

# The message in the candy wrappers

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*Ever since Neville can remember his parents have been in St. Mungo's, and every time he goes to visit them his Mum gives him an empty 'Drooble's Best Blowing Gum' wrapper.*

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# 1 - One

Neville sat quietly on the train home staring out the window his plant held securely on his lap. His thoughts drifted from one thing to another never quite settling on a single topic. He didn't even notice when Ron went in to an outrage over Ginny's newest choice in boyfriend.

"Ron!" came Hermione's annoyed voice, "can't you put your candy wrapper's in the dust bin like a normal person?" She was waving a discarded chocolate frog box under his nose.

"Candy wrappers have hidden messages in them," came a soft voice. Neville looked up before realizing it was only Luna Lovegood come to collect her Quibbler magazine back from Ginny who was currently doing a quiz. "Take Drooble's for example."

"Really?" said Hermione with an annoyed expression on her face. Luna only nodded.

"If you rearrange the letter's in the name you can get the words be strong, blue owls dig with the letters O, and M left over." Hermione snorted and Neville went back to watching out the window.

\* \* \*

Some days later Neville sat by his parents' beds in St. Mungo's. His father was currently asleep, but his Mum was sitting up and chattering, if pointing and gurgling could be called that. Neville had brought his school bag (intending to do his Potions and Herbology homework during lunch) and at one point his Mum dug out One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi and began pointing to the various flower pictures and matching them to the plants by the other occupant's beds. The nurse of course took this as a sign she was getting better. Neville didn't say anything.

About lunchtime Neville's Gran came to pick him up. As they reached the door his Mum came over with her usual 'Drooble's Best Blowing Gum' wrapper. "That's nice Alice dear," he heard his Gran say, and then another voice echoed through his head.

"Candy wrappers have hidden messages in them. Take Drooble's for example."

Turning he watched her climb back into bed a little sadly. "Mum wait!"

"Neville what . . ." ignoring his Gran he dropped his school bag into the chair beside the bed.

"Mum? Have you been trying to tell us something?" his Mum nodded and began rummaging through the bag. Pulling out a piece of parchment and a quill she pointed to them and then the gum wrapper several times before he understood what she wanted.

"You want me to write down the letters you point to?" Again she nodded.

It took three hours. Alice sometimes pointed to one letter and then made him cross it out and begin the word again. She would take the quill from him and put a large dot were the period should be. Other's she motioned for him to start a new line and several times she had him put an apostrophe where a letter she didn't have should be. Alice did however know exactly what she wanted to say, and she always made sure he knew where to begin a new word.

After a while she stopped pointing to letters and Neville put the quill down to read the page.

son

tell dumbledore to use stelh. 'e must see 'nd not be seen. The dementors 're loose, others 're gone to tom riddle.

Tell them in the ministrie. the' must be diligent to slow tom down. We must be toget'er to not let riddle near the muggles.

Dumbledore must no.

Trust onl' dumbledore 'nd the order. the order must try to bring riddle down. 'e will get 'ollowers. we must be strong.

Tell dumbledore. 'elp 'im. 'ou must ne'ille

Sto' tom riddle.

"Don't worry Mum. I'll try!" Neville said softly. Smiling she picked up the quill in both hands. At the bottom of the page in large shaky letters she wrote the words:

I love you my son