

ITERATE

BY: SHIVANI/GRAZHIR

Pairing: Gen

Written: 23 September 2008

Spoilers: Anything from canon as necessary.

Warnings: AU, canon mangling, Harry is not a Horcrux

Disclaimer: This story is based on characters and situations created and owned by J. K. Rowling, various publishers including but not limited to Bloomsbury Books, Scholastic Books and Raincoast Books, and Warner Bros., Inc. No money is being made and no copyright or trademark infringement is intended.

Notes: I've seen one too many stories about someone (Harry, Hermione, Luna, etc.) forcing a do-over of canon to 'set things right' in one fashion or another. Most of them, regrettably, are het.

Summary: Ginny returned from the Department of Mysteries with a souvenir. She read the instructions, but . . . she didn't read the warnings.

Harry was amazed as he looked around the house. This was how real wizards and witches lived! He tuned out what Mrs Weasley was saying—she wasn't listening to what her children were trying to explain anyway—and instead took in all the wonders open to his eyes. A short time later he found himself seated at a table with breakfast before him; he was pleased to dig in, being rather hungry.

Only a few bites made it into his mouth, and subsequently to his stomach, when a red-haired girl sauntered into the kitchen and took a seat. A brief glance reminded him that he had seen her at Kings Cross both times. Ron's little sister served herself after smiling at everyone and Harry was, for some reason, attracted to the pendant hanging from a chain about her neck. He did not know why, but it seemed familiar to him.

Later on while he was helping Ron and the twins to de-gnome the garden he absently listened as his friend muttered about how strangely Ginny was acting. She normally never shut up, and usually blushed and went silent whenever Harry's name was mentioned. And what was up with her wearing a dress like that? To breakfast? He shrugged a lot in between capturing the little creatures and tossing them over the fence like a wobbly discus thrower.

That night he dreamed. By the time morning rolled around Harry had come to a startling realization.

He remembered. He knew what was shortly to come, a future he had not yet lived, and yet had, several times over. And Ginny was the key. He remembered the barrier being closed to him and Ron, he remembered Lockhart and the dueling club, the revelation that he was a parselmouth. He remembered saving Ginny, the basilisk. He remembered Sirius and Remus, the dementors, Peter, and so much more beyond that, several iterations worth.

And he knew why. Ginny was obsessed with him. That pendant she favored as a treasured possession she had picked up at the Department of Mysteries, and when she could not get him to fall in love with her—or rather, stay in love with her—she had rewound time, each time changing things slightly in an attempt to secure his love. In point of fact, she owed him a life debt several times over, for she had always chosen to live through the basilisk incident so he could save her life.

And that brought him to new revelations. When she could not secure his love originally she had, in a fit of demented pique, used her souvenir to start over again. She tried a love potion next—he knew that now—taking up much of his time during his sixth year, but even then he had broken off with her, his sense of chivalry and duty overcoming the effects. And then she started earlier on, trying to keep Sirius alive, and pointing him toward solutions regarding his little Voldemort problem. And every time he resisted her desire. It probably helped that he was gay, which was another thing he now understood.

He was one of the most knowledgeable twelve year olds out there. He pondered for quite some time about things, and what he ought to do. It seemed to him that each iteration made Ginny a little more crazed, and wondered if a long stay in a mental ward would produce favorable results. He also wondered just exactly how much *she* remembered. One thing was certain: that pendant must be taken away from her.

The trip to Diagon Alley went much the same. Lockhart was a pain, Draco was an ass, Lucius was snide, and a certain diary ended up in Ginny's cauldron. He found himself eyeing Mr Malfoy speculatively; he remembered a lot of things, after all. Harry managed, during that trip, to pick up a few extra odds and ends, and later that night he managed to produce a replica of the pendant using Arthur's wand (just to be on the safe side). A switch was made, with Ginny none the wiser.

He needed a magnifying glass to inspect the thing properly, to see the tiny words etched into the metal. As far as he could tell Ginny had only read the instructions, but had neglected to read the warnings. Because the focus of her desire to turn back time was centered on him, and she had, every time, used it in his presence, the possibility existed that he would remember at some point, should it be used too many times. She probably had told herself each time what her goals were and what had not worked previously, and that was all she remembered, even if she could not remember why. She might not even have told herself to avoid the diary.

The pendant needed to either be destroyed or hidden. And things would most definitely be different this time around.

At school his first task was to read up on some things he never got around to any of the other times. And then he sent off a letter, using a school owl, to Lucius and Narcissa Malfoy. They met him in the Shrieking Shack, warily superior and looking quite nearly outraged at such a nasty meeting place, but bearing the pensieve he had requested they bring.

"You must think I'm crazy," he opened with. "I assure you I'm not. To reiterate what I said in my letter, nothing I plan to share with you is meant as a threat, only a warning of things to come."

Lucius sneered at him.

"For instance, I know you slipped a diary into Ginny Weasley's cauldron in Flourish & Blotts." When Lucius stiffened and his hand twitched on his cane Harry hastily continued, "And I know the outcome of that action. I also know what will happen several years from now, and I think you both will be extremely interested to see."

"And what makes you think you have anything of important to say, Potter?"

Harry sighed. "Well, if you don't want to hear about how Voldemort will take over your home, take your wand for one of your failures and leave you without another, and send your son off on a fool's mission to kill Dumbledore to keep you two alive. . . . Draco failed, by the way, repeatedly."

Narcissa placed a hand on her husband's arm, though her disdainful expression never slipped.

"So let's make a deal. We three give vows of nonaggression—until noon, at least—and secrecy. I will show you what the future holds, and how I know of it. And I'm certain you realize that you can tell when memories have been tampered with, so you'll also know I'm not trying to trick you."

"Why should we believe anything you have to say, little boy?" Lucius demanded.

He smirked. "Afraid to find out that Voldemort really would turn on you? Or are you cunning enough to see this advantage and utilize it? Wouldn't you prefer to remain a pillar of society, a voice people listen to? Wouldn't you prefer to stay out of Azkaban, because I assure you, you will end up there for a time if you choose not to listen to me. It's happened several times already."

Harry apparated to the other side of the room the second Lucius went for his wand. The man stood there for a moment, shocked, then whipped around to stare at him. "I know more than you think I do, Mr Malfoy. Keep it up and I'll let you rot. But this time, you'll stay there."

Narcissa touched her husband's arm again, her expression blanking out. Lucius snarled and nodded. Once the vows were out of the way Harry conjured up a set of chairs and took a seat, levitating the table with the pensieve over to rest between them. "Let me give you a brief explanation," he said, then did so, inwardly amused at just how much they allowed their reactions to show through their usual cold masks. "And now I'll show you what I remember. This in particular never changed."

He showed them his memories of events, those which drove home the point of Voldemort's betrayal of their family. He could always rewind if necessary, and search out another way of handling things.

It was nearing two o'clock when Lucius said, "That girl is insane."

Harry shrugged. "I thought so myself."

"Darling," Narcissa said quietly, "I don't see how we can let this happen. The boy—Potter—is"—she coughed delicately, looking exceptionally pained—"right. The Dark Lord turned on us. Your loyalty and service meant nothing to him! He reduced us, practically destroyed us, and used us for his amusement. He expected Draco to fail! And while the girl always turned things back too soon for us to know what would have become of us, I can certainly imagine the results."

"I always thought of Draco as an annoyance," Harry said into the resulting silence. "But he never really did anything to deserve death. He simply isn't cut out to be a servant of Voldemort, which is why I saved him. I know he was desperate, that he truly cared about you two. And I could see that you returned that feeling."

"One might think he owes you a life debt," Lucius said reluctantly. "Us as well."

"That's beside the point. I didn't do it to have that kind of hold over anyone."

"Yet it gives you power," Lucius countered.

Harry rolled his eyes. "I know from your point of view it must seem illogical, but I'm just not that kind of person. Nobody, even my friends, seems to realize I just want to live my life. I didn't want any of this. Dumbledore might secretly revel in hoarding information, pulling peoples' strings, and being a hero, but I don't. I'd just like to end this repeating nightmare. I think you two can help me with that, and keep your reputations unsullied in the bargain. Something for something."

After another long silence Lucius said, "What do you plan to do about the Weasley girl?"

"Well, frankly, I'd like some advice on that. Does the wizarding world even have psychologists? Can her mind be fixed?"

Narcissa looked at him. "Longbottom."

"Ah." Harry bit his lip.

"I hate to say it, dear—"

Harry blinked.

"—but I think the girl shouldn't survive this time," Narcissa said.

He sighed again. "Perhaps. After all, I've killed more than a few times already," he said, thinking of Quirrell first and foremost.

"I have decided," Lucius stated firmly. "We shall make an alliance."

By the time the end of May rolled around Harry was heartily sick of things. He had changed nothing, despite the temptation. Until that night. Once Lockhart had backfired his spell and reduced his memories to mist, Harry cast a few spells of his own. After he cleaned up the rock fall Lockhart and Ron were levitated down the tunnel to the Chamber of Secrets and dumped right outside the door, unconscious, with Ron lacking any memory of anything since they had slid down the huge pipe, Harry having rather cunningly obliviated him.

Harry then marched on in to face the memory of Tom Riddle. The second the basilisk was called forth he whipped out a pair of specially-spelled wrap-around sunglasses and put them on, then produced a sword and proceeded to carry on in almost the same fashion. There was no rescue by Fawkes this time, or sorting hat with Gryffindor's sword, but his sword did knock free one of the snake's fangs.

Harry anxiously waited until the exact right moment before pulling on a pair of dragonhide gloves and stabbing the diary with the basilisk fang. Ginny died. Riddle exploded. The glasses were placed on Lockhart, the fang placed in Ginny's hand, and the gloves destroyed. An hour or so

later, when he was well shivering from his resting place on the floor, Harry stealthily woke Ron up and pretended to be unconscious.

"Ginny!" Harry groaned and rolled over, causing Ron to rush over and shake him. "Harry! Where the hell are we?"

He slowly pushed himself up and wearily looked around, letting his eyes go wide at the sight of Ginny lying there. "Ron. . . ? What happened? The last thing I remember is. . . ."

"That bastard!" Ron shouted. "Oh no! Ginny!"

An hour later they were all in the infirmary. Dumbledore was forced to accept that one of his teachers had done something heinous, though no one could quite figure out what had happened, as nobody could remember anything. Harry thought his Occlumency work was particularly good at deflecting suspicion. Lockhart ended up in St Mungo's.

Shortly before term ended Harry had another clandestine meeting with Lucius and Narcissa. They had successfully retrieved all of Voldemort's Horcruxes.

The next year went along mostly the same, with Harry not attempting to change anything. The Weasleys were incredibly subdued that year, but that was only to be expected. Remus learned the truth, Sirius got away, and Harry suffered through the summer with the Dursleys without losing his temper, no matter how foul-mouthed Marge was. One black mark off his permanent record.

His fourth year went the same, too, and it was as wretched as he remembered it being. When the third task rolled around Harry made sure that he and Cedric took the cup at the same moment, after the same argument. But when they arrived things went a hair differently. Cedric was pushed out of the way of the killing curse, just barely, the older boy knocking his head against a tombstone and falling unconscious.

Peter apparently assumed he had been successful and proceeded to plan. Harry deliberately focused on being an unwilling giver of blood, concerned that the ritual would not work properly otherwise. He had already spotted Lucius and Narcissa lurking about and knew they were in place to handle their end of things. He also spotted a very pale Cedric hiding behind a headstone, watching everything, and wondered if one of the Malfoys had bound him in place so he could not interfere.

And it all happened rather quickly. As the cauldron seethed and Voldemort prepared to emerge a number of events occurred. The Horcruxes were all destroyed by the Malfoys—including Nagini—and Peter was then knocked out and removed from the scene. Cedric had a clear view of everything. And finally, Harry's restraints were quietly removed.

Voldemort stepped out of the cauldron in all his evil glory, looking quite superior and confident. Though, Harry noted from a position of memory and clarity that he looked ever so slightly unsteady on his feet.

And while the man was gaining his bearings, Harry struck. He beheaded Voldemort with a clever little spell which was not illegal, though the ministry might wish to quibble given that it was used to kill. And it was over.

"Bravo, Mr Potter," Lucius said, stepping into clear view along with Narcissa. "Now, shall we go to Hogwarts and let the world know that . . . Voldemort . . . is gone?"

Harry nodded and turned around so he could release Cedric as Lucius busied himself with a little clean-up work for a certain grave. "You okay?"

"I—what the—?"

Harry nodded again. "You're fine. Come on."

Back at the school it was chaos, partly for the fact that two champions had disappeared unexpectedly, and partly because a certain Defense professor had not realized his little flask had been swapped out and had transformed back into Barty Crouch Jr in front of a large number of people. He was stunned, of course, almost before he could blink.

Harry, Cedric, the Malfoys, Peter, and a bunch of destroyed Horcruxes reappeared into the mess and were immediately hustled off to Dumbledore's office along with Fudge, Crouch, and a number of aurors.

And the wizarding world celebrated. Sirius was declared innocent and pardoned for his escape, the Malfoys retained their status, and Harry got to leave the Dursleys behind. And it was all thanks to a delusional stalker named Ginevra Weasley.

Harry considered, finally, that she had repaid her life debt. And the pendant . . . was safely hidden, in a place Harry visited only once, not wishing to be so uninventive as Voldemort had been with his Horcruxes.

Just in case the Malfoys decided to do something foolish.