that it infuriated him immensely just thinking about that day. Voldemort's hand crept up to his face, and he touched just below his now healed eye with his bony fingers.

Just a few days back, he didn't have anything in his eye socket with its previous resident needing to be evicted to curb the spread of the curse that plagued his stabbed eye.

He remembered the day as vividly as if it had happened yesterday. He was dueling Dumbledore in the Ministry Atrium, enjoying the thrill of magic while battling the frustrating urge to keep his magic at bay so as not to cause any commotion that would arouse suspicion in the Muggles above and risk breaking the Secrecy Laws. Unlike Grindelwald, he didn't consider it time for the Wizarding world to reveal itself to the rest of the

world. . . the day would come when the superior kind would rule with him at the throne. . . but that day was not now. As he kept his magic in check, Dumbledore did the same, trying to compete against him.

Dumbledore. . . Voldemort sneered at the thought of the old hindrance.

The second coming of Merlin, the sheeple liked to call Dumbledore—what fools they were. The entire country was filled with foolish people whose brains would sell for top gold as they were brand new from not using them to think at all. But he knew. . . he was superior, and soon the entire Wizarding world would know. The only reason Dumbledore could compete was because of the wand in his hand.

The wand. The Elder wand. Voldemort hated to think that the greatest wand made in the history of magic was in Dumbledore's hands, but at the same time, he would love the feel of power that the wand would provide him. The greatest wand for the greatest wizard seemed fitting, and the Elder wand demanded someone like him instead of an old coot like Dumbledore.

'I would have that wand with me,' thought Voldemort as he arrived at the end of the tree-lined street.

He turned the corner and entered the small township of Rosensten, hosting two dozen families who lived their peaceful lives in their lovely town. Then there was the magical part of the town that sat within the same ground, just hidden underneath the veil that kept it hidden from the Muggle part. And today, he had come to visit that part of the town.

Voldemort walked through the town under the eyes of Muggles, unhidden with his presence. The eyes fell on him, then followed him. . . and then they dropped to the ground like lifeless dolls who had their strings cut. He didn't give the Muggles a single glance; they were not worth it— what they were worth were getting diseases in their family

history pop up in them sometime in their lifetime. The planet was teeming with Muggles as if they were cockroaches; some of them dying from injuries wasn't going to change anything. Anyone that crossed paths with Voldemort watched him for a few seconds before dropping down to wherever they stood.

The trail of unconscious bodies continued until Voldemort arrived in front of the house of Randolph Westen, the Head of Floo Network Authority. He gazed at the home kept properly maintained for a moment before flicking his finger. A silverish sheen of magic shimmered in the air, outlining an invisible dome covering the property.

"Aegis. . . it has improved," he noted. The last time he had faced Aegis was at Amelia Bones' home when he had given her a 'friendly' visit and had ripped apart the Aegis ward over that house. But now, as he looked at the ward, which felt strikingly familiar to the one over the Bones' home, yet it was different, and as he observed, he could see clear improvements— and he was happy about it. A human warding scheme that had stood against goblin warding and now had improved in such a short time meant that wizards were superior to goblins, who should know their place.

But that was it.

Voldemort brandished his wand as if handling a conductor's baton and stepped to the front gate of the Westen property. He flicked it with a twitch of his digits, and the magic sang to the command. The ward over around the door turned a ghastly green, shifting into a cold blue, and finally settling into an acidic yellow that slowly crumbled away.

Voldemort put his wand back and sauntered into the Westen property.

Like any normal person, who was visiting someone, Voldemort knocked on the door and then waited. The door opened for a lady to show her

beautiful face that twisted with horror as she recognized who he was.

"Good day, Lady Westen. . . I wonder if your husband is at home."

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Quinn West - MC - I hate my life.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - I reworked this. The last version was let's just say. . . bad.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

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391. Chapter 391: A Successful

Assault

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

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When the clock stuck fifteen past five, the floo of the Westen house fluttered in green, and Randolph Westen arrived home. He frowned at the sight of the lights in the floo-room turned off.

He called, "Charlotte! I'm home, dear." Randolph hung his coat at the coat-hang and walked to the living room while loosening his tie, turning on the lights on his way. He called for his wide again but didn't get any reply.

"Is she not home?" he muttered as he entered the living room to be again greeted with darkness. He walked to the light switch of the MLEs and flipped them to light up the room, but when he turned back, his heart all

but stopped.

"Randolph Westen, welcome home. I've been waiting for you."

Randolph's eyes trembled as his body turned to steel. There sat Voldemort in front of him in his favorite chair, staring up at him, looking like a simple house guest.

"D-Dear. . ." His eyes turned to the side and saw his wife sitting like a trembling cat in the rain, looking as if she was scared out of her mind. Her face was a mess with mascara that had dripped down her face with red puffed-up eyes. She turned her head, pointing to the side with tears trickling down her eyes.

Randolph followed, and sitting in another chair was his daughter with her eyes closed with her head leaning to the side, resting on the curved edge of the chair. His throat closed up, and his stomach churned violently as his mind flew in directions that brought upon thoughts that almost made him pass out.

"A-Annie, Annie!" he yelled.

"Nothing has happened to your daughter, Randolph," spoke Voldemort, making the father turn to him, "she's simply unconscious." Voldemort snapped his finger, and the little girl stirred as if waking from a nap. She sat up straight and rubbed her eyes before looking upon Randolph; a bright smile surfaced on her face, showing her front tooth missing that had fallen off a few days back.

"Daddy!" she exclaimed in glee and was about to get off the chair when her eyes turned back, and she slumped in her chair.

"Annie!"

"Take a seat," said Voldemort. A chair creaked behind Randolph, who sat down, but his eyes were fixed on his daughter. "You have a charming house here and a delightful family. Your wife has been a lovely host to

me in your absence. . ."

Mrs. Westen continued to tremble, not daring to raise her eyes from the floor. To Randolph, his wife seemed like she had aged a decade and looked as though she hadn't slept for a week.

". . . I desire something from you, Randolph Westen, and you will give it to me," continued Voldemort. "I want access to the floo network. My Death Eaters should be able to lock down any floo they want, any time they want. If there are some un-intelligent folk out there who haven't secured their floo-s on incoming, I want my Death Eaters to be able to get into their house without any problem. . . . I want the floo network of this country to be under my control."

"I-I can't do that."

"You can and you will. It's elementary. You get contacted someone from my side, and you give them whatever they want, whenever they want. . . don't make them come down to your house because they wouldn't mind coming here anytime."

"P-Please, I-I cannot. . . I would—"

Voldemort raised his hand, and the look in his eyes made Randolph stop into a croak. "I do not like to repeat myself. When I say I want something, it happens. That's not going to change today. You have the means to give me that and. . . you. . . are not going to refuse me. But I see the dilemma here, so let me offer you a clear reason for you to do my bidding, something you can't refuse."

Voldemort lifted his wrist; little Annie's right arm rose up, and like a spot of ink dropped in the water, dying the clear in its color, a Dark Mark appeared on her fair, thin arm. Randolph gasped, and his wife broke down into sobs. The snake coming out of the skull's mouth looked all the more horrifying on the girl's arm, who didn't even have her permanent

set of teeth.

"You don't give the control over the floo-system, and I can make your daughter suffer all the way to death with a single through." Voldemort raised his finger, and Annie's thin brows crumpled, and her petite body shivered slightly as her face paled. Annie stirred and weakly opened her eyes, and just like last time, she called — "Daddy" — however, this time, it was a weak mummer that could barely exit her mouth. Voldemort rested the finger back on the armrest, and Annie closed her eyes again; the red returned to her skin, she stopped shivering, and her face looked as peaceful as if nothing had ever changed. "Kneel down, kiss my robe, and little Annie will grow to become a fine woman with a happy future and life in front of her. . . all because of her daddy."

Randolph pressed his palms into his knees. He looked to his daughter, then to his wife, who was repeatedly nodding and pleading. That was it for Randolph; that was all he needed. "I'll do it. I will give you the floo network," he said.

"Kneel down and kiss my robe."

"W-What?"

Voldemort raised his chin.

Randolph stood up from his chair and walked to Voldemort with shaky steps. He dropped down to his knees at Voldemort's feet; with trembling hands, he picked up the hem of Voldemort's robe and kissed it with his eyes squeezed shut in disgust.

"Good," Voldemort stood up and walked towards the exit.

"Why not just Imperio me?" said Randolph, still on his knees.

Voldemort paused at the living room door. "The time for Imperius Curse passed the last time we visited." He turned to Randolph, "Besides, Imperius makes people work as ordered. You, Mr. Randolph, will do

much more," he glanced at Annie, and she stirred, "well beyond what I have asked for."

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In an inner corner of the Ministry headquarter, somewhere highly restricted, so much so other than a few select Ministry personnel, no other Ministry employee was allowed inside. It was an area reserved when the Ministry wanted to do things quietly away from prying eyes. . . and for the cases where people of interest demanded the privacy they deserved.

"Is today really supposed to be such a big deal?" Kinsley said to Robards as they stood in the pearly white corridors, much different than the black interior present in most of the Ministry.

"It is," said Robards, pointing to Scrimgeour standing ahead of them, chatting with the Secretary of the Ministry of Magic, the highest-ranking member in the Minister's cabinet, "if today goes well, it is going to be massive for the department."

"For the Ministry, you mean."

"Yes, for the Ministry as well."

They straightened up when the floo at the end of the hall turned green.

The most exclusive floo after Minister's own had been connected on the other end.

"At attention, people, the party's about to arrive," announced Scrimgeour.

The green fire exploded like an upward shooting fire thrower going up into the empty roof of the chimney. A group of people stepped into the Ministry from the curtain of fire.

Scrimgeour stepped forward and greeted with a smile, "Mr. West, it is a

pleasure to see you again."

George West was the reason why the Head of DMLE, the Head Auror, and the Secretary of Ministry of Magic all had arrived collectively for greetings. They were some of the people who wouldn't come greet people like this individually, much less together. But George West was the big fish that warranted this treatment. It was the Minister of Magic's dignity that held Amelia Bones wanted to maintain the reason behind she was not here— Cornelius Fudge would've been here faster than the fastest runners in the country.

George West nodded to Scrimgeour before turning his eyes to the people present in the hall. There were a couple people accompanying him.

As Scrimgeour talked with George, Robards leaned near Kingsley and pointed out the well-dressed smiling man standing beside George, conversing with the Secretary, "That's Elliot Dalton, THE right-hand man to George West. Most people have to go through him before even getting the chance of getting a single alphabet to George West, much less seeing him."

"I have never seen Madam Secretary smile like that."

"Neither have I. Moving on, you know Bach," Robards sneered. Kinglsey nodded with similar emotion and recognized arguably the best attorney-at-law in the country, Orrin Bach. The old lawyer had built a career so strong that he was the only one in the country able to bill whatever he wanted from his clients. None in the entire DMLE liked the man and his firm.

"As for the other, I don't know who that is. . ." said Robards, looking at the middle-aged man in a fedora who stood a step back from everyone with a small smile on his face.

Robards and Kinglsey had their eyes stuck to the man. They couldn't pull

them away, no matter how they tried. Even Scrimgeour shifted his eye to the man from time to time. There was something about the man which screamed dangerous to the Aurors— the way he stood, the way his hands laid- relaxed yet ready, even the way his eyes moved said that the man was experienced.

"That guy is trouble," said Robards, eying the guy with a critical eye.

"He's the bodyguard, isn't he?"

"He's got training. I can tell he's got professional training and then something more. . . I wonder how much is he getting paid?"

Robards quirked his brow. "Are you looking to switch to private?"

"No, I'm for the long haul," smiled Kingsley.

"Aiming for my position?" asked Robards. Kingsley shook his head. "Head of DMLE?" Kingsley again shook his head. Now Robards was surprised.

"The Minister of Magic?" Kingsley nodded with a smile. "Oh my, you got big aspirations, my friend, and I hope you achieve them."

They stopped talking when Scrimgeour began to lead George down the hall. It was time for the biggest meeting of the year. . . and possibly of the entire current administration.

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Voldemort - Dark Lord - I use spells other than the Unforgivables.

Randolph Westen - Head of Floo-Network Authority - I should've retired the first time around.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - WARRIOR DUBS!

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When the West party and the Ministry escort reached the designated meeting room, they were greeted by Amelia Bones. The Minister rose from the black chesterfield sofa in greeting. "How are you doing today, Mr. West?" she smiled.

"Not well," George said bluntly as he directly sat on the sofa opposite without exchanging the customary polite greeting. "I do not like what is happening in this country, my country. A madman is running freely in the country, blowing up Auror's Office, barging into Ministry and taking hostages. . . and who knows what he's doing now." He peered at Amelia, who was still standing, "And when I ask anyone or read the paper, all I hear and see is that your government is a strong one, or at least is supposed to be."

Amelia sighed deeply and sat back in her spot, and Scrimgeour sat by her side, with Elliot taking a seat beside George. Orrin Bach placed himself on one breadth of the table alone while Robards and Secretary sat opposite him. The bodyguard walked straight to the bar in the room while Kingsley stood next to the wall near everyone.

"We are trying to keep him down," said Amelia; gone was the polite smile, and back was the woman who had reigned over the DMLE, "but with the current situation, it has been getting difficult to properly deal with with the Dark Lord and his minions."

"And what are these problems?"

"How can I truly focus on the threat when I'm shackled down by internal problems."

"What, the blood supremacist? Minister, you're making me doubt if you're truly committed to dealing with the threat as quickly as possible. You can't use them as an excuse when you have been handling them just fine during your time in DMLE."

"My ranks were clean when I was the Head of DMLE. All I get to deal with now is a building full of people who wouldn't move a finger if it's not doing them some personal good," the Minister's one grey hair looked whiter than ever.

"Give them a boot; you're their boss."

"If it could be that easy, politics gets in the way."

"It isn't that difficult," George said unperturbed.

The Ministry officials all showed some form of reaction to the words. It wasn't a secret to them that George had dug his claws into the Ministry. But the way he had done so made them twitch— the speed at which the reach of his influence had grown was astounding, to say the least. George West had never been directly involved with the Ministry; there were always systems in place that would facilitate him when required— but never directly. It was as if West always knew that something like would happen and had cast the net when needed. And all of it had been done out of spite and just because he could do it.

"The Dark Faction have been clogging up Wizengamot for months.

Whenever I try to bring something of real consequence up, they just make a f-" Amelia held her tongue, "mess of things. The other factions try to intervene, but eventually, everything turns into a pissing contest between men."

"Why do you need Wizengamot's approval for anything? You're the Minister of Magic with a background in DMLE of whom I suppose you have the support," George pointed to Scrimgeour. "What is the problem; because I can't see any."

"Resources are the problem, Mr. West. DMLE doesn't have enough resources to deal with the current situation. Even with the lethality law in place, the force can't make a difference if they don't have the means for it."

"DMLE's budget hasn't dipped since you assumed the big office. The Aurors Office and the Hit Wizard Bureau never had a shortage of funds during your time. You lobbied the budget to be highest after war times."

"After the war times, that's the crux. . . the wartime budgets were much higher than anything I saw coming in. We are at war, Mr. West— houses are being broken into, families are being threatened, and just last week, I had cases of six Muggleborn deaths done with Death Eater work all over it— DMLE can't fight this without a war chest." Amelia sighed as she gazed at George, "But you already know this, or else you wouldn't have arranged this meeting. . ."

"That is true," said George, "and I'm here to help, so how can I help?"

"I need your help in clearing up the Wizengamot clog so that I can redirect the budget to DMLE. The Grey Faction needs to participate in the hearings more proactively; what they're doing is not supportive enough. .

. . I also know that you have ties to some in the Dark Faction; the Ministry would appreciate it if you could have them soften up."

If George had been any other rich man, Amelia would've never bothered to meet him like this— she would've lobbied him differently. But the Wests were entrenched in the country more deeply than most people could imagine. A request like this would usually require her to reach out

to various people who would reach out to various other people— but there sat a single person who could handle all that for her and could do it much smoother, quicker, and discreetly than she could with all the eyes upon her right now.

George turned to Scrimgeour and posed a question, "Can you assure me that you can show some results with an influx of resources?"

"I assure you we can," said Scrimgeour, steely certainty in his tone. "My people have been working hard with what they have; they will work harder if they get the right means for their job."

George peered at Amelia, Scrimgeour, and Robards. He nodded, "I will help you clear up the mess at Wizengamot; start preparing for the motions you want to present, and I guarantee they will be properly discussed." Everyone from the Ministry smiled as they exchanged looks of happiness.

"Thank you, Mr. West; this would truly be of great help," Amelia said.

"And I can provide you with my contacts," said George, making everybody look at him. "I'm willing to provide you with my contacts, access to my trade routes, better prices on purchases. . . additionally, I can provide external funds— my gold— to the efforts in the war."

Orrin Bach, the lawyer, took out a sheet of paper from his briefcase and slid it over to Amelia. He smiled, "There's the number Mr. West is willing to provide to war efforts."

Amelia picked up the sheet and started to read what was a short description of what George was willing to provide, and as she reached the end of the page, her eyes widened at the string of digits printed on the bottom right corner. She looked up at George as she passed the page to Scrimgeour. "Are you sure? This is a sizeable amount," she said.

"That's something to say," Scrimgeour breathed out.

"I can get the talks going in Wizengamot," started George, "but do you think with the current divide, you'll be able to gather the amount you need? This isn't like last war, Madam Minister. Before the Dark Lord, the purebloods supremacists got what they wanted by exerting control from the shadows; they believed themselves superior to the others, but they talked about it behind doors. During his reign, they were enabled to display their views in the open and now could silence those who didn't think the same way— purebloods who didn't agree became blood traitors and either got killed or outcasted. . . Muggleborns who previously were at least welcomed into our world suddenly felt it to be cold, harsh, and unwelcoming. After his fall, the purebloods who had tasted power couldn't go back to the days of pulling strings from behind the curtain; they had tasted what it felt like to be in open power, and with a weak administration, they took the chance and cemented their position despite being in a disadvantageous situation. Some were pushed as scapegoats, while others got free by paying petty fines and using the Imperious excuse. Over the last ten years, the pureblood influence has risen instead of getting weaker— the Boy-Who-Lived might have been a Symbol of Hope, but the Dark Lord was a Mark of Fear that persisted even after his supposed death. Yes, some purebloods tried to fight for equality, but it didn't change the fact that all enjoyed the benefits."

Amelia knew that better than anyone. No matter what Faction, they all had used the opportunity to position themselves in prominent positions. It was why they had so few Muggleborns in prominent positions of power, and the entire Ministry's upper hierarchy was occupied with purebloods, the vacuum in the middle had been taken up by Halfbloods, leaving the scraps to the Muggleborns.

"You might not get what you're expecting," finished George.

". . . Even then, I can't accept this. If this was a donation to DMLE's support fund, I could've imagined it going through— but you're offering it as war support; I have no way of accepting this. I can still accept the other help, but not the direct gold."

"Oh, but you can," said Bach with his lawyer smile. He pulled out a thick stack of paper and placed it on the table. He placed his on the stack and said confidently, "This here details how the DMLE can accept the gold within the confines of the law. . . barely, but still within the law— and you get to use it for war purposes."

"Take it now," said George calmly, "or forget about it."

"I can't accept this now. I have to get this checked," Amelia pointed to the stack.

"You can get it all checked; we will forget about it if you find any illegality. But you have to decide now if you want it or not."

Amelia stared at the stack, then at Scrimgeour, the Secretary, and Robards. Scrimgeour slightly nodded while the other two didn't send any negative signals. Amelia took out her handkerchief and started cleaning the monocle she wasn't wearing; she looked up at George and nodded. "I accept. As long as there are no problems concerning the legality, I will appreciate the help," she said.

"Excellent choice." George got up with everyone following him. "I hope I won't come to regret today, Minister. I'm expecting some returns from this."

"You won't regret this, Mr. West; you won't."

. . .

This time around, Amelia accompanied George to see him off. After today, if she could get the entire Ministry, she would get them together to see George off.

"Who's the bodyguard," asked Amelia, glancing at the fedora-clad man walking ahead of everyone. "Is he from the Limax?"

"You know about Limax?" asked George, quirking his brow.

"I've seen their name plenty of time on documents when you bring them into the country."

"I see. No, he is not from Limax; they are busy with other. . . commitments. Laro is an independent contractor and a friend."

"Scrimgeour was giving him looks; Robards as well."

"He is good, that's why."

As they reached the end of the hall, nearing the floo, it burnt up green, and a figure stepped out, making everyone stop when they recognized the man. George's brows furrowed together when he saw the man, and Elliot was no different with his smile slipping away.

"Good day. . . everyone," said Dumbledore as he fixed the hat on his head.

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George West - GrandMC - Returns. . . those I will get.

Amelia Bones - Minister - She doesn't know it yet.

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393. Chapter 393: Shoulda Just

Asked

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a donation and get chapters earlier than usual as a bonus.

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"Good day. . . everyone," said Dumbledore, his eyes gazing at everyone, stopping on George and the fedora-wearing bodyguard more than anyone else.

A sense of surprise came from both parties. Dumbledore— to see George West meeting the Minister of Magic and the Head of DMLE. From Amelia and her party, they preferred someone from the outside— especially Dumbledore— to know about this arrangement before it was inked and the resources were flowing. They were sure that Dumbledore wasn't going to get the meeting details, but they preferred if he had no idea at all.

"Amelia, George. . . I'm surprised to see you two together; what brought this along, if I may ask?" asked Dumbledore, his eyes twinkling.

"Mr. West and I were discussing a Ministry contract."

"And we discussed a donation from me to the Ministry for the war efforts against the Dark Lord and his Death Eaters," said Geoge out of nowhere.

Amelia, Scrimgeour, Robards, and others from the Ministry turned to George with a shock that they hid after a split moment with all the politician's skills they possessed. "Mr. West, we shouldn't talk about this with outsiders," said Scrimgeour.

"Yes, we should not," said Geoge, staring at Dumbledore. "But this is Dumbledore, the one who the Dark Lord fears and the one who defeated Grindelwald. I'm sure he would be glad to know the Ministry would be getting the aid that would allow it to resume its proper working without getting into a lengthy yet needless political conflict. These are urgent times that need urgent actions. . . don't you think so too, Dumbledore?"

". . . Yes, I think so too," said Dumbledore.

"I was sure you would," George said. "The Order of Phoenix was of great help the last time around, and even though they weren't a legitimate authority. . . a vigilante outfit. . . and had no place doing somethings they did, those brave people stepped up in the time of need for the right thing, for the just thing— what do you think of their contribution in their last war, Minister Bones?"

"Of course, I am grateful for their bravery and courage to stand for their country against evil," said the Minister, keeping a positive yet diplomatic stance on the matter

"I, too, commend their valor," said George smiling. "My contribution today is in the similar vein, help my country in the time of need— it's just that my gold is much more valuable than my wand. I'm simply trying to help. . . like others have done before me."

Dumbledore smiled positively as ever, flashing the infectious charm, and nodded along; however, the man of words with something to speak on anything and everything said nothing and seemed like he was humbly not accepting the praise. How could he. . . all his ear could hear was the subtext lingering and hidden in George's words.

"And the Ministry appreciates your generous contribution, Mr. West," said Scrimgeour.

"I'm just doing my civic duty," George said with a slight head nod. He turned to Dumbledore and addressed the man for the second time,

"Dumbledore, if I remember correctly, you wanted to meet me regarding something. I have time now; we can talk now. I'm sure the Ministry has a lounge that we can borrow for a while. The one in which we just sat down, perhaps."

"Of course, take all the time you need," said Amelia.

George gazed at Dumbledore, his stone-grey eyes studying him as he

stood under everyone's attention.

"It is fine; we can meet at a later date at leisure; I also have official urgent Hogwarts that I need to take care of right now before the offices close," Dumbledore said in a good-hearted tone. "From the gist of it, the discussion you just had with Amelia was a significant one and enough for today— let's leave some other work for another day."

George twisted the ring on his finger. "I don't like to leave work for tomorrow; I'm a busy man, and I prefer to finish as quickly as possible so that I can return home. . . where my family awaits me. I'm sure any office will be more than happy to accommodate Albus Dumbledore even if he's a little late. . ."

"Oh no, I can't keep people at work more than what's warranted; I don't want them cursing me in their minds as they do my work," Dumbledore chuckled.

George looked to Elliot, who leaned in to listen to some whispers. Elliot nodded, took out his wand as George approached Dumbledore, and cast a privacy spell around them. He turned to the Ministry people and smiled, "So, I hear the executive lounge in the DMLE serves some great truffle." Amelia glanced at the two men under the privacy dome, wondering what they were talking about. If she knew, she would want to scrub the information out of her mind because it would mean saying goodbye to the opportunity that had presented itself today. . . and she didn't want to get that slip away even if she had to pay the price later.

"What are you trying to do, Dumbledore?" said George, all the etiquette slipping away. "I have been waiting for you to approach for long, but I haven't even seen a glimpse of your shadow. Is this some play of yours to make me sweat?"

"I don't understand. . ."

"Don't handle me, Dumbledore. If you want to deal with me, then do it directly, don't go blackmailing my grandson. . . but maybe getting to my grandson is all you're capable of." George glared at Dumbledore before breathing out deeply. He set his shirt sleeves under his suit sleeves before saying, "No matter. I would make sure my grandson gets out scot-free even without you."

"Was that what today with Amelia was about?"

"Do you think I need to do this to get my way? I don't. This country owes me more than enough already. I'm doing this so the megalomaniac is erased from the face of the Earth, and I can have my grandson back home. He has idiotically left home because of that threat of yours and refuses to return home," George sighed, "the sooner this ends, the sooner I can have my grandson in front of me. . . . If anything to happens to my grandson, then pray to everything divine because I will make the lives of you and everyone you're involved a living hell. I don't care if the Order of Phoenix is made up of Aurors and Hit Wizard and think their fellow colleagues won't prosecute them because of some brotherhood code— I will become the Kingmaker in this country and put whoever can get me what I want on the Minister chair. Don't force my hand by going public with what you know, Dumbledore, because if you do, I will take away the one thing you love so much."

"And what that might be?"

"Many might not like you up there, but I don't mind you in the castle, Dumbledore— so don't make me change that, for I can make that happen. I know you love the Headmaster chair more than anything in this world, so consider yourself warned— cross me, and you'll never see the inside of the castle as Headmaster or Professor or anything."

For decades, Dumbledore had been up in the test polls for Minister of

Magic during elections, but for decades, the candidate who could essentially hold the chair in perpetuity had refused to run in the election. It could've meant that Dumbledore wasn't interested in politics, but he was an active member of the Light Faction and the Chief Warlock of Wizengamot. After that, the most likely reason one could consider that was that he hadn't run for Minister of Magic because that would mean giving up his seat as the Headmaster of Hogwarts.

"I can see where he got that bite of his," muttered Dumbledore, staring at George.

"What?" asked George.

"Nothing. I noticed that you didn't pull out of our Hogwarts deal. I notice your people are still there in the village."

"Don't for one second think that's because of you," said George. "I have other reasons for my people in Hogsmeade."

"Is that reason called the Daphne Greengrass? You've people stalking the place in case Quinn comes to meet her."

George fixed Dumbledore a stoney look. It was true; he was hoping that Quinn would visit Daphne or he would visit Astoria Greengrass for treatment. The previous plan had been capturing him. . . but after the incident with Limax, George considered talking and persuasion the first choice before using force.

The conversation was over. George was done as he stepped out of the dome and towards the fireplace with his companions following him.

"What was that about?" asked Kingsley to Dumbledore.

Dumbledore's eyes followed George until he was gone, and the fire settled down in the fireplace. "That was when you get hasty and don't consider all the cards dealt," said Dumbledore. He looked to the Ministry company and muttered, "I suppose this is the best I can get out of this

situation. What did George offer?"

"It makes me think if I had a wish, I would wish to be reborn as a West.

We could really do something with what we're getting."

Dumbledore sighed. He wasn't sure how to feel about it. Even though George had said he didn't need to do this, it was clear that he was the reason it happened. And while he directly didn't get what he wanted, the DMLE got a war chest.

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Quinn sat on a bench inside Bristol Temple Meads railway station.

Hundreds of people walked past him every minute while he sat there with a newspaper in his hand, doing the crossword. "You're here," he said.

Lucius Malfoy, sitting behind him on the joined bench, turned his head towards Quinn and asked, "Do we have to do this here?" he asked, looking disgusted at his clothes. "We could've met anywhere, in a forest—why here?"

"Because no Death Eater would come looking in a non-magical railway station," said Quinn, though the real reason was that he wanted to hold a secret meeting in a busy railway station. "You got something for me?"

"Something big is coming up soon. We haven't done something this big since the last war."

"Oh, a big attack, tell me more."

"Not a big attack— big attacks. We are going to attack Ministry Officials who have been creating problems. . ."

"A series of assassinations; that's bold."

"Not a series of assassinations. . . they're going to be done on the same

day," said Lucius, and Quinn's brows rose. "The aim is to create as much chaos as possible in the Ministry."

"How is this going to happen?"

". . . I don't know."

"What? You're Lucius Malfoy; how can you not know?"

"That's the problem; no one knows the entire operation except the operation lead," said Lucius. "We are assigned the targets, and two weeks from Thursday, we will go after them. I was able to get the names, but not how or when they are going to happen during the day. The different teams are not allowed to discuss their plans."

"Why is this happening?"

"Because of Rivers Lock, you know him," said Lucius, and he was right; Quinn knew him. "He made it so that no one other team knows. Novellus Accionites operated that way apparently."

Quinn closed his crossword and pursed his lips.

This was going to be a problem.

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Quinn West - MC - Okay, let's think about it; I can always clone myself. . . that's easy enough. . . yeah, super easy.

George West - GrandMC - I'm embedded in this country.

Albus Dumbledore - Headmaster - I should've just asked.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - Do you guys know how to insect-proof a room? The monsoon season is approaching in my college city, and I'm not from a place where we get a lot of insects during the rain.

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394. Chapter 394: Finding Her

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"We shouldn't be doing this," Hermione gazed around the streets of Hogsmeade, looking at every person, window, and rooftop with suspicion and worry. "This is too dangerous, and we can get in trouble."

"Don't be spoilsport," said Ron with a bag of Mangey's mouth-firecrackers in his hand. He popped some in and kept his mouth open for miniature firecrackers to burst out. "We aren't going to get in trouble if we don't get caught; it's as easy as that."

Hermione removed her worried eye from the surroundings and glared at Ron. "I'm not worried about getting caught by the professors, that is—" She stopped with a surprised eek when an arm snaked around her waist. She turned her eyes to find Harry looking at her with a comical-surprised look.

Harry fake-gasped, "Hermione Granger, not worrying about getting caught by professors? Who are you, and what did you do to my girlfriend?" he smirked.

Hermione rolled her eyes, "This is not a joke! What if—" she looked around before dipping her head to whisper "— a Death Eater sees you and tries to kidnap you. . . What if they call others and others get hurt!" The more she spoke, the more panicky she got. "I really feel we should return to the castle now; it's not worth the risk."

She was stopped when another arm went around and above her shoulder

from the other side. "Cool down; you're worrying too much," said Ivy Potter with a smile that Hermione had only started to see return recently. "No one will know it is us because how can they? We don't look anything like us."

Hermione pressed her lips into a white line. It was true; they didn't look anything like their original appearance. Harry and Ivy were barred from visiting the village during Hogsmeade weekend because of security concerns and all the things that could go wrong if they were outside Hogwarts without protection. So when the plan to sneak out to Hogwarts was made, she had, of course, denied it immediately. But then Ivy had suggested the solution of changing their appearances to some random magazine models they had looked up in an old issue of *Witches Weekly* so that no one would know who they actually were. They even made sure not to wear their Hogwarts robes in case someone got suspicious because of their house trims.

"But what if someone realizes that it is magic," Hermione rebuked. They didn't have hair for a Polyjuice, so she and Ivy had to work off the magazine clippings and create a replication through Transfiguration.

"Our magic is good enough so that no one would know if they didn't know what exactly to look for. I adore how worried you're getting for us, but shake it away— who knows, this might be our last Hogsmeade weekend," said Ivy.

"Hey!" Harry chipped in, "Let me tell you, this is in no way the last time we are doing this. I'm here till June, and I will be in Hogsmeade every time the weekend opens up."

Hermione tried to resist one more time, "But still. . ."

"How about we go look at some stationary," said Ivy, "that should calm you right down, and it will take your mind off this when you see all the

new inventory they have."

Hermione rolled her eyes and softly shoved Ivy away, making her giggle.

Maybe Ivy was right; perhaps she was overthinking it— her magic was good, it would hold up. "Should we go to Scrivenshaft then?" she asked—the thought of new inventory did make her feel a rush of excitement.

"Not Scrivenshaft," Ivy's smile ran away faster than a squirrel.

Hermione knocked herself internally, and she could feel Harry's arm tighten around her waist, telling her that it was indeed a landmine that she should've sidestepped. She knew that Ivy had a fight with Quinn, and her mood hadn't been good ever since then— her temper had only improved around the time they had begun planning for today.

"Tomes & Quills is better; we should go there," said Ivy, pulling her towards the street that led to the store.

But then they heard a voice that made them come to a skidding stop. "I would like to object to that statement," said the familiar voice. They turned to see him standing in the middle of the street, smiling at them pleasantly.

"Scrivenshaft is the best stationery and printing solutions store there is in Hogsmeade. . . nay the country. . . nay the world," said Quinn. He was dressed in a suit made up of a grey blazer and tan pants; he seemed absolutely spotless in how he dressed— not how one would expect someone who had run away from home.

He slightly narrowed his eyes and examined them over. "Let me take a guess," one by one, Quinn looked at them, "HG, Ron, Boy twin. . . Girl twin."

"Sorry, I don't know—" Hermoine said, trying to defend, but that went down the drain immediately.

"How did you know?!" exclaimed Ron, his jaw-dropping, letting the

firecrackers whistle out.

"Idiot!" "Ron!" "Moron."

Quinn smiled, "Thank you for confirming, Ronald. As for how I knew? I know every Hogwarts student who was there last year. You clearly aren't new first years, and I don't know any now-seventh year who looks like you four. . . it was an easy guess."

"How did you know we'll be in the village today?" asked Harry, his tone full of distrust.

"I didn't." Quinn looked to Ivy, "Can we talk. . . somewhere private?"

Harry stepped forward, but Ivy pulled him back. She whispered something into his ear; Harry looked like he wanted to protest, but a look from Ivy, he clicked his tongue and turned away.

"You go ahead; I'll find," said Ivy.

"Are you sure?" asked Hermione. "You don't have to. . ."

Ivy didn't reply and followed Quinn as they entered an alley and disappeared into another street.

"Should we go after them?" asked Ron.

"I don't think he's going to hurt her," said Hermione, though she was tempted to go after them. She turned to Harry to see what he thought, but he just passed by her wordlessly, heading towards where Ivy and Quinn had left.

"Harry, wait!"

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"What do you want?" Ivy asked scathingly.

"I want to talk."

Ivy stopped in the middle of the street and stood there with crossed arms.

"Well, I don't want to," she said testily.

Quinn stopped and rolled his eyes for a moment before turning to Ivy.

"Yes, you do, or else you wouldn't have followed me here. Now let's go,"

he took her arm and pulled her along. Ivy tried to resist, but Quinn

tugged her along anyway.

"Let me go!" she protested.

Quinn looked around to survey the surroundings. He entered the door nearest to him and pulled Ivy in. It was a shop full of odd trinkets with an odd scent permeating from the floor's wood. There was a long counter that stretched from one side of the shop to another, and an old man sat behind it, wiping a glass bowl with a washcloth.

"Ernie, is the back room free?" Quinn asked as Ivy studied the shop with suspicion.

"It is," said the old man with a shaky voice.

"Thank you, Ernie."

They walked to the store's back room, which was filled with boxes. Quinn walked to a wall, and like they didn't exist, they passed through the boxes.

"What— the wall," yelled Ivy.

But they passed through the wall. It was an illusion that opened up to a narrow tunnel with a single MLE on the top, walls that barely had any paint or plaster on them, revealing the red bricks that had turned a dirty brown with time. At the other end of the tunnel sat a red door at the end. Inside the room, on the other hand, was nothing like the tunnel. The room was furnished to the inch with decor that made it seem like it was a luxury hotel.

"What is this place?" asked Ivy, stunned at the place.

"Hogsmeade is a village, and like any other village, it has places that only

local knows. Locals and those who know what to look for. This place is a spot where people can hold meetings with privacy." He turned to Ivy and said, "So, let's have that meeting."

"What is there to talk about? You said it all the last time, or maybe you didn't— who knows what you're hiding."

Quinn sat down on a comfy leather chair and motioned Ivy to the chair in front of him. "For one, I don't plan to hold the Horcrux hostage. I never did. I want Voldemort dead as much as anyone does," he said. "It was merely a timed threat against Dumbledore. I have my security now."

"What if you didn't have the security?" Ivy asked, not taking the seat.

"What then? Keep the Horcrux; maybe join Voldemort while you're at it."

Quinn's brow furrowed for a moment, and his smile weakened the same.

He sighed and lightly shrugged, "In that case. . . then I would've walked into the Aurors Office and revealed the Invisible Vigilante's identity in front of the entire Auror force. That way, my grandfather wouldn't have needed to deal with Dumbledore. It would've probably jeopardized my future in this country. . . grandfather would've tried to undo that and most probably succeeded, but I wouldn't be walking around as freely as I'm right now— I'm already fending off grandfather's attempt to bring me; I don't want the Ministry behind me as well."

"Like that would've mattered; they haven't been able to catch you until now."

"No, they haven't, but they could do much better with my face. Not only would I have Aurors looking for me with a renewed vigor— people hate rich folks— but I also would have the non-magical authorities after me. . . I don't like that many eyes on me." He was sure that in this scenario, his grandfather would've used the Ministry and, in turn, non-magical intelligence agencies as extra man-force. "It was crucial for me that

Dumbledore stayed quiet. Moreover, I don't appreciate my family getting threatened."

"So, you're saying you did nothing wrong?"

"I did you wrong and your family. And I deeply apologize for it. It was wrong for me to keep what I knew, what I did, hidden. I know my justifying my actions won't be helpful here, but I had reasons to do so.

"I'm aware I sound like Dumbledore right now," said Quinn. He pointed to the chair, "Would you please take a seat, or would you prefer for me to stand up."

Ivy eyed the chair, then Quinn, before conceding her stubbornness to keep standing to take the chair opposite Quinn.

"I missed you," said Quinn. "I tried to reach out to you, sent you letters, but you never replied. You even stopped picking up my calls on the mirrors."

"I didn't read them," said Ivy, a little less angry than before.

Quinn looked down at his hands in his lap. There was a silence in the room. As the silence persisted, Ivy's anger started to slip, replaced with a worry at Quinn's demeanor. The only time she had seen him quiet was when he was working with magic, but other than that, he always had a way of striking up conversations— the silence now was unnerving for her.

"Quinn?"

He raised his head, and even though there was a smile on his face, it sent all the wrong signals to her. If she had been worried at Quinn's silence before, she was genuinely concerned now.

"I . . ."

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Quinn West - MC - I know places, and I know people.

Ivy Potter - Much Anger - Quinn?

FictionOnlyReader - Author - I just wrote the first chapter last conflict of AMJ. AMJ has successfully entered the last leg of its journey. It's expected to end Early or Mid July 2022 (I can say it with confidence this time). It'll followed by the Epilogue Volume, which will end by the last days of July 2022.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

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395. Chapter 395: The Occasional

Thought

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Link in the Bio/Profile

Though there was a smile on Quinn's face, his face was sending all the opposite signals to Ivy. All of a sudden, she could notice the slight droopiness, the lack of the lustre in his eyes that made him seem intelligent at times and mischievous at others, she could even light bags under his eyes. It was as if a filter had been lifted over her eyes, and as she put aside her anger for a moment, she could see more and more.

"I. . . I am tired," said Quinn. "I have known about the Horcruxes for a very-very long time, and I don't know how Dumbledore does it, but it is a great deal of pressure for me knowing that there exists a madman who can't be killed without getting rid of immortality granting vessels. At first,

I was all up for it— things seemed so simple back then— find and destroy the Horcruxes, kill the Dark Lord, and be the unknown hero by the end of it all— and it started great. . . . I had a bucket load of Basilisk Venom ready to torture the soul fragments till they die, and one already down the sack, then I got another one and burnt the ring to a crisp. . . . But things are never so simple, are they."

Quinn heaved a heavy sigh. He glanced over his shoulder at the alcohol trolley near the wall with any choice of liquor he could ask for. "Do you mind if I drink?" he asked.

"You don't drink."

"I know, but I really feel like it could help," he sighed. The look from Ivy looked like she wanted to say something but was holding back made him chuckle weakly. "You don't have to say it; I'm not going to drink; it was just a thought." Both of them knew that Quinn didn't want to partake in anything that would leave him inebriated.

"You see, the first time I saw your brother, I always knew that that scar wasn't normal— I thought it was a dark curse injury that your family wasn't able to get fixed, but when I came to know about the Horcruxes, I began to suspect things, and when I looked closer my suspicions were true— the infamous lightning bolt of a scar was indeed a Horcrux. I don't know how that could be possible because Horcrux takes elaborate magic to create. . . . but then there hasn't been a maniac who split his soul more than once." Ivy watched as even the talk of magic that would always make Quinn's face glow up failed to bring any joy to his face. "It may sound bad, but back then, I didn't care for your brother's well-being much; I would've preferred to help him, but the bottom line was that Harry Potter was simply. . . . a Horcrux."

Ivy's face wasn't a pretty sight. There was hurt and alarm painted all over

her face; she even hugged herself, a very out-of-place sight for someone like Ivy Potter. Quinn watched her, and the look of betrayal didn't make him feel any good. But it was true, from the very moment he had begun actively thinking about the whole Horcrux ordeal, he had found Harry to be an allowed sacrifice for the good of many. Yes, Harry had survived in the canon, but magic could be as unpredictable as methodical; who knew what would happen this time around.

"But then something happened which changed all of it," he said with a bittersweet smile. "I became friends with you."

"What?"

"I don't become friends with people easily, you know that. It was a miracle that we became friends, much less get together in an unorthodox relationship. If I had told a past version of me before things went up for us, he would've scoffed and laughed at me while patting me for better luck next time on the prank," chuckled Quinn with a tired smile, but a real one nevertheless.

"Okay, well, thank you for tolerating me," Ivy snapped in return.

"But with hindsight, I think you and me were bound to at least have a good rapport with each other even if we didn't get together like we are now. Don't you think so? I like people who appreciate magic. You had a personality that I could along with. And well, you being pretty didn't hurt, but I'm sure you have heard that plenty of times."

"Are you seriously flirting with me right now?" asked Ivy, flabbergasted—he had been down in the dumps just a moment earlier.

"Who other than I you would I flirt with?" said Quinn bluntly, and the frankly straightforward look made her feel conscious of what he meant.

"Even before we started dating, you were close enough to me that I couldn't perceive Harry as just a Horcrux. I couldn't look at him as a

liability; he was now an asset to be protected."

"And that's when things became difficult," she said in a half-statement, half-questioning tone.

"The realization kicked in later, but yes, that's when the easy-go-lucky attitude exited my body, and slowly life started to get real," said Quinn.

"Things were tough during the Tri-wizard tournament and our time in the DA. I started to sit down with Harry more frequently than ever, and most of the time, I was acutely aware that there was a Horcrux near me, and he was your brother." Quinn paused, and for a few seconds, he rubbed the armrest of the chair in silence, staring at his hand. "I began looking into sure-fire ways I could subtract Harry out of the equation— or at least subtract the Horcrux in Harry's scar from him— and the more I looked, the more questions began to pop up, more problems surfaced, and the answers weren't flowing in at the same rate. As time passed, I began to put increasingly more time into the Horcrux research. Soon both my social and personal time was being dominated by Horcruxes. . . and last year wasn't good for me. . ."

Quinn shook his head. It wasn't good at all. The entire year, his mental state was like a glass full of water up to the brim, threatening to spill over with a single drop or gentlest of gust, and Snape's death was the thing that broke the dam— for a couple of days, he had shut down completely, letting the Sins take over for a time longer than he would've permitted if he was sane. But at the same time, right now, some part of his mind interpreted them as the last moment of true peace where he was free from any sort of conflict— even if that state came because of giving up on everything.

"You know, somewhere down the line, I began to realize what was truly at stake; that if the Horcrux weren't taken care of, the Dark Lord would've

threatened millions of lives, if not more," said Quinn with a harrowed look. "Do you know, destroying the Horcrux is not the hardest part of the problem? The hardest part is killing Voldemort," he said, and Ivy reacted, but he motioned her down. "There are many who have accomplished much in magic, revolutionary achievements that will go down in history, but there are only a handful of people who have reached levels of combative power that Dumbledore and the damned snake bastard have achieved— they can level down cities on their own, wipe out armies, magic or non-magical. They're almost impossible to kill; if one comes looking for you, it is advised to escape rather than attempt confrontation. I said this about Dumbledore before; the same goes for Voldemort; killing them is nigh impossible when they can decimate everything and anything around them."

If there was one thing he couldn't agree with in the canon timeline was the fight between Voldemort and Harry. Voldemort could've killed everyone in the Great Hall with a flick of his wand without breaking a sweat. His agreeing to duel Harry was Voldemort saying that it was enough of playing around and he was taking over to finish everything on his own. Quinn had gone dueled Harry, and he had faced Voldemort; both of them weren't even on the same planet.

He looked at the red door of the room; it was the only 'striking' thing that stood out from the rest of the interior of the room. He simply stared at it.

Ivy noticed it and asked,

". . . What are you doing?"

"A couple of times in the last years, but mainly in the past few months, I'm visited by this one thought, it is same every time. It always comes in the evening. . . always. . . just before dinner time," said Quinn, and his eyes were locked onto the door with Ivy trying to figure out if she was

missing something. "The thought always starts with imagining what my life would be if the Dark Lord and Horcrux never existed. It goes the same for me every time—" he smiled "—I would be somewhere in Europe or Asia with Eddie and Marcus on our trip," which he knew, despite his many attempts to convince himself otherwise, wasn't going to happen, "having the best time before Eddie starts traveling with his Quidditch team, Marcus with studying under Uncle Elliot, and me going to stay with Mr. Alan for the apprenticeship. . . I imagine me visiting you and Daphne during Hogsmeade weekends or whenever we miss each other—I have gotten pretty good with my apparition, and I can create Portkeys, so it wouldn't be a problem to pop by whenever I want. . . I imagine enjoying the world and doing the craziest of things with my best friends while I also take little time to explore some magic here and there, you know, without it distracting from the purposes of the trip. . . I imagine myself not knowing anything about Horcruxes, anything about how to cripple people, with much less knowledge of how to break people down, and without knowing what it feels like to take a life and live with it—that last part always feels plastic because I can't escape from it— it is called living with it, after all, can't just imagine it not existing . . ."

While Quinn's tone was positive and his words full of warmth, Ivy noticed how his demeanor grew weaker by the sentence. The person she knew to be strong no matter what seemed to shrink into his chair. She got up from her chair and almost leaped to his side; Ivy knelt in front of him, taking his hand into hers.

". . . And then I'm back. . . In a room inside my suitcase, or under the mask hunting Snatchers, or in a shitty corner who knows where talking to people I didn't know, almost always under a fake face because I know my grandfather will find me. Always I console myself that the best part of

the day, dinner, a hot and delicious meal, is ahead of me," Quinn was now staring into Ivy's eyes as he spoke every word, which now contained a faint hint of a quiver in them. "I walk out in the open from where I am and always stare at the sky, and the same thing passes through my mind. As I look at the evening sky, I always feel tempted to just give up," Ivy's eyes widened, "give up on the life as a runaway, stop being a Death Eater hunting masked Vigilante— hand over the Horcrux and my research to Dumbledore, and leave everything behind. A part of my mind speaks to me, says that this was never my duty, that I don't have to deal with Voldemort— I should leave it to Dumbledore and the Ministry, that they would take care of it. . . and I should live my life, having fun without all the unnecessary stress."

The bitterest of smiles crept over his face as he pointed at the red door, "I had the same feeling right now. . . that this, what is happening between us too difficult, and I should just leave because I don't think I can fix it anymore." He grasped Ivy's hand and leaned forward, "I don't want to feel like this, but I can't help it. . ."

Ivy stood up, sat down on his lap, wrapped her arm around him, and hugged him tightly while whispering words into his ears. She felt him clutch at her clothes. Ivy couldn't see Quinn's face as it was dipped away from her, but she could tell what was happening from the wetness she could feel on her clothes.

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FictionOnlyReader - Author - I don't want to write anything for this chapter here.

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396. Chapter 396: Cut Short

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"Hey," Ivy whispered softly, "how're you feeling now?" She held Quinn in her arms, sitting in his lap. The heavy breathing had settled down, and Quinn was not clutching her as tightly as he was before.

Quinn leaned away from Ivy but didn't let her go. His face looked like a mess with tear stains, but the heaviness had lifted away, and now he seemed much more like himself than before. "Yes, I'm fine now, thank you. . . . I apologize for my unsightly behavior," he said. "I don't know why that suddenly came over me. . ."

"No. . . no need to apologize," Ivy said. She felt that Quinn breaking down had done good. She feared that if Quinn had continued to hold it in without an outlet, it would've snowballed into much bigger concerns down the line.

"It was guilt," he suddenly said.

"What?"

"Why I didn't tell you about the Horcruxes," he said with a tired voice. "I knew if I told you about the Horcruxes, I would've needed to tell you about Harry. If it was before, I wouldn't have pressured Dumbledore into revealing Harry's identity and simply let Dumbledore do whatever he was doing— the reason why I revealed it was because of guilt of hiding a lot more, much more. Somewhere in my mind, I felt that if your family

learned about Harry, it would ease my conscience somehow. . . it didn't. I felt great when I left the Headmaster's Office, but by the time I was out of the castle, I was back in the pangs of anxiety. When Dumbledore threatened to reveal my secret, and I had to tell you myself before he could, I felt like hurling my stomach out at the thought of things going to the worst-case scenario."

"The worst-case scenario?"

"You breaking up with me, of course," Quinn said tiredly. "I jeopardized a lot doing this; I'm already at odds with my family, my social life has reduced to nothing, and if you left me, it would be all for nothing."

"It wouldn't be for nothing. . . You-Know-Who will be vanquished."

"We don't know that for sure. As I told you before, killing him is the hardest part of the problem."

"Don't be like that. If the other side is You-Know-Who, then we have Dumbledore. The Headmaster can stand against him. . . and Dumbledore has the Elder wand, the most powerful wand in existence, which gives him a clear advantage."

Quinn's brows raised as a surprise passed over his expressions; he sat up straighter in the chair. "You found about the wand?" he asked.

"I found about the Deathly Hallows." It was the last time they had met that he had given her some cryptic information about what he was doing. Fueled by the anger, she had dug into it on her own, and after much researching, she wasn't able to find a single reference of the symbol anywhere in the Hogwarts library. Just when she had started to think that Hogwarts was a dead-end, she stumbled upon it from an unlikely source. "I had almost given up when Luna happened. . ."

"Luna?"

"I was in the library when she found me and saw the Deathly Hallow

symbol I had drawn. She knew what it was. The Tale of the Three Brothers by Beedle the Bard. . . it turns out that her father had shown the symbol to her while telling her the story. The three Deathly Hallows—the Elder Wand, the Resurrection Stone, and the Invisibility Cloak. . . do you really think they were crafted by Death?"

"No, even with the existence of magic, I don't believe laws of nature having living personifications. I think they were made by the three brothers, who I don't know if you know. . ."

"They're my ancestors. I found Ignotus Peverell in the Potter family," she sighed. "I can't believe my Invisibility Cloak is the Invisibility Cloak from the story. . . I still can't believe it."

"The signs of it being something special have always been present. That cloak has been passed down in the Potter family for generations and before without ever needing any work on the strengthening of the charms. . . it's clear that the cloak is special."

Ivy had to agree to the point. She guessed no one ever paid any attention to the fact because the cloak had been in the family for so long that its existence had become normalized. "I can't believe you have the Resurrection Stone," she said. "Does. . . Does it really work, you know, can it summon the dead?"

Quinn nodded.

"Have you used it?"

"For summoning souls— no. I have been using it for other purposes."

"And what are they? You didn't tell me last time. I found about the Hallows now; can you tell me now?" Ivy found herself the target of scrutiny in Quinn's eyes the moment the question left her. The stone-grey eyes studied her for a moment.

"I'm trying to figure out how to get the Horcrux out of Harry's head. Even

though a fragment, a Horcrux is still a soul, and because the Resurrection Stone is a soul artifact, I believe it can be the key to free Harry from the Horcrux." He sighed, "It's not going well."

"Don't push yourself," Ivy caressed Quinn's face, which was paler than usual.

Quinn gently grasped Ivy's hand and leaned into it. "I didn't have any hope today, you know. I had been avoiding you since the last meeting because I thought if we meet, you will dump me. . ."

"Don't be ridiculous."

"Not gonna lie, I'm judging you a little bit," he said and got a light smack in return. Quinn stared at her as he softly said, "You're too good for me, you know. . ."

Ivy sensed his eyes going to her lips, and even she found herself doing the same. They moved at the same time, and in a moment, they were kissing. It was stronger than what she was expecting, but at the same time, she was surprised at her own reaction— since the last time they had met, she hadn't once imagined it going like this once.

She felt his hand go under her sweater. She raised her arms up, and Quinn removed it, and yet she felt herself getting hotter. She reciprocated and got rid of his suit jacket; one by one, the clothes began to come off, but before they could move ahead from making out, there was a loud slam.

Ivy jumped and turned to the noise, feeling a mix of shock and irritation. But all of that drained away when she realized where the sound came from. The loud slam was from the door of the room swinging to slam into the wall, but that wasn't what had shocked her— it was who had slammed the door open. It was her twin brother in his natural appearance (without the disguise they had put on) along with Hermione

and Ron, who were still in disguise. She watched as they, for a split-second, their eyes widened, but before she could even blink, three red spells shot toward them faster than an arrow from behind her, making their eyes turn upwards, and they crumpled down where they stood. Ivy turned back to Quinn, who shrugged. "I'm testy these days," he said. "They're lucky you were here, or else they would've been hit with something much worse than a stunner."

"Wake them up, please," she said, contacting up from his lap before adding, "let me get dressed first."

As she got dressed, Quinn dressed himself, all the while grumbled about locking the door— much faster than her, using magic— and then levitated Harry, Ron, and Hermione and dumped them into the chairs in the room. She gave him a nod, and Quinn snapped his fingers. The unconscious three snapped open their eyes and immediately jumped up from their chair. Beside her, Quinn waved his hand, and all of them were knocked back into their chairs. She gave him a look.

"Ivy!" "Are you alright?!" "Wha—"

"Calm down," she said. "What are you three think you're doing?! Didn't I tell you to go, and I'll catch up to you."

"You mean you'll catch up after shagging him!" Harry shouted scathingly.

"I don't like the sound of that," commented Quinn, leaning against the wall just beside the door. "Makes me sound dirty."

"I can do whatever I want," Ivy said, arms crossed. "You barging in here was extremely rude. You shouldn't have done that." It didn't feel great to have her twin brother barge upon her when she and her boyfriend were in a state of undress, not to mention her best friend and a boy who she saw as a brother.

"I'm also curious, how did you get in here? Ernie should've stopped you,"

Quinn asked Harry, but then he narrowed his eyes. "Don't tell me you showed him your face, and he let you." Hermione and Ron's expressions answered for Harry. Quinn sighed, "He's getting old; I'll have to have a talk with his son."

"You shouldn't have removed your disguise," said Ivy. "There's a reason why we used them; what if someone saw you."

"Let's not turn this about me," said Harry. He pointed to Quinn with his whole hand and spoke, "Just a while back, you were telling me how much you hated him— and now you're doing this! What the hell?!"

Ivy resisted the urge to look at Quinn. She had said some nasty words before today in anger and frustration, mostly in front of Hermione, but there were times she had sprung out in front of Harry and Ron. "What do you want, Harry?" she asked. "You barged in here; now what?"

"Are you serious? I was worried about you! I didn't know what will he do to you!?"

"Oh. . . and here I remember a time when you were willing to have your flesh cut by Umbridge on my word," said Quinn, pumping his brows.

"Where did all that trust go?"

Harry ignored Quinn and continued to speak to Ivy. "You know, he's dating Greengrass, right?! What the hell are you doing?"

Ivy could feel Quinn's eyes boring into her from behind. She had told Harry about Quinn being the Invisible Vigilante and about the other Horcrux that he had destroyed, along with other things Quinn had told her, but she had left her relationship with him out of the things she had told Harry. In the room, only Hermione knew about their dating.

'Well, not anymore,' she thought. "We are dating," she said.

" "What?!" " Harry and Ron shouted in unison.

"Happily," said Quinn. Ivy gave him a glare asking him to stop. He wasn't

being helpful here.

"When did he break up with Daphne?" asked Harry, still reeling from the shock. "When did you two start. . . when did all this happen?!"

"He didn't break up with Daphne," Ivy sighed as she saw Harry and Ron's expressions cycle through a very wide range. "He's dating me, and he's dating Daphne. As for when. . . same day as Professor Snape's funeral."

There was utter silence in the room. Ron was staring at Quinn, shocked with a hint of administration in his eyes. Harry, on the other hand, was moving his eyes between Ivy and Quinn— he opened his mouth to speak but couldn't get any words out— for a moment, he resembled Ron by quite a bit.

Ivy gave Hermione and 'telepathically' had a conversation with her best friend. She pleaded with Hermione to take over, and after some back and forth, Hermione agreed.

"Alright, boys, let's get out of here," said Hermione. "Let's go back to the castle, and I'll tell you all about it."

"You knew?!" Harry exclaimed for the n-th time.

"Yes, I knew, of course, I knew. I'm her best friend. Now, let's go," said Hermione, and amidst protest, she dragged them both out, closing the door behind, leaving Quinn and Ivy alone.

"I think I should leave," said Ivy, after a moment of silence. "Harry would irritate Hermione if I don't get there soon."

Quinn nodded. "I should also leave. . . can't be seen out and then stay for long. . . the news will get to grandfather." He took Ivy's coat from the hanger and helped it on her.

"Quinn. . ." Ivy turned to face Quinn and found him close enough to feel his breath. His hand went up to her cheek as he kissed her. It was deep, and Ivy savoured it because she knew that it was going to be the last one

for a while.

The kiss ended, and Quinn began to back away towards the door. "I don't know when any of this will end, but I'm going to well damn make sure that when things settle, they tip on my side." There was a steel in his eyes that, to Ivy, was a little scary and reminded her that she was looking at the Invisible Vigilante, but at the same time, that same looked so reliable that all she could do was nod. "Be safe, Ivy, be safe," said Quinn before disappearing.

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Quinn West - MC - I'm going to take a long shower.

Ivy Potter - Rollercoaster - Okay, I don't have to have this talk, but let's have it.

FictionOnlyReader - Author - Hostel Mess food ain't that great. . .

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

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397. Chapter 397: Gathering Intel

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One Canada Square, the fifty-story tall high-rise skyscraper with its iconic pyramid-shaped top, stood tall in the middle of Canary Wharf, London, glittering in the London night skyline.

On a vacated floor in the forties that once served as an office, Quinn

overlooked the active civilization that ran along in its fast-paced city life with no time to stop in fear of falling behind. He sat on a leather chair with a glass of steaming slow-cooked salted caramel hot chocolate in his hand. His eyes followed the traffic of cars on the road and the group of office workers that shuffled out of their respective office buildings to return home— he extended his Legilimency senses but shook his head to himself when his range grossly fell short in reaching even five floors below much less people on the ground.

As Quinn wondered how to extend his reach, he heard the door creak open, and a chorus of footsteps entered the room with a chatter that echoed on the empty floor.

"Welcome, gentlemen," said Quinn; his eyes remained on a solitary man who looked to be a delivery man entering the nearby office complex.

'Maybe I should also order in today,' he wondered.

"Did we have to meet here?" asked a gruff voice as the footsteps came to a stop.

"Do you have a problem with the location? No one knows that we are meeting here. It's empty, isolated enough, and with guards who can be turned away with a snap of our fingers. Isn't it a perfect meet-up place?"

Quinn swiveled in his chair to come face-to-face with nine grown men, all dressed up in clothing perfect for blending in the non-magical part of the country. "It was either this or inside a dark forest somewhere. I'm sure all of you fine people prefer this to a forest at night."

He snapped his finger, and nine comfy leather recliners appeared in a broad U-shape around Quinn's own chair. He motioned them to sit down, which they did, taking a seat each, with the man who had spoken before sitting in front of him. The man was dressed in leather and seemed to have more hair coming out of his head, beard, chest, and arms than a

brown bear's.

"So, what do you have for me, Mason?" asked Quinn.

The nine men were hired by Quinn to follow people. They were a for-hire group that worked in the field of intelligence. After accepting a brief, they executed and got as much information as they could and presented it to the client. It was a secret society of people that Quinn had found in his years of exploring the country during summer breaks, and things had taken a spike when he had run away— his time had been spent in darker, seeder, hidden gaps where people of many skills resided.

"We did what you asked for," said Mason, rubbing his forehead. "Tailing and documenting the daily schedules of nine high-ranking Ministry employees. . . "

"Any problems?"

"No. . . no problems. It's just that this was a big job."

"Which I paid for. You already have your sixty percent as you quoted. Give me the information today, you receive another twenty percent, and when my job is done next week. . . and you keep me updated till that day." He had paid a good chunk of change— golden change— to finance the job.

"Yes, I know that."

Quinn snapped his fingers and clapped his hand. "Then, let's get started," he said. "Let's get started with. . . Head of Office of Misinformation. What is Mrs. Wambsgans doing these days?"

All eyes turned to the person third from the right, and Quinn followed them to face the lean coat-hanger of a man who seemed as though he hadn't eaten in days.

"Err, yes. . . Fiona Wambsgans is a woman who doesn't know how to have fun. She gets up every morning at six, tends her gardens for half an hour,

freshens up, and is out of her house by quarter past seven. She takes her office by quarter to eight and is at work till five in the evening. She is home by quarter to six and then doesn't leave until the next morning, where the cycle continues."

"She travels how? Apparation or floo?" asked Quinn.

"Floo directly to her office and the back."

"If that is so, then how do you account for the gap in time in the morning and evening. She leaves at seven-fifteen and assumes her office thirty minutes later; what happens in those thirty later? In the evening, there's a forty-five-minute gap between office and home; what's there?"

The man took out a little tan notepad from his long jacket and flipped through the pages. "There's a night shift in the Office of Misinformation that she directly meets for what has happened since she had left— that covers the time in the morning. As for in the evening. . . she goes to this little cafe where she has tea, the same order every day, and then goes home from there."

'And there it is,' Quinn tapped the leather with his right index finger. He asked, "Any other irregularities in her behavior? Anything at all? Does she have a friend group that she visits— or maybe even an occasional dinner with guests— or if she meets with someone at the cafe. . . anything of that sort?"

"In the time I've been following her, she has had dinner with others twice. Both of them happened in one of those high-end Ministry restaurants. She doesn't meet people outside of working hours."

"A bit strange for a high-ranking Ministry official, but if that's what her behavior says, then she's unique," said Quinn. He had already guessed where she was going to get attacked; it didn't matter if she was outside now. "Alright, moving on, what's the deal with the International Magical

Trading Standards Body's chief. Who was on that?"

The one who spoke next among the nine men was the most average-looking man Quinn had ever seen. This was a man whom one could look at and then forget the next second. It was quite frightening.

"Colton Hirsch is, I would like to say, is completely opposite of Wambsgans. He's in the office for four to five hours, but other than that, he's always out meeting someone at salons, bars, restaurants, private clubs— I can confirm with absolute confidence that the man is a functioning alcoholic. In the days, I have tailed him, there hasn't been a day since he hasn't been drunk."

Quinn pursed his lips. This was different from the previous one with various variable factors, which didn't bode well for him. "What are his go-to places?" he asked.

The man took out a sheet and passed it on to Quinn. There was a list with various establishments' names on it. "There's no set pattern of how he chooses where he goes, but he makes sure that he doesn't repeat one place in a week."

"What about reservations?"

"He visits the places so much and spends so much gold that they give him a room, table, appointment whenever he comes."

"In other words, he's a regular," Quinn sighed. "Can you get me his schedule for the next week? His secretary must have a schedule on which we can get our hands?"

Mr. Average glanced at Mason, who spoke after a few seconds of silence.

"We can get that for you; it might take a couple of days."

"Not more than three," said Quinn. If he could get the schedule, he could try to find the weakest point in the day. He didn't have the time to keep a constant eye on the target because of the work burden on the day,

meaning that he needed to ensure that he had the exact time and location so he could prepare.

"Let's continue; who would like to go next?" asked Quinn.

One by one, the men continued to feed Quinn with information on the targets he had specified, which he got from Lucius Malfoy. There were some which he found easy, while there were others which he found to be increasingly harder than the previous. He posed questions, in return, got answers— for those which he didn't get one, he asked the team to get the answers.

Quinn stood up, and his drinking glass and chair disappeared into thin air. "Today was a great day, gentlemen. I'm quite satisfied with your work, and if you get me what I asked of you today, I'll be elated as well," smiled Quinn. "Now, let's get to the part everyone has been waiting for." Quinn took out a small briefcase from his bag and put it on the floor. He opened it and continued, "This is the twenty-percent cut that I promised you; anyone of you gentlemen can go inside and confirm an amount." Mason nodded to one of his companions, who went inside, and after a minute, the man came out. "It's the correct amount."

"Great," said Quinn. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to leave." Saying that, Quinn headed toward one of the floor's exits.

"Who are you?" came Mason's voice.

Quinn turned and looked at Mason in surprise. "I'll be honest, Mason, I wasn't expecting you to ask me that. I'm your client, not a target. Or did someone hire you to investigate me?"

"I prefer to know who I'm doing business with," said the spy. "But we haven't been able to find out who you are, not a single fact. . . it's like you're a ghost. In usual circumstances, we wouldn't even take a job without a proper background check—"

"But you did because of the money," smiled Quinn. It wasn't strange they hadn't found anything on him. "You don't need to know who I am, Mason. You can treat me as a ghost if that's what you'd prefer."

Mason sighed. He took out a smoking pipe and twisted a bronze ring on it that lit a fire inside. He took a puff before saying, "I would've preferred what I was getting into, John. I have been hearing chatter about the very people you asked us to investigate. I don't know what this is all about. . . yet, but I'd like to. . . know."

Quinn laughed, "Don't we all. But be careful; knowing can be a curse." He turned away and walked off, humming a tune that seemed a little sad.

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Quinn West - John - I need to prepare; it's going to be a busy week

Mason - Intelligence Seller - Can feel it on his skin. . . something big is coming.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the Bio!

398. Chapter 398: Always Preparing

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

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Link in the Bio/Profile

The seaside breeze tickled Quinn's nose as he looked at the blue North Sea that stretched to the horizon. He stood at a hill near the seaside,

overlooking an unexplored part of the shore with beautiful white sand receiving the gentle white tides.

Quinn shifted his feet and unsettled the seaside pebbles near his feet. He raised his hand, palm down towards the ground, and said: "Up!"— A couple of dry, rounded stones rose up, gently smacking into his palm. He looked to the sea and raised his other hand, and in response, puddles of water rose up from the sea and floated at his feet-level in a straight line. He cocked his arm to the side and swung it like a whip launching the shallow pebble towards the first puddle— it skipped off the water pool, and then continued to skip along in the line, landing precisely where the puddles were.

He smirked and extended the line of puddles. He tossed the stone up high, and while it was in the air, he injected body magic through his body. The stone came back down, touched his palm, and with another whip-like swing, heaved it across the line of floating water puddles launching water out on every hit.

Quinn nodded his head with satisfaction at his effort. He stamped his foot, and a pebble shot up into his hand, ready to be hurled across (and above) the sea— but his senses picked up something, and he dropped the stone along with the water. He waved his hand in front of his face to ensure his disguise and then turned to see Lucius Malfoy struggling his way up the small hill.

"Updates?" asked Quinn.

Lucius Malfoy stepped to the top of the flat hill and respired heavily while trying to hide the fact that the climb had left him out of breath. The proud man stood straight and looked toward Quinn as if nothing was wrong, and Quinn waited in silence.

"No changes have been made to the plans," said Lucius finally. "The

attacks are to go down tomorrow—" he cleared his throat "—my own target will be attacked near the noon, at the Cerible Square, whereafter he will be taken into custody—"

"Until all attacks have been completed," Quinn nodded. As the days had passed, Rivers Lock had distributed more and more parts of the plan to the teams, and one of the additions was that the target-victims were to be hidden until the end of the day or the last attack, whichever came first.

"Are you ready?" asked Lucius.

"Ready?" Quinn quirked a brow. "No, I'm not."

"What. . . then—"

"Being ready means that you believe you've prepared for an event, which means that there's nothing more to be done. I never believe that there's always more to be done— to ensure the success of the plan to a greater degree, even if it's only by a fraction. I have certainly met the minimum requirements to secure success— but as Helmuth van Moltke the Elder said: No plan ever survives contact with the enemy— and I've learned that I like my plans surviving even if by a thread."

While the words were pretty, they held the concrete truth inside of them. He was a major disadvantage of being only one person and going against eleven groups of people who had planned out their offenses. And even with his preparations, most of it wasn't his own— the research for nine out of eleven targets had been outsourced, one he had taken directly from Lucius, and the remaining one he had done on his own. Moreover, the influence of Rivers Lock had organized the plans in such a way that he had no way to get the exact details of the plans— and his counter-strategy was a gamble, even though backed by research. He didn't even fully trust Lucius' information and had to get into the double-spy's head stealthily to confirm the genuinity of his words.

"What about me," spoke Lucius. "I-I don't want to get into trouble with the Dark Lord."

". . . Has the last meeting been done? Is the Dark Lord or Rivers Lock or anyone else going to address regarding tomorrow?" asked Quinn, looking over the setting sun at the horizon. The sea was stunningly blue, with the sky above painted in a tint of red, with streaks of white clouds that were half-shadowed by the light from the sun.

"Everything's done, today we rest, and tomorrow we go for the job."

"I see," Quinn turned to Lucius and said, "then you're going to be just fine." He raised his arm and pointed his index finger between Lucius' brows— it was just close enough that Lucius had to squint to zone-in on the finger. His squinting eyes blanked out with pupils dilating; the shoulders slumped, and the entire loosened.

"If there's no memory of it, then there's nothing to be worried about," muttered Quinn as he stepped closer and let his fingertip touch Lucius' forehead. "Don't worry, I will return your memories when I think it is safe. Yes, you won't be getting any more family visits for a while— but don't worry, I will leave the comfort behind."

There were two types of Obliviations: one type was to completely erase the memory, expunge it completely without leaving any trace of it— but then there was the other kind, it would cut the connection of the memories to the larger net, leaving them inaccessible, turning them into forgotten memories. Quinn had learned both types of Obliviations from Alan's texts— he had wiped Dolion's memories completely, which was the first type of Obliviation— while what he was doing with Lucius was simply snipping the strings to the memories that could be retied later. As for 'leaving comfort behind,' — he was going to work around the emotions and leave the sentiments Lucius felt during his short reunions

with his family. Not only would it make Lucius's Obliviation proceed much more smoothly, but it also wouldn't risk his work tomorrow. As for the risk, Quinn knew how Legilimens operated. He knew how Legilimens scoured through memories, and he knew if not explicitly looking for it, no Legilimens would look for Obliviated memories. And someone like Voldemort, who brute-forced most of the time, would never look, especially when his target willingly submitted for most of the time.

Quinn removed his head, and Lucius dropped to the ground like a sack of potatoes. Lucius' body rose up into the air, straight as a plank. Quinn put his hand on his shoulder, and without an eruption of noise, the beachside was left void of human life.

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"You called for me, my Lord," said Rivers Lock, standing just outside the room's threshold by the door. He looked at the brightly lit room with a shred of surprise— whenever he had met with the Dark Lord, he had done it in a dimly lit room with a couple of candles or a fire burning in a fireplace. Having a room adequately lit, even a little bit overlit, was a surprise if nothing else.

"Come in."

Rivers stepped in and observed the Dark Lord sitting behind a table with a book in his hand, flipping through the pages as he leaned into his chair leisurely. And there it was again, once again a surprise. River knew that the Dark Lord was a learned man— no one becomes a magical juggernaut without studying— but in the years he had been near the Dark Lord, he had never seen him with a book in hand.

"Sit down."

Rivers complied and sat down. When Voldemort didn't look up from his book, Rivers took the chance to observe the room; it was different from the last time he had been there. The empty room had been filled with bookshelves with tomes in every row; a grand table, and a throne-like chair behind it. There were velvet curtains over the windows, and there were some interesting things on the walls— an animated world map, a tapestry giving out an intimidating feel, a seemingly normal circle mirror, and a pelt of some beast hanging on the wall.

"Is everything prepared?"

Rivers turned to Voldemort and replied, "The teams have been prepared and instructed. I have sat down with all the leaders, listened to their plans, and suggested some improvements— it's up to them if they wish to implement my suggestions. All in all, the teams are ready to perform tomorrow." He had listened to their plans, and even though he would've done things differently, done things better— but making plans wasn't part of his duty. Though, the plans were decent enough for them to succeed. "By tomorrow night, the Ministry would know what has happened to them, and by the following morning, the people of this country will realize who they're facing," he said.

Voldemort hummed and continued to read the ancient tome with frayed page edges. "Who do you think has the highest chance of failing?"

"Nott," said Rivers without skipping a beat; he didn't even need to think about an answer.

"Why?"

"Too brash, too hot-headed. The Southern Lord is too self-confident in himself, the people he has chosen for his team, and his plan. I have sat with everyone on various stages, and I had to directly question the man on specific parts of his plans to make him see the egregious faults in

them," Rivers said nonchalantly, but his eyes were deader than usual. "He doesn't know the importance of feedback; I had to force it down his throat to make his plan. . . acceptable."

"What if he fails?"

"I . . . have a man in his team. . . a competent man, in case things go awry. He will deviate from Nott's plan and do what seems fit for the situation."

"And what if the situation is too public? Your plan requires secrecy."

"If it seems that the plan is going south, I've prepared a backup team just in case."

"To go to such great lengths, you must really not trust Nott."

"Success is the only desired result," said Rivers. Trust Nott? If there was a person in the world he trusted, it would never be Nott. If not for the orders and Nott's standing in the Death Eater circles, he would've not even let the man sniff the air around this operation.

Voldemort hummed again. He closed his book and let go of it for the book to float into an empty slot in the bookshelf. For the first time, he looked up at Rivers, and there was a sense of critical observation in the red eyes. "What do you think will happen if tomorrow succeeds," he asked.

"Chaos. Aurors will be blamed, Ministry will receive pressure, and a great unrest will spread. We can assert control in the situation."

"Yes, we can. . . but I do not want to assert control, Lock," said

Voldemort, in a tone that, even though it seemed flat, was nothing but. "I wish to rule," the voice was full of self-confidence, something much different than Nott's— it was an insult to even compare. "For that reason, this is just the start— the days of hiding are coming to an end."

"What do you mean, my Lord?"

"It's time to take over."

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Quinn West - MC - Busy day ahead.

Lucius Malfoy - Double-Cross - Found himself waking up in a private booth at a private club— thinks he's getting old to fall asleep in the evening.

Voldemort - Dark Lord - I wish to dominate.

Rivers Lock - Strategist - Sure. . . whatever you say.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the Bio!

399. Chapter 399: Cicada - Mantis

- Oriole

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Link in the Bio/Profile

Quinn stretched on the roof in his Noir gear configured into a grey urban camouflage setting. It had been a second since he had put on the suit— the Taboo curse had run out of steam with no Snatchers responding to the calls— he had done a month where he had slept in two very short shifts and had gone out after anyone who had responded to his Taboo calls and swept the floor with them hard. Since that month, the Taboo activity had been cut to near zero, excluding some exceptions.

After ticking out the last crack in his back, the mask appeared over his

face, and he moved towards the center of the roof to the edge. He turned invisible, stepped on the ledge, and looked down at a window of a calligraphy store, behind which an elderly friend sat trying out new stationery. Quinn turned his head around the street and scoured the general crowd, and there he saw it— people acting weird while trying to blend in naturally.

'Use magic, you morons,' he thought, looking at the fools who were not using a single shred of magic.

Head of Beast Division, Steven Jeffery— the man in charge of sub-departments like Centaur Liaison Office, Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures, Dragon Research and Restraint Bureau, Troll Patrol. . . and the Security Council of Werewolf Caution. It was clear why he was a target today; eliminating the man in charge of so many important sub-department would cause so many security problems that the DMLE would receive a ton of tension.

'A perfect start to the day. . .'

Quinn stretched his gloves over his hand and stepped back down. He turned to the side, ran, jumped over to the next roof, and crossed the distance before dropping into the alley below. He cut his fall with magic and silently walked behind the Death Eater, standing in the shadow of the wall, smoking a pipe— he was doing the best job, so Quinn decided to take him out first.

Quinn tapped the wall, and the bricks shifted behind the man, creating a void in which he fell. Quinn snapped his finger, and the sound of the horrified man's scream was snuffed out. When the bricks closed, all that was left behind were the Death Eater's hands, and the fingers moved around, trembled, and even desperately flexed in search of freedom. Quinn extended his hands and intertwined his fingers with the Death

Eater's, along with various tiny holes for breathing purposes.

"Sorry, but this is going to be traumatic," he muttered. Tetani Nervum coursed through the Death Eater's arms and crippled them to the core. He then released the Death Eater from the wall imprisonment and dropped him down to the ground. He crouched down and entered the man's head to get some concrete information about the plan.

'Got it.' Quinn got up and cast an anti-attention shroud over the Death Eater. He walked out in the street while being invisible; he spread his arms wide, and invisible magic started raining down on the Death Eaters. Their eyes dulled and hazed for a moment before they returned to normal.

He dipped into an alley again, and a moment later, he was out in his John disguise. He wasted no time and entered the calligraphy shop— behind him, not a single Death Eater twitched even a muscle.

"Welcome, sir," greeted the female employee with a smile. "How may we serve you today?"

Quinn smiled, "I'm here to pick up a guest." Even though she was still putting up a professional smile, he could see the confusion in her eyes.

He didn't wait for her response and clapped once; a wave of magic surged out of him, and it was like someone had pushed pause on a video; no one moved or reacted and remained utterly still— except Quinn.

He walked to Steven Jeffrey. There Ministry top-brass had his eyes concentrated on his writing with the quill's tip touching the paper that was soaking up the ink, creating a widening ink blot. Quinn snapped his finger, and the quill slipped out from Steven's hand into the ink pot.

"Let's get you out of here," Quinn tapped the man on his bald spot, and Steven went limp.

Quinn walked out of the shop with Steven in tow, floating beside him

under an invisibility spell. He looked behind and clapped again for the store to resume its activity again— the female employee who had greeted him blanked out for a second before turning to another customer. Quinn gazed at the Death Eaters, who had their eyes trained on the shop window and hadn't moved at all; even though Steven Jefferey was no longer there, they didn't react. Such was the power of illusion magic. They saw an illusion of Steven Jeffery doing what he was doing before. 'Two minutes,' noted Quinn. According to the scouting, Steven left the calligraphy store at the same time every Friday. He dumped Steven Jeffery on a bench on the street and then walked towards the Death Eaters.

Two minutes later, out of a team of six Death Eaters, five had their hands crippled, and Quinn was staring down at the unconscious sixth man.

"You're one lucky guy, Goyle," Quinn shook his head. Every team leader had to report back on specific points of the day to communicate that everything was going according to the plan. "Get ready to have a good day. . ." He placed his hand on Goyle's head and began fabricating.

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Rivers Lock apparated into a forest with nothing else but trees. A place away from everything, somewhere he had explicitly chosen to hold meetings. If he had chosen the meeting point in the headquarters or a place with a roof, some of the team leaders would've been bound to become lazy, thinking their job was done. In a place like this, they would rather go back and wait with their people.

He turned to notice a bulky large-framed man sitting on a luxurious chair — clearly conjured— under a tree's canopy shade.

Rivers walked in front of the chair and asked: "How did it go, Goyle?"

Vincent Goyle, who had been combing his long beard with a beard comb, looked up at Rivers with unhidden displeasure and snorted, "What do you expect?"

Rivers stared at Goyle without a word. Goyle stared back that soon turned into a glare, but Rivers continued to stare down at the man. He knew many Death Eaters didn't like him, labeling him as a 'fake' Death Eater because of his past as a Novellus Accionites. It hadn't been a problem when he had been under Pettigrew's 'mentorship,' but they had turned on him when the Dark Lord had begun giving him attention. Miserable people playing their pathetic politics. At least people like Rookwood and Pettigrew made the experience bearable.

When Goyle saw that Rivers didn't budge, he grumbled, "It's done. Jeffery is on the allocated area."

"Dead?"

"Dead."

Rivers nodded, "Good, now return," and turned away to leave.

"Don't be proud of this," called Goyle, scoffing. "You're nothing but a bug."

Rivers didn't reply. It wasn't needed. Goyle was a simpleton whose brain operated like an ape. He apparated out, not giving another look to Goyle.

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When Rivers left, Goyle stood up and also left by way of apparation, all the while grumbling about pathetic lowlives. He left the forest and arrived at a small cabin situated in a grassland with a gentle breeze wafting the green pastures.

"I've returned," said Goyle upon entering the wooden cabin. "Any problems while I was gone? . . . No? Good. . . Where's the body? In the

back." Goyle walked to the back room and looked inside the back room, and gazed at the table in the center of the room. He nodded before walking back into the front. "Anyone by chance brought something to drink?" he asked. He got no response in return. He sighed, "No matter, we shall drink our hearts out when today ends, and celebrate in the name of our glorious Lord."

He cheered, sat down on the padded rocking chair, swung back and forth. . . and seemingly talked to people who were not there, laughing all alone in the small cabin. There was no one in the little house, not even a dead body in the back room that Goyle had just seemingly checked.

All alone.

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Quinn looked up at the hole in the ceiling, watching the light snow falling down. He followed a little flake as it fluttered past his face, weightlessly made its way down to the floor, and gently landed on a Death Eater's check. The cloudy white snowflake dyed red from the blood that bled out of a shallow cut.

Fourteen Death Eaters laid around him in all sorts of horrendous positions and shared the fact that they all were riddled with injuries.

Quinn sighed; things had gone awry so quickly. He looked at the cause of it, and he couldn't say that he wasn't surprised.

Nott Senior. Father of Theodore Nott. The man that had once tried to make his underaged son into a Death Eater. Quinn had thought that the man would be more shrewd if he had once tried to leverage his son, but it turned out that he was just another idiot.

"To be not trusted by your own side, what a pitiful sight," he sighed.

The day had started great; he had begun with Goyle's team and had made it through half of the teams before lunch without a hint of trouble. But then he met Nott's team and faced the first unexpected situation, and none of it was his fault. Nott's target was Colton Hirsch, the high-functioning alcoholic.

The operation had started well, with Quinn identifying every single one of the Death Eaters in record time. They were just sitting around in the biggest bar in town, watching Hirsch without even pretending to hide. Unlike with Goyle, he couldn't repeat what he did in the calligraphy store with so many people drinking in the bar, so he decided to target Hirsch instead.

When the drunkard decided to go piss, Quinn followed him with the plan of shooting Hirsch with a stunner inside a stall, tapping him up in there under an invisibility spell and then taking his place. But it turns out that Nott had the same plan as half of his team followed them inside the washroom.

Wands were drawn, and in the tight quarters, Quinn had taken quick action and used hostile force against the Death Eaters, breaking bones and knocking consciousness. Alas, they had squealed like pigs, and some of the noise leaked out before Quinn could silence it, causing the rest of the Death Eaters to come inside. He had knocked them out instantly, but then something shocking happened. A hole blew up in the ceiling, and spells rained inside. Taking them out was simple, and Quinn had done so, but the gaping hole in the roof could've created a problem.

"Let's hope no one was scouting," Quinn muttered.

He snapped his fingers, and the debris flew back to the ceiling, sealing the gap up; in a couple of seconds, the roof was whole again. He walked to Nott and targeted the feeble mind of the fool.

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Quinn West - MC - Let's see, shall we?

FictionOnlyReader - Author - 1 down, 1 to go.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the Bio!

400. Chapter 400: 400!

If you want to read ahead of the posting schedule then head over to my Patreón.

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Link in the Bio/Profile

Quinn observed the Death Eaters standing outside a local Quidditch stadium.

The target was yet again a department head, and the reason she was visiting a stadium was to see a game that her son was playing in as part of a local team in a second-tier league. Quinn gazed around to see if he could discover someone hidden, but none was in sight. He sent out the gentle winds to do his scouting, but they also returned empty-handed.

The Death Eaters he could see were the only ones present.

'Which means that the situation with Nott hasn't created a problem,' thought Quinn. After the fight at the bar was over, Quinn had read every Death Eaters' mind present in the washroom, and he had found that the two teams didn't have any communication with the Rivers Lock, which meant that he could spin the narrative any he wanted. He had edited the memories in the mind of Nott and Rivers' spy in Nott's team to make it so

that they would remember their operation as a success— while the backup-cleanup crew was expunged of their memories of ever getting a distress call from the spy and were made to believe that Nott's team had done the job correctly.

It was a three-way insurance. Rivers would meet Nott and get a positive response; he could call upon the spy and get the same answer; the backup crew's leader would convey the same result.

Quinn let the winds under his feet go and allowed himself to freefall from the sky. The winds fluttered for a moment before Arresto Momentum cut his fall, and he was beside the Death Eaters. He flicked his wrist, and the Death Eaters fell down like bowling pins.

"One more, and I'll be done for the day," he sighed, "but before that." He looked at the target walk out of the stadium's VIP gate and flicked his wrist again, and she fell down on the ground, face first. Quinn wrinkled his nose. "Sorry about that," he muttered. He was going to need to fix that before he could let her go. He couldn't let any of the targets continue on with their days because the Death Eaters had plans with their corpses. 'Better than in my care than theirs,' Quinn shrugged as he got to the standard memory alteration.

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The sun was near setting, with the sunset red almost out of sight and about to be replaced by the evening blue. Only one Death Eater team was left, and Quinn had saved the easiest one for the last.

He turned his head from the changing sky when he heard the pops of apparation. The last Death Eater team had arrived. He stepped out from the shade of the tree and came upon a huddle with the last leader, Lucius Malfoy, addressing his team. Quinn sighed when he saw the long sleeve that hid Lucius' right missing hand. That hand could be healed back to

new in a week tops; the cut wasn't caused by dark magic and only needed the material and the jolt from magic to regrow— but Lucius hadn't grown it back because it was fear rather than magic holding him back.

'I hope he doesn't get punished,' he thought as he raised his hand for several stunners to fly out of his hand. The entire team dropped to the ground, and it made Quinn realize how easy it was some time to simply take out people from the shadows.

He sat down the Death Eaters and cast Tetani Nervum onto everyone except Lucius as he still had a job to do. As the soot and haze covered the Death Eater, he heard footsteps coming to a skidding stop. Quinn turned and saw a middle-aged in track pants. It was the target; he had his house right around the corner, and around the same time every day, he would go for a run around his home. Quinn shrugged, and a stunner caught the man in the chest, and he flew a couple steps back before falling down to the ground.

"Well, time for chaos."

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"Lucius Malfoy just reported back," said Rivers to the Voldemort, who was again reading in his room. "The last Ministry head has been captured and killed. They're ready to be presented."

"Good, give them the signal to proceed."

"They'll move at six."

Voldemort's hand, which was writing on parchment, stopped. He leaned back on his chair and stared at Rivers for a moment before saying, "I would like to see."

"My Lord?"

"I would like to see one of the displays."

Rivers thought for a moment before shrugging internally; he didn't mind the Dark Lord tagging along. The Dark Lord was the one who ordered the operation, Rivers had no say in refusing him, so he asked, "Which one would you like to go visit?"

"Lucius. Perhaps I was too hard for him. I shall witness his work and graciously bestow the permission to have his hand healed back. It'll be excellent to re-affirm the fickle Mafloy into out of our ranks. I'm sure he'll be elated," said the Dark Lord. "Where is Malfoy?"

"He's in charge of Diagon Alley."

"You must like him to give him Diagon Alley."

"He was the most logical and calm of all. It was a rational choice to give Diagon Alley to Malfoy," Rivers said before posing a question. "Your room has changed quite a lot, My Lord. May I enquire the reason for the sudden change."

Voldemort raised his right arm for a wand crept out of his sleeve and slid into his hand. Rivers stilled as he cautiously gazed at Voldemort while hiding all his emotions; he didn't dare to reach for his wand. Voldemort gazed at the wand as he spoke, "Magic is power, Rivers. If you master magic, you can master pure power. Mastering magic, however, requires knowledge— the more knowledge I gain, the more magic I'll master, and more power I'll acquire." Voldemort looked up at Rivers. "I can sense that you disagree."

"No, My Lord. You are correct."

"You're simply saying that to agree with me," Voldemort called him out.

"Both of us have been leaders of organizations. I of Death Eaters and you lead the Novellus Accionites— but the truth of the matter is that the only reason you gained followers was that you used my name. . ."

Rivers kept his face steady, but his fist clenched behind the table.

". . . and why do you think that is?" continued Voldemort. "Even when the world thought I had perished, they responded to my name— why? Because I commanded that much power. So much so that even after my death, people didn't dare to say my name and taught their children to not utter it." He pointed his wand at the book and raised it up, "This is the source of all of it, Rivers. Magic and knowledge. You are witty and wise, but you lack the might of magic. . . and that's the difference between you and me." Voldemort stood up, "Come now, as we witness the start of my rise."

Rivers silently stood up and followed after Voldemort. As he looked at Voldemort's back, Rivers clenched his jaw as he failed to think of a way to get rid of Voldemort. . . and that made him feel what he had been just told.

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In the winter, even with a thick coat of snow coating the roads, roofs, and the nook and crannies of the Diagon Alley streets, the Diagon Alley was abuzz with people shopping in the shops that the marketplace had to offer. The shops sparkled with their lights under the night sky, shining their glows on the paved paths.

"Ugh, the cold's hurting my back," Sirius Black pressed the sides of his fists into his lower back.

"What happened to your back?" asked James, looking around the street, observing everything that entered his eyes. Today was the monthly random check of the area under their jurisdiction, which they did to check if the rookie Aurors were doing a good job at their patrol duties.

James was in charge of Diagon Alley and had placed his most promising subordinates on Diagon Alley, so he wasn't expecting any problems, but it was better safe than sorry.

Sirius groaned, "I didn't sleep well yesterday."

"What happened?"

"I was with this girl I met yesterday, someone I picked up at the bar," said Sirius twisting his waist in an attempt to gain some relief. "We were having fun, as we ended up at her place—"

"Okay, okay, so you slept at her place, and the bed didn't suit you; is that it?" James said with a sigh.

"I did sleep at her place, but not on her bed. . . things were pretty wild, and I woke up on the floor with her draped on me," Sirius smirked and then gleefully said, "It was a good night."

James shook his head. "When are you going to settle—"

"Oh, here we go."

"— find a good girl, start a family—"

"Can we not do this again."

But before the banter could continue, they heard screams and shouting of men and women that cut through the joyous theme of the streets. Sirius and James turned back and saw a crowd of people gathering around a spot. They exchanged looks, and their faces assumed an Auror-on-duty expression as they ran towards the crowd.

"Move aside, move aside!" Sirius pushed people aside as he and James made their way to the front of the crowd. "Aurors! Move back, move back!"

When they reached the front, two Senior Aurors gasped when they saw the scene that had gathered so many people. Seven people, on their knees, forming a circle with their heads bowed down to the ground; their

arms hung wide on wood beams. One sleeve each of the seven men were torn, revealing their arms— and showing the tattoo made up of a skull and a snake— the Dark Mark.

"Death Eaters," whispered James.

"Who did this?" said Sirius.

"I can guess, and I'm pretty sure it will check out their arms for magic, but he has never been so public with his showings."

"No, not in public like this."

"What did they do? Or is he planning something?"

"How would I know. . . let's get the people away from the scene."

James and Sirius were about to call out to people when they heard someone call out to them by name. They turned to see a Junior Auror pushing her way to the front.

"Sir. . . sir," she huffed to catch her breath. "Sir, twelve Ministry departments are missing! None of them—" The female Auror stopped when she saw the seven Death Eaters. "W-What happened here?"

"Continue the report," ordered James.

"Err, yes, sir," she said with her eyes still on the Death Eater kneeling circle. "Just now, we got a report—"

"Sirs!" another voice called after them. Three Aurors turned to see another Junior Auror pushing his way to the front. "Head Auror is calling you back to the Office, sirs. We got multiple reports of Death Eaters sightings—" his eyes went to the Death Eaters— "exactly like this! Oh my god, who is doing this?!"

Sirius and James looked at each other. "He's involved," said Sirius. James nodded, "Oh yeah, no doubt about it. . . let's go—"

"Sirs!"

"Again?!" Sirius exclaimed when another Junior Auror came running

through the crowd. "What is this? Why isn't just one of you relaying messages."

"Sirs!" exclaimed the third Junior Auror, standing in line with the other two. He looked at the female Junior Auror before continuing, "The department heads have been returned in a group outside one of the Office gates!"

James was speechless, but Sirius had one final thing to say, "Today is a Friday, man. . . why can't they choose a better time?"

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On the roof of a building in Diagon Alley, Voldemort and Rivers watched the commotion.

"Lucius reported that the operation was a success," frowned Rivers. He looked at the Dark Lord, who hadn't said a single word since they had arrived.

"Do you see the Aurors there?"

Rivers moved his eyes, and to his surprise, he saw James Potter and Sirius standing in the front of the crowd.

"I heard what they're talking about," said Voldemort. "One of them said that all the department heads just showed up at the Aurors Office— and they," he pointed at the Death Eaters, "met the Invisible Vigilante, I can sense his magic inside their arms. . . so I will ask this once, Rivers Lock— when did you start colluding with the Invisible Vigilante?"

". . . What? I'm not colluding with the Invisible Vigilante."

Voldemort turned to Rivers, and he backed away, feeling the eyes of the ruthless man on him.

"You were the one who knew the entire plan, Rivers. You're the only one

that could've told him about it."

". . . I didn't."

"Speak the truth."

"I did not collude with the Invisible Vigilante. I haven't even seen him in person."

"You leave me no choice," Voldemort raised his hand, and Rivers felt like someone had buried everything below his neck into the ground— he couldn't even move his toes. "If you won't tell the truth, I'll look inside myself."

Rivers felt like his heart would leap out of his throat, and Voldemort moved closer to him, and when the pain arrived, he couldn't even scream out.

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Quinn West - MC - Chaos. . . just the other way around.

Rivers Lock - Death Eater - Nooooo!

Voldemort - Dark Lord - I'm feeling displeased.

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If you have any ideas regarding the magic you want to see in this fiction or want to offer some ideas regarding the progression. Move onto the DISCORD Server and blast those ideas.

The link is in the Bio!

Внимание! Этот перевод, возможно, ещё не готов.

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