

WHO KILLED LORD VOLDEMORT?

A 10-Minute Play

by

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ACT I

SCENE I

(Neil, Ron, and Hermione are seated at a rectangular table. Ron and Hermione are seated next to each other on one side of the table, opposite Neil. Ron is sitting to Hermione's right. There is an empty chair to hermione's left meant for Harry, who is supposed to be meeting them there. He has yet to arrive. Ron has a butterbeer, Neil and Hermione are drinking tea.)

RON

Of course he's not here. Why would he show up on time? I'm sure he's got some celebrity appearance to make . . .

(Ron grabs his butterbeer and takes a swig, looks offstage.)

HERMIONE

Oh, please, Ron. Maybe . . . traffic's bad.

(Hermione glances around the pub, expectantly, as if Harry will come through the door any second.)

RON

Traffic? He's a wizard, Hermione. Tell me, do you ever have traffic problems, what with being a witch and all?

(Hermione rolls her eyes, ignoring Ron.)

NEIL

How is that?

RON

We were told you understood our . . . situation.

NEIL

Oh, I was. The whole witches and wizard thing took me a while to get used to; there are still some things I don't quite understand.

HERMIONE

Well, we can disappear and reappear at will.

RON

Hence, no traffic problems.

HERMIONE

We call it disapperating and apperating.

(Hermione sighs and look disapprovingly at Ron)

NEIL

Ah, yes. Sorry, I forgot. I was given a brief rundown of your abilities, but it's hard to keep them all straight. There are so many things you can do.

(pause. Ron and Hermione glance at each other)

You have to understand – I didn't know any of this until I was approached by Mr. Potter. Apparently, he's still got some clout with your . . . what's it called?

HERMIONE

The Ministry of Magic?

NEIL

Right, right. The Ministry of Magic . . . anyway, Harry put in a request for an author. I'm who they shook up.

RON

Yeah, about that; I was wondering – why you?

NEIL

Pardon? I'm not quite sure I–

RON

I mean you're supposed to be some great muggle author, right?

NEIL

Muggle?

HERMIONE

A non-magical person.

RON

Right, a non-magical person like yourself. How'd you get mixed up in all this?

NEIL

Well, I used to be a pretty *decent* “muggle” writer. My books sold well enough. Then . . . I don’t know, I . . .

(Neil shakes head, obviously embarrassed)

HERMIONE

Don’t let him fool you. His last novel was a best-seller . . . amongst muggles, anyway.

NEIL

Hasn’t been that way for a long time. It seems that I’ve come down with a bad case of writer’s block. But if we get all the facts straight on this story, then Harry’s bio could be a best-seller, too. That’s what I’m hoping for, anyway.

RON

But why a muggle? There are plenty of good wizard writers, right?

NEIL

I was wondering that myself. Certainly your kind has authors; witches and wizards read, don’t they?

HERMIONE

Yes, well . . . there are a lot of people who’ve called some of Harry’s stories into question; people who don’t think he could’ve done everything he says he did. Many wizarding authors are simply unwilling to tackle a story of that . . . magnitude. You’ll be reinterpreting a number of events that most wizards still consider *fact*. You’ll be . . . rewriting our history.

NEIL

Oh, right. I was warned – that people don’t think he killed Lord Vol–

RON

Don’t. Say. His name.

NEIL

What?

RON

“You Know Who,” “He Who Must Not Be Named” – don’t say it. Not out loud.

(pause.)

NEIL

Right. So . . . uh, you do think he's coming, then? You two are here to verify his story, but we can't have a story until he shows up. Without him, it'll be near impossible to write the last few chapters.

HERMIONE

Yes, he'll show. I haven't seen him in . . . (cough) I mean, *we* haven't seen him in years. I'm sure he'll be here. He'll want to see us, don't you think, Ron?

RON

He'll want to see us? Ha (Ron gives a short, barking laugh). Yeah, and I'm Dumbledore's wrinkly old—

HERMIONE

Ronald Bilius Weasley, how dare you—

RON

Ah, come on, Hermione. Dumbledore's been dead for — how long has it been — fifteen, sixteen years? The only person who'd even care anymore is—

HERMIONE

Harry!

(Hermione sees Harry come into the pub. Harry approaches the table, glances around the bar, and slumps down in the chair to Hermione's left. Harry smirks at Hermione.)

HARRY

Hermione, so good to see you. Sorry I haven't written in so long. I got your letters — I was busy. Touring with the Weird Sisters for a bit, then bunking with the Holyhead Harpies — I tell ya, an all-female quidditch team is a dangerous thing, on and off the pitch.
(Harry smirks and gives Neil a quick wink.)

HERMIONE

Oh, Harry. Bet you taught them a thing or two. You always looked so good in your Quidditch robes. Underneath your Quidditch robes.
(An awkward silence hangs over the table. Harry's smile falters. Ron looks away from the table and takes a deep swig of his butterbeer.)

HARRY

Uh, yeah. Thanks. So . . . anyway, you're the author, right?
(Harry indicates Neil. Hermione continues smiling brightly.)

NEIL

Yes, I–

HERMIONE

So you and Ginny are still on break then?

HARRY

Yes, Hermione. Ginny and I are still on a break.

*(Ron snorts disapprovingly and take another drink.
He doesn't look at Harry.)*

NEIL

Wait, what does that have to do with–

HARRY

Look, Ron, if you've got something to say, then just spit it out.

RON

Well, everybody knows why you broke up.

HARRY

Please, enlighten us. *(To Neil)* This'll be a kick.

NEIL

Okay, but I just have a couple questions, so–

RON

Laugh it up, Harry. Everything's funny when you're on wizard snuff, right?

HERMIONE

Ron!

RON

No, it's true, Hermione. Wizard snuff, Goblin Green, Gilly Weed, Floo Powder, Dragon's Breath, Smokus Pocus – Harry's on drugs. It's been in all the tabloids.

HERMIONE

Oh, Ron, don't be ridiculous.

RON

Oh yeah? Why do you think he could talk to snakes, huh? Why do you think he was always hearing voices in his head?

HARRY

Cause I'm a parseltongue, you ass. I can talk to snakes with magic.

RON

Your excuses won't work anymore, mate. I used to buy into your rubbish but I finally wised-up. And so did Ginny; that's why she left.

HARRY

I don't have to take this from you.

(Harry slumps farther down in his chair with his arms crossed, ignoring Ron. Ron shakes his head in disgust and takes another swig of butterbeer)

NEIL

Well then . . . I, uh . . . I certainly see that you're passionate, Harry. All the witness reports and newspaper articles haven't been wrong about that, eh? If you're ready, and if Ron and Hermione are ready, then we can get started. Let's see, I did have a couple questions about . . .

(Neil leans over the table, glancing at Ron and Hermione as he whispers . . .)

Lord Volde—

RON

What did I just say!?

NEIL

. . . “He Who Must Not Be Named.”

(Harry shifts uncomfortably in his chair at the mention of Lord Voldemort)

Look, I've gotta just say it. This is getting ridiculous.

HARRY

. . . Fire away.

NEIL

...Voldemort!

(Ron winces, then sips his butterbeer in disgust. Neil ignores him and continues)

Voldemort, Voldemort! *(pause)* Okay, now let's run through some of your encounters with “He Who Must Not Be Named”—

RON

That's better--

NEIL

--Also known as Voldemort – Lord Voldemort. Let’s talk about him and his minions, OK? I’m still a little confused as to how you beat him all those times, and since the papers have started to question the, uh . . . *validity* of your statements, it’s important that we flesh it all out in the bio. (*Neil starts sifting through his notes.*) Now, auror reports indicate that you fought Voldemort your first year at Hogwarts.

HARRY

Yeah, he was trying to steal a magic stone that would make him immortal.

RON

Well, it wasn’t really Him now, was it? You fought Professor Quirrel–

NEIL

Who’s Professor Quirrel?

HERMIONE

He was a teacher at Hogwarts – Defense Against the Dark Arts.

NEIL

Oh, yes. That’s right.

(*Neil begins scribbling furiously in his notes*)

HARRY

But he was possessed by Voldemort, Ron. Honestly, do you not remember this? Oh, yeah, that’s right, none of you were with me, and I had to fight him all by myself.

RON

You’re daft. He's not scary when he’s latched onto a bum like Professor Quirrel.

NEIL

Yes, about that. I’ve got it here in my notes that you defeated the Professor Quirrel-Voldemort hybrid by . . . ah, here it is – by *touching* his face. Am I reading that right? You just touched his face?

HARRY

Urm, yeah. I guess so.

NEIL

You touched his face, and then it melted? His face just melted clean off?

HARRY

Yeah, just like in “Raiders of the Lost Ark.”

RON

What?

HERMIONE

Oh, you wouldn't know – it's a muggle film. You know, moving pictures for non-magical people. Harry, you were very brave fighting Professor Quirrel like that – making him melt at your touch . . .

(Hermione blushes and reaches for her tea.)

NEIL

. . . And then your second year at Hogwarts, you stumbled upon the legendary Chamber of Secrets, and fought a giant, hypnotic snake-creature, correct?

HARRY

Yes, a basilisk.

NEIL

Also, it seems that you faced Voldemort a second time.

HARRY

His ghost.

NEIL

I'm sorry?

HARRY

His ghost or something – his memories. They came out of his diary and turned into a real person.

RON

Not very hard to beat someone's memories, though. I mean, I have memories of "He Who Must Not Be Named," too – want to know how I beat them? Easy, just think of something else. Woosh – no more memories.

HARRY

Are you drunk after only one butterbeer?

RON

I had one before you came. You'd know that if you had been here on time.

HARRY

What are you driving at?

NEIL

Gentlemen, really. This isn't neces-

RON

That you're a lazy git.

HARRY

This, coming from a grown man who can't find himself a job.

RON

I do so have a job.

HARRY

Yeah, so I've heard – working for your Dad in the Misuse of Muggle Artifacts Office, right? Way to go. I bet the interview was really hard.

NEIL

Alright, then. So . . . in your fourth year at Hogwarts, Lord Voldemort returned, right?

HARRY

Yeah, he used my blood to build himself a new body.

NEIL

You can do that? Wow. Okay, well, why your blood and not someone else's?

HARRY

Voldemort said if he used my blood, then he would finally be able to touch me.

NEIL

I'm sorry . . . is this another wizard thing I don't understand? Why would Voldemort want to touch you?

HARRY

I . . . I'm not sure.

NEIL

Did he touch you?

HARRY

. . . Yes.

(Neil begins scribbling furiously in his notebook.)

NEIL

I see. And, if it's not too difficult for you, can you tell me where he touched you?

RON

Yeah, mate – where'd he touch you? Did he wrap his hands around your magic wand?

HARRY

Very mature, Ron.

HERMIONE

Harry, don't listen to Ron. He's just jealous.

RON

Jeezus, Hermione! What, you want Harry that bad? You want to go and shack up with him? Just let him stick his wand up there and yell *impregnio* – that'll solve all your problems, yeah?

HARRY

This is ridiculous. I'm leaving.

NEIL

No, no, no, no. Wait. Wait for just another minute. I've only got one more question to ask, really.

HARRY

This is maddening. I can't believe I've got to sit here and listen to this–

NEIL

Listen, you need this deal. I know you do. All the papers say you're running low on funds. And if we make this book, if we make it *right*, then all your problems go away, right? All mine, too. Come on, one more question. We're almost done.

HARRY

... Fine.

NEIL

Good. Alright. So, reports indicate that nearly every time you've faced with danger, every time you're fighting for your life, you tend to favor the same two spells – *expelliarmus*, the disarming spell, and *stupefy*, which knocks out your opponent.

HARRY

Yeah. What about it?

NEIL

Well, how did *you* – a teenager at the time – beat the most powerful dark wizard in history with spells like that? You expect people to believe that you pointed your wand at Voldemort, yelled *expelliarmus* at the top of your lungs, and blew him halfway to kingdom come?

HARRY

Well, I–

NEIL

If I put that in the bio, people just won't believe it; it doesn't make any sense.

HARRY

Wait a minute, now. I–

NEIL

Expelliarmus doesn't even kill people; it's a disarming spell for crying out loud. In all your time at Hogwarts, you never learned a more potent spell than that? Come on, Harry. Who really killed Lord Voldemort. People want to know the truth.

HARRY

That's it. I'm done.

(Harry rises from his chair and leaves.)

HERMIONE

Harry? Wait. Harry, wait for me.

(Hermione grabs her things and exits after Harry.)

RON

You look like you could use a drink, eh? I know I could stand another.

NEIL

Yeah, sure.

(Ron reveals his wand and points it at the table.)

RON

Inebrio.

(Two cans of shitty beer appear on the table. Actor has cans hidden under robe)

NEIL

What's this? This isn't a butterbeer, it's a Coors Light. You couldn't have whipped up something better?

RON

Hey, this is harder than it looks. You think I can just wave my wand and make butterbeers appear from thin air? I'm not Harry Potter, you know.

(Ron dives into his beer. Neil shrugs and follows suit.)