Voldemort was in a deep trance behind some of the strongest wards known to wizardkind. He had been observing everything that was happening in the Ministry. To be frank, he was observing everything Potter had been doing since he sent the boy visions of Sirius Black and Andromeda Tonks getting tortured in the Department of Mysteries. It had been not easy to ensure the floo network and owls in Hogwarts would not work, and Severus had done his part. Still, it was a gamble on his part, but it worked like a charm. Severus had informed him that Potter was not on good terms with Dumbledore or the rest of the Hogwarts staff. Building on that, he had devised a plan to get Potter out of Hogwarts.

Unfortunately, his incompetent Death Eaters were unable to capture the Tonks family or Sirius Black. As a last resort, he had sent a few Death Eaters after the Greengrass family, but those Death Eaters went missing. Either Damien Greengrass killed them off, or those idiots tried to run away from him. Either way, he knew he'd be punishing them both in due time. With no other option left, he had to resort to trickery using the Mind Arts. He disliked stooping to such cheap tricks to capture Potter, but he was surrounded by incompetent fools. Desperate times called for desperate measures.

Therefore, he sent visions of Andromeda Tonks and Sirius Black getting tortured in the Department of Mysteries, hoping to entice Potter to rush after his surrogate family like an unthinking Gryffindor.

His plan went smoothly. Potter took the bait and rushed into the Department of Mysteries. Unfortunately, his Death Eaters were proving to be idiots once again. Voldemort grimaced as he watched Bella put the boy through another dose of the Cruciatus curse, forcing him to temporarily withdraw from Potter's mind.+++++++++++++

"Take the orb, Potter. Or else my master will come here and torture you until your skin peels off." Bellatrix screeched.

"Fuck you." Potter spat.

Bellatrix let out a rageful screech and put under another dose of Cruciatus.

Voldemort abruptly stood up and walked out of his lair with long, purposeful strides. He could not have Potter turn into a blubbering mess by Bellatrix's hand. The Potter boy had to be killed by his hand. There could be no doubt left in everyone's mind about his power. Harry Potter had escaped his clutches far too many times, and he had to make sure people understood that their precious hero was slain by his own hand. No one else could be allowed to have the honour of slaying Harry Potter.

With this in mind, Voldemort apparated away from his hideout straight for the Ministry. The incompetence of the Ministry didn't disappoint him the least. The entire Ministry atrium was left vacant. It was as if the wizards fled, fearing the breakout of a plague inside the Ministry. But he knew why the entire Ministry was left wide open. All Ministry employees were enjoying a party thrown by Fudge, whose niece was getting married tomorrow.

'I suppose I could give Minister Fudge a nice wedding present for the family in Lord Voldemort's name tomorrow. The cold dead body of the boy-who-lived by the fountain should suffice.' he thought amusedly, gliding through the vacant halls passing by the Fountain of Magical Brethren.

He couldn't help but sneer at the stupid statue of lesser magical creatures standing as an equal to wizards.

'That'll be the first thing to go in my reign.' Voldemort promised to himself as he entered the lift.

"Department of Mysteries."

The lift started going down, and anticipation built up within him. He could feel that he was so close to victory over his greatest enemy. With the death of Potter, the hold of Prophecy over him would go. He was sure his deteriorating health was somehow linked to the Prophecy. There was no other explanation as he had tried to cleanse his body with the blood of a hundred pure souls. Not only did his weakness remain, but Voldemort felt like the counter ritual only increased the deterioration of his body.

The only answer he could see in the absence of any other explanation was it had something to do with the Prophecy. He cursed himself for being short-sighted last year. He had assumed Harry Potter's blood would increase his power, incorporating the Old Magic protections Lily Potter bestowed on her son into his new physical form. In his haste, he had forgotten to consider how the Prophecy would affect him.

'Immortality is a double-edged sword. It makes me blind to the subtle aspects of magic. It is the same mistake I made when I confronted the Potters.' Voldemort mused.

The lift came to a stop at the lowest level of the Ministry, and the grill slid to the side. He slowly stepped out of the lift and stared at the jewel-encrusted door of the Department of Mysteries.

'All those mistakes will be undone tonight. I, Lord Voldemort, will become invulnerable.' He thought, opening the jewel-encrusted door and leisurely strolling inside the Department of Mysteries.

Contrary to his expectations, Voldemort found the Hall of Prophecies to be empty sans the many prophecy orbs in the dozen or so shelves arranged inside the expansive hall. He could not help but glare at the hall, confused out of his mind. There was also a gnawing fear scratching at the base of his mind, but he found it easy to shove that feeling aside. He moved forward, looking around for his Death Eaters and Harry Potter, but try as he might, he could only see the innumerable orbs made of glass glowing eerily on the shelves. The rest of the hall was hidden away in a veil of darkness, which bothered Voldemort more than he let on. He felt as if his every move was being watched. But his blazing red eyes could not find anything in the darkness. He stopped walking once he reached the prophecy orb that had haunted his dreams for more than a decade. His eyes traced the distinct label beneath the orb, where he could see the undeniable proof of his destiny within his hand's reach.

S.P.T. to A.P.W.B.D.

Dark Lord & Harry Potter

Once again, Voldemort stared at the vacant hall for his Death Eaters and his nemesis, but there was no sign of them.

'Could they have left the hall while I was on my way to the Ministry?' he mused distractedly.

His eyes went back to staring at the glass orb, enticing him with the entire content of the prophecy. Voldemort could no longer suppress his curiosity, and for the life of him, he could not fathom why he didn't do this sooner. After all, why the heck should he be scared to stroll deep inside the bowless of the Ministry? He was Lord Voldemort, after all!

Reaching out with his pale white hand, Voldemort took the orb into the palm of his right hand. The glass orb remained impassive in his hand despite waiting for a while to see whether the orb showed any reaction. The orb started to let out a small light, garnering Voldemort's attention. Bringing the orb closer to his eye level, he saw there was some kind of smoke moving inside. The smoke suddenly developed a smiley face inside the orb, making Voldemort frown.

Little Tommy wanted a peek,

He was a loser nosy boy!

All he got was a smack on his cheek,

For he had no nose for a flick!

Little Tommy wanted a peek,

He was a loser nosy boy!

All he got was a glassy bowl,

For his troubles to be a sneak!

Little Tommy wanted a peek,

He was a loser nosy boy!

He forgot he was a baldie boy,

With a face even a mother would balk!

The loud, high-pitched, girly voice singing coming from the glass orb made his ears ring.

The rage and hatred Voldemort was feeling right now was unimaginable. He was right about to smash the orb when it shattered in his hand and turned into pink dust that quickly covered his entire body. He couched out the powder as he accidentally breathed some of the powder through his nose and mouth. With a flick of his wand, Voldemort tried to vanish the pink powder, but that created a massive explosion, and he was consumed by a raging fire.

"Aaaahhhhhhh!" Voldemort screamed as the magical fire burned through his skin and robes.

With a might bellow, he snuffed out the flames by absorbing them into his magical power by converting the fire into wisps of magical energy and pulling it away with the tip of his wand. However, Voldemort was allowed no respite as he was immediately assaulted by the need to scratch all over his body. While he struggled to get a grip on what was happening, the shelves carrying many other orbs in the Prophecy hall began to fall one after another. With one hand, Voldemort tried to scratch himself to death, while with his wand, he banished the orbs and shelves that came close to his body. His senses suddenly screamed danger, and he placed the strongest shield around him. Not a moment later, four pairs of bludgers violently smashed into his shield. But the iron balls found themselves grinding to a halt as his shield refused to grant them entry. Observing the bludgers more closely, Voldemort realised they were targeting his limbs, possibly to immobilise him.

'A trap of this depth on such short notice. How?' Voldemort mused as he destroyed the bludgers with a couple of blasting curses.

Voldemort was still feeling the urge to scratch all across his body, and he was suffering from pain because most of his body was burnt. He decided not to waste any more time in the hall and was

about to make a run for it when a figure emerged from the shadows. He only had time to widen his eyes as the shadowy figure acted before he could defend himself.

"Battio Inflammata."

Voldemort immediately regretted cancelling the shield around him as he was smashed through a line of shelves by a familiar fiery spell that singed his arms under its assault. The air was knocked out of his lungs as he was forced through a wall into another chamber. He let out a scream of pain and rage as he could feel intolerable pain flare up from his back. With some effort, Voldemort managed to climb to his feet, but he could hear several voices asking him to come to their side. His red eyes widened as his eyes fell on the Veil of Death pulsing with a silver sheen. The voices from the beyond became more pronounced, and for a moment, he could hear several voices of his victims from the Veil. He took several steps back in reflex as fear permeated every corner of his body and soul despite being assured of his immortality.

"Voldemort – the one who flees from death. I should've seen this coming, but I expected my enemy to have some standard regarding what he fears the most in the world. Instead, I find myself disappointed in you, Riddle."

Voldemort gritted his teeth as he slowly turned around to see his archnemesis step into the light from the shadows with his glowing green eyes wand in hand.

"You…!" Voldemort snarled, banishing a wooden table straight against the smug face of Harry Potter.

A fiery red shield materialised between them, burning away the table into fine dust and making Voldemort's eyes twitch.

"Me! Who else did you expect to see in this trap, Riddle? After all, you were the one who desperately wanted to see me and created an elaborate scheme to get me into the Department of Mysteries." Harry tilted his head to the side, giving the Dark Lord a chiding look.

"Well, it doesn't matter what means were used. I'm here now as you wanted. You can surrender to me now and apologise for all the cruel things you've done. I, being a gracious wizard, accept your unconditional surrender. Out of the goodness of my heart, I'm even willing to forgive you for killing my parents. If you give me an Unbreakable Vow to leave the British Isles and never step foot on these shores, I'll happily leave you alone and never knowingly disturb you in any way. What say you, Riddle?"

"You dare mock me, Potter? Lord Voldemort never surrenders, least of all, to a scrawny toddler like you." Voldemort snarled, his red eyes blazing with rage.

"Ah, yes. You have a habit of disintegrating into ashes before babies. How silly of me to forget that! I apologise if I have struck a nerve there, mate." Harry mocked.

"Avada Kedavra." Voldemort jabbed his wand with every fibre of his being oozing with hatred.

Harry shielded himself by placing a glass orb on the spell's way. The killing curse struck the glass, shattering it to dust, but the curse was successfully thwarted.

"For someone who fears death, you throw around the Killing Curse like cotton candy."

"I fear nothing." Voldemort snarled, transfiguring several broken wooden pieces into snakes.

"*$Bite him. Kill him.$*" Voldemort ordered in Parseltongue, causing the snakes to rush towards Harry with their fangs at the ready.

"Incendio." Harry waved his wand in a wide arc, burning away the snakes easily.

"If you fear nothing, why is your wand arm shaking?" Harry shot back while conjuring a metal spoke and banishing it towards Voldemort.

"Arrrrgggghhh!" Voldemort screamed in rage and launched a flurry of curses at Harry, who chose to deflect a few back while dodging the rest by moving around in the chamber.

"Where are my Death Eaters, Potter?" Voldemort asked angrily.

"Why ask me when you can sift through my memories, Riddle? After all, you are a master of the Mind Arts. Or are you?" Harry finished ominously.

Voldemort's eyes widened as his senses suddenly went chaotic. His magic was screaming at him to step away, and he realised with growing horror that he had somehow walked right next to the Veil of Death. With wide eyes, he looked towards Harry Potter, but a stab of fear took birth in his heart when he saw the image of Harry Potter slowly disappear. Instead, he found Harry Potter sitting on a table in a relaxed manner.

"You…! When did you get inside my head?" Voldemort asked fearfully, training his wand on his most hated nemesis.

"I see. Let me ask you then, Riddle. Why do you think I was never in your head from the beginning?" Harry asked with a raised eyebrow.

Voldemort let out a frustrated yell before immediately firing another Killing Curse, but it passed through harmlessly, and Harry flickered away as if it was a mirage.

"No! This is not possible! I'm Lord Voldemort."

The Dark Lord let out a terrifying roar, unleashing all his magic and rage. The thick magic unleashed was quickly turned into bright, hot flames of the Fiendfyre curse, which spread out into every corner of the chamber. Voldemort laughed like a maniac as he unleashed the flames of hell all around him. But he glared ominously at the Veil of Death that remained unharmed despite the bright flames of Fiendfyre curse trying its best to destroy the archway. After many attempts, Voldemort turned away from the archway and directed the flames at everything around him. He willed the flames to pour out of the Veil chamber and spread it into the Hall of Prophecies in search of his most hated enemy.

"Where are you, Potter? Come out and face me." Voldemort screamed as he unleashed more power into the Fiendfyre curse to burn everything faster as he sought out his enemy.

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"Well…there goes my plan to blast snake-face into the Veil of Death in flames." Harry muttered as he ran for his life as the Fiendfyre curse gobbled up everything in its path.

Harry cursed himself for not considering Voldemort using the Fiendfyre curse inside a tightly packed chamber. He had counted on the Dark Lord's self-preservation to keep the man from using a curse as

volatile as Fiendfyre in the bowels of the Ministry. He should have just stopped gloating around and blasted Voldemort into the Veil, even though there was a very low chance of that working. Voldemort was a gifted sensor. Harry was sure he was only able to trick Voldemort for so long because all the other steps in the plan worked flawlessly, and the Dark Lord was not in his best state of mind.

Harry knew he had wasted a great opportunity because of his hubris. And now, he was paying the price for his overconfidence by running for his life as a serpent made of hellish flames chased him through the many halls of the Ministry.

"Protego."

Harry put up a shield behind his back just as the flames tried to catch him. The shield spell kept the flames at bay while Harry quickly turned into his spirit form to escape faster from the hellish flames. Assuming his spirit form, Harry flew straight towards the doors of the Prophecy Hall, but the flames quickly converged on the door, cutting off his escape.

"Oh fuck!" Harry muttered as the flames converged together and formed into a giant serpent.

Harry turned in mid-air and went straight towards a wall at full speed. Along the way, he solidified his arm and aimed at the wall with his wand.

"Bombarda."

The spell blasted the wall open, allowing Harry to escape the Hall of Prophecies consumed by Fiendfyre. Unfortunately, the hellish fire followed him to the Time Chamber, where rows and rows of time turners could be seen neatly arranged on many shelves. With a roar, a serpent made of fire smashed through the hole Harry made in the wall and entered the Time Chamber inside the Department of Mysteries.

"Fuck me!" Harry muttered before running away as fast as his legs could carry.

The time turners began to fall one after the other as the raging fire inside the chamber. A few of those time turners bounced off of his head, making Harry flinch. The chances of getting caught up in a space-time continuum were high, with time turners raining down on top of him, but somehow, he managed to traverse through the length of the hall with a few scratches and a small bump on his head. It was by the skin of his teeth that Harry managed to escape the Time Chamber and exit the doors to the Department of Mysteries. He quickly found the lift and escaped to a higher level.

Harry found his friends patiently waiting by the fountain in the Ministry atrium, along with Sirius, Remus, Fleur and Nymphadora.

"Run!" Harry shouted as he ran towards them.

"Why? What's going…holy ghost of Merlin!" Sirius breathed out with wide eyes, seeing a giant serpent made of fire smash through the lift Harry ran out a moment ago.

They all ran as fast as they could put some distance, but Harry paused once he reached the Fountain of Magical Brethren. Turning swiftly on his heels, Harry used the spell he had created to subdue the Fiendfyre spell a few months back when he was preparing to finish off the Giants.

"Locus Sigillum."

Harry drew a small circle in an anti-clockwise direction with the tip of his wand in the immediate space before him. A black circular tear in space formed before him and collapsed in on itself right when the Fiendfyre spell barreled towards him in its snake form with its jaws wide to devour him. But the spell Harry used let out a powerful repelling force that smacked away the head of the fiery snake before dragging the flames into the tear formed in space. A violent vortex of wind formed around the tip of Harry's wand as it pulled the hellish fire into the eye of the storm. The sound of crackling flames was drowned out by the whooshing air as the hellish fore of the Fiendfyre curse was dragged away into the folds of space. Once the last ember of flame was sucked away, Harry cut off the spell forcing the space to seal itself shut, sealing away the raging fire of the dark spell in a pocket of space accessible only to Harry.

"You have been a permanent annoyance to me since you were born, Potter." Voldemort snarled, looking positively livid after seeing the Fiendfyre getting sealed away.

"I'll try my level best to keep up my performance for the foreseeable future until you die." Harry snarked.

"No. Not if you'll die here." Voldemort snarled, brandishing his wand and firing off a familiar green spell.

"Avada Kedavra."

Harry was ready to face that spell with something of his own.

"Fulmen Fulminata."

A bright blue arc of lightning arced out of the tip of Harry's wand, striking the killing curse in mid-air. The two spells clashed against each other before locking themselves in a battle of wands enforced by the brother wand effect. A golden energy dome suddenly formed around Harry and Voldemort, shielding them from everyone else in the atrium. Harry felt his feet leave the floor as phoenix song filled the air. The meeting point between the spells glowed with a bright golden colour, forcing him to avert his eyes.

He poured more power into the spell, and that was enough to push the meeting point towards Voldemort's Yew wand. Harry was fortunate because Voldemort was scared shitless by what was happening, and the Dark Lord was relatively weak. Therefore, he encountered little resistance until the meeting point between their spells finally touched the Yew Wand. A sharp trill emerged from the wand, and one by one, the souls of those who died at the hands of Voldemort emerged. To Harry's horror, so many children's souls emerged from Voldemort's wand.

"You can do it, big brother."

"Kill the monster."

"I'm scared."

"Help me. Mommy! Daddy!"

The desperate cries of children filled the Ministry atrium, spiking Harry's rage as he realised Voldemort had gone on a killing spree after getting resurrected.

"You bastard son of a whore!" Harry snarled.

With a sharp tug upward, Harry broke the connection, and before Voldemort could recover from the fear of seeing so many of his victims appear in their spirit form, Harry unleashed a curse that connected with full power.

"Defodio."

The gauging curse punched through Voldemort's shoulder, making the Dark Lord howl in pain.

"Sectumsempra."

The dark-cutting curse cleaved through Voldemort's left arm, cutting it off clean at his shoulder. The silence that followed was deafening as Voldemort stared numbly at his severed hand in disbelief. The silence was broken by one of the mute spectators of the whole battle.

"Good Merlin!"

Harry turned his eyes sharply to the sound and found that it belonged to none other than Minister Fudge.

"He's back! He's back!" Fudge kept on muttering, staring slack-jawed at Voldemort.

"You – you'll suffer for this, Potter. You'll know the true might of Lord Voldemort." Voldemort growled.

"Based on what I've seen so far, I believe I've nothing but disappointment to look forward to when you're involved, Riddle." Harry shot back before Voldemort let out a frustrated yell and apparated away.

"I believe you've had an eventful evening, Harry." said Dumbledore, looking rather tired and older than he ever looked as he slowly made his way towards the group.

"It'd seem so Headmaster Dumbledore." Harry said blandly but otherwise didn't deign the man with any response as he focused on the Daily Prophet reporters and Ministry officials. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a war to fight that you are too spineless to finish."

Harry turned his back on Dumbledore and walked towards the Ministry employees and Wizengamot members in the crowd. While his plan to kill Voldemort went up in smoke, his Plan B was still salvageable. It was time to spread his reach in the Ministry and form his own faction. Today would be the first step in a long series of moves that'd lead the way to the highest office of power in Wizarding Britain.