

## Chapter 44

Fleur moved closer to Harry. Her veela magic, previously contained, reached out tentatively to brush against his own power.

"Anozzer one?"

Harry simply shrugged in response. "There are more."

"Hmm... she's Daphne and Astoria's maman?" Fleur looked thoughtful.

"That troubles you?"

"Not really, no," she shook her head after a moment of pause. "I don't zink anyzing will trouble me now after everyzing I've seen around 'ere."

"Don't know what to say to that," Harry chuckled, earning a small smile.

"She is right, you know," Fleur said softly. "You are becoming somezing more zan just a man fighting a war. Ze ozers, zey look to you for guidance. For protection. For... everzing."

"Well, I never asked for that," Harry said calmly.

"No one ever asks for leadership," Fleur replied with a small smile. "It is zrust upon zem by circumstance and necessity. But you 'andle it well, 'Arry. Better zan most would."

She hesitated for a moment before she reached up to cup his face gently. "What 'appened between us earlier. Before we left. We should talk about it."

"Now?" Harry asked.

"Non," Fleur smiled slightly. "Not now. You need to relax and someone seems to 'ave ideas. Very good ideas, if I'm right about zis. We'll talk tomorrow. We need to understand what zis is between us."

"I know what it is," Harry said, smiling. "It's not the first time for me."

"Experience wiz so many women, I believe?" Fleur teased before getting serious. "But I 'ave never felt anyzing like zis before, 'Arry, and it frightens me. It frightens me 'ow quickly it 'appened and 'ow much I want it."

She kissed him softly, pressing her lips gently against his that promised more when they both had the energy to explore it.

"Sleep well, 'Arry," she murmured. "Tomorrow we'll talk. Zen we'll plan. Ze day after, we'll kill more monsters."

She left him alone in the corridor right outside the room as she made her way to hers.

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Harry pushed open the door to his bedroom, only to pause right there.

Evelyn stood beside the bed wearing something that made his mouth go dry. The silk robe clinging to her curves was translucent white, tied loosely at her waist and revealing tantalizing glimpses of creamy skin beneath. Her blonde hair hung loose around her shoulders, making her look younger and infinitely more approachable. Her blue eyes held a warmth that sent heat pooling low in his belly.

A professional massage table had been set up near the window, covered with fresh white linens that looked impossibly soft. Various bottles and vials were arranged on a small side table alongside several fluffy towels. The room smelled of lavender and eucalyptus, something soothing that immediately began working on his frayed nerves.

"Evelyn," Harry said slowly. "What is this?"

"You've had a difficult night," she replied, her voice silky. "You fought werewolves, saved lives, and pushed yourself to dangerous limits diving into that monster's mind. I thought you might appreciate some proper relaxation."

She moved closer gracefully. The silk caressed her skin with each step, revealing more of her long legs and the curve of her breasts.

"I believe I'm a good masseuse," Evelyn continued. "A skill I picked up years ago when I wanted to understand pressure points and muscle tension for dueling purposes. Very useful for relieving stress. And you, my love, are carrying far too much of both right now."

Harry merely chuckled at that, taking a step closer.

"The bathroom first," Evelyn said, gesturing to the adjoining door. "You need to wash away all that blood and dirt and forest grime before we proceed. I'll help you get properly clean."

"You don't have to do that," Harry smiled.

"I want to," Evelyn replied simply. She crossed the remaining distance and placed her hand on his chest, right over his thundering heart. Her touch was warm through his shirt. "Let me take care of you, Harry. You've been taking care of everyone else all night. It's time someone returned the favor."

She took his hand and led him into the bathroom. With a casual wave of her wand, water began filling the large tub. Steam rose from its surface as she added something from a small crystal vial, and suddenly the air was thick with eucalyptus and mint.

“Strip,” Evelyn said softly, turning to face him fully. “Let me see what we’re working with.”

Harry pulled off his shirt and Evelyn’s eyes traced over his chest and abs with open appreciation.

“Very nice,” she said, her voice lower now.

“Like what you see?” Harry teased, his own voice rougher than usual.

“You know I do.”

He unbuckled his belt and slid his trousers down, leaving himself in just his boxers. Evelyn’s gaze became more heated, lingering on the obvious bulge straining against the fabric.

Smirking, Harry hooked his thumbs in the waistband of his boxers and pushed them down. His cock was already half hard from her attention, and it twitched visibly under her scrutiny. Evelyn bit her lower lip, her eyes darkening.

“As impressive as ever,” she murmured. “My daughter chose extremely well.”

“As if you didn’t,” Harry chuckled.

Evelyn smiled as she reached up and untied her robe, letting the silk slide off her shoulders to pool on the floor. Harry’s breath caught as he took in her naked body. Evelyn was absolutely stunning. Her breasts were full and firm with dusky rose nipples already peaked with arousal. Her waist curved in before flaring out to generous hips, and her legs were long and perfectly toned. A neatly trimmed patch of blonde lightning bolt crowned her sex, and Harry smirked at the sight. He could see a hint of moisture glistening there.

“In you go,” Evelyn said, gesturing to the tub.

Harry climbed in. The hot water immediately began working on his tired muscles, and he sank down with a grateful sigh. The heat penetrated deep, easing tensions he hadn’t even realized he was carrying.

Evelyn climbed in behind him, her legs on either side of his hips. Her breasts pressed against his back as she reached for a soft washcloth and a bar of soap that smelled like sandalwood.

“Lean forward,” she instructed.

Harry obeyed, and Evelyn began washing his back with slow strokes. Her hands were strong but gentle, working the soap into a rich lather and massaging his muscles as she cleaned. She paid special attention to his shoulders, her fingers digging into the knots there.

“The girls were impressive tonight,” she said conversationally as she worked. “They trained for hours without stopping. Daphne and Susan in particular showed remarkable improvement in their spell chains and defensive positioning.”

“They’re determined,” Harry replied, his voice already rougher as her talented hands worked magic on his tense shoulders.

“More than determined. They’re driven,” Evelyn corrected, her breath warm against his ear. “They know you’re fighting a war, and they’re desperate to stand beside you. Daphne especially feels like she’s failing you by not being ready yet.”

“She’s not failing anyone,” Harry said firmly. “None of them are.”

“I know that. You know that. But teenage witches in love rarely listen to reason,” Evelyn said with genuine amusement. “They see you risking your life and they want to share that burden. It’s actually quite sweet when you think about it.”

Her hands moved lower, washing his spine with the same thorough attention. Harry felt his cock harden further as her full breasts pressed more firmly against his back, her nipples hard points against his skin.

“Hannah and Astoria need more work,” Evelyn continued, her hands never stopping their careful ministrations. “They’re talented but less experienced than the others. Hannah especially tends to overthink her spellwork. She needs to trust her instincts more, let her magic flow naturally.”

“I’ll work with her,” Harry said.

“I know you will. You’re good at bringing out the best in people,” Evelyn murmured. Her hands moved around to his chest, washing his front slowly. Her fingers traced over his pecs and abs, following the lines of muscle. “It’s one of your more attractive qualities. You make people want to be better for you.”

Harry’s breath hitched as her hands moved lower, washing his stomach. Her touch lingered, teasing without quite going where he desperately wanted.

“Evelyn,” he said warningly.

“Hm?” She sounded perfectly innocent even as one slick hand dipped below the water, wrapping around his fully hardened length. “Am I missing something that needs cleaning?”

Harry groaned as she stroked him slowly underwater, her grip firm and confident. Her other hand continued washing his chest, maintaining the pretense of bathing him even as she pleased him with expert skill.

“This is very dirty,” she tsked, her hand moving in long, slow strokes from root to tip. “Definitely needs thorough cleaning.”

She worked him, her hand moving in a rhythm that had him hardening to full attention within moments. Her thumb circled the sensitive head, spreading the precum that leaked steadily from his slit.

"So responsive," she breathed against his ear. "I can feel you throbbing in my hand. Does this feel good, Harry?"

"You know it does," Harry grunted, his hips bucking involuntarily into her grip.

"Good," Evelyn purred. Her other hand moved to cup his balls, massaging them gently as she continued stroking his shaft. "Just relax and let me take care of everything."

The dual sensations had Harry's head falling back against her shoulder. She took advantage of his exposed neck, pressing soft kisses along the column of his throat while her hands worked him mercilessly.

"That's it," Evelyn encouraged, her lips brushing his ear. "Don't hold back. I want to feel you respond to my touch. I want to make you feel good."

Harry's hips bucked again, seeking more friction. Her hand was incredible, knowing exactly how to touch him, where to apply pressure, and when to speed up or slow down.

"You're leaking so much," she whispered, her voice thick with arousal. "Your cock is practically weeping for more. Do you want to come already, Harry? Do you want to spill yourself all over my hand?"

"Yes," Harry groaned.

"Then come for me," she teased, her hand speeding up. "Let go and give me what I want."

Her hand moved faster and harder, stroking him harder now. Her other hand squeezed his balls gently, rolling them in her palm, and that combination was all it took. Harry came with a grunt, his cock pulsing in her grip as thick ropes of cum shot into the bathwater. Evelyn kept stroking, milking every last drop from him as he shuddered through an intense release.

"Beautiful," she praised when he finally stilled, his chest heaving. "That was absolutely beautiful."

She released him and reached for the washcloth again, cleaning him thoroughly despite the mess he'd just made. Harry lay against her as she finished washing him with tender care.

"Better?" she asked.

"Much."

“Good. But we’re not done yet,” Evelyn said. “That was just the appetizer. The main course is still waiting.”

She helped him stand and guided him out of the tub. A wave of her wand dried them both instantly, and she led him back into the bedroom toward the massage table.

“Lie down on your stomach,” she instructed.

Harry climbed onto the table and settled himself face down. The linens were incredibly soft against his skin, and he felt himself relaxing despite his recent orgasm. The table was at the perfect height, and he could already tell Evelyn knew exactly what she was doing.

Evelyn poured scented oil into her palms, warming it between her hands before placing them on his upper back. She started at his shoulders, her strong fingers digging into the tense muscles there with perfect pressure.

“You carry so much stress right here,” she observed, her thumbs working circles into the tight knots. “Right in your shoulders and neck. Classic signs of someone bearing far too much responsibility for their age.”

Her hands worked methodically, finding every knot and working it loose. Harry groaned as she hit a particularly tight spot, and Evelyn made a sympathetic sound.

“I know it hurts,” she said softly. “But it needs to be released or it’ll only get worse. Trust me to help you.”

She worked her way down his spine, her thumbs pressing firmly on either side of his vertebrae. The pressure was intense but not painful, and Harry felt tension he hadn’t even known he was carrying begin to melt away under her skilled touch.

“You did brilliantly tonight,” Evelyn said as she worked, her voice taking on a more serious tone. “From what I understand, you led a team into hostile territory, eliminated sixteen werewolves including one of the most dangerous creatures in Britain, saved Amelia’s life, and extracted valuable intelligence. That’s impressive by any standard, Harry.”

“It was necessary,” Harry replied.

“Yes. But necessary doesn’t make it easy,” Evelyn countered. Her hands moved to his lower back, massaging the muscles there with the same thorough attention. “Can I ask you something?”

“What is it, Eve?”

“I know you’ve taken lives before. Taking a life, even a monstrous one, leaves marks. Not on your body but on your soul. How do you handle that reality?”

Harry was quiet for a moment, considering the question seriously. “I don’t feel guilty if that’s what you’re asking. The Death Eaters, Greyback, and his pack deserved

exactly what they got. They were monsters who preyed on innocent people for pleasure."

"But?" Evelyn prompted gently.

"But it doesn't feel good either," Harry sighed. "Killing them was necessary, but I didn't enjoy it. Even when I was torturing Greyback for information, I took no pleasure from his pain. I just wanted it done and over with."

"That's healthy," Evelyn said approvingly. Her hands moved to his buttocks, kneading the firm muscles there. "The day you start enjoying the violence is the day you become like them. The fact that you can do what's necessary without losing yourself to it speaks very well of your character."

Her hands were moving dangerously low now, her fingers occasionally brushing against his inner thighs and making his cock stir with renewed interest. Despite having just come, Harry felt arousal building again under her ministrations.

"Roll over," Evelyn said softly.

Harry obeyed, turning onto his back. His erection was already at half-mast and growing, and Evelyn's eyes darkened with unmistakable hunger as she took in the sight.

"Very nice indeed," she murmured appreciatively. "Such beautiful recovery time."

She poured more oil onto her hands and began massaging his chest. Her touch was more overtly sensual now, less therapeutic and more seductive. Her fingers traced over his pecs and abs, occasionally circling his nipples until they hardened into sensitive points.

"My daughters and I often talk about how well endowed you are," Evelyn said conversationally, her eyes never leaving his growing erection. "We all like to compare notes, you see. To make sure none of us undersell you."

Harry's cock twitched visibly at her words, and she smiled with satisfaction.

"Does it excite you?" she asked, her hands moving lower to massage his abs. "Knowing that my daughters and I talk about your cock? About how well you fuck us? About how you make us scream your name?"

"Eve," Harry groaned.

"We talk about everything," Evelyn continued, her hands moving dangerously close to his straining erection but still not touching it. "How you make us come so hard we see stars. How you fill us so perfectly we can barely walk the next day. How you can go for hours without tiring, giving us orgasm after orgasm until we're

begging for mercy. We're a bunch of very, very lucky witches. My daughters, I, Tonks, Susan, Hannah, your friend Luna, and hopefully several more witches soon."

Her hands bypassed his throbbing cock entirely, moving to his thighs instead. She massaged the powerful muscles there with firm strokes, her fingers occasionally brushing against his balls but never quite touching his desperate shaft.

"Such a tease, you are," Harry said, his voice rough with need.

"Accusations now, my love?" Evelyn asked innocently, though her smile was pure sin.

"Touch me," Harry demanded.

"I am touching you," she replied with mock confusion.

"You know what I mean," Harry growled, his patience wearing thin.

Evelyn laughed, the sound rich and sultry and full of promise. "I do. But I want to hear you say it properly. Tell me exactly what you want, my Lord. Be specific."

"I want you to stroke my cock," Harry said bluntly, past caring about propriety. "I want to feel your hand wrapped around me again. I want you to make me come."

"Oh, my Lord, so crass," Evelyn moaned filthily. "But I like a man who can be direct about his desires instead of dancing around them."

She poured oil directly onto his shaft, and Harry hissed at the cool sensation against his heated flesh. Then her hand wrapped around him firmly, and all coherent thoughts fled as pure pleasure coursed through his body.

Her strokes were slow and sensual, her grip firm but not too tight. She skillfully worked him from root to tip, her thumb swirling around the sensitive head on each upstroke. Her other hand cupped his balls, massaging them with gentle care.

*'This is one hot MILF, Harry,'* he heard Maria's voice in his mind.

*'Don't I know that...'*

*'And there's another one downstairs too. I don't think you should make her wait too much either.'*

*'Hah! Amelia won't come around so easily.'*

*'I won't be so sure about that. Something changed tonight. I sensed it, and I know you did too.'*

He did, but he didn't have the time to think about the buxom redhead right now as Evelyn's thumb began to swirl over the head of his cock more firmly.

"You're leaking so much already," she observed, spreading his precum around the head of his cock with her thumb. "Your body is so responsive to me. So eager. Do you need release already?"

"No," Harry managed, fighting for control. "Don't want to come yet."

"What do you want then?" Evelyn asked, genuine curiosity in her voice.

"I want to taste you," Harry said boldly, meeting her eyes. "I want to make you come on my tongue."

Evelyn's smile turned absolutely predatory. "Is that so? You want to put that talented mouth of yours to work on my pussy?"

"Yes," Harry confirmed without hesitation.

"Then who am I to deny such an enthusiastic request?" Evelyn released his cock and climbed onto the table, positioning herself over his face. Her pussy was already glistening with arousal, her lips swollen and flushed pink with need.

Harry gripped her thighs firmly and pulled her down onto his waiting mouth. His tongue swept through her folds, tasting her sweetness, and Evelyn gasped above him.

"Oh fuck," she breathed, her voice shaky. "Your mouth is absolutely incredible."

Harry worked his tongue deeper, finding her entrance and thrusting inside to taste her directly from the source. Evelyn rocked against his face, grinding her pussy against his mouth as he ate her out with enthusiasm. Her thighs trembled on either side of his head, and he could feel her getting wetter by the second.

He moved his focus to her clit, circling the sensitive nub with the tip of his tongue before sucking it between his lips. Evelyn cried out sharply, her hands fisting in his hair as pleasure shot through her core.

"Right there," she gasped, her hips moving faster. "Don't stop, don't you dare stop doing that."

Harry had no intention of stopping. He worked her clit relentlessly, alternating between firm suction and gentle licks that had her moaning constantly. One hand moved from her thigh to her entrance, and he slid two fingers inside her tight, wet heat.

"Yes!" Evelyn shouted, abandoning all pretense of control. "Fuck, yes, just like that!"

He pumped his fingers in and out while his mouth continued its assault on her clit. Evelyn was close already, he could feel it in the way her inner walls clenched around his fingers, in the way her thighs trembled against his ears, and in the desperation of her moans.

"I'm going to come," she warned breathlessly. "I'm going to come all over your face."

Harry increased his pace, his fingers curling to hit that special spot inside her while his tongue flicked rapidly over her swollen clit. Evelyn's back arched sharply and she came with a scream that definitely woke someone in the house, her pussy clamping down on his fingers as her orgasm crashed through her.

Harry didn't let up, continuing to finger her and suck her clit through the intense waves of her climax. Evelyn's legs gave out completely and she collapsed forward, bracing herself on trembling arms as aftershocks rolled through her body.

"Merlin's balls," she gasped when she could speak again. "That was absolutely incredible. How can we all not be so obsessed with you!?"

She climbed off his face on shaky legs, and Harry sat up. His face was covered in her juices, and Evelyn leaned in to lick them off with a wicked grin.

"My turn again," she said, her voice husky with renewed desire.

She pushed him back down onto the table with surprising strength and positioned herself between his legs. His cock stood at full attention, rock hard and glistening with oil and precum. Evelyn wrapped one hand around the base and leaned down to lick a slow stripe up the underside.

Harry groaned as her warm, wet mouth engulfed his tip. She sucked gently at first, her tongue swirling around the head before she took him deeper. Inch by inch she worked him into her mouth until her nose was pressed against his pelvis and he could feel himself lodged in her throat.

"Fuck," Harry gasped, his hands fisting in the sheets.

Evelyn hummed around his length, the vibrations sending pleasure racing up his spine. She pulled back slowly, her lips tight around his shaft, before taking him deep again in one smooth motion. Her hand worked the base of his cock in perfect time with her mouth, and her other hand continued massaging his balls with expert care.

She established a steady rhythm, bobbing her head up and down his length. Her cheeks hollowed as she sucked hard on the upstroke, and Harry had to grip the edges of the table to keep from thrusting up into her throat.

"Eve," he warned, feeling his control slipping. "If you keep that up, I'm going to come."

She pulled off his cock with a wet pop, a string of saliva connecting her lips to his tip. "Not yet. I have other plans for this magnificent cock of yours."

She climbed onto the table and straddled his hips. Her pussy hovered just above his straining erection, and Harry could feel her heat even without contact.

"Tell me you want this," Evelyn commanded, her eyes boring into his. "Tell me you want to fuck me."

"I want to fuck you," Harry said immediately, his voice rough with need. "I want to feel you wrapped around my cock. I want to make you scream."

"Good answer," Evelyn purred.

She reached down and positioned his tip at her entrance. Then, in one smooth motion, she sank down onto him completely. They both groaned as he filled her, stretching her inner walls around his thick shaft.

"So big," Evelyn gasped, her eyes fluttering closed. "So fucking big. You're stretching me so perfectly."

She began to move, rising up until just his tip remained inside before slamming back down hard. Her pace was slow at first, each stroke designed to maximize the pleasure for both of them as she adjusted to his size.

Harry's hands found her hips, helping to guide her movements. His thumbs stroked over her hipbones as she rode him, and he watched as his cock disappeared into her pussy over and over again.

"Touch my tits," Evelyn commanded breathlessly. "Play with them properly."

Harry's hands moved to her breasts immediately, cupping the full globes and kneading them with firm pressure. He pinched her nipples between his fingers, rolling the hardened peaks and making her moan loudly.

"Harder," she gasped, her pace increasing. "Don't be gentle with me."

Harry pinched harder, and Evelyn cried out in pleasure. Her hips moved faster, chasing her building orgasm with single minded determination.

"Fuck me," she demanded, her voice sharp.

Harry planted his feet firmly on the table and began thrusting up to meet her downward strokes. The sound of flesh slapping against flesh filled the room, punctuated by their moans and gasps and the wet sounds of their coupling.

"Yes!" Evelyn shouted, her head falling back. "Just like that! Harder!"

Harry grabbed her hips firmly and pulled her down as he thrust up with force, driving his cock as deep as physically possible. Evelyn's mouth opened in a silent scream as he hit spots inside her she'd discovered only after being with him.

"I'm close," she gasped, her inner walls beginning to flutter around him. "So fucking close already."

“Come for me,” Harry growled, his own control fraying. “Come on my cock.”

One of his hands moved from her hip to her clit, rubbing tight circles around the sensitive nub. The dual stimulation was too much, and Evelyn came with a scream that probably woke the entire house once again. Her pussy clamped down on his cock like a vise, rippling and milking him as her orgasm tore through her body.

Harry kept thrusting through her climax, prolonging her pleasure as long as possible. Her inner walls spasmed around him rhythmically, and the sensation was so intense he felt his own release building rapidly despite his best efforts to hold back.

“I’m going to come,” he warned through gritted teeth.

“Inside me,” Evelyn gasped, still shaking from her orgasm. “Fill me up. I want to feel you come deep inside me.”

Her words pushed him over the edge immediately. Harry buried himself to the hilt and came hard, his cock pulsing as he emptied himself deep in her pussy. Rope after rope of hot cum painted her inner walls, and Evelyn moaned appreciatively as she felt each powerful spurt.

They stayed locked together as their orgasms slowly faded, both breathing heavily and covered in a light sheen of oil. Finally Evelyn collapsed forward onto Harry’s chest, his softening cock still buried inside her.

“That was amazing,” she breathed against his neck.

“Yeah,” Harry agreed, wrapping his arms around her.

They lay there for several minutes, just holding each other and catching their breath. Eventually Evelyn rolled off him with a satisfied sigh and used her wand to clean them both with a quick spell.

“Bed,” she said softly. “We both need actual sleep now.”

Harry climbed under the covers and Evelyn joined him immediately, curling against his side with her head resting on his chest. His arm wrapped around her automatically, holding her close.

“Thank you,” Harry said softly, pressing a kiss to the top of her head. “For tonight. For everything.”

“My pleasure,” Evelyn replied with a satisfied purr. “Quite literally.”

Harry chuckled and tightened his hold on her. Within minutes, exhaustion claimed him completely and he fell into a deep, dreamless sleep.

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The Death Eater safe house was located deep in the countryside, hidden by multiple layers of wards and protective enchantments. Inside the main hall, over two

dozen dark wizards and witches had gathered, their faces grim beneath their masks or hoods.

Bellatrix Lestrange stood at the center of the room, her wild dark hair cascading around her shoulders in a tangled mess and her eyes gleaming with barely controlled manic energy. She paced back and forth like a caged predator, her wand gripped tightly in one white knuckled hand.

“Say it again,” she hissed at the werewolf cowering before her. “Tell me exactly what you found at the den.”

The werewolf, a heavily scarred man named Grael who’d been out hunting when the attack occurred, trembled visibly as he spoke. “The entire pack is dead, Mistress Lestrange. All of them without exception. Greyback, his lieutenants, the younger members, everyone. We found nothing but ash and scorched earth where the den used to be.”

“Ash,” Bellatrix repeated softly, her voice deceptively calm in a way that made several Death Eaters shift nervously. “They were burned then.”

“Yes, Mistress. Whatever killed them used fire so intensely hot it consumed absolutely everything. Even the bones were reduced to fine powder. There was nothing left to identify.”

Bellatrix’s wand hand twitched dangerously, and several Death Eaters took cautious steps backward. They all knew the telltale signs of her impending fury.

“Who?” she asked, her voice still eerily calm. “Who would dare attack Greyback’s pack in their own territory?”

“We don’t know,” Grael admitted carefully. “There were no witnesses whatsoever. No survivors to tell the tale. Just the fire and evidence of an intense battle.”

“Evidence,” Antonin Dolohov spoke up from his position near the wall. “What kind of evidence specifically?”

“Spell scorching consistent with extremely high-level combat magic,” Augustus Rookwood replied from the corner, his voice steady. “I analyzed the den to the best of my abilities. There were multiple casters based on the variety of curse marks I found. Different magical signatures, different spell types. And there was silver fire residue in several locations, the kind only a veela can naturally produce.”

Silence fell over the assembled Death Eaters as they processed this information.

“Veela fire,” Bellatrix said slowly, rolling the words around in her mouth. “How very, very interesting.”

“There’s only one veela we know of currently in Britain,” Thorfinn Rowle said from the shadows. “The French girl. Delacour.”

“Fleur Delacour,” Bellatrix said, her smile sharp and cruel. “The Triwizard champion from Beauxbatons. She’s been spotted in London recently, hasn’t she? Arrived in the company of my little blood-traitor niece. A niece who is close to a certain famous boy wizard after her fallout with the Order.”

“Potter,” Dolohov said flatly. “You think Potter orchestrated this attack?”

“Who else would have both the capability and the audacity?” Bellatrix laughed, the sound high and unhinged. “Who else would have the balls to actually attack Greyback in his own den? Who else has been making themselves such a delicious nuisance to our cause lately?”

“The Carrows,” another Death Eater said nervously. “Potter killed them and everyone at that safe house. If it was him again attacking us, then this makes it twice he’s struck directly at our operations.”

“Twice now that precious baby Potter has struck at us,” Bellatrix said, her voice rising with each word. “Twice that he’s eliminated significant portions of our forces. First the Carrows and their entire operation wiped out in one night, and now Greyback and his entire pack of useful beasts. The little baby is growing claws and learning to bite back.”

“This is deeply concerning,” Dolohov said carefully, watching Bellatrix’s increasingly agitated movements. “Two major attacks in such a short period of time. Potter’s becoming significantly more aggressive, more dangerous to our operations. If we don’t respond decisively, others might get ideas about challenging us as well.”

“Oh, we’ll respond,” Bellatrix promised, her eyes gleaming with madness and anticipation. “We’ll respond so thoroughly, so completely, that Potter will wish he’d never crawled out from under his mudblood mother’s corpse.”

She began pacing again, her movements jerky and agitated like a puppet with tangled strings. “Greyback was useful to our cause. Predictable and crude, yes, but useful nonetheless. Now he’s nothing but ash scattered across some worthless forest, and we’ve lost access to his entire pack. That’s extremely inconvenient for our plans.”

“More than inconvenient,” Rowle muttered darkly. “We were counting heavily on those werewolves for the Diagon Alley operation. They were supposed to provide shock troops and create maximum chaos.”

“Then we’ll find others,” Bellatrix snapped viciously. “There are always more monsters willing to serve the Dark Lord’s glorious cause for the promise of prey. What concerns me far more is Potter’s growing audacity. He’s no longer playing defense and hiding behind Dumbledore’s robes. He’s actively hunting us now.”

“Should we inform the Dark Lord about this development?” a younger Death Eater asked nervously.

Bellatrix’s wand came up so fast the speaker barely had time to register the movement before the Cruciatus Curse hit him squarely in the chest. He collapsed immediately, screaming and convulsing violently on the stone floor as Bellatrix held the vicious curse.

“You dare?” she hissed, her face contorted with rage. “You dare suggest bothering our Lord with this minor irritation? He has far more important concerns than one impudent boy wizard playing hero!”

She held the curse for another fifteen seconds, letting the Death Eater’s screams echo through the hall, before finally releasing it. He lay gasping and twitching pathetically, tears streaming down his face and a wet stain spreading across his robes.

“Potter is mine to handle,” Bellatrix declared to the room at large. “The Dark Lord has marked him for death eventually, yes, but that doesn’t mean I can’t have my fun with the baby first. I’m going to make that arrogant little brat scream so beautifully. I’m going to break him piece by piece until he begs for the sweet mercy of death.”

“The Dark Lord wants Potter brought to him alive,” Dolohov reminded her very carefully.

“I know perfectly well what the Dark Lord wants,” Bellatrix snarled, rounding on him. “I’m not an idiot, Antonin. I won’t kill the Potter brat outright, tempting as it is to watch the life drain from those disgustingly green eyes. But I can hurt him. I can make him suffer exquisitely. I can destroy everything and everyone he cares about until he’s nothing but a hollow, broken shell.”

She turned to address the assembled Death Eaters directly. “Potter thinks he’s clever, doesn’t he? Thinks he can strike at us without consequences. We’re going to teach baby Potter otherwise. We’re going to show him exactly what happens when you draw the attention of our lord’s most faithful servant.”

“What do you propose we do?” Rowle asked.

The smile Bellatrix gave was mad even by her standards, and everyone who looked at her shivered.

Nothing good could come out of that unhinged grin on the madwoman’s face, and for the first time, a few Death Eaters even felt sorry for whatever fate was about to befall the poor bastard.

To be continued...