

Luna Lovegood

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Luna Lovegood and the Chamber of Secrets - Part 1

Luna Lovegood walked through the barrier between Platforms Nine and Ten to Platform Nine and Three-Quarters. Luna wondered what happened to Platform Nine and One-Half. Numbers like "three quarters" only appear when you divide an integer in half twice in a row.

Luna looked around for someone who might know the answer and spied a unicorn. She wore clothes, walked on two feet and had curly brown hair. None of that fooled Luna. The unicorn radiated peace and her fingernails were made out of alicorn.

"What happened to Platform Nine and One-Half?" Luna asked the unicorn.

"There is no Platform Nine and One-Half," the unicorn replied.

"How do you know?" Luna asked.

"It would have been in *Hogwarts: A History*," the unicorn replied, "nor is there mention of a Platform Nine and One-Half in *Modern Magical History*, *Important Modern Magical Discoveries*, or any other book in the Hogwarts library. There is only a Platform Nine and Three Quarters."

"What about Platform Nine and Seven Eighths?" Luna asked.

"There is no Platform Nine and Seven Eighths either." The unicorn turned around and walked away before Luna could ask "How do you know?"

If Platform Nine and Three Quarters does not appear in Muggle libraries then Platform Nine and One-Half is unlikely to appear in wizard libraries, except for double-witches' libraries. The Hogwarts library is not a double-witch library.

"How are you?" a Weasley-headed first-year girl asked Luna.

"I'm trying to find Platform Nine and One-Half. The unicorn told me it doesn't exist. If it does exist then it must be hidden by powerful magics. How are you?" said Luna.

"What unicorn?" the first-year girl asked.

"That one, right there," Luna said, pointing.

The girl invented an excuse to end the conversation.

Luna didn't know how to make friends. She had a vague idea that as a first-year, the Hogwarts Express was a one-time opportunity to do so. She wore a necklace she had painted herself which nobody else seemed to notice. She had brought kettle of home-brewed Comed-Tea, but it had got her jeered out of a compartment.

Nobody was interested in the troll she had smelled at Platform Nine and Three Quarters or her discovery of a lich in the second year or that the Chamber of Secrets

had been opened or any of Dark Lord Harry Potter's various plots. The other first-years seemed unfocused and confused.

Confused....

Wrackspurts are invisible creatures that float into your ears and make your brain go fuzzy. The train could be full of them. They could be floating into her ears right now. Luna stuck her index fingers in her ears to block the possible Wrackspurts. The first-years in the nearby compartment looked at Luna as if she were already unpopular.

Wrackspurts are cognitohazardous which means they mess with your thoughts. Luna learned all about Wrackspurts and other cognitohazards in her work on *The Quibbler*. The most important thing about cognitohazards is to check yourself regularly and figure out if you've already been affected by one.

Luna observed her own mind. Fuzzy? No. Unfocused? No. Confused? No. Wrackspurts had not yet entered her brain. (Unless it already had and was inhibiting her meta-cognition—but she didn't *think* that was happening.) Luna observed the other students. Maybe they were infected by Wrackspurts or maybe they were behaving normally. It was hard to tell without a Wrackspurt-free baseline to compare them to.

Before she could unplug her ears, Luna had to figure out if there were Wrackspurts roaming the train. But Wrackspurts are invisible. How can she test whether such a thing exists?

Wrackspurts are attracted to people so the safest place to go would be an empty compartment. Smaller would be better since that would decrease the likelihood of a Wrackspurt having drifted in randomly. Luna walked past cabin after cabin with her fingers in her ears. Eventually she found a suitable compartment, boring and cramped. She shut the door with her knee and then unplugged her ears. She counted to eighty-nine and then observed her mind again. Still no Wrackspurt symptoms.

She had hoped Hogwarts would be an opportunity to make friends. But the other girls and boys her age all seemed wrapped up in amassing power by forming alliances. Even the Muggle-borns were more interested in visible charms like chocolate frogs than invisible creatures like Wrackspurts.

Luna wondered if she was the most invisible first-year in the school. No other compartments had fewer than three students. Presumably, everyone else in first-year was making friends or already had some.

It could be worse. Luna could have a curse that made her unpopular or made people forget who she was. Muggles had a hard time seeing witches and wizards. If double-witches were real then it would be hard for witches to see them just like it's hard for Muggles to see witches. Luna's eyes would drift from one side of the double-witch to the other without noticing the witch in front of her.

Luna looked around her cramped compartment. To her left, in the opposite cabin, four girls were pointing at her and laughing again. Out the window, to her right, the countryside drifted by. Luna was getting distracted.

Luna stuffed her fingers back into her ears. The left index finger went right in. The right index finger didn't.

Luna covered her right ear and then gently squeezed the Wrackspurt into her right hand. From there, she guided the Wrackspurt into an empty Comed-Tea can and wrapped her scarf over the opening.

Luna wondered where the Wrackspurt could have come from. It had to have been there before she shut the door. But the Wrackspurt had not immediately entered Luna's ears when she had first entered the compartment. There may not have been any free Wrackspurts in the compartment when Luna had entered it. Luna's trapped Wrackspurt must have been in someone else's ear.

But who? Luna's eyes slid from one end of her compartment to the other, as if nothing important existed in-between.

Luna Lovegood and the Chamber of Secrets - Part 2

"I wonder what pulls the boats," Luna said.

"Whatever pulls the horseless carriages must also pull the boats," a first year said.

"But...but.... You can SEE horses pulling the carriages and you CAN'T SEE anything pulling the boats." Luna said.

Luna's Failed Friendships Counter ticked up to four.

"They're called thestrals," said a gentle voice behind her, "Why don' yeh sit with me. I'm Keeper of Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts. I take care of the magical creatures in the Forbidden Forest."

Luna sat in a boat with the gameskeeper.

"You must know all about invisible creatures, Mister," Luna said.

"Call me Hagrid," Hagrid said, "I knew a few. There's thestrals, obviously. Imps can't be seen or heard or remembered. But there's lots of spells that'll move the imps about so you can cage 'em up."

"It sounds like there's no creature in the world you're scared of," Luna said.

"What? I'm just as scared of dangerous creatures as the next fella," Hagrid said.

"Like dragons?" Luna said.

"Dragons aren't dangerous!" said Hagrid.

"Trolls?" Luna said.

"They might pull your arms off but it's nothing personal," Hagrid said.

"Dementors?" Luna said.

"You don' geddit. Dementors aren't dangerous the way a nargle is dangerous," Hagrid said.

"What's a nargle?" Luna asked.

"I shouldn't have said that," Hagrid muttered, "I should NOT have said that."

Headmistress McGonagall gave her first opening speech.

"...I am also proud to announce to you that the Chamber of Secrets has been opened. Archaeologists have swept it for traps and curses. Guided tours have been added to your History of Magic curriculums this year..."

Luna tuned out the Ministry propaganda. There were new teachers. Lady Yue would be teaching Potions, Professor Susan Lapsusa would be teaching Transfiguration and—*oh my god—*

Gilderoy Lockhart would be teaching Battle Magic.

Gilderoy Lockhart was renowned as the greatest combat wizard of the era—a modern-day David Monroe. Every week the Daily Prophet printed a story where he described an encounter with ghouls, hags, trolls, vampires and werewolves. Rumor was this week he would tell about his encounter with a yeti in Antarctica. He had more confirmed kills of dark wizards than the best Ministry Auror. He had won Witch Weekly's Most Charming Smile Award five times.

Gilderoy's golden hair flowed with painstakingly-crafted effortlessness. He thrust his shoulders back as if he had just saved the world. And that nose—

"Lovegood!", Prof. Lapsusa shouted.

Luna skipped to the front of the Great Hall. Students sniggered. *This is the price you pay for being the daughter of someone who speaks truth to power* Luna thought.

The sorting hat covered Luna's head all the way down to her shoulders. It was cozily quiet inside.

Hmm, said a small voice in her ear. Difficult. Very difficult. Plenty of courage, I see. Not a bad mind, either. There's talent, oh my goodness, yes – and a nice thirst to prove yourself, now that's interesting ... So where shall I put you?

Do you say that to every girl? Luna thought, *Do you call all of us complicated and courageous and talented and—*

"RAVENCLAW!" shouted that hat.

Food appeared on the golden plates. Luna wondered where it came from.

"Where does this food come from?" she asked a mousy-haired boy next to her.

"It's created from nothing," he said.

"That's magically impossible," Luna said, "Food is one of the five Principal Exceptions to Gamp's Law of Elemental Transfiguration."

"Then where do you think it comes from?" he said testily.

Luna's Failed Friendships Counter ticked up to five.

"First-years follow me," the Ravenclaw prefect said.

The logical place for the kitchens is under the Great Hall. Luna waited to see what general direction the prefects went and then stalked her way to a place under the Great Hall called the "Kitchen corridor". The Hufflepuff prefect tapped a barrel in the rhythm of "Helga Hufflepuff". The lid slid open and students crawled into the common room. Luna circumnavigated the area under the Great Hall until the Hufflepuffs retired.

The "Kitchen corridor" was brightly lit with torches. Barrels were stacked in a nook to camouflage the Hufflepuff common room entrance. There was a suit of armor and several paintings, mostly depicting food. This, plus the absence of visible horizontal doors elsewhere adjacent to the area under the Great Hall, suggested the kitchen entrance would be in the kitchen corridor.

But how to enter? There were no obvious doors. Luna tapped the paintings with her wand. Luna tapped the Hufflepuff Common room entrance to the tune of "fish and chips" and it dosed her in vinegar. She talked to the fruit. She peeked inside the suit of armor. As she was chanting a long stream of gibberish to a giant painting of a big bowl of fruit the painting burst open straight into her nose throwing Luna across the broad hallway into the suit of armor which crashed down on her.

Two identical Weasleys stumbled out under armfuls of cakes, cookies and muffins.

"*Episky*," cast a Weasley while balancing the tower of food on his left arm, left elbow, left shoulder and left side of his head. Luna's nose stopped bleeding.

"Are you a first-year?" said a second Weasley.

"Yes. I'm looking for the kitchens," Luna said.

"What have you tried so far?" said the first Weasley.

"I tapped everything with my wand while muttering long strings of gibberish."

"Did any of it work?" the second Weasley asked.

"Tap that barrel to the tune of 'fish and chips'." Luna said.

"It appears we have a student who, on her first day of school, snuck away from the Ravensclaws to steal food from the kitchens," said the first Weasley.

"She discovered the entrance to the kitchen which is off-limits to students and the Hufflepuff common room which is off-limits to Ravensclaws," said the second Weasley.

"Then she soaked two older students in vinegar."

"We could report her to the proper authorities."

"Or we could take advantage of this opportunity."

"Really? What naughty things could we possibly do with this transgressive little girl?"

Luna Lovegood and the Chamber of Secrets - Part 3

"I solemnly swear that I am up to no good."

Fred and George had carried concealed broomsticks at all times since the previous year's troll attack. When they heard Harry Potter's prophecy at the Quidditch final they flew just over the castle walls and then Apparated to the graveyard where they salvaged their map along with several rings, amulets and strange devices.

"Have you visited every room on this map?" Luna asked.

"Excuse me?" George said.

"What part of the school have you never visited?" Luna enunciated each word.

"Did she just insult us?" Fred said.

"Perhaps our reputation is in disrepair," George said.

"What makes you think there exists a single room in the school we hadn't explored by the end of our first year?" Fred said.

"Are you telling me you visited every room in Hogwarts in your first year?" Luna said.

"We make no such claim," George said, "For if were we to make such a claim then we would include not just mere rooms but also secret passages, pocket dimensions, secret dimensions, pocket passages, and docket sassagees."

"Surely someone of your reputation must have visited every room, passage, dimension, sassage and chamber by the end of your first year," Luna said.

"Surely," Fred said.

"Had you visited the Chamber of Secrets before Headmistress McGonagall announced its existence today?" Luna said.

Someone said a rude word.

"Where is the Chamber of Secrets?" Luna asked.

"It's this complex of tunnels," George said, "It connects to this painting of Salazar Slytherin to this girls' bathroom and these places over here. This path goes to the Hogsmeade graveyard."

"Has the Chamber of Secrets always been on this map?" Luna asked.

"Yes," Fred said.

"How do you know?" Luna asked.

"I remember it," Fred said, "I just never really noticed it before McGonagall's announcement."

"Are there any other rooms on this map you haven't noticed?" Luna asked.

The students failed to find anything they hadn't found before.

"I have an idea," Luna said, "First we are going to look at this map normally. We are going to list every room and secret passage we know of, including the Chamber of Secrets. We are going to count them. Then you are going to conjure a grid over this map. We are going to count every single room without identifying them. Then we will compare the two numbers."

The two numbers came up exactly the same.

"Wait a minute. I have another idea. Give me that list. Is there any room in this castle you haven't been to?" Luna said.

"No," George said, "We've been everywhere important except the Chamber of Secrets."

"Let's go over the map again," Luna said, "List each room you've been inside."

"...and that's the broom closet we trapped Percy in along with his girlfriend, his ex-girlfriend, his ex-ex-girlfriend and Peeves," Fred finished.

Luna tore up little bits of parchment and covered up each room Fred and George had visited. She had covered nearly all of the Marauder's Map. There were just a few unimportant rooms that didn't really count. Then Luna caught herself. This must be what a Muggle-Repelling Charm felt like.

Luna deliberately read off the unimportant rooms she had just nearly written off.

- The Stone Citadel (under construction)
- The Chamber of Secrets
- The Forgotten Library

Luna Lovegood and the Chamber of Secrets - Part 4

Luna located the Ravenclaw Common Room on the map. She climbed up to Ravenclaw Tower, then climbed up Ravenclaw Tower. All that separated Luna from making day-one friends was a door with a bronze knocker in the shape of an eagle which spoke riddles appropriate for first-years. She could almost hear muffled sounds of the other children partying. Luna knocked once. The eagle spoke with Rowena Ravenclaw's voice.

"Where is my diadem?"

Luna lacked sufficient hours-until-breakfast to find the Lost Diadem of Ravenclaw. Luna curled up in an alcove close to where heat leaked out of the Common Room. She wrote a thank you note to the house-elves for keeping the floor clean.

"I'm going to call you Wanda," Luna said to her Wrackspurt.

Wanda appeared on the Marauder's Map. Luna clicked her tongue and then spellotaped the Comed-Tea can to her ear so Wanda could feed. Luna's brain went fuzzy. Then she was asleep.

Luna woke to the sound of Ravenclaw going down to breakfast. Luna removed Wanda from her ear. Someone had placed a blanket over Luna while she slept. Luna threw the blanket off before anyone else spotted her and realized she hadn't solved the riddle. She knocked once on the eagle. The riddle hadn't changed.

On her way to breakfast, Luna passed the Forgotten Library at the base of Ravenclaw Tower. She had to eat food because she was a human being. Or she could explore a room that had stood for a thousand years and would probably still be there tomorrow. The entrance to the Forgotten library was a grey heptagon embedded in the wall. Its interior emitted monochromatic grey light. Luna stepped into the Forgotten Library.

Luna stepped out of the Forgotten library. She checked her satchel for quill, parchment and inkwell. Luna wrote "Exploration Journal" at the top of the parchment. Luna stepped into the Forgotten Library.

Luna stepped out of the Forgotten Library. She held a sheet of parchment with "Exploration Journal" at the top. Luna stepped into the Forgotten Library.

Luna stepped out of the Forgotten Library. She had left her exploration journal inside. Luna stepped into the Forgotten Library.

Luna stepped out of the Forgotten Library. She held a blank sheet of parchment. She had missed her first Charms class. If she hurried she could still reach Battle Magic on time. The Marauder's Map showed a shortcut leading from a door disguised as a

window to a window disguised as a door. Luna repositioned herself onto the top floor of prosaic geometric space just outside the Battle Magic classroom.

Professor Lockhart had preserved Former Professor Quirrel's tradition of combining all four Houses into a single class. He had also combined all seven years into a single class. Professors Burbage, Lapsus, Sinistra, Trelawney, Vector and Yue were there too, plus Headmistress McGonagall, Miss Pince and Madam Pomfrey. Hogwarts had grown an auditorium that rotated with the Sun under a geodesic dome to ensure Gilderoy Lockhart could always be seen in the best possible light. Gilderoy Lockhart's smile shouted *I love you* to you, personally.

"Before we begin I have a demonstration. *Protego*," Lockhart said, "On the count of three I want someone to hex me. One..."

Gilderoy Lockhart had given this demonstration dozens of times to witches and wizards around the world. Most were not duelists. Those who were tended to be too surprised to cast anything.

This was Gilderoy Lockhart's first interaction with the survivors of Former Professor Quirrel's armies.

A hundred hexes hit Gilderoy Lockhart before he could say "two". The Defense Professor's podium was molten slag. His body resembled a Blast-Ended Skrewt. Purple smoke billowed up from the shattered dome. The professors rushed to his aid. Headmistress McGonagall evacuated the students.

Luna went to lunch in the Great Hall.

"There's Loony Lovegood," someone said.

"She can't afford an owl so she pretends she has an invisible pet."

"Writes notes to House-elves because she doesn't have any friends."

"She thinks she knows everything but she can't even solve her bronze eagle riddle."

"Should have been sorted into Gryffindor."

Luna clicked her tongue and let Wanda feed on her thoughts. She stole lunch from the kitchens to eat in the Forgotten Library.

Lady Yue had replaced the dungeon torches with candles. She wore the robe of a future historical reenactor confident in her knowledge of what a modern witch's clothes were supposed to look like. The Gryffindors' and Ravenclaws' chatter dampened to silence before their mistress.

Lady Yue stood behind a table with two steaming cauldrons on it.

"What is real?" she asked the class, "Lovegood."

"Reality is what you can observe," Luna said.

"Five points to Ravenclaw," Lady Yue sighed. She gazed upward toward exactly where the moon could have been seen if they weren't all in a dungeon. You could tell, merely by looking at her, that it was raining outside.

Luna wanted to justify her answer. But Lady Yue had rewarded Luna for being wrong—even though Luna was right. Lady Yue had out-manuevered Luna by supporting her. Luna couldn't be angry. Nor could she be satisfied.

Lady Yue cast a disillusionment charm on the first cauldron. The steam appeared to intrude from a rip in space.

"What is real?" Lady Yue repeated.

Several students once again raised their hands. Lady Yue pointed to Ginny Weasley.

"Reality is everything with a physical or magical manifestation."

"Five points to Gryffindor," Ginny Weasley looked at her shoes. Lady Yue tapped the visible cauldron. It ceased existing.

"I have just demonstrated two ways of unmaking a form. The disillusionment charm conceals its image. Vanishment banishes its substance into nonexistence," Lady Yue said.

Luna began to raise her hand to ask what happened to the third cauldron. Lady Yue silenced her with a saccade. The tendrils of Lady Yue's reverse legilimency said *see me after class*.

The two witches waited for everyone else to leave. In the quiet, Luna noticed that Lady Yue moved soundlessly. She took that much care in every detail of her movement.

Lady Yue waited for Luna to make the first move. Luna played the game. The candles burned out. It became pitch black.

"Are you a Dark Lord?" Luna asked.

"Saving and/or destroying the world is a boy's game," Lady Yue said.

The Earth and Moon orbited their center of mass.

"Hard magic has form," Lady Yue said, "It can be controlled. Soft magic is empty; it is without form. Soft magic is suppressed by every organization from the Department of International Magical Cooperation to Lord Voldemort's little club."

"Are you telling me You-Know-Who didn't practice the Dark Arts?" Luna said.

"Five points from Ravenclaw," said Lady Yue, "In the First Wizarding War, your mother contributed to the development of a secret weapon intended to neutralize Lord Voldemort."

"Do you know where I can find the Lost Diadem of Ravenclaw?" Luna blurted out, "Can you tell me what a nargle is? What happened to Platform Nine and One-Half?"

The rain became a thunderstorm.

"This is your mother's astrolabe. She left it in my possession before she died. It is time it was returned to you."

Luna Lovegood and the Chamber of Secrets - Part 5

"What do you mean 'bureaucratically impossible'?" said Harry James Potter-Evans-Verres.

"It just is," said Mad-Eye Moody.

"Nothing 'just is'," Harry said, "Everything happens for a material reason. What *precisely* is preventing you from acquiring the permits?"

"I suspect an unfriendly nation-state is employing bureaucramancy against us," Moody said.

"Bureaucramancy," Harry said dryly.

Didn't the Ministry of Magic understand how important this was? No, because Harry had declared the existence of the Sorcerer's Stone to be top secret.

"Can't we just build it without the permits?" Harry said.

"I hope you're not insinuating that a trusted Auror like myself might allow expediency to outweigh accountability," Moody said.

"As if you cared about accountability when you assassinated the Dark Lord of Berzerkistan," said Harry.

"I can neither confirm nor deny whether I have ever set foot in Berzerkistan," Moody said, "But if I had, I can assure you that I would not have broken a single British law within its sovereign borders."

"What is the worst thing that could happen if we completed the Stone Citadel without proper authorization?" Harry asked.

"The end of the world," Moody said. Harry flinched.

"What's the worst thing that is net 'likely' to happen if we build this hospital without proper authorization?" Harry asked, "Will we forfeit a tax exemption or something?"

"You sound like a Dark Lord abusing his political power for the greater good," Moody said.

"It's just a zoning law!"

"The hospital will not be part of Hogwarts and will therefore be unprotected by its wards," Moody said.

Britain had 1% of the planet's magical population. It had 1% of the planet's armies. Hogwarts was a fraction of that. If Harry Potter revealed his hospital to the world it ~~could~~ would catalyze an international crisis. When that day came, it would be to the Chief Warlock's advantage if the Stone Citadel was located inside the Hogwarts wards.

Another three minutes and fifty-four seconds ticked by. Another human being died forever. At times of civilizational inadequacy—which was all the time—Harry Potter could empathize with Lord Voldemort's pleasure at murdering his way through the Ministry bureaucracy.

There was a knock on the door. A dreamy first-year voice said "I'm looking for Harry Potter."

"Harry James Potter-Evans-Verres is busy. He is trying to save and/or destroy the world and/or wizardkind," Harry said, "If you make an appointment then he might get back to you in a few epochs."

"How about Tom Riddle?" the voice said, "Does he know what astrolabes do?"

Luna was untrained in the Muggle arts. Muggle Studies Professor Burbage declared the astrolabe beyond her pay grade and referred Luna to Harry Potter. There was no "Harry Potter" on the Marauder's Map so Luna went to "Harry Potter's Office". Tom Riddle answered the door.

"It's nice to meet you, Mister Riddle," Luna said.

Tom Riddle ushered Luna into Harry Potter's office, shut the door and cast thirty security charms.

"Call me Harry Potter," Tom Riddle said.

"Call me You-Know-Who," Luna played along. It was a relief to pretend to have friends for a change.

"*Hss hsssss hsss*," Tom Riddle said in Parseltongue.

"Hiss hiss hiss," Luna said in not-Parseltongue. She held her index fingers down from her mouth like fangs and swayed her head like a snake.

"You're not really You-Know-Who," Tom Riddle said.

"You're not really Harry Potter," Luna showed him the map, "It says so right here."

The 12-year-old boy banged his head against the wall. Just because you've won a battle doesn't mean you've behaved optimally. Optimal behavior is when you extract maximum utility from your circumstances. He shouldn't have been content to retrieve his belongings. He should have looted everything of value from the corpses of his fallen enemies. If he had done that then Bellatrix Lestrange would have been in Ministry custody, he would have possessed the Marauder's Map and his identity would have been secure.

"What do you want?" the boy said.

"I want friends," Luna said, "But right now I'll settle for the Lost Diadem of Ravenclaw. I am at Harry Potter's office because Professor Burbage told me he is an expert in modern Muggle technology."

"I'll tell you what an astrolabe is if you pretend I am Harry James Potter-Evans-Verres from now on."

"Deal," Luna said.

"An astrolabe is a handheld model of the universe," Harry said, "What is the Lost Diadem of Ravenclaw?"

"A diadem is a crown," Luna said, "Ravenclaw's is said to make you smarter."

Harry Potter had heard the term "intelligence explosion" before. If Rowena Ravenclaw could create a magical device that increased her intelligence then she would not have been content to stop there. She would have used the first diadem to make a second, superior one. Then she would have used the second diadem to make an even better third iteration. She might not have stopped until after she had gone full Singularity.

"On second thought," Harry stuffed the Ministry zoning paperwork into his trunk, "Saving the world can wait. What can you tell me about this Lost Diadem?"

Announcement

The easiest way to keep updated on this story is to subscribe to my posts here on Less Wrong.

Last chapter, CitizenTen [asked](#) if I had any plans to post this story to fanfiction websites. I currently do not. You have my permission to copy this story in part or in its entirety to any website I am not active on (which, right now, includes every website on the Internet except lesswrong.com) provided:

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Luna Lovegood and the Chamber of Secrets - Part 6

"It's in the Mirror of Atlantis," Harry said.

"We need Gillyweed," said Luna, "Lots of Gillyweed."

"The Mirror of Atlantis is located at the end of the third-floor corridor on the right-hand side," said Harry.

"What are you waiting for?" said Luna.

"You're not going to ask me how I know these things?" said Harry.

"Why would I do that?" said Luna.

"Because...because..." Harry searched for words to express the magnitude of the epistemic hole.

"You talk like a Muggle," said Luna, "You think like one too."

Harry puzzled over whether he had just been insulted. Luna skipped ahead to the third floor.

Harry and Luna flew a double-seated broomstick over the dieffenbachia and other unmaintained obstacles to the Mirror.

"You're a really good flier," said Luna, "I bet you're on the Quidditch team. What position do you play? No. Wait. Don't tell me. I bet you play Seeker."

"This Mirror lets you store an object until someone with the right intentions arrives," said Harry testily.

"I seek entry to the Ravenclaw Common Room," said Luna to the Mirror, "I want to sleep in a bed."

"In Gödel's name, what monstrously difficult riddle did the bronze eagle ask of you?" asked Harry.

"Where is my diadem?" said Luna.

"You're supposed to say 'lost' or 'hidden'," said Harry, "You're not expected to rediscover the Lost Diadem of Ravenclaw."

"Oh," said Luna.

"Since we're already here, let's give it a modicum of effort," Harry withdrew a mechanical stopwatch from his pouch and set it to five minutes.

"I want the diadem to save the world," Harry said.

"I aim to save the lives of all sentient beings," Harry said.

"I promise to bring you, Rowena Ravenclaw, back to life," Harry said.

"I seek to disassemble stars," Harry said.

Luna ignored him. Rowena Ravenclaw was not a jealous witch. If she concealed knowledge then it was not because the knowledge could be used for evil. It was because the knowledge itself was intrinsically dangerous. A cascade of logic began to self-assemble.

Rowena's basilisk attacks those who know it exists.

Luna forced her thoughts back into disarray.

"BRIIIIIING!" the mechanical alarm went off.

"I'm hunting nargles," Luna said.

The Luna in the Mirror held the Diadem of Ravenclaw in her left hand. The real Luna held it in her right.

"What is a nargle?" said Harry.

"You don't want to know," said Luna.

"What do you plan to do with this magical artifact of incredible power?" asked Harry.

"I'm going to get a comfy night's sleep in the Ravenclaw dormitory," said Luna.

"Can I, uh, try it on first?" Harry asked.

"Sure," said Luna. They were friends, after all.

Harry Potter thrust the diadem onto his head.

Then he had a seizure.

Harry's arms locked into place as if a powerful electric current flowed through them. Luna failed to pry the diadem loose. Luna dug through her satchel for the Comed-Tea can. She released Wanda.

"Help him," Luna said.

Harry's convulsions stopped. Luna wrestled the diadem off Harry's head and out of his hands.

Luna Lovegood and the Chamber of Secrets - Part 7

They were in the hospital wing.

"Who are you?" Harry Potter said to Luna.

"You-Know-Who. Hiss hiss hiss," Luna said. She held fingers down from her mouth and swayed like a snake.

"This is Loony—" Hermione said, "Luna Lovegood. She created the *BOY-WHO-LIVED GETS DRACO MALFOY PREGNANT* headline the summer before last. She believes there exists an unobservable Platform Nine and One-Half concealed by powerful magics. She claims you and she adventured together without me."

"Do you have any evidence I trusted you before I lost my memory?" Harry asked.

Luna glanced at Hermione.

"All my secrets are hers as well," Harry said.

"I know your real name, that you're a Parselmouth and that you've operated the Mirror of Atlantis," said Luna.

"My real name isn't something I'd tell you so you must have worked it out yourself and therefore does not constitute evidence of my trusting you in the past. There are at least three people who know I'm a Parselmouth so it's not surprising the information leaked out. These are the same people who know I've operated the Mirror so the Mirror adds no bits of information. An enemy would be at least as likely as an ally to possess this information," said Harry, "Did we discover an ancient artifact or something?"

"We found the Lost Diadem of Ravenclaw together," Luna showed it to him.

"This crown proves little since you could easily retcon a story around it. On the other hand, there is information I would tell someone I trusted if I wanted to guarantee recognition in case of obliviation," said Harry, "Do you have the recognition code?"

Luna recognized the logic of someone whose priors outweighed the available evidence. She fled the room.

The Marauder's Map showed Luna how to climb on top of the Great Hall. She hugged a stone gargoyle at the edge. It guided her tears down into the Hogwarts courtyard.

"Not now, Wanda," Luna said, "I need to feel this."

Luna detected quiet behind her. She continued staring at the students mingling below.

"I do not intend to jump," Luna said.

"I do not intend to stop you," Lady Yue said.

They listened to the wind. They smelled the gentle scent of trees.

"How does one make friends?" Luna asked.

"That is Professor Lockhart's field of expertise," Lady Yue said.

"Do you have a spell for loneliness?" Luna asked.

"今夜鄜州月，" Lady Yue sang from her teenage youth, "閨中只獨看。遙憐小兒女，未解憶長安。香霧雲鬟濕，清輝玉臂寒。何時倚虛幌，雙照淚痕乾？"

《月夜》 *Moon Night* by Du Fu 杜甫

今夜鄜州月，

Tonight Fuzhou moon,

閨中只獨看。

boudoir inside only alone see.

遙憐小兒女，

Distant tenderness small girl,

未解憶長安。

unsolved recall Chang'an.

香霧雲鬟濕，

Scent fog cloud hair wet,

清輝玉臂寒。

clear splendor jade shoulder cold.

何時倚虛幌，

When lean empty window curtain,

雙照淚痕乾。

both shine tear stains dry.

Luna Lovegood and the Chamber of Secrets - Part 8

Luna had too many Calls to Adventure. If there was an author writing Luna's life, Luna would file a complaint. Luna had three magical artifacts of incredible power and at least two of them were maps. What kind of author gives her hero two magical maps? It's redundant.

"Are you a map of 10th century Wessex?" Luna asked the Diadem of Ravenclaw.

A princess's cute animal companion is supposed to be visible.

"Maybe you'll turn into a prince for me," she said to Wanda. Luna tried kissing Wanda but the Wrackspurt dodged and went for her ear instead, "Oh well."

Luna needed a mysterious old wizard to help guide her narrative.

Gilderoy Lockhart's office hours were always packed.

"How did you get past all the security to assassinate the Dark Lord of Berzerkistan?" a sixth-year girl asked.

"I can neither confirm nor deny whether I have ever set foot in Berzerkistan," Lockhart winked, "If, as rumored, I am indeed responsible for the Dark Lord of Berzerkistan's untimely demise then my methods must remain a state secret."

"Tell me how you got rid of the Bandon Banshee," a first-year girl said.

"It is all in my book," Lockhart said.

"How did you kill the Dementor sent to Hogwarts last year?" a third-year girl asked.

"I promised not to tell," Lockhart said.

Lockhart loved his little fans even though none of them cared how he had won *Witch Weekly's* Most Charming Smile Award. Lockhart patiently parried their questions until one last first-year remained. She had waited to ask him something in private.

"Umm. It's okay if you say no. But. Well. Can you teach me to be popular?" Luna asked.

Lockhart brandished his award-winning smile. Then his face fell.

"Such personal attention to a student might appear unseemly," Lockhart said genuinely.

"It's an interview for *The Quibbler*," Luna said.

Luna tried out for the Quidditch team. She crashed her broom into the stands. Luna tried out for the Gobstones team. She passed out from the fumes. Luna attempted to try out for Smite Club, a rumored underground continuation of Quirrel's battles. Luna

could not find where Smite Club held its meetings. Smite Club may have only ever existed in her imagination.

A month flew by. Luna was exhausted. She sleepwalked.

99% of other people never notice the things you fail at. 1% have forgotten by tomorrow morning.

—Lovegood, Luna. "Secrets of Gilderoy Lockhart." *The Quibbler*.

Luna started a Welters team. No other students showed up. Luna started a Wrackspurt training club. Wanda and Luna showed up, but nobody else. Luna started a Muggle Repelling Charms study group in the Forgotten Library.

Another month passed. Luna fell asleep in herbology. She wore shoes to bed.

People think about themselves 99% of the time. You are competing with all of wizardkind for the remaining 1%.

—Lovegood, Luna. "Deeper Secrets of Gilderoy Lockhart." *The Quibbler*.

Luna dreamed her classmates were casting a spell. Luna played along.

"*Somnium*."

Luna woke up. She had been sleepwalking.

"Congratulations Ms. Lovegood," said Gilderoy Lockhart, "You will be representing Ravenclaw at this year's dueling tournament."

You cannot predict how others will react when you do something out of the ordinary.

—Lovegood, Luna. "Who knew Gilderoy Lockhart possessed so many secrets?" *The Quibbler*.

Luna Lovegood and the Chamber of Secrets - Part 9

The Ministry-sanctioned tour of the Chamber of Secrets was pure propaganda. The Marauder's Map showed a second entrance to the Chamber of Secrets hidden in the Girls' Bathroom.

"Hss hsssss hsss," Luna copied from Harry Potter.

A sink opened up into a large tunnel.

"Lumos, Luna said.

Each tunnel segment was designed in the same pattern as the previous, as if to deliberately disorient adventurers. Luna closed her eyes in case Slytherin's basilisk was still alive.

"Nox," Luna said.

It was quiet under the school. The tunnels smelled faintly of mildew. Ministry tours turned left at every fork. Luna placed her right hand on the right wall. She felt destiny wrapping around her. Salazar Slytherin's secrets would be hers. Luna followed the right wall until she bumped into the bones of a giant monster.

"Lumos," Luna said.

Some Gryffindor had slayed the basilisk before it could pass on its secrets to the Heir of Slytherin. Ministry archaeologists had defanged the skeleton. So much for destiny.

Salazar Slytherin had circumvented the Interdict of Merlin. But why? If Slytherin had wanted secrets to be preserved then he could have just passed them on to his students. No. Ravenclaw had positioned her diadem to be discovered by someone hunting nargles. Slytherin had done something similar.

But who was his target? Only a Parselmouth could talk to Slytherin's basilisk. Only a Parselmouth could enter the Chamber of Secrets. If only a Parselmouth could talk to the basilisk then it made sense to make the entrance only allow Parselmouths in so that you didn't get a Gryffindor charging in and killing the basilisk before talking to it. Except Slytherin's security by obscurity had failed.

That left the question of why. Parselmouths were not special. They did not have secondary characteristics. There was no reason for Salazar Slytherin to leave his greatest secrets to someone random to find. The only thing he would know about the Heir of Slytherin was that whoever opened the Chamber of Secrets:

1. Could speak Parseltongue and could therefore communicate with Slytherin's basilisk.
2. Would have opened the Chamber of Secrets.

Chamber of Secrets. Plural.

The mazelike passageways echoed Daedalus's Labryinth. The Heir of Slytherin was supposed to use Salazar's secrets to slay the monster Slytherin himself never could. Instead, a Gryffindor had broken into the Chamber of Secrets first, slayed Slytherin's basilisk, released the real monster, declared victory and returned home.

Luna bolted to the Ministry-sanctioned exit.

The Ravenclaw vs Hufflepuff semifinal duel was that evening. Luna faced two Hufflepuffs. It was supposed to be a doubles tournament.

"I'm not alone," Luna said to Wanda, "I have you."

Gilderoy Lockhart counted down. There was a bang from his wand.

"*Protego*," Luna said.

Luna's shield blocked the first Hufflepuff's sleep hex. The second Hufflepuff's stunning hex smashed through her shield. Luna collapsed.

The Hufflepuffs rushed up to check on Luna.

"*Somnium*," Luna whispered, "*Somnium*."

Luna felt around for the unconscious Wanda, who she stuffed in her pocket. Luna stood up and held her wand high.

Luna Lovegood and the Chamber of Secrets - Part 10

Luna had been spending more and more time in the Forgotten Library. Half a year slipped by.

"Is there somewhere safer I can think?" Luna asked Lady Yue.

"Take us to Xi'an," said Lady Yue.

"Where is Xi'an?" asked Luna.

"34 degrees, 16 minutes and 37 seconds north," said Lady Yue, "108 degrees, 57 minutes and 42 seconds east."

Luna had three magical artifacts of incredible power. One was a map of Hogwarts. One put its user into a catatonic state. Luna withdrew her astrolabe.

An astrolabe displays the universe's location relative to itself. Luna set the latitude dials to $34^{\circ} 16' 37''$ N and the longitude dials to $108^{\circ} 57' 42''$ E.

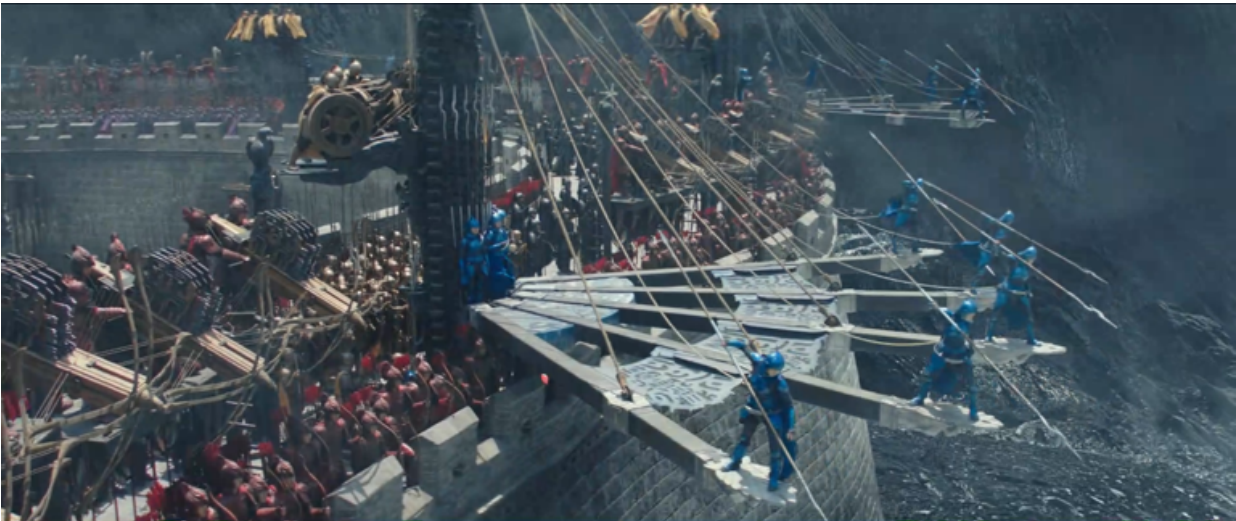
Two witches stood on a sidewalk wider than a London street. Lady Yue guided Luna to the old city wall.



The original Xi'an was surrounded by a moat, giving it the appearance of resting on a motte. The walls were almost taller than the trees planted on the berm. The gatehouse used circular arches in contrast to Hogwarts' Gothic arches. The top was decorated with flags and lanterns the colors of Gryffindor. You could ride carriages four abreast along the top. Scattered Muggle tourists moseyed about.



Britain was a small, desolate rock as far from civilization as the Earth is from Sagittarius A*. Lady Yue gestured toward the real city.



Infantry in red scale armor patrolled the walls of Chang'an with repeating crossbows. Three wizards rappelled to perform maintenance on a giant retractable circular saw blade protruding horizontally two-thirds of the way up the wall. Witches in blue plate armed with spears and bungee cables dived off the machicolations to practice semi-aerial combat. An armored vehicle was positioned between every pair of guard towers,

which were armed with siege flamethrowers and rocket turrets. Chang'an had survived land wars in Asia.

"How long has it been Fideliused?" asked Luna.

"Since 1936," said Lady Yue.

"I guess you're not coming with me then," said Luna.

Lady Yue gazed longingly at old Xi'an.

"You don't look a century old," said Luna.

"I'm not," said Lady Yue.

Lady Yue handed Luna a slip of paper with English directions in black on the back, ancient runes in black on the front and a large Heirloom Seal of the Realm stamped in red on both sides. Two suits of armor with soldiers in them allowed Luna through the checkpoint.

Curious citizens swarmed Luna. They said words she couldn't understand and thrust strange foods into her arms. Luna showed her instructions to a especially helpful bicycle. It zipped Luna through the city.

Luna smelled oyster sauce and stinky tofu. She passed a self-woking food stall and old men wargaming on the sidewalk. Luna gripped the handlebars tighter as the bicycle showed off. The bicycle dinged happily. They screeched to a halt.

A gyrocopter was parked on the roof of the laboratory. A fission reactor stuck through the top of the garage. Six different styles of radio dish poked out of six open windows. Luna entered through the airlock. She bumped her head on a ceiling-mounted security camera.

Warning. You will be ejected in 5...4...3...—

"Stand down," said the halfling artificer to the security system, "It's nice to meet you. We don't often have visitors from outside. What is your name? My English name is Leet Haxor Zεr0, or LZ (Lizzie) for short. The empress dowager says you are from Britain. I have heard all about Britain. Do all British Muggles travel through time and space in telephone booths or is public transit restricted to aristocrats? I have acquired three but none of them seem to work. I suspect magic in our air is interfering with the Muggle technology."

Luna didn't know what to say so she gave Lizzie a rice roll and a box of chicken feet.

"Thanks. I haven't eaten in three days. You know how it gets when you get deeply absorbed in a project," said Lizzie.

Lizzie guided Luna to the guest room, a planetarium not yet entirely filled with Muggle artifacts.

"You can store your clothes in the wardrobe. Leave space for the ghost inside that looks just like you. Don't let it freak you out. The ghost has never hurt anyone in the many times it has appeared over the decades," Lizzie said.

There was a siren.

"I have to adjust the reactor control rods," Lizzie said, "Holler if you need anything."

There were no windows in the planetarium. Light came from a giant projection of Saturn and the starfield behind it.

Luna exhaled. The Fidelius Charm would protect her from Rowena's basilisk. Luna hid in the wardrobe to bulwark causality.

"*Lumos*," said Luna, "I solemnly swear I am up to no good."

Luna found the location on the Marauder's map where the bones of Slytherin's basilisk lay. Luna monitored that place in space as she adjusted the time dial of the astrolabe backwards. The Ministry archaeologists came and went. Other wizards came and went earlier but did not pass the bones of the basilisk. The basilisk's killer appeared. Tom Riddle. Luna tuned her astrolabe back into causal time.

Tom Riddle had slain Slytherin's basilisk. Harry Potter was Tom Riddle. Harry Potter was a Parselmouth. Harry Potter possessed the secrets of Salazar Slytherin.

Luna spun the wheels of time on her astrolabe to between after Slytherin's basilisk was killed and before the Ministry archaeologists investigated it. Though the map's writing was tangled and confused, Luna could not mistake the name. Tom Riddle walked down the Chamber of Secrets passageway to the graveyard where David Monroe was reputed to have killed You-Know-Who. Luna read the date on the astrolabe. It was the date David Monroe was reputed to have killed You-Know-Who.

You-Know-Who's real name was Tom Riddle.

Announcement

There are three parts left to this story. Part 11 will be posted in the coming week. Parts 12 and 13 will be posted during the Less Wrong 2020/2021 New Year's Party.

Image Credits

The photos of Xi'an come from China Daily. [link](#)

The image of Chang'an comes from a 2016 historical documentary starring Matt Damon. [link](#)

Luna Lovegood and the Chamber of Secrets - Part 11

Luna closed Professor Gilderoy Lockhart's office door behind her.

"I thought our next interview wasn't until Friday," Professor Lockhart said.

"You-Know-Who is alive. He transferred his soul to Harry Potter twelve years ago. I know because both of their real names is Tom Riddle," Luna showed him the map and explained how she had gone back in time, "Harry Potter is constructing a secret citadel inside the Hogwarts grounds from which he plans to rule the world. He even told me he plans to 'save the world', which is code for conquering it."

"It is not easy to kill a Dark Lord," said Professor Lockhart.

"We must take him alive," Luna said, "Tom Riddle has all the magical secrets of Salazar Slytherin. We need them to kill the nargle. Fortunately he is in the body of a 12-year-old. You can crush him with a *Finite Incantatem* and then stun him. In the best case you are heralded as the vanquisher of You-Know-Who. In the worst case we Obliviate him and forget this ever happened."

"We should alert the proper authorities," Professor Lockhart said.

"Cease the humility," Luna said, "Do you not have more confirmed kills than anyone in the ministry?"

"I take credit for the kills of paranoid Aurors who want to keep a low profile," Lockhart said, "We should tell Mad-Eye Moody. He can kill You-Know-Who. I can take the credit. You can invent an exciting story about me for *The Quibbler*. Everybody wins except You-Know-Who."

"Mad-Eye Moody knows You-Know-Who is abusing his power. It is a joke to them. You know Mad-Eye's feelings about the law," Luna said.

"If Harry's behavior is acceptable to Mad-Eye then it is acceptable to me too," said Professor Lockhart. He rested his feet on his desk.

"Mad-Eye doesn't know about the nargle," said Luna.

"What's a nargle?" said Professor Lockhart.

Luna unfolded the Marauder's Map. Luna carefully read off the name of each being in Hogwarts until exactly one of them gave her a feeling of unimportance. She read it aloud. The name smelled warm and tasted rough on her ears. The nargle ate Luna's shoes by her bed in the Ravenclaw Common Room.

"Look here at this dot in the Ravenclaw Common Room named *the nargle*," said Luna, "The nargle is hunting you too now. If we go straight to Harry Potter's office then we can reach You-Know-Who before the nargle intercepts us."

"H—H—How can I be sure all this is real?" Professor Lockhart said.

"Reach into your hat," Luna said.

"What?" said Professor Lockhart. He picked up his hat from the hatstand where it had hung, untouched, since he had arrived in his office.

"Just do it, hero."

Professor Lockhart stared in horror at the Sword of Gryffindor in his hand.

There was a knock on the door of Harry Potter's office.

"Harry James Potter-Evans-Verres is plotting to overthrow the Ministry of Magic's incompetent government," said Harry dryly, "Please leave him alone."

"I possess an artifact of incredible power that can make the user smarter," Luna said.

Harry Potter opened the door.

"*Finite Incantatem*," Professor Lockhart said, "*Stupefy*."

Professor Gilderoy Lockhart's stunning hex knocked out Harry James Potter-Evans-Verres.

Finite Incantatem is a brute-force spell. The Finite Incantatem neutralized all spell effects on Harry Potter. Harry Potter wore a transfigured ring on his hand. The Finite Incantatem un-transfigured the ring into the stunned body of Lord Voldemort. The Finite Incantatem overpowered the stunning hex on Lord Voldemort, who opened his snakelike eyes.

Lord Voldemort had risen again.

Part 12 will be posted on December 31st at 12:01 pm PST. The conclusion, Part 13, will be posted on January 1st, 2021 at 12:01 am PST.

Luna Lovegood and the Chamber of Secrets - Part 12

"*Stupefy*," Professor Lockhart said.

Lord Voldemort spat a verbal non-somatic counterspell. He dodged too, just in case.

"Do not do that again," said Lord Voldemort.

Lord Voldemort cast another non-somatic spell. Animated skeleton hands grew from his wrists. He picked up Harry Potter's wand.

"Take a look at this map," Luna said, "Do you see this nargle? It will hunt you forever unless we work together to stop it."

Lord Voldemort's Legilimency tore through Luna's mind.

"It is almost here," said Professor Lockhart.

"Place your hands on my astrolabe," Luna said.

"Rennervate the boy to awaken after we leave," said Lord Voldemort to Professor Lockhart.

Headmistress Minerva McGonagall, Chief Warlock Amelia Bones and Auror Mad-Eye Moody burst into Harry Potter's office.

"What did you do this time?" said Auror Moody.

"Nothing," said Harry James Potter-Evans-Verres.

"Uh-huh," said Headmistress McGonagall.

The Forgotten Library was a regular heptagon centered around a giant Pensieve. Seven giant shelves radiated toward the corners. The shelves held brown tattered diaries, vials of silvery memories and endless stacks of stationary. Six desks were interlaced in six aisles between the seven shelves. The seventh aisle led to the entrance. Each desk was covered in parchment covered in Luna's handwriting. A flowchart on the far left desk said START HERE in giant letters.

Luna checked the Marauder's Map. The nargle moved faster than it had before.

According to Luna's notes, they had all three components of the ritual: the Sword of Gryffindor, the secrets of Slytherin and the Diadem of Ravenclaw. Lockhart wielded the sword. Lord Voldemort wielded the secrets. Luna placed Ravenclaw's Diadem on her head. The diadem forced Luna's thoughts into coherence.

There was an epic battle.

The vials had been smashed. The diaries had been burned. Something was missing.

Ravenclaw's horcrux continued to overwrite the Luna personality. Not yet. Luna had unanswered questions. The power of Gryffindor. What had destroyed Atlantis? The intellect of Ravenclaw. Where was Platform Nine and One Half? The secrets of Slytherin. What had happened to the third cauldron? The sacrifice of Hufflepuff.

Luna wondered where the Wrackspurt could have come from. It had to have been there before she shut the door. But the Wrackspurt had not immediately entered Luna's ears when she had first entered the compartment. There may not have been any free Wrackspurts in the compartment when Luna had entered it. Luna's trapped Wrackspurt must have been in someone else's ear.

But who? Luna's eyes slid from one end of her compartment to the other, as if nothing important existed in-between.

Luna never met Kirito on the train. He wasn't sorted into Hufflepuff. He didn't nudge her into exploring the kitchens. He didn't place a blanket over her the night she slept outside the Ravenclaw Common Room. He never founded Smite Club. He never joined Lockhart's dueling club. He didn't sacrifice himself to defeat the nargle. Kirito had never existed.

Where do vanished objects go?

Atlantis had never existed. Platform Nine and one Half had never existed. There had never been a third cauldron.

Why had Luna never worn shoes?

Luna yanked the diadem off her head.

"We just have one more loose end to tie up," said Professor Lockhart. The Sword of Gryffindor cut through Lord Voldemort's wards, counterspells and skull. Lord Voldemort died. Professor Quirrell revived. Professor Quirrell opened a portal to Hell underneath Professor Lockhart. The Sword of Gryffindor clattered to the floor.

"Is there a self-interested reason why I ought not to kill you too before I leave this room?" said Professor Quirrell to Luna.

Luna Lovegood and the Chamber of Secrets - Part 13

"Wait," said Luna, "This is the Lost Diadem of Ravenclaw. It makes the wearer smarter. You might want it."

Professor Quirrel took the diadem in his hands. He feinted as if to place it over his head.

"I am an Occlumens," said Professor Quirrel, "Ravenclaw's device rips the incoherence out of doublethink. If I were to place this device over my head I would be lucky if it did not shred my mind. Nice try."

Professor Quirrel tossed the diadem back to Luna. Luna kowtowed.

"I heard stories of the First Wizarding War. You never cared much for individual human beings but you were always very careful not to destroy wizardkind," said Luna, "I get the feeling you put some effort into protecting the universe."

"So?" said Professor Quirrel.

"You are bored. This plane is too small for you," said Luna.

You-Know-Who did not murder her.

"You should not be a villain," said Luna.

"If you tell me to be a hero then you will die painfully," said Professor Quirrel.

"You should be a god," said Luna.

Luna willingly bestowed the astrolabe to Professor Quirrel.

"Is that all?" said Professor Quirrel.

"Yes," said Luna.

"*Avada Kedavra*," said Professor Quirrel.

Luna collapsed. Professor Quirrel sheathed his wand. His slender skeleton fingers untangled the clockwork. Professor Quirrel unfolded the astrolabe around him. He ascended to a higher plane of existence.

Luna stepped out of the Forgotten Library. She held the Sword of Gryffindor in her left hand and Wanda in her right. She buried Wanda in Hagrid's pumpkin patch.

The final duel of Lockhart's tournament was that afternoon. Professor Flitwick refereed. Luna lost.

Clang. Luna dropped the Sword of Gryffindor on Professor Lockhart's empty chair. She sat down for dinner in her seat at the end of the Ravenclaw table. A student stood behind her.

"You fought well in Lockhart's dueling tournament," said Ginevra Weasley, "Why don't you try sitting with us Gryffindors for a change?"

The astrolabe displayed "7" on one dial and "0" on all the rest. A tall, slender snakelike figure stepped into Heaven's throne room where a god rested. The trespasser threw a tactical reality anchor like a javelin. It stuck into the wall behind the throne. The trespasser stabbed his second tactical reality anchor behind himself into the floor of the entrance.

"LET'S DUEL."

Credits

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Thank you J.K. Rowling for creating *Harry Potter* and Eliezer Yudkowsky for creating *Harry James Potter-Evans-Verres*. In addition, thank you MondSammel, Measure, ejacob, Gurkenglas, Jeff Melcher, gilch, mingyuan, Dojan and everyone else in the comments who corrected spelling and other mistakes in this story.

Luna Lovegood and the Fidelius Curse

- Part 4

Luna stumbled, but then straightened, shaking off the disturbing feeling of disorientation.

"I solemnly swear that I am up to no good."

Luna hurried into the nearest empty classroom. She poured her knapsack out onto a desk. The most important thing to do after your memory has been modified is to write down everything you can observe and remember in case your memory is modified again. Luna identified a quill, an inkwell and a crumpled up ball of parchment. She flattened out the parchment. There was already writing on it.

The Department of Mysteries is watching you.

Schedule

Luna Lovegood and the Fidelius Curse will update once per week until the story is complete. You can subscribe to update notifications via [my RSS](#) or by clicking "Subscribe to posts" on [my Less Wrong profile](#) while logged in.

Luna Lovegood and the Fidelius Curse

- Part 1

King's Cross Station was crowded with Muggles trying to be somewhere else. Luna Lovegood stood before the barrier between Platforms Nine and Ten where there should have been a Platform Nine and One-Half. She bowed her head, giving a moment of silence for a history that never was. A Hogwarts student went around her, deliberately-by-accident bumping Luna along the way.

Luna stood before the barrier between Platforms Ten and Eleven. A girl with short scarlet hair came to stand beside her. Fire-head girl walked because she was missing her wings.

Fire-head girl bowed her head too.

Luna maintained her vigil.

Fire-head girl snuck at glance at Luna.

Luna glanced back.

Fire-head girl raised her eyebrows as if to communicate *Are you thinking what I'm thinking?*

Luna widened her eyes in shock at the implication.

Well?

Luna twitched her head.

Fire-head girl nodded back.

Luna and fire-head girl pushed their trolleys away from the brick barrier. They needed distance to build up momentum. Faith isn't free. It made no difference to just say you believed in a double-magic school. It would do no good if you merely tried to walk onto Platform Ten and Three-Quarters. You had to pay the ante. You had to run into the wall so fast you'd hurt yourself if reality didn't fold first.

Luna and Fire-head girl started toward into the magical gateway that was just pretending to be a solid brick wall. They accelerated. They ran as fast as they could push their luggage carts. They were double-witches. Bricks didn't have to be magical for a double-witch to pass through them. It was their birthright.

Bang. CRASH. Clink. Scatter.

The other Hogwarts students sniggered quietly, so as to not draw the attention of Muggles. They needn't have bothered. King's Cross station at the start and end of Hogwarts' term had the strongest Muggle-Repelling Charms in all of Britain. Luna and fire-head girl savored their own audacity. Who in their right mind would try walking through a random barrier between platforms at King's Cross station?

"Ouch," said Fire-head girl. She rubbed her head.

"Ouch," agreed Luna. She had broken her toe.

"*Episky*," said Fire-head girl. Luna's toe straightened itself with a hot crack.

"Thanks," said Luna.

Fire-head girl gave Luna a look as if she was observing at something specialer than a perfectly ordinary second-year witch.

A steam whistle blew. The Hogwarts Express would leave soon. Fire-head girl glanced back at Platform Nine and Three-Quarters.

"I guess neither of us is secretly a double-witch who attends a double-secret double-magical school," said fire-head girl.

"I was at Hogwarts last year. I can't be in two places at once," said Luna.

"You could if you suffered from Spontaneous Duplication. That would make you a quadruple-witch," said fire-head girl.

The steam whistle blew a second time. They rushed back to Platform Nine and Three Quarters. Luna gasped the words out as they ran.

"What is Spontanenous Duplication?" said Luna.

"It's an incurable non-contagious disease. You treat it by wearing a Spimster wicket around your neck," said fire-head girl who had no trouble talking while running.

Spimster wickets were not interesting. It didn't take long to get back to Platform Nine and Three-Quarters. Luna and her new friend rushed through the barrier to Platform Nine and Three-Quarters. They jumped aboard the Hogwarts Express right as it blew its steam whistle one last time and began to leave the station. Luna landed on her hands and knees in the corridor between compartments. Fire-head girl tumbled on top of her.

"Be careful. The train is infested with Wrackspurts," said Luna.

"What are Wrackspurts?" said the girl.

"I'll tell you later. Just cover your ears," said Luna. She placed her hands over her ears.

The two girls crept down the train with their hands over their ears. The other students gave Luna fuzzy-minded looks. Luna found a mostly-empty compartment and shut the door behind her as soon as they got in.

Fire-head girl said something.

I can't hear you, mouthed Luna.

Luna withdrew a winter scarf from her satchel and wrapped it around her head, covering her ears. Fire-head girl put on a big knitted cap and pulled it down over her ears.

"Are we safe yet?" said fire-head girl.

"Let's find out. These are called Spectrespecs. I invented them. They show you everything you can see," said Luna. She rummaged around her satchel for her a giant pair of gaudy glittery glasses and put them on.

"Do you see any Wrackspurts?" said fire-head girl.

"No. Wrackspurts are invisible," said Luna. Her visual field stayed the same. It was like wearing non-prescription eyeglasses. Luna handed the Spectrespecs to her new friend.

"I don't see any Wrackspurts either," said fire-head girl.

"Good. That means you're not making things up," said Luna

Luna removed the scarf from around her ears. Luna was new to this whole "friend" thing. She didn't know what to say.

"My name is Fay Li," said fire-head girl. Fay held out her hand with the false confidence of someone who had tried, unsuccessfully, to walk through several brick walls and was going to keep walking into brick walls until the stone ground into powder because past performance is not indicative of future results.

"Luna. Luna Lovegood. I'm in Ravenclaw. But you know that. We live in the same dormitory," said Luna. Luna shook Fay's hand.

The girl's eyes widened. "You remember me from last year. What's my name?" she said.

"Fay. Fay Li. You just told me." said Luna.

Fay clutched her knitted cap as if it was a Reality Anchor.

"Why is it such a big deal?" said Luna.

"It just is. Say my name again," said Fay.

"Fay Li," said Luna. Apparently this was how making friends works. You just said the person's name three times. Luna had been doing it wrong all her life.

Fay carefully scrutinized the veins on her own wrists. Luna recognized the action as a way to test if you're in a fictitious reality. Mind-altering illusion charms often get the details wrong. Fay was checking to see whether the wrist veins in her observed reality matched the wrist veins in baseline reality.

"Luna."

Luna had never seen anyone (else) run a physical spot check before. It was something you only do in private or with people you trust absolutely because if someone knows what you spot check then they could patch the detail in their own illusion charms.

"Luna," said Fay. A Weasley-haired girl was knocking on their compartment door. Luna wrapped the scarf back around her ears and opened the door.

"I was wondering if you'd like to join me and my friends," said the Weasley-haired girl.

Each compartment had four seats. "Friends" implies at least two. Ginny plus two friends plus Luna equals four. Only Luna was invited. There would be no space for Fay.

"No thanks," said Luna. The Weasley-haired girl left, looking offended.

"That was kind of you," said Fay.

"Why?" said Luna.

Fay opened the compartment door and strode down the hall. "Look! A Crumple-Horned Snorkack," Fay yelled.

"Where?" said Luna. The students in the compartments continued their conversations.

Fay walked down to a compartment door and walked in on three fourth-years. The fourth-years ignored the intruder and closed the compartment door. Luna watched through the window.

"Hi I'm Fay," said Fay. No response. Fay poked a student. "Cut that out," said the student. Fay picked up another student's choco-mocha and took a sip. "Leave right now or I'll hex you," said the other student, drawing his wand. Fay drew her wand.

Luna followed her in and placed her hand over Fay's wand-hand. "I get it," said Luna. She escorted Fay back to their compartment.

"I'm invisible," said Fay.

Luna put on her Spectrespecs. Fay looked like Fay, pixie cut and all. "I can see you just fine," said Luna.

The train ride passed quickly. Luna shared her dirigible plums. Fay shared her stories of breaking into Filch's storeroom of confiscated tools. They got off the train and onto the carriages pulled by skeletal winged horses. Luna related her adventures the previous year. Soon they were at Hogwarts.

Luna Lovegood and the Fidelius Curse

- Part 2

"Then suddenly all the Mirror of Atlantis showed were the reflections of me and Harry Potter," said Luna.

Fay glared jealously over at Harry James Potter-Evans-Verres.

"He doesn't remember me," said Luna.

"What a horrible life you live. I feel so sorry for you," teased Fay. She bonked Luna with her golden plate.

"There must be a perfectly supernatural explanation for your condition. We'll see what information the library has on it," said Luna.

"But the Hogwarts Library doesn't have a section on Repelling Charms. I even looked in the Restricted Section. That's what I got the second detention for," said Fay.

Luna rolled her eyes at Fay. Luna wished she had brewed a pot of Comed-Tea.

"Oh," said Fay.

There was a new teacher at the Head Table. The new teacher wore dueling armor. Otherwise, her robes followed every Hogwarts rule, standard and regulation. The witch moved slowly and steady like a turtle. A snapping turtle.

Tink, tink, tink. The Headmistress called for quiet. There were all the usual announcements and then....

"There will be no Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher this year," announced Headmistress McGonagall.

The students gasped. Luna inventoried the teachers. Nobody was missing from last year besides the handsome brave gallant Professor Lockhart. He was not afraid to die, brave oh brave Professor Lockhart.

Fay sat on Luna's right. Luna whispered to Fay, "What do you think of the new Defense Professor?"

"Did you not hear what the Headmistress just said?" said Fay.

Luna shrugged. She pointed to the High Table. "Right there. There's a new teacher between Professor Sinistra and Lady Yue. No one is missing so she must be the new Defense Against the Dark Arts professor" said Luna.

No one (besides Fay) wanted to sit next to Luna. Colin Creevey sat two seats Luna's left. "Who are you whispering to?" he said to Luna.

"My friend," said Luna.

Colin Creevey took a careful look of Luna as if Fay's seat was empty. "There's nobody there," he said.

Padma Patil sat to the left of Colin Creevy. "Luna has an imaginary friend," Colin reported to Padma.

Fay flicked a Brussels sprout at Colin.

"I was just kidding!" objected Colin.

Luna's imaginary friend rolled her eyes.

Luna's first Defense Against the Dark Arts class was the next morning. Luna tried to ask the other students what they thought of the new Defense Professor. Their answers were a tangle of contradictions. The students all agreed that there was no Defense Professor even though they all had Defense Against the Dark Arts class.

The Defense Professor tapped her podium.

"Hello everyone. My name is Martina Memnuela but I don't expect any of you to remember that. You may refer to me as 'the Defense Professor' even though the thoroughest defense is a preemptive offence," said Defense Professor Memnuela.

Fay raised her hand.

"Reality is precarious. The Forces of Evil work tirelessly to undermine consensus reality. Most of you will live your lives in blissful indifference of the complex systems protecting you. A few of you, the Best of the Best, will join the first, last and only line of defense against existential threats. The security we provide is what Defense is about. Everything else is just paperwork," said the Defense Professor.

Xena Smith raised her hand. Professor Memnuela called on her.

"Are you an Unspeakable?" said Xena.

"I can neither confirm nor deny whether I work for the Department of Mysteries," said Professor Memnuela, "But I hope someday to introduce a few of you to the secrets contained therein."

There were scattered chuckles. Fay's hand was still up. The Defense Professor continued to not respond to it.

"I have a question," Fay said.

"Wait until you are called upon," said Professor Memnuela.

"You're never going to call on me," Fay said.

"Five points from Ravenclaw," said Professor Memnuela.

"I am asking a question. Asking questions is what Ravenclaws are supposed to do," said Fay.

"Detention," said Professor Memnuela.

Fay rolled her eyes. She passed a note to Luna. *Why can we remember her name when nobody else can?* Luna raised her hand. Professor Memnuela called on Luna immediately. Luna almost asked Fay's question before she realized that the Defense Professor was a

dangerous person, possibly evil, and that it would be imprudent for Luna to reveal that she knew the true name of an Unspeakable who had teachers' privileges to Hogwarts' wards.

"Did you have a question?" said Professor Memnuela.

Luna blurted the second thing off the top of her mind. "Where can I find information about Repelling Charms?" said Luna.

Professor Memnuela paused as if composing a riddle. Luna deduced that the Unspeakable had an answer memorized and was just pretending to deliver it impromptu. It was a trap. Luna resolved to ignore the Unspeakable's misdirection.

"When you stare into the void, the void stares back," said the Unspeakable.

Sorry. I'll explain later. Luna wrote to Fay. Professor Memnuela noticed Luna writing a note to herself. That got the Unspeakable's attention. The Unspeakable approached her slowly. Luna averted her eyes.

"Are you hiding something, young one?" said the Unspeakable.

Luna's eyes darted around the room, looking anywhere but at the Unspeakable's face. This would be easier if she were wearing her Spectrespecs.

"Look at me or I will compel you to do so," said the Unspeakable.

Luna stared defiantly into the Unspeakable's eyes. The Legilimens' fingers held Luna's eyelids open. There would be no official recourse. There was no Defense Against the Dark Arts Professor this year.

"Wow. I am impressed. I have never seen such a perfect Occlumens so young," said Professor Memnuela.

"I'm not an Occlumens," said Luna.

"You sincerely expect me to believe that Wrackspurts and Crumple-Horned Snorkacks are real, that you discovered the Lost Diadem of Ravenclaw and that you joined forces with the handsome Gilderoy Lockhart to face down You-Know-Who?" said Professor Memnuela.

Luna had gotten distracted by what she thought might be Wrackspurts floating in an upper corner of the classroom.

"Miss Lovegood?" said Professor Memnuela.

"No. Professor Lockhart and I joined forces with You-Know-Who too. The three of us worked together," said Luna. The Wrackspurt slipped out of her ear.

"You are an impressive actor. I admire your imagination, your sense of humor and your dedication to the role. That persistence will serve you well. But, please. I have a serious class to teach," said Professor Memnuela.

Luna was too stunned to retort. She sat in her chair until long after everyone else except Fay had left the classroom.

Luna Lovegood and the Fidelius Curse

- Part 3

It was Luna's first time visiting the Hogwarts Library with a friend. It was Luna's first time doing many things with a friend. Lonely books tried to get the girls' attention by flapping their covers. The girls ignored them. Flirtatious books were easy to pick up but became annoying after you checked them out. They moved about on your bedside table when you were trying to sleep.

"You still remember who I am," said Fay as if she couldn't believe it.

"I have to. You're my imaginary friend. If I forget about you then you'll cease to exist," teased Luna.

"I'd better annoy you so you don't forget about me," said Fay.

Fay tickled Luna. Luna screamed and ran away. They chased each other through the stacks. When they were out of breath and had lost all but the most determined tails Luna unfolded an old tattered sheet of parchment. She handed the treasure to Fay. What was the point of secrets if you had no one to share them with?

"Tap it with your wand and say 'I solemnly swear I am up to no good'," said Luna.

The spiderweb of ink spread across the Marauder's Map.

"My name's on here," said Fay.

Luna looked at the map. "Indeed it is," she said.

"Sometimes I wonder if I'm a figment of my own imagination," said Fay.

"We are all figments of our own imaginations. What matters is if we can become more than that," said Luna.

"Who were Moony, Wormtail, Padfoot and Prongs?" said Fay.

"I don't know. Sometimes I fantasize that one of them might be my mother and that she'd be proud of what I'm doing it. But you can't wish loved ones existing," said Luna.

Fay listened quietly with uncharacteristic patience.

"Keep watch. I'm going to look for the Repelling Charms section," said Luna.

Fay fixed her eyes on the map. They were in the 'R' section. Luna put on her Spectrespecs. She looked at the bookshelves and then immediately shut her eyes. Her Spectrespecs showed her everything except the Repelling Section. The bright blast of censorship nearly blinded her.

"The Repelling Charms section is right here between 'Repeat' and 'Repetition'," said Luna.

"There isn't anything between 'Repeat' and 'Repetition'. They're the same thing," said Fay.

"That's enough for today. I just remembered we have important things to do," said Luna.

"Yeah. I'm busy too," said Fay.

Luna Lovegood and the Fidelius Curse

- Part 5

"If I knew someone had modified my memory I would be furious too. But you can't just go breaking into the Department of Mysteries," said Fay.

"Why not?" said Luna.

An advantage of your friends being imaginary is it's easy to get away with whispering back-and-forth in Potions class when you're supposed to be distilling attention.

"Because it's impossible. The Department of Mysteries is the most secure magical facility in all of Britain," said Fay.

"Why do we say 'the most secure magical facility in all of Britain'?" said Luna.

"Because it is," said Fay.

"No. I mean why the qualifier 'in all of Britain'?" said Luna.

Fay dropped an ice cube into the Thought Condenser.

"It's like how 'Hogwarts is the best magical school in all of Britain'," said Luna.

"That we know about," said Fay, "We only tested the barrier between Platforms Ten and Eleven. The train to a double-magic school might be stationed between Platform Seven and Platform Eight."

"Why between Seven and Eight?" said Luna. She dropped an ice cube into the Thought Condenser.

"Because Seven ate [\[1\]](#) Nine," said Fay, "But even if that wasn't the case, we should systematically ram into all the barriers at King's Cross next year because the only way to prove a negative is to exhaustively search all of the possibilities."

An Attention Still consists of a Comed-Teapot attached to a Thought Condenser. Comed-Tea boils when you stop watching it. You stop watching it because your attention is directed elsewhere. By placing ice into a Thought Condenser at the exact instant your attention drifts, you can condense volatile attention into a liquid. Attention Stills are operated by two people because it's hard to remember to do something the instant after your own attention drifts.

"You never answered what's so important about the qualifier," said Luna.

"The Department of Mysteries is the most secure magical facility in all of Britain," said Fay.

"Why?" said Luna.

Potions Mistress Lady Yue had drifted over to listen to their conversation. "You heard her. The Department of Mysteries is the most secure magical facility in all of Britain," said Lady Yue.

"How many secure magical facilities are there in Britain?" said Luna.

"I can name one," said Fay, "The—"

Luna rolled her eyes. "Besides the Department of Mysteries," said Luna.

Fay shrugged.

"How do you know the Department of Mysteries is so secure?" said Luna.

"Everybody knows the Department of Mysteries is the most secure magical facility in all of Britain," said Fay.

"You don't find that a little suspicious?" said Luna.

"Nope," said Fay.

There is nothing special about the Repelling Section. The Repelling Section is perfectly ordinary. The Repelling Section is not important. The Repelling Section does not matter. The Repelling Section is of no concern to people like you. The Repelling Section is boring.

Do not visit the Repelling Section. There is no reason for you to be interested in the Repelling Section. The Repelling Section is somebody else's problem. Everything is progressing according to plan. Please return to your tacitly-condoned misbehavior.

1. Eight [↩](#)

Luna Lovegood and the Fidelius Curse

- Part 6

Luna and Fay drank their distilled attention and stepped into the Repelling Section.

It was like when Luna was very young and her parents had taken her to Third Hand Book Emporium and told her she could have one book. Except this time instead of one book she had approximately five minutes before the distilled attention ran out.

"Check it out. Next year's *The Historiography of Time Travel*," said Luna.

"Focus. We're looking for books about the Department of Mysteries. Ignore everything else," said Fay.

Luna reluctantly tore her eyes away from *Zeitsmithing*, *Wrackspurt Ecology* and *Counter-Zeitsmithing*. They searched through the titles systematically.

"I found one. *Magical Espionage: Theory and Practice*. How much time do we have?" Luna said.

"Two minutes. It'll have to do," said Fay.

Luna and Fay were wary of drawing attention to themselves. The Hogwarts Library had charms to detect unauthorized removal of books. They opened the book on the stone floor and read it on their knees.

Table of contents:

- 0. Preface
- 1. Fundamentals of Magical Concealment
- 2. Consensus Reality

:

"Start with fundamentals," said Luna.

Fay turned to Chapter 1.

...If an adversary asks "Does a secret exist" then the secret has already been lost. Magical concealment therefore operates on the principle of (mis)directing attention.

There are a spectrum of spells for (mis)directing attention, from Muggle-Repelling Charms to memory modification. However, the most secure method of concealing a secret is Fidelius Charm. So little is known about the Fidelius Charm that we have fit the entirety of our researches into Chapter 7...

Fay turned to Chapter 7. She glanced at her watch.

The Fidelius Charm hides a secret in a single sentient being. It operates by cleaving consensus reality...

Fay began turning pages.

"But—," objected Luna.

"We have one minute of attention remaining. We need to know if the Department of Mysteries employs the Fidelius Charm," said Fay.

...However, the Fidelius Charm was immediately used in 683 CE to hide itself...

"That doesn't make sense. What's the point in Fidelius using the Fidelius Charm if the Interdict of Merlin already prohibits inadvertent transmission?" said Luna.

"The Interdict of Merlin prohibits indirect transmission. The Fidelius Charm prohibits all transmission," said Fay.

"Then there's no way for the Department of Mysteries to use the Fidelius Charm," said Luna.

"Why not?" said Fay.

"The Department of Mysteries is an organization. Organizations function by teaching their employees. If something cannot be taught then—," said Luna.

"Understood," said Fay. She turned the pages backward.

...operates by cleaving consensus reality. The connections are that which is sacrificed. A person placed under the Fidelius Charm, while protected, will be unable to interact meaningfully with consensus reality.

Luna stared into the wide eyes of her imaginary friend.

"Wait. If the Fidelius Charm's incantation was lost, then how was it cast on..." said Luna.

"Time's up," said Fay.

Luna and Fay suddenly realized they were late for dinner.

Luna Lovegood and the Fidelius Curse

- Part 7

It was too easy.

"We're looking for the office of Miss Dolores Umbridge," said Fay.

You can wander freely around most places just by looking as if you're supposed to be there.

"Are you lost?" said a Ministry Bureaucrat.

"Miss Dolores Umbridge said we could interview her today but an important meeting came up at the last minute. We're keeping out of everyone's way until she's done," said Fay.

"You might be waiting a long time, kid. I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but you may be in for some disappointment," said the Ministry bureaucrat.

Perfect.

After the employees had gone home, Fay and Luna took the elevator to Basement Level 9. They walked down the hall to the Department of Mysteries. Fay opened the door and let Luna in after her.

They were standing in a large, circular room. Everything in here was black including the floor and ceiling — identical, unmarked, handle-less black doors were set at intervals all around the black walls, interspersed with branches of candles whose flames burned blue, their cool, shimmering light reflected in the shining marble floor so that it looked as though there was dark water underfoot.

The Entrance Chamber was designed to disorient intruders. The walls spun, making it impossible to tell which door led back outside.

Fay and Luna were trapped far outside the wards of Hogwarts.

How do you secure a facility against witches and wizards who can do anything?

You use honeypots.

Luna thumbed the Spectrespecs in her pocket.

"Obliviate me RIGHT NOW!" shouted Luna.

Luna Lovegood and the Fidelius Curse

- Part 8

"If this is a trap then They are coming," said Luna. She used the word "They" to avoid activating possible Taboos.

"It's a trap," said Fay.

"How do you know?" said Luna.

Fay rolled her eyes.

"We're doomed," said Luna.

"This is the Department of Mysteries. Maybe we'll find some powerful magical artifacts," said Fay.

They picked a door at random.

The Time Room was filled with glittering Spimster wickets. There were big Spimster wickets, little Spimster wickets, grandfather Spimster wickets and digital Spimster wickets. Fay shut the door behind them.

"I don't suppose you suffer from Spontaneous Duplication?" said Luna.

"Nope," said Fay.

Spimster wickets were not interesting. Luna and Fay retreated to the Entrance Chamber. It spun. They picked another door.

The Brain room contained a big open-topped tank full of green liquid. Tentacled brains swam around inside it.

"Nope," said Fay.

"Wait," said Luna.

Luna slowly approached the tank.

"Snap out of it. Those things are hypnotizing you," said Fay. She tugged on Luna's sleeve.

Luna placed her hand against the glass edge of the tank. One of the brains placed its tentacle opposite Luna's hand.

"Mum?"

Fay yanked Luna away from the tank and back toward the Entrance Chamber. It was too late. An Unspeakable stood in the doorway wearing dueling armor.

Luna Lovegood and the Fidelius Curse

- Part 9

"*Expelliarmus!*" said the Unspeakable. Luna's wand flew away and landed in the brain tank with a splash.

Luna showed her hands were empty.

"Hello little one. I am an Unspeakable. We have no names and no faces. We have no identities. One us represents all. All of us are represented in one. When you speak to me, you speak to the Department of Mysteries," said the Unspeakable.

"Hello Professor Memnuela. Are you the person who has been modifying my memory?" said Luna.

"An agent never tells. I can neither confirm nor deny.... Who am I kidding? It is the obvious deduction. It would be an insult to pretend otherwise," said Professor Memnuela. She took off her mask.

Fay crept along the wall while Memnuela's attention was focused on Luna. Luna deliberately avoided glancing in the direction of Fay.

"Congratulations. You passed. My friends are on their way," said Memnuela.

"What?" said Luna.

"The Department of Mysteries' selection process. We are the best of the best of the best. We do not recruit just any Hogwarts graduate. Only those witches and wizards who penetrate this far are allowed into our clandestine ranks. Why, I remember when I was standing right there facing down my own Unspeakable when I broke in. Well, not exactly right there. My initiation took place in the Death Chamber," said Memnuela.

"Wait a minute. You mean I'm not in trouble for breaking into the most secure facility in all of Britain?" said Luna.

"The most secure facility you know about. Nitpicking aside: Of course not. How backwards would an organization have to be to punish someone for ethical hacking?" said Memnuela.

Luna acknowledged the logic of the policy. Fay had worked her way behind Memnuela. Luna dragged on the conversation. She didn't have to pretend she had lots of questions.

"Besides. You are a perfect Occlumens. Never before have I seen such raw talent for the art," said Memnuela.

"I told you already, I'm not an Occlumens," said Luna.

"Let us not play this charade again. How do you feel about becoming an Unspeakable?" said Memnuela.

"What does becoming an Unspeakable get me?" said Luna.

"All our secrets will be yours. You will know all that is known about the Mind and Body, Time and Space, Prophecy and History, Life and Death, Love and the Divine," said Memnuela.

"That's ten divisions, plus the entrance door. The Entrance Chamber has twelve doors. What did you leave out?" said Luna.

"Room Eleven."

"The price?" said Luna.

"Anonymity shall be your name. Silence, your native tongue. You shall not exist," said the Unspeakable.

"Is that why nobody can remember your name, Memnuela?" said Luna.

The Unspeakable stumbled and then regained her composure. "No. The curse on me was not cast by the Department of Mysteries nor any of its agents," said Memnuela.

"What about the connections I have? The people you used to know?" said Luna. She looked at the Unspeakables mask, her cape, her breastplate, her greaves. Anywhere but behind Memnuela.

"It shall be as if you had died," said the Unspeakable.

Luna pictured her mother, the tentacled brain in a vat.

"Forgive me if I'm skeptical at the prospect of sacrificing so much for the promise of secrets I can verify neither the existence nor the truth of," said Luna.

"I shall offer you a taste. One more question. Any question. What do you wish to know? I shall answer truthfully. Then you must choose," said the Unspeakable.

Luna Lovegood and the Fidelius Curse

- Part 10

One question.

Where can I find a Crumble-Horned Snorkack? Not important right now.

Why is my mother a brain in a tank? Not important right now.

What is the countercurse to Fay's affliction? How to ask without ruining Fay's ambush?

"What happened to Chang'an?" said Luna.

Fay's ears perked up.

"I do not have all day," said the Unspeakable.

"What is the countercurse to your affliction?" said Luna.

"I am under the influence of the Fidelius Charm. Only the Secret Keeper can reveal my existence. I wonder who informed you of me," said Memnuela.

I wasn't informed of you.

"I thought the Fidelius Charm was immediately used in 683 CE to hide itself," said Luna.

"Writing is mind control. Don't believe everything you read. Time is up. Shall you join us?" said Memnuela.

"My mother. Did she make it this far?" said Luna.

"I offered you one question. No more," said Memnuela.

"I'll tell you who informed you of me if you answer my question," said Luna.

"You really are your mother's daughter. Your mother has done much of our best work on Space and Time. Would you like to see her again?" said Memnuela.

Luna's mother had traded her daughter for the secrets of the Universe.

Time out. Memnuela was pressuring Luna to make a quick decision under pressure. When someone pressures you into make a quick decision it's usually a sign that person is attempting to manipulate you into choosing against your best interests. Especially when such a decision supposedly involves lots of secrets.

What would happen if Luna declined? The Department of Mysteries would wipe her memory. Then what? Luna would rediscover the Department of Mysteries again. She would eventually find herself right back in the Department of Mysteries' Entrance Chamber.

What would really happen if Luna declined?

Magical Espionage: Theory and Practice was a honeypot. It contained misinformation. If a person or organization is willing to lie to you once that means they are willing to lie to you.

Memnuela had lied to Luna about the Fidelius Charm. The Secret Keeper couldn't counter the Fidelius Charm because the Secret Keeper revealing the secret of the Fidelius Charm was the Fidelius Charm working *as intended*. The Department of Mysteries did not know how to counter the Fidelius Charm.

"You can say no. We'll pretend this never happened," said the Unspeakable.

If the Department of Mysteries trusted Luna then why was Luna unarmed?

Luna's mother would never sell her daughter in exchange information she could deduce for herself.

What was Room Eleven for?

"You want to know who informed me of your existence?" said Luna, "CHANG'AN!"

Luna dropped to the ground as she shouted the last two words. Memnuela's hex shot where Luna's chest used to be and smashed into the brain tank, shattering it.

"*Somnium!*" Simultaneously, at Luna's signal, Fay cast a sleep charm at the Unspeakable.

The Unspeakable's armor blocked the child's sleep charm. A tentacled brain threw Luna her wand.

"Avada kedavra," said Fay.

"Trying to cast the Killing Curse in defense of another? That's adorable. *Stupefy!*" said the Unspeakable. Fay crumpled into a heap.

The floor was ankle-deep in green liquid. The tentacled brain launched itself at Memnuela. Memnuela was distracted. Luna would need a ridiculously overpowered spell to overcome the Unspeakable's armor in one shot. Ravenclaw's Diadem hadn't taught her anything that broken.

Memnuela tore the tentacled brain off of her face and threw it against the wall.

Luna's life flashed before her eyes. She recalled her first Potions lesson.

There is no Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher this year.

What happened to the third cauldron?

"*FIDELIUS!*" shouted Luna.

Luna Lovegood and the Fidelius Curse

- Part 11

Luna's mother climbed back into the vat of life-preserving liquid. Luna dragged her unconscious friend into the Entrance Chamber.

There were seven Unspeakables in the Entrance Chamber. The green brain-preserving liquid splashed across their shoes and into the bottom of their long, flowing ceremonial robes.

They looked down at Luna and her friend.

"I am honored to be welcomed into your ranks," bluffed Luna.

"*Expelliarmus!*" cast an Unspeakable.

Not again. The next time Luna went into battle she would tie her wand to her wrist with a strap. Or stick it to her hand with a charm. Or enchant the wand to return to her hand. But without her wand Luna couldn't do any of that. She couldn't cast her ridiculously overpowered spell.

When Luna read serialized fiction, it confused her how stories seemed to start over each book. A hero would discover the Chamber of Secrets in his second year and then in his third year it would be as if the second year had never happened. He would discover time travel in the third year and then in his fourth year it would be as if time travel was not possible.

Stories are modular because they are designed to be easy to understand. In real life, a hostile will throw memory modification, propaganda, reverse causality, traps, antimemes and cognitohazards at you all at once. That way it is maximally difficult for you to untangle rules and isolate variables.

Luna put her wrist between her teeth, ready to paint a transmutation circle in her own blood.

Wrong answer. Right answer but to the wrong question. If you cannot solve the puzzle then pick a different puzzle. If you are not sure what to do then just do the opposite of whatever you have been doing.

What is the countercurse to Fidelius?

Luna looked up at the Unspeakables.

The Secret Keeper couldn't counter the Fidelius Charm because the Secret Keeper revealing the secret of the Fidelius Charm was the Fidelius Charm working as intended. The Department of Mysteries did not know how to counter the Fidelius Charm.

The Secret Keeper sharing the secret didn't break the curse. It was part of the curse. The Fidelius Charm enforced the confidence of a secret. How do you end a secret

without breaking confidences?

Your rediscover it independently.

The most important part of any secret is the knowledge that a secret exists.

The Department of Mysteries is watching you.

Who wrote that?

"*Stupify!*" The seven instances of Kirito cast the spell simultaneously.

Luna Lovegood and the Fidelius Curse

- Part 12

"I didn't know you suffered from Spontaneous Duplication," said Luna.

"Your mother is safe in what's left of her tank. Let's modify these guys' memories and get out of here," said Luna's not-imaginary friend.

Six Kirito instances turned their Spimster wickets. One boy remained.

The Hufflepuff Common Room was as cozy as ever. It always had snacks. Luna, Fay and Kirito sat on fluffy sofas before the roaring fire. Technically Luna and Fay weren't supposed to be there but the Hufflepuffs didn't let rules get in the way of hospitality.

"What happened while I was unconscious?" asked Fay.

"I could tell you but you'd be happier if you figured it out yourself," said Luna.

"Fiiiiine," said Fay.

"Random question. Would you trade me and Kirito for the deepest secrets of the Universe? Hypothetically, of course," said Luna.

"What a silly choice. The secrets of the Universe would drive me insane," said Fay.

"Phew," said Luna.

"You're much worse," said Fay.

Luna tickled her. They chased each other around the Common Room and ended up back on the sofa.

"The Department of Mysteries is such a rip-off," said Fay.

"What do you mean?" said Luna.

"We never did cure my affliction. You know, the whole thing where nobody except you two know I exist? I thought there would be some sort of clue," said Fay.

"Sorry about that Fay. Maybe we'll figure it out on our next adventure," said Kirito.

"Wait a minute," said Fay. She got up.

"Where are you going?" said Luna.

"I'll be right back," said Fay.

The dungeons were the color of yin.

"Hello Professor," said Fay.

"Hello Ms. Li," said Lady Yue.

Lady Yue poured some 綠茶. Fay didn't give a damn how it was pronounced or how expensive it was. The student let the hot cup rest on the table, untouched and unappreciated.

"Who Fideiused Kirito?" said Fay.

"That is not my place to say," said Lady Yue.

"Who Fideiused this year's Defense Professor?" said Fay.

...

"Nevermind. Who Fideiused Chang'an?" said Fay.

"I did," said Lady Yue.

"Why?" said Fay.

"There was a war," said Lady Yue.

"You left us. Everyone who wasn't in the city when it was Fideiused," said Fay.

"There was a war," said Lady Yue.

"Was. The First Wizarding War ended decades ago. Historical context does not negate the fact that you sacrificed your own people," said Fay. She drew her wand.

"The price of secrets is you must take them to the grave," said Lady Yue.

Harsh words were said, there was a flash of green light and Chang'an rejoined the world.

This concludes *Luna Lovegood and the Fidelius Curse* .