

Luna Lovegood and the Doctor's Cult Luna

I boarded the Express in a state of anticipation. It was my sixth year, and life was definitely looking up.

Tom Riddle was gone, Harry having dealt with him in some dramatic fashion over the summer. At the time I was being held in a rather clichéd dungeon under Uncle Lucius's home, so I missed out on the details, but I'm sure that it was dangerous and quite exciting. Harry does that sort of thing all the time, so I think that everyone had just come to expect it.

The excitement of the summer, and my unfortunate incarceration, had spoiled the annual Snorkack hunt that my father and I usually participated in over each Aestival solstice. This was quite vexing, given that together Daddy and I had determined that this year's most likely hunting grounds for the Snorkack herds would be in Sweden somewhere in the 683 91 postal code, quite likely in a yellow split-level house with well-tended roses.

I was, of course, most annoyed by the knowledge that by the next year the entire convocation of Snorkacks would most certainly have moved on to new hunting grounds. Snorkacks are of course prodigious migrators who almost never leave a forwarding address... or inquire at the Post Office about their mail, but that is another story all together.

It was not until I had passed the third compartment that I had noticed something odd.

I should probably note here that I know there are entire groups of people who would find the idea that I found something to be odd to be somewhat hilarious. Indeed there are those who have suggested that I personally invented the concept of 'odd', and they have gone on to suggest that if I did not, then surely I should be held up as an example of oddness. Further, if Samuel Jacobs, a Muggleborn Ravenclaw two years behind me, is to be believed, my reputation has extended into the Muggle world. I do not recall inventing much of anything, so I believe that puts paid to the first theory, and I have personally witnessed many things far odder and me. Still...

Note to self: I must find one of these 'Dictionary' things and see if the photo they used is at least somewhat flattering.

The odd thing I noticed was a group of third year Hufflepuffs that were all drinking from metal cylinders while seeming to giggle uncontrollably. The metal cylinders were a sort of reddish brown, with a silver metallic sheen on what appeared to be the tops and tapered bottoms of the cylinders. I recognized one of the third years as being a Muggleborn witch, so I assumed that these were examples of a Muggle beverage, perhaps the cylinders were examples of those 'Can' things that Daddy often spoke of when he told of his travels amongst the Muggles.

Shaking my head at the antics of the third years, I once again began my trip through the cars of the express looking for my friends, my mind occupied with two things. First, was it possible that Harry would be open to a relationship with a certain young blonde girl, and second, did the Muggles have some kind of container called a 'cannot'?

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The first week of classes progressed as they were wont to do, and I still had not managed to find some time alone with my Harry.

'My Harry'. I liked the sound of that.

Anyway, Hermione and Ronald were, as usual, constantly at my Harry's side. This was extremely inconvenient for my plan to have my Harry seduce me, but they were his best friends after all, so I could hardly deny him their company.

They were not coming on the honeymoon, however. A girl had to put her foot down when it came to some things, and this was where I was drawing the line. My Harry would put up a fight, but would thank me later.

It had come to my attention that a certain percentage of the girls at Hogwarts were setting their sights on distracting my Harry away from me. Most of them had no chance. I had studied my Harry in great detail, and I knew that he would never have any interest in any of the flighty girls who were even now plotting to throw themselves at him, but there were a few who might actually be threats.

I had happened across Lavender Brown sitting with Parvati Patil and plotting against my happiness in the Great Hall one early morning. At first glance, Lavender did not really appear to be competition, in as much as she is by reputation one of the more flighty girls at the school, but she has the advantage of access, a trait shared by the other Gryffindors of Harry's year and below. Then you add in her physical presence. I looked down at my own figure. While not boyish by any extent of the imagination, I certainly did not share Lavender's hips and chest. Some boys like that sort of thing.

However, reflecting on the girls that my Harry had been interested in in the past, were Lavender's attributes really all that much of a concern? I mean if anything Cho and Ginny were even slimmer than I was. My musings were interrupted by a popping sound followed immediately by a hiss of released gas. Lavender had just opened one of those can things, though this one was white with writing of a reddish hue. She took a sip of her beverage and sighed.

"You should really try this Parvati, it's really good."

The other girl seemed unconvinced, "I don't know Lav, I've never been a fan of fizzy drinks, and I've been trying to lose that horrid two pounds I

put on over the summer."

"Oh, come on Parv, this is different, it really is," Lavender said pushing the can across the table to her friend and dorm-mate. "It's really good, and..." the tall blonde leaned across the table as if to confide some secret, "it's sugar free!"

"Really?" Parvati asked. "Well, I suppose I could try it once..." She opened the container and took a sip. As she did so, her eyes went wide, and her sip became a deeper draw on the contents. "This is... lovely!" she proclaimed before the conversation between the two Gryffindors descended into giggling.

'Fizzy drinks'? That was an odd name for a beverage, and it solidified my working theory that there was some sort of Muggle plot to infiltrate Magical society with their libations. In the last week, I had seen variations of the scene between Brown and Patil several times with one person convincing another to try the canned beverage, sometimes becoming quite insistent that the other try it. This needed further investigation. I knew then that there was a Quibbler article in my future.

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Two weeks into classes and I had yet to manage getting my Harry alone, and it was not through lack of trying on my part either. During the Wednesday evening study group, I thought that I had finally succeeded in convincing my Harry that we should find some time to talk. Unfortunately, that was when Susan Bones cast a charm that somehow 'accidentally' backfired and ripped open her blouse in front of the entire study group, demonstrating beyond any doubt that (1 she most specifically did NOT stuff her bra and (2 there was no bra to stuff.

The way my Harry's eyes bugged out dispelled my hope that he did not share in that common male mammary fantasy. Susan's tearful pleas that my Harry should be the one to escort her back to her common room because 'she could trust him' ruined my plans for the evening. My Harry offered me an apologetic smile and a small shrug when he escorted the buxom Hufflepuff from the room.

Frustrated beyond my understanding, I stomped my way from the study group to my dorm room, silently cursing all of the large breasted girls in the castle for their unfair advantage in attracting the attention of my Harry.

Upon arriving at my dorm, I flung myself onto my bed, intending to have a good cleansing cry, only to have my plans frustrated again, this time by the soft hoot of Stringer, our family owl. I swallowed my frustration and rose from my bed to stroke Stringer's feathers and to assure him that someday, if he worked hard at it, he would become a full time reporter for the Quibbler. Consoled by my predictions of his career prospects, Stringer extended his leg and allowed me to retrieve Daddy's letter.

My Dearest Luna

You have my sympathies Little Moon; I recall when your lovely mother took an interest in me and the contortions she had to go through before I realized that I was supposed to be pursuing her. Of course, it all turned out for the best, and I am sure your interest in young Mr. Potter will as well.

I need to thank you for the tip on the odd Muggle drinks that have apparently swept into popular use across Britain. Out among the common wizard and witch, the uses of these odd carbonated potions is even more wide spread than what you have described from your vantage point at Hogwarts. There have even been incidents of devotees of these beverages breaking into song and performing intricate group dance numbers through Diagon Alley and the streets of Hogsmeade.

It may be a while before my next letter as I am preparing to go 'under cover' to investigate these phenomena. Who knows how long this will take, but as you know, that is the burden of an investigative reporter.

As always my pretty Little Moon, keep your nose dry and your powder to the grindstone.

Dad.

I carefully folded Daddy's letter and put it away in my trunk with all the others he had sent me over my Hogwarts career. He had given me quite a lot to think about.

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On October 9th, I observed the oddest exchange I have ever seen in my life to that point. I was sitting in one of the numerous bay windows that are available on the 3rd floor of the castle. It was one of my quiet thinking places, where I had found over the years people tended to leave me alone.

In all honesty, I was trying to pinpoint precisely when so many of fellow female students had become boyfriend-stealing bitches, with each of them doing everything they could to come between my Harry and me. I was in the final planning stages of plotting their downfall via vicious Nargle attack when my Cousin Draco's voice reached me.

"Creevey!" Draco called, "over here."

Draco calling Colin Creevey? Or just plain being civil to *any* Muggleborn? How very odd. Were those rumors about Colin's sexuality true? Moreover, if so, did that mean that Draco... Oh, Uncle Lucius would not be pleased.

"What do you need Malfoy?" Colin answered.

"I wanted to get some more of that Muggle Potion you had." Draco said. Was that pleading I heard in his voice?

"I suppose that's doable," Colin replied. "Of course, it won't be cheap."

"You want money now? But you just gave me all those other doses."

"Ah," Colin laughed. "The first few tastes are free... If you want any more, well, I've got expenses, you know?"

I stayed in the shadows just listening and watching. I could tell from Cousin Draco's body language that he was furious. His words confirmed this. "When my father hears..."

"Oh yes Malfoy," Colin laughed again. "Run to your daddy and tell him how much you want the Muggle soda, and how I'm being so mean to you by charging for what you want. I think I'd love to hear that conversation."

"Fine!" Draco all but screamed. "How much?"

"I was thinking it would be very fair if I were to charge you, oh say... two galleons per six pack."

"Six doses for two Galleons?" Draco asked incredulously.

Colin lost his smile. "You know Malfoy, you're right. Two Galleons for a six-pack just isn't fair. We had best make it three galleons per six-pack. That sounds fair to me."

"What?" an obviously distressed Draco asked.

"Maybe you'll think about all the times you called me and my brother Mudbloods every time you make a purchase from me Malfoy," Colin laughed. "I happen to have a six pack with me... do you have my money?"

I watched as my cousin's arrogance completely collapsed and he dug into his pockets for the three golden coins. Colin exchanged six of the metal cylinders connected via some sort of plastic mesh for Draco's money, and walked away laughing. There was the now all too common pop and hiss and I watched Draco slide down the wall into a sitting position nursing at the reddish brown can as if it were life giving.

This exchange gave me much to think about.

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A week later the first of the grand musical numbers seemingly spontaneously erupted in the Great Hall. As soon as the music started issuing from no apparent source, I looked to the staff table to see how they would be reacting to the latest bit of oddness to infect the school.

I was only moderately surprised to find that Professors Sprout and Flitwick had joined in with the dancing. There were two or three of the reddish brown cylinders before each place setting at the staff table, excepting for Hagrid's place where a pair of hug metallic barrels sat, plus another ripped open and cradled in the hands of the half giant as he nursed from the liquid it contained.

I watched as first, Dean Thomas of Gryffindor began singing an oddly catchy song as he danced, then he was joined by more and more of the assembled staff and students. I was among the very few who did not join in, not because I didn't enjoy dancing and singing, but because I didn't know the steps and quite frankly, I wasn't sure I understood what the meaning of the song lyrics might be, as catchy as they were.

"Oi! Lovegood!" A panting Hannah Abbott said as she slid into the seat across from me at the Ravenclaw table. "That was fun!" She slid one of the cans in front of me. "Here, you look like you could use this."

Before I could think of a response, her friend Susan Bones took Hannah's hand, and she was pulled from the table toward a huge punch bowl on the Slytherin table that was filled with the Muggle potion and slices of oranges. A crowd of laughing witches and wizards crowded around drinking from the bowl sharing cups of the steaming liquid.

I lifted the can Hannah had given me, and began to examine it closely. None of this made the slightest sense. I had to find the underlying cause of this mystery.

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I stepped back from the slowly simmering caldron, trying not to cry in frustration.

So I cursed instead.

The mystery had deepened. Three times, twice with the reddish brown cans and once with the white can, I had attempted to deconstruct the Muggle potion, and three times the results were exactly the same. The potion contained no magical ingredients, and had no magical properties. How was it doing what it was doing to the population of Hogwarts?

I returned to my notes and confirmed, yet again, that I had found nothing. Out of desperation, I tried reading the writing on the outside of the white can.

Ignoring the reference to a Muggle healer, I found a section labeled 'Nutritional Facts' and discovered that the can claimed to have no fat, which struck me as a very odd claim for a metal cylinder to make. Further, it had no protein, and 35mg of sodium.

I knew that Sodium could be quite dangerous under certain conditions, but was 35 mgs a dangerous amount? What was an 'mg' anyway?

Then I found the section labeled 'ingredients'. Carbonated water? What was that? Water with carbon in it? Caramel colour? Phosphoric Acid? That sounded dangerous. Potassium Benzoate? Caffeine? Was that not in tea? Was this potion some sort of Muggle modified tea? Why would they do that? Moreover, what the hell was Phenylalanine?

I sighed in frustration. This did not bode well for my investigation.

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As the month of October ground on, life in Hogwarts castle continued to be just a bit odder every day. The spontaneous singing and dancing

sessions started happening more and more often, and each time there were fewer not participating. I know that I for one was sorely tempted, but it was the not understanding what the potion was doing to my fellow students that kept me from joining in.

I continued with my observations and kept copious notes on what I was seeing. I still had not heard back from Daddy, but that was not unusual when he was undercover on a story. I hoped that my notes would be useful to his final story.

Unfortunately, I had not had any luck finding time with my Harry. Every time I tried to get him alone, he was surrounded by other girls, who all seemed to be shamelessly throwing themselves at him, or in the middle of one of the musical numbers.

I was saddened by the thought that my Harry might have been ensnared by the Muggle Healer's cult, but I promised myself that I would free him through my love and devotion.

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Of course as you all know from Daddy's award winning article, the entire incident came to a head on Halloween.

That particular day opened when, on my way to breakfast, my cousin Draco met me at the entrance to the Great Hall.

"Cousin!" he exclaimed as he wrapped me into a hug. "It is so good to see you."

"And you Draco," I replied patting him on the back. I recall wondering what was going on, and what had been done to my cousin.

"Isn't it a lovely day?" Draco asked, smiling widely. It was then I realized that I had never seen Draco smile before. He had smirked, of course, and even grinned once or twice in a manner that I perceived as 'evil', but never just smiled. "Just a lovely day. Here" he said, pressing one of the reddish brown cans into my hands. "I want you to have this. I love you Luna. Oh, there's Hermione, I must say good morning, toodles!"

I stood in shock, staring open-mouthed as Draco approached Hermione Granger with a squeal and a hug, a hug that the Muggleborn witch enthusiastically returned.

I just had to ask myself, what the hell was going on?

I slowly made my way to my normal spot at the Ravenclaw table, noticing all the odd relationships that were forming throughout the Great Hall. People that prior to this year had hated one another for whatever reason were suddenly the best of friends.

Quite odd. Not necessarily bad, but quite odd.

Padma Patil slid into the seat across from me. "Good morning Luna, isn't this just a wonderful day?"

"So I've been told," I answered.

"Oh, I see you have a can," Padma said in a dreamy fashion... pretty much the way people claim I speak. No wonder so many people reacted badly to it, I found the effect to be bloody annoying. "I was going to offer you one. Don't you just love it?"

"Well," I replied, "I have never actually tried it."

The Great Hall went utterly silent. My words 'I have never actually tried it' hung in the air as if painted there in large threatening letters.

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"Never tried it?" A shocked voice asked.

"She said she's never tried it!" another exclaimed.

"Here Luna," Justin Finch-Fletchley said, "Take mine. You need this." He slid yet another of the cans in front of me. Dozens of others followed Justin's gesture, until I was almost hidden behind a wall of the reddish brown cans.

"Drink it Luna."

"She's not drinking," a voice complained. "Why isn't she drinking?"

I abandoned my breakfast and my book bag and ran from the Great Hall. There was no doubt in my mind that I needed to get away, that if I valued my mind and personality, I needed to stay as far away from the mind controlled victims as I could.

It took only a few seconds, but I could hear them starting to follow me, calling for me to stop, and offering me one of those damnable cans. The Entry Hall was blocked off, I tried exit after exit only to find each were denied me. Out of desperation, I made my way into the dungeons, hoping to find one of the legendary secret exits.

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Of course, my Harry was the one to finally corner me. However, by then, he was not really my Harry was he? No, he belonged to the Muggle healer's cult of cans now.

"Why did you run Luna?" He asked as he approached me, bracketed on each side as usual by Ronald and Hermione.

"I don't want that," I said, pointing at the can in his hand.

"Oh, Luna," my Harry said as he got even closer, his vibrant green eyes sparkling in the flickering dungeon light. "You only think you don't want it. You do, you will. Just try it."

My Harry was so close now, I held up my hands to keep him away, and I gasped as my fingertips touched his chest. My legs felt weak, and I could no longer speak.

"Luna," my Harry said, now standing so close I could smell his clean scent, "we all want to share this with you. Luna, I'm a Pepper, Ron's a Pepper, Hermione's a Pepper... We're all Peppers."

He was even closer then, his lips next to my right ear, and my Harry whispered, "wouldn't you like to be a Pepper too?"

Almost against my will, I nodded. My Harry placed an ice-cold can into my hands, before turning me so that he could hug me from behind, while nuzzling my neck. It was everything I had ever dreamed of, and if the price of it continuing was to surrender my mind to the group, so be it.

With trembling hands, I raised the can to my lips while Ronald and Hermione looked on approvingly. I took a sip.

Yuck! That was horrible. What was wrong with these people?

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AN: Why yes, I will go quite a ways for a joke...