It All Started with a Book

by oabf45

Summary

Remus Lupin never thought that the day he met little Hermione Granger would be the day his life changed. And for the better! Read as this little girl changes a man’s life by showing him what love is, what a family looks like, and prove to him that life isn’t always so bad. And to think, it all started with a book. Remus/Hermione father/daughter relationship. Starts before Hogwarts. No pairings for kids decided yet. Possible certain Weasley bashing.

Notes

Hello! My name is Olivia, better known as Oliviaa Rose on Fanfiction.net. I'm known for my Harry Potter/Twilight crossovers, but this is not one of them. This is a story I have been working very hard on for some weeks on and I've finally decided to give it a shot and post it. I love the idea of Remus being a father figure to Hermione and I have this whole story planned out in my head. Now the only thing is to get it typed out! So I hope you enjoy the beginning of what can become great!
See the end of the work for more notes.
Meeting Hermione Granger

Hermione Granger was eight years old when he first met her. Remus Lupin had been sitting on a bench in a park nearby, reading one of his favorite books; The Giver. It was a bright and sunny day and Remus thought it’d be good to take a stroll through the old park. Though he didn’t live near the park, it was a part of his childhood neighborhood. His father, Lyall Lupin, lived only a few blocks down. His mother had died a few years ago, leaving his father a widower. After a nice, long walk through the beautiful park, listening to the sounds of children’s laughter and watching their parents look at them so lovingly, Remus had decided to take a seat at his usual bench and read under the shade of a great big oak tree. The park brought back so many great memories of his childhood. The childhood he had before everything went so wrong.

And he liked watching the children play. He didn’t mean it in a creepy way, but in a longing way. Growing up he’d always dreamed of having a big happy family with a bunch of little munchkins running around. He wanted a child to raise, to love, to see grow up and have children of their own. But he knew that’d never happen.

It had all started with a book. As he read he didn’t notice the little girl silently and hesitantly walk up to him, looking at his book with great curiosity.

“What are you reading?” she eventually asked, startling Remus from his reading. He looked up in surprise, his eyebrows rising at the sight of the little girl standing in front of him. She was a tiny little thing with a big, bushy mound of brown curls on her head. What stood out the most were her eyes, though. Her big, round doe eyes were a caramel brown with specks of gold in them. They shined with curiosity and wisdom that took Remus by surprise. She stood with her hands on her hips with her head slightly tilted to the side.

Remus cleared his throat, shaking away his surprise. “Uh, The Giver,” he answered, showing her the cover of the book.

Her eyes brightened and she grinned excitedly. ‘I’ve read that! Fantastic book, truly fantastic! The idea of a totally different, utopian world is fascinating! But also terrifying. I mean, to be in complete control under the government. Not being able to make your own decisions. Seeing no color and having no memories of what’s really out there. What’s the point of living if you can’t live the way you want to. The author tries to make it seem like it's this perfect world, but the true message is that no world is ever perfect, no matter how hard one might try and make it be. Brilliant!” the little girl rambled excitedly, bouncing as she lost herself in her own thoughts.

Remus looked at the little girl, amazed. This girl couldn’t have been more than eight, maybe nine, years old, yet she spoke with the wisdom of a grown woman. He could already tell she’d grow up to be very intelligent.

The girl looked up at him, as if suddenly realizing he was there, and looked abashed. “Oh! I’m sorry, how rude of me. I’ve yet to introduce myself. I’m Hermione Jean Granger. And you are?” she asked, holding out her hand.

Remus smiled kindly at the well mannered girl, Hermione, and took her small hand in his bigger one. “Remus Lupin. Lovely to make your acquaintance, Hermione Jean Granger.” he said, shaking her hand gently.

Hermione beamed. “Yours as well, Mr. Remus Lupin,” she said, and Remus grinned at how proud she sounded while formally stating her name.
“Tell me, Hermione,” he said, “how much do you like to read?”

Hermione’s smile widened. She climbed up and sat in the empty space on the bench besides him. After crossing her legs she looked up at him brightly. “I love to read! My mummy has an office full of books at home, but I’ve been through almost all of them.” Hermione cocked her head to the side, still looking up at him. “You know, I always see you here. You come every Wednesday and sit at this very bench with a different book. Today I decided I’d come and introduce myself.” Remus laughed at her proud expression for her decision.

“Are you here often?” he asked.

Hermione nodded. “Everyday. My mummy owns that bookstore over there,” she said, pointing to the small, brown, wooden building named A Bookworm’s World that was behind them on the other side of the road. “I get dropped off there after school and usually hang out here until my mummy comes to get me.”

“What about your father?” Remus asked.

At the mention of her father Hermione looked a little sad. “He died in a car crash last year.”

Remus looked at her, sorrow for this little girl filling his heart. “I’m sorry, dear,” he said genuinely.

Hermione looked up at him through her eyelashes and gave a small, sad smile. “It’s okay, sir. Mummy says he’ll always be right here,” she said, pointing to her heart.

Remus grinned at her innocence. “That’s right,” he said. “Tell me, Hermione, have you ever heard of a book called Little Women?”

Hermione immediately perked up. “No, sir.”

Remus’ grin widened. “Well, you should see if your mother has a copy in that bookstore of hers. I think you’d quite like it.”

Hermione shifted herself onto her knees and scooted closer to Remus, excitement lighting up her brown eyes. “What’s it about?” she asked anxiously.

“Well,” he started, “it’s about a family that go by the surname March. The March family consists of four girls and their mother. Now, they aren’t a wealthy family, no, not at all. But they learn throughout the book how to make the best of their situation and be grateful for what they do have.”

Hermione’s eyes were wide with curiosity. “What happens?” she asked.

Remus shook his head. “Ah, ah, ah, dear girl. I shan’t give it away. No, I will leave you to read it and find out for yourself.” Hermione pouted and Remus chuckled. “I will be here next Wednesday and every Wednesday after that. I expect you to have at least started the book by then.” Remus didn’t know why, but he felt an immediate attachment to Hermione and wished to see her again.

Remus looked amused as Hermione scoffed. “Puh-lease, I will have the book finished by the time we meet again,” she said confidently.

Remus laughed and gave her a warm smile as he stood. “I’m going to hold you to that, dear,” he said as he tapped her nose lightly.

Hermione giggled and smiled hugely up at him. “I promise.” Hermione held out her pinky expectantly. Remus’ smile widened at the gesture and he intertwined his larger pinky finger with
“Good.” They separated and Remus sighed, knowing it was time for him to depart. “Well, dear Hermione, unfortunately it is time for me to depart.” Hermione’s face fell and she nodded sadly. “I will see you Wednesday, my dear.” Hermione’s face visibly lit up once again and Remus grinned, happy to see her happy. “Until then, Hermione.”

“Until then, Mr. Lupin,” she replied.

“Remus, dear,” he said. “Call me Remus.”

With that Remus walked away, towards the woods. Hermione’s eyes followed him until he disappeared into the woods. As soon as he was out of sight she jumped up and ran across the street to her mother’s bookstore in hopes of finding Little Women.

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The next Wednesday Remus stuck true to his word and Hermione found him sitting on the same bench as the Wednesday before.

“A real view on life,” Hermione said as she neared him. Remus smiled and looked up from his book. “Although not everything is peachy, you can still achieve your dreams and be optimistic. That’s the message, I think. Some very sad parts, but very easy to relate to for many young girls like myself.”

Remus marked his page and set his book aside. “I thought you’d like it.”

Hermione sat next to him and grinned. “I loved it!” she exclaimed, said book clutched in her hands. “It really gives the moral of family and friends and how important they are. It was liberating. Especially learning about the roles of women during the Civil War. Fascinating.”

Remus was once again amazed by Hermione’s intelligence. “I’m glad you enjoyed it. It was my mother’s favorite book. She’d go on and on about it and some nights when I couldn’t sleep she’d read it to me.” Remus smiled fondly at the memories.

Hermione smiled, clutching the book tightly to her chest, as if scared someone would rip it from her grasp. She looked at the book he was currently reading and tilted her head. “You’re still reading The Giver?” she asked, sure he would have finished it by now.

Remus picked up the book. “More like rereading. It’s my favorite book and I never grow tired of it. Each time I read it I find something new. For example, I am at the part right before Jonas is assigned his job. He’s standing on the stage, looking out at the crowd in front of him. Now that he can see the color red he notices the bright red blush in everyone’s cheeks.” Remus looked down at Hermione, his eyes holding a knowing twinkle. “What do you think that suggests?”

Hermione tilted her head again, confused. “That they’re human?” she guessed.

Remus chuckled and shook his head. “Think harder, dear,” he said, staring at her with his gentle, all knowing look.

Hermione looked down at her lap, thinking hard. It took her a minute or two before it finally dawned on her. “They’re all white!” she exclaimed, staring up at Remus in excitable disbelief. “That’s the only way he’d be able to see their bright red blushes; if they all had white skin.”

Remus smiled proudly. “Excellent, Hermione.” Hermione swelled with pride at the praise.

“I never made the connection when I read it,” she said, shaking her head.
“Neither had I,” Remus said, “until I read it again.” He shook the book slightly in the air and grinned.

“For the thousandth time, I bet,” Hermione giggled.

“You’d win,” Remus teased, and Hermione continued to giggle.

“Do you have another book suggestion for me?” Hermione asked hopefully, ready to go at another new book.

Remus chuckled at her obvious excitement. He can’t remember the last time he’d seen such a young child be excited about reading. Remus looked around the park, watching the other kids play on the playground for a moment before asking, “Dear, why don’t you ever play with the other kids?”

Hermione looked over at the rowdy kids and grimaced. “They’re too loud, too rowdy. Even so, they don’t like me. They don’t like that I’m smart. The kids at school, they call me mean names, so I don’t talk to anyone. I mostly just stick to my books.” Hermione looked down sadly and Remus felt a sharp pang in his heart. He knew what it was like to be an outcast for being a nerd. Before Hogwarts he was often teased and picked on in his neighborhood for being the smart kid. He definitely felt for the girl.

“Don’t worry, child,” he said, lifting her chin to make her look at him. “They’re just jealous of you. They see how smart you are and they know that they can never live up to you. Instead of trying to, they decide to knock you down instead. Don’t let them knock you down, Hermione. You are strong. You are intelligent. You hold your head up high and show them that Hermione Granger will not be affected by their childish ways because in the end it’s you that will come out on top. Do you understand?” he said with all the passion in his heart, hoping Hermione would see truth in what he said.

She did.

Hermione stared at the man in front of her and felt a warmth fill her heart at each word he spoke. Never had anyone ever seem to believe in her so much besides her mother and father. She was an only child, she didn’t have any other relatives her age, and she never had any friends. Hermione was a lonely child. But listening to this man who had just met her a week ago defend her against not only them but herself also, Hermione knew that she finally had a friend.

Hermione nodded. “I understand.”

Remus nodded, smiling gently. “Promise you won’t ever, and I mean ever, let someone knock you down.” He held out his pinky, his smile teasing and knowing at the same time.

Hermione grinned widely at the familiar gesture and looped her small pinkie around his big one.

“I promise.”

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Remus and Hermione met in the park every Wednesday since the first for the next two months, and soon, it was summer time. Hermione and Remus would sit on their bench and some days they’d talk about a book Remus would have her read, some days Remus would read to her, but others they wouldn’t talk about books at all.

Hermione quickly realized that on few occasions where they met up Remus would look extremely pale and sickly. When she asked why he merely said he was prone to getting sick often, and she
dropped the subject, sensing he didn’t want to talk about it. Both were eternally grateful for each other’s presence, growing to greatly care for one another. Remus, after losing James and Lily to Voldemort, and Sirius betraying them and killing Peter, Remus was utterly alone. Well, not completely. He did have his good friend Kingsley Shacklebolt, but his friend was so busy at the Ministry they didn’t get many chances to meet up. Remus always dreamed of having a family of his own, but would never dare attempt to start one, not with his lycanthropy. He wouldn’t want to put a woman through that, and he certainly wouldn’t birth a child with the possibility of it getting his disease. He couldn’t bare it. But now having Hermione in his life, he felt less lonely. He felt as if she was his own.

It was now mid July and Remus once again sitting at their bench, waiting for his little companion.

“So you’re the man that my daughter never stops talking about,” said an almost angelic voice from behind him. Remus turned, startled, to see Hermione and a woman standing on the sidewalk. Hermione was holding the woman’s hand with a large smile on her face and she waved happily when he looked at them. The woman resembled Hermione greatly, from the bushy hair to the little button nose, and Remus knew immediately that this must have been her mother. Remus immediately stood, worry filling his heart. He never thought of what Hermione’s mother might think of her little girl going to the park every Wednesday to talk to some strange man. But the woman didn’t seem angry or cautious as she stood there with a warm smile and her green eyes lighting with pure kindness. Remus guessed Hermione got her eyes from her father.

Remus cleared his throat and held out his hand. “Mrs. Granger, pleasure to make your acquaintance. Hermione speaks very lovingly of you.”

Hermione and her mother both stepped forward. Hermione let go of her mother to stand on the bench between the two adults, and her mother shook his hand with her now free one. As soon as their hands touched and large shock ran up his arm and down his spine. He quickly stuffed down the gasp that tried to fight it’s way to surface as a pleasurable chill ran up his spine. Moony silently howled inside and seemed to become excited. Hermione’s mother tilted her head as she felt Remus tense up, wondering what was happened. Remus wondered the same. “Please,” she said, the smile never leaving her face, “call me Jocelyn.”

Remus smiled, recovering from his shock, and nodded. “Then I insist you call me Remus,” he said, slowly letting go of her hand.

“Remus it is then,” Jocelyn said softly. “I have to say, you’ve had quite an impact on my little Hermione.” Jocelyn smiled lovingly at her daughter, who looked between the two with a smile that lit up her face, which caused Remus to smile fondly. Jocelyn caught the action and immediately knew this man was no threat to her daughter.

Before Remus could reply, the sound of jingles reached their ears and the three turned to see an ice cream truck coming to a stop in front of the park.

Remus reached into his pocket and placed some money into Hermione’s hand. “Here, dear, why don’t you go and get yourself something sweet.” If it were possible Hermione’s smile brightened and, after getting a nod from her mother, she said her thanks before running off.

As soon as she was out of earshot Remus turned to her mother. “Listen, Jocelyn, please know that I mean no harm to your daughter. I would never dream of it. I know it’s a little strange, but—”

“Remus, Remus,” she cut him off gently, “I believe you. I’ll admit, I was a little wary when she told me about you, but she’s a smart girl and I trust her judgment. Plus, I was right across the street, so I always kept an eye on her. I can see how much you care for her and it’s very obvious that she’s quite
taken with you. I’d also like to thank you. She’s been so lonely and, since her father’s death, she hasn’t been her happy, excitable self. Now, it’s like she’s back to her old self. You did that. I am eternally thankful for that.”

A small red tint came to Remus’ cheeks as he rubbed the back of his neck awkwardly. He was never the best at taking compliments or gratitude. “It was nothing, Jocelyn. Really. She’s such a sweet girl and I enjoy her company. She doesn’t deserve the sadness that fills her heart, not when all she wants to do is fill others with happiness. She’s going to grow up to be such a lovely woman,” he said, meaning every word. Knowing how the other kids treated her filled him with anger. All he wanted to do was protect her from their cruel ways and harsh words.

Jocelyn looked at the man standing in front of her with respect. She smiled and said, “Well, still, I thank you. You gave me my Hermione back.”

At that moment said girl came bounding over, a chocolate pop in her hand. Hermione once again jumped onto the bench and Remus immediately grabbed her arm to steady her as she wobbled. When she regained her balance he let her go and Hermione smiled.

“Chocolate?” he asked.


“Mine too,” he winked and Hermione giggled.

Jocelyn smiled at the interaction. She turned to Remus and said, “So, Remus, tell me about yourself. What do you do for a living?”

Remus once again looked around awkwardly, stuffing his hands in his pockets. “I’m out of a job at the moment. I kind of jump around a lot, but nothing is ever stable. Not with my condition.”

“Condition?” she asked worriedly.

Remus cursed in head for his slip up. “Um, you see, I’m prone to sickness. I get sick about twice a month. The doctors have no idea what it is.” He hoped she bought it, and from the look on her face, it seemed she had.

“Oh, you poor dear. I’m sorry. That must be extremely hard.”

“It is, but I get by,” Remus said, shrugging.

Jocelyn stared at him, tilting her head. Remus smiled a little, now seeing where Hermione gets it from. He knew that tilt only meant two things; she was either curious or getting an idea.

She turned and looked at her bookstore across the street with interest. After a moment of thinking she pointed to it. “What about a job at my bookstore?” she asked.

Remus’ eyes widened and he looked at her like she had grown three new heads. “What?” he asked dumbly.

Jocelyn turned to look at him with a smile. “Come work at my bookstore.”

Remus laughed in disbelief. “I couldn’t—”

“Of course you could!” she exclaimed, a excited spark in her eye. “Look, I’ve been looking for more help. Right now it’s just me and Calvin, he’s a family friend. I need help moving boxes of books, my
tiny body isn’t that strong i’m afraid. And I could certainly use help at the counter, or cleaning and
organizing. You need a job and I need the help.” Jocelyn looked hopeful while Hermione just looked
plain excited.

Remus stared at the woman, truly believing she was crazy. “And my condition?”

“You can have those days off. Calvin and I will be able to handle it. He’s been looking for more
hours, so I’m sure he’d be happy to work your hours when you’re gone.”

Remus was about to deny it, not wanting her feel like she was required to give him a job, when
Hermione spoke up.

“Please work there Remus! Then we can see each other everyday! Please!” Hermione begged,
bouncing up and down while giving him her best puppy dog eyes. Remus knew it was inevitable.

Remus looked at Jocelyn and nodded. “I accept your offer. Thank you,” he said. He truly was
thankful for the offer.

Jocelyn grinned. “It’s the least I could do. So, how about you come in tomorrow afternoon so you
can sign a few papers and I can show you the ropes.”

Remus nodded. “Sounds like a plan. Would twelve o’clock suffice?” he asked.

Jocelyn nodded. “Sounds like a plan,” she teased, smiling and Remus matched her smile with one of
his own.

“Then I shall see you both tomorrow,” Remus concluded. He turned to Hermione and quickly
pecked her head, something he started to do a while ago whenever they departed. Maybe he was
becoming too attached to her, but Remus didn’t care.

Hermione giggled and hugged him quickly. “See you tomorrow!” she said happily, jumping down
from the bench and taking her mother’s hand.

Remus smiled fondly. “See you tomorrow, dear.”

Jocelyn smiled at the obvious affection and waved goodbye as she and Hermione walked to the
bookstore.

Remus watched them walk away, wondering if he had made the right decision of accepting
Jocelyn’s job offer.

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The next day Remus walked into the bookstore at twelve o’clock on the dot. He looked around,
smiling at the cozy looking store. Book shelves covered the walls and made aisles throughout the
store. Scattered throughout the aisles were little tables where people could read. Right next to the
door was the front counter. To the very left was a staircase that led up to a second floor balcony.
People littered around the store, looking through the shelves or reading a book.

“Remus!” Remus looked to see Hermione flying down the stairs and soon she was jumping into his
arms. Remus caught her and held her to his chest, hugging her. He was glad he got to see her sooner
than having to wait for a week. Looking around the store the shoppers either wore amused, fond, or
disgruntled expressions while the others ignored them completely, but Remus didn’t care.

“How are you, dear?” he asked.
“I’m spectacular now!” Hermione exclaimed happily, still hugging him around his neck. Remus laughed, but his heart filled with joy at her words.

“Little Bit, don’t kill the man before I can meet him!” came a voice from his right, and Remus turned to see a boy walking towards them pushing a cart of books. He was a tall kid that looked to be around sixteen or seventeen. He had dark brown skin and a clean shaven head. His facial features were sharp but as he neared he smiled widely, showing his pearly white teeth, and his face softened. When he was in front of the duo Remus found that his eyes were as dark as his skin, but they lit up with mischief and laughter. Remus was strongly reminded of James and Sirius and knew he’d like this boy.

As the boy opened his mouth to introduce himself, a lady sitting at a nearby table shushed them. He immediately turned to her and raised an eyebrow. “Lady, I don’t know who you’re shushing. This is a bookstore, not a library. I have full liberty to talk. If it annoys you so much you got two options; buy the book and leave or just leave.” The woman gaped, obviously affronted. She slammed the book she was reading shut and, grabbing her purse, she stormed out of the store. “Have a lovely day!” the boy shouted after her.

The boy turned to them with a smile, as if the whole ordeal hadn’t even happened. Hermione groaned a little, shaking her head and rolling her eyes. This suggested to Remus that this wasn’t the first time something like this had happened. “Hey, man,” the boy said, holding out his hand. “The name’s Calvin, nice to meet you.”

Remus chuckled. “Remus. Nice to meet you, too.” As Remus shook his hand it dawned on him that Calvin had an American accent. “You’re American.”

“That I am,” Calvin said jovially, chuckling. “I was born and raised in Rhode Island, America. When I was five my dad got a job opportunity here in England and, without a second thought, he packed us up and moved us here. I’ve lived here ever since. My mom often came in here and dragged me along. That’s how we met Jocelyn. I had, uh, been running around the store and knocked into a bookshelf, causing most of the books to fall off. My mom was furious, but Jocelyn was just laughing the whole time, reassuring us that it was okay.”

“And they’ve been my family ever since,” Jocelyn said as she descended the staircase. Today she wore her hair in a messy bun, but Remus thought she looked just as angelic as she did yesterday. As she stopped in front of them with a warm smile she greeted him, “Remus.”

Remus nodded to her. “Jocelyn,” he said.

Jocelyn gestured around her store. “So, what do you think?”

“I love it,” Remus said, taking another look around. “It’s very cozy looking.”

Jocelyn nodded, looking at her store fondly. “It is.” She turned to Hermione and said, “Darling do you mind helping Calvin put some books away while I get Remus situated?”

Hermione nodded and Remus put her down. “Yes, Mama,” she said obediently and Jocelyn smiled.

Calvin scooped Hermione up and placed her atop the cart. “C’mon, Little Bit, let’s go put these books away and then we can go and open the box of brand new books that Mama Lynn ordered,” he said, grinning as Hermione gasped in excitement.

“What are you waiting for?” she asked, bouncing where she sat. “Let’s go, let’s go, let’s go!”

“Okay!” Calvin laughed joyously, pushing the cart down an aisle. “We’re going, going, going!”
Remus laughed as they disappeared, Hermione and Calvin’s laughter still echoing throughout the store.

“Mama Lynn?” Remus asked.

Jocelyn rolled her eyes and laughed. “Calvin gives everyone he meets a nickname. I’m Mama Lynn, Hermione is Little Bit. It won’t be too long until you get one too.”

“He seems like a great kid,” Remus said.

Jocelyn nodded. “He really is. Three years after they moved here Calvin’s father died. Calvin was really depressed. Gone was the little mischievous boy and in it’s place was a quiet, sad one. It wasn’t until I had Hermione later that same year that he slowly came back to us. He’d play with her and make her laugh. He loved to hear her little giggles. He’s been like her brother all her life. Armelle, his mother, says if it wasn’t for my Hermione Calvin might not be the boy he is today. I like to think he would be, but it’s nice to also think she can have that much of an impact on someone.”

“She can,” Remus promised. Jocelyn looked at him and she knew he was talking about himself.

Jocelyn smiled, but did not reply. Instead she clapped her hands together and said, “Ready to get started?” she asked.

Remus took a deep breath and nodded. “Let’s get this show on the road.”

An hour later Remus had the papers all filled out and had been shown around the shop. He was now currently learning how to work the cashier. At first he had stared at the thing like it was a ticking bomb, causing Jocelyn to laugh. The warmth that filled his body at the sound blocked out his embarrassment. But eventually he got the hang of it.

He was leaning against the counter when Hermione walked up to him, clutching a book as usual.

“What you got there, dear?” he asked. Hermione reached up and placed the book on the counter in front of him. “Hatchet?”

Hermione nodded, a familiar twinkle in her eye. “It’s new. Just came out this year,” she said with enthusiasm. Remus smiled seeing her usual excitement at a new book. “Read it with me?”

Remus sighed, knowing that he couldn’t say no. He reached over the counter and picked her up, sitting her down on the counter. He picked up the book and opened it to the first page, beginning to read the first chapter.

As he read Hermione paid rapt attention to every word he spoke. She loved when Remus read to her. She like hearing his voice. Occasionally he’d have to stop to ring someone out, but it was relatively peaceful.

Neither one noticed Jocelyn watching them from the balcony above, her body warming at the site below.

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The rest of June flew by, along with the month of July, and soon it was August. Remus spent everyday with the Grangers and Calvin, loving his new job and new friends. If it were possible Remus and Hermione became even closer. He truly did look at her as if she were his own child. Everytime he entered the store she’d be there to greet him with a smile and a warm hug. At least three days out of the week he’d take her out to lunch and Calvin would sometimes join, if the store
was really empty. And on Wednesdays they’d go to their bench at the park and have their private
time together. She even started to call him Moony after he told her about the nicknames he and his
friends all had.

Calvin absolutely loved Remus, happy to have another male around. He’d talk to the older man
about anything and Remus would always listen. Remus was happy to have Calvin around, the
younger boy reminding him of James and Sirius with his constant happy attitude and joking manner.

Then there was Jocelyn. No matter how much Remus tried to deny it he was definitely developing
feelings for the warm woman. Remus had never met anyone like her before. She was intelligent and,
what you could describe as, a “good girl”, but she had one big funny bone and her humor never left
him bored in her presence. Whether they were talking about a book, joking around, or telling one
another about their lives he loved being in her presence. It didn’t help that, at least in his eyes, she
was drop dead beautiful. The way her light brown hair fell in ringlets over her shoulders and down to
her waist, how it seemed to crackle when she got mad or excited. Her green eyes that’d light up
when she was really happy or curious. Those plump lips she’d chew on when she was thinking
especially hard or if she had something she wanted to say but wasn’t sure on whether or not she
should. The way her little button nose would scrunch up when she was concentrating hard on
something or when she disagreed. Her tiny, delicate hands that would often rest on his arm, it’s
warmth seeping through his clothes. Her tiny body that, though looked delicate, held so much
confidence and strength. But what amazed him the most was her smile. Her gorgeous, radius smile
that would light up not only a room, but his heart.

Though Remus tried with all of his might to push those feelings away he knew it was inevitable. He
was falling fast and hard. And it didn’t help that Moony loved both of the Granger girls, seeing them
both as his. Moony purred in satisfaction every time Hermione called Remus ‘Moony’.

But Remus wouldn’t allow it. If Remus wasn’t who he was then he would have tried to seduce her
by now. But he was who he was; a man who turned into a monster every full moon. No. Jocelyn and
Hermione were both too precious for him. He’d accept their friendship, but he’d keep his disease and
his magic a secret for as long as he could.

Hopefully forever.

It was the second day of August when he walked in. Remus hardly recognized him. He was still
intimidatingly tall, his body was still very strong, his skin was still dark, and his head was still bald.
No, the reason Remus had to do a double take was because he was wearing muggle clothing. Gone
were his purple Auror robes and in their place was a purple, loose fitting, button up shirt, dark blue
casual jeans, and black shoes. He looked completely muggle.

“Kingsley?” Remus said in surprise.

Kingsley turned to the counter he had passed when he came in, not noticing his long time friend
standing there. He grinned. “Remus!” he boomed. “My good friend, how are you doing?”

“I’m doing great,” Remus said, walking to the other side of the counter to hug his friend in greeting.
“How are you doing? What are you doing?”

“I’m here to see you, of course,” Kingsley said jovially. “When you wrote me about this place and
what you’ve been doing lately I had to come see for myself. Today is my day off and I thought my
niece and I could stop by on our way to the park.”

It was then that Remus noticed the little girl standing behind Kingsley at the door. She small, but a
little taller than Hermione. She had skin a little lighter than Kingsley’s and dark brown hair that was
in many braids that reached the middle of her back in it’s ponytail. Her face was heart shaped with a small but plump nose and bushy eyebrows. All in all; she was adorable.

Her brown eyes met his and she smiled, showing him the gap in her teeth. “Hello, I’m Rose,” she said politely.

Remus smiled down at her. “I’m Remus. Nice to meet you.”

“Who are your friends?” They all turned to see Hermione standing behind Remus with a book clutched to her chest.

“Hermione,” Remus smiled, gesturing for her to come closer. When she was beside him he introduced her. “This is Hermione. Hermione, this is my good friend Kingsley Shacklebolt and his niece Rose Wriley.” Remus remembered going to Kingsley’s sister, Annalie’s, wedding. They used to be quite close, but had lost touch over the years.

Hermione smiled at them both. “Nice to meet you both.”

Kingsley grinned. “Pleasure is mine!” he boomed and Hermione jumped at the sudden noise.

Rose rolled her eyes at her uncle and stepped in front of Hermione. “Ignore him. He’s too jolly for his own good. He’s like a dark Santa Clause.” The two girls burst into giggles at his affronted expression, Remus trying hard not to laugh also. “Hey,” Rose suddenly said, “you want to go play in the park?” she asked.

Hermione looked very surprised at the offer, obviously never having been asked this question before. When Remus saw her expression his heart fell, upset that she had no friends her age all because of her intelligence.

“Um,” she looked up at Remus, almost asking him whether she should or not. Remus nodded with a reassuring smile. “Sure,” she finally said, a radiant smile lighting up her face, immediately making Remus feel better.

“Let’s go!” Rose said, grabbing Hermione’s hand and rushing out of the store.

Kingsley looked at Remus when the door closed behind the girls. “Why was she so shocked?” he asked.

Remus sighed and ran a hand through his hair in frustration. “She doesn’t have any friends. Kids at her school outcast her for the sole reason the she’s intelligent and she knows it.”

Kingsley shook his head. “Unbelievable. Well, if she and Rose hit it off I have no problem bringing her over more often.”

Remus smiled. “I think she’d like that. She needs to learn it’s okay not to always have her head in a book and have fun. She’s counted on books for companionship all her life.”

“Poor girl,” Kingsley said, shaking her head. He then gave Remus a knowing look. “I can see why you’re so attached. She’s a mini, female you,” he chuckled and Remus rolled his eyes. Kingsley followed him as he moved back behind the counter. Kingsley looked around. “This is a cozy little shop.”

“It is,” Remus nodded. “Jocelyn, Hermione’s mother, worked hard on it. She’s really proud of it, and she should be.”
Kingsley looked at his friend closely. “What’s that?”

Remus looked at him in obvious confusion. “What’s what?” he asked.


Remus narrowed his eyes. “Don’t start,” he said threateningly, but it had little effect on Kingsley as his smirk just widened.

“It’s already begun,” Kingsley said and Remus groaned. “Have you done anything about it?” he asked.

Remus, knowing there was no point in trying to hide it from his perceptive friend, sighed. “Nothing.” Kingsley blinked. “Nothing?” he asked. When Remus nodded Kingsley groaned and rolled his eyes. “Why not?”

“Why do you think!” Remus exclaimed before lowering his voice. “Maybe it’s because I’m a wizard and she’s a muggle. Or maybe it’s the fact that I’m a freaking werewolf!” he whispered angrily.

“Remus,” Kingsley sighed. “How many times do I have to tell you that you’re not a monster? Sure, you turn into a great big beast once a month, but you’ve never harmed anyone!” Remus shook his head, mindlessly going through paperwork on the counter. Kingsley leaned forward and said, “Even werewolves deserve happiness, Remus.”

Remus looked up and just stared at him for a moment, contemplating everything he had said. Remus shook his head when a sliver of hope crept in, not allowing it. “I am happy,” he said determinedly. “I like working here, I like having Hermione and Jocelyn in my life as friends and Calvin is a great companion. This is enough for me.”

“It won’t always be,” Kingsley stated. “Sooner or later it’s just not going to be enough. I know you look at that little girl like she’s yours, and why can’t she be? And why can’t Jocelyn be yours too? You have a real chance at a family here. Don’t throw it away, Remus.”

Remus just stared at him. Say he was right. Say Remus decided to throw caution to the wind and try to make these Granger girls his family. The real question was; would they even want to be? Would they accept his magic, or even his disease? Would Jocelyn be ready after only losing her husband a few months ago? And what about Hermione?

“You won’t know unless you try,” Kingsley said.

Remus looked at him, startled. Then his expression turned angry. “Did you use Occlumency on me?” he demanded.

Kingsley chuckled. “No, you’re just extremely easy to read.” Remus rolled his eyes and Kingsley continued to laugh.

“Hey Remmy,” Calvin said, bounding down the stairs. “I have to label these new books. Should Spycatcher go under history or action?”

“History,” Remus said.

Calvin nodded. “I had thought so, but I had wanted to check with King Bookworm,” Calvin grinned cheekily and Kingsley boomed a laugh. Calvin jumped and seemed to just notice the large man
standing beside him. His eyes grew wide as he looked up at him. “Dang man, way to make a homie feel self conscious,” he joked and Kingsley laughed again. “I'm Calvin by the way.”

“Kingsley,” Kingsley said.

Calvin nodded in greeting before turning back to Remus. “Where’s Little Bit?”

“In the park playing with Kingsley’s niece, Rose,” Remus said.

Calvin blinked. Once. Twice. Three times. Then he raised an eyebrow. “Hermione Granger . . . playing in the park? Since when does that happen?” he asked incredulously.

“Since someone asked her,” Remus replied. Calvin’s expression turned sad as he nodded.

“Well, I think it’s great she’s finally getting her head out of a book and having some fun,” Calvin said, his smile returning. It was never gone for too long. “At least,” he said as an afterthought, “I hope she’s having fun.”

xXx

Hermione was having a great time with Rose, the two becoming immediate friends. Hermione couldn’t be more excited to finally have a friend. Rose didn’t judge her or stop her when she went on some know-it-all mini rant or state random facts. If anything Rose added her own two sense. Rose also made sure Hermione had fun. They climbed the monkey bars, swung high on the swings, and slid down the slides, all while giggling madly. Hermione liked Rose. She was loud and outgoing. Hermione could tell she was one that didn’t give much thought to what others thought of her and wouldn’t be one to mess with. She had a fiery attitude, but she was fun.

They were currently trying to build a sandcastle in the sandbox without the aid of water. Hermione giggled as their little “towers” crumbled in their hands.

“I don’t think this working,” she giggled.

Rose joined her and grinned down at their mess. “I think you’re right.”

“Look who came out of her dusty dungeons,” a shrill voice yelled behind them and Hermione immediately tensed. Rose’s smile was placed with a scowl and both girls turned to see who had said such a thing.

Standing behind them were three girls. The girl on the left was smaller than the other two with brown pigtails and army green eyes. The girl on the right was a little taller than the first. She had red hair that fell in soft curls and big brown eyes with freckles running across her nose. The middle girl, the one that had spoken, was taller than both of them. She had perfectly straight, blond hair with a pink bow headband. Her blue eyes shone with maliciousness as she stared at the two girls.

“If it isn’t Harmony Granger,” the blonde said hauntingly.

Rose immediately stood, Hermione not far behind. The latter filled with dread, not looking forward to the torture that was sure to come with their visit. “It’s Hermione,” Hermione said timidly.

The blonde looked at her with fake surprise. “Oh! I could of sworn it was Harmony,” she mocked and her friends laughed.

Hermione crossed her arms and looked at the ground. “What do you want Marissa?” she asked quietly, hoping this would end soon.
“Oh, I was just wondering what finally made you come out of that dusty, old box your mum calls a bookstore.”

Rose growled as Hermione looked down at her feet. “Back off,” she spat.

The blonde, Marissa, looked at her as if just noticing that she was there. “Who are you?” she asked rudely.

“I’m Hermione’s friend.”

Marissa looked at Hermione in surprise. “You have those?”

“Yes,” Rose snapped forcefully, “she does. And if I were you I’d take a huge step back. Preferably back to the hole you climbed out of.”

“You know, I have to say,” Marissa said, ignoring Rose’s threat, “she’s an improvement from that grubby looking guy you’re always hanging around.”

Hermione’s head snapped up at that, knowing she was talking about Remus.

“You know, the one that always looks so dirty and raggedy. The homeless looking man,” Marissa continued.

“Shut up,” Hermione snapped, though softly.

Marissa ignored her. “Not that I’m surprised. I mean, it’s not like anybody with class would want to hang out with you.”

“Shut up,” Hermione said again, this time louder with more force. But, once again, she was ignored.

“Speaking of nasty, grubby men,” Marissa said with a smirk, “how’s your father doing? Still rotting in the ground?”

“SHUT UP!” Hermione exploded. Suddenly there was a loud bang and the sandbox behind Hermione and Rose exploded. The only thing was, the sand seemed to fly right over them and only land on the three girls in front of them. Rose and Hermione gasped as the girls were covered head to toe in sand.

Marissa and her friends screamed as they were covered in sand. When the flow of sand ended they tried to shake it off only to find that it wouldn’t come off. They wiped at it and tried to scratch it off but no budge. The sand was sticking to their bodies! Everyone in the park stopped what they were doing and stared at the scene in shock.

Rose was looking at Hermione with wide eyes. There was only one explanation for what just happened. Hermione was a witch!

“What did you do?!?” Marissa screeched, knocking Rose out of her musings.

Hermione shook her head in fear and surprise. “I-I-I don’t-” she stuttered, her eyes as wide as saucers.

“You freak!” Marissa screamed, still trying to rub the sand off her body.

“C’mon,” Rose said quietly, taking Hermione’s hand. “C’mon, we have to get out of here.” Rose ran for the bookstore, practically dragging a hysterical Hermione after her.
When they entered the store Remus, Kingsley, and Calvin were still at the front counter. When they saw the girls their smiles immediately dropped at the sight of Hermione sobbing and Rose’s shocked expression.

“Hermione!” Remus exclaimed, rushing to the girl and scooping her up into his arms. She buried her face into the creek of his neck and continued to sob. “What happened?” Remus demanded.

Seeing that Hermione was in no shape to answer, Rose did instead. “Well, we were having a great time! We played on the playground and were goofing around. We were in the sandbox trying to build a sand castle when these three mean girls came over and started harassing Hermione. One of the girls, Marissa,” Calvin groaned angrily, obviously having heard this name before, “started saying all these horrible things about her mom and this bookstore. When she started on Remus, Hermione got mad and kept telling her to shut up, but she wouldn’t listen. Then she said a horrid thing about her father and Hermione just exploded. Then the sandbox blew up!”

“What?!” the men all shouted in surprise.

“What do you mean the sandbox blew up?” exclaimed Jocelyn, coming down the stairs. She had heard the commotion from upstairs and had just made it to the balcony in time to hear the story. She took a quick moment to admire how tenderly Remus held Hermione, rubbing her back and rocking her back and forth. Jocelyn shook herself out of her silly thoughts as she neared them. She ran her fingers through Hermione’s hair, but made no move to take her from Remus, who looked as if he was never going to put her down.

“It went ‘BOOM’!” she made an exploding motion with her hands. “But the thing is, all of the sand from the sandbox only fell on Marissa and her cronies. And it wouldn’t come off! No matter what they tried to do the sand would not leave their bodies!” Rose looked at her uncle and she knew he was thinking the same as she.

Kingsley looked at Remus, to the girl in his arms, the back to him. He raised an eyebrow and Remus shook his head.

“Impossible,” Remus denied, not at all letting any hope creep into him.

“It is possible, and you know it,” Kingsley replied. Remus shook his head again. What were the chances that the girl he came to care so much about was a muggleborn witch?

“What are you two talking about?” Jocelyn demanded, looking between the two.

The two men stared at one another for a moment before Remus sighed and nodded.

Turning to Jocelyn he said, “It’s best we discuss this in your office, away from prying ears.” He looked around and noticed a few shoppers giving them curious looks. Jocelyn nodded in agreement. Remus then turned to Kingsley. “Do you mind taking care of the people in the park?”

“I’m on it,” Kingsley said and promptly strode out of the bookstore.

Remus gestured for the others to follow him and they all trudged up the stairs and into the small office on the second floor. The office was a good size with tan walls and brown, wood flooring. There was a big, oak wood desk at the back wall with a computer and paperwork littered across the top, and a black swivel chair behind it. In front of the desk sat two green two people couches placed at an angle. The wall to the left consisted of three tall bookshelves, while the wall to the right had a bunch of framed pictures.

Remus sat on one of the couches, Jocelyn sitting beside him and Calvin and Rose sitting on the other
couch. As he placed Hermione in his lap he gingerly detached her arms from around his neck and pulled her back so he could see her face. Seeing her tear stained face broke his heart. Inside him Moony growled. How dare someone hurt his pup!

Remus gently wiped her cheeks and she sniffed sadly. “Hermione,” he said gently. She looked at him with a sad gaze, her big, doe, brown eyes glazed with tears. “I have to ask you something and I need you to answer me honestly,” he said and she nodded. “What happened today, with the sandbox blowing up, has anything like that ever happened before? An abnormal accident that you couldn’t explain?”

Hermione started to tear up again and he knew her answer. He wiped the tears as they fell and looked to Jocelyn for an answer.

Jocelyn sighed. “One time a few months ago those girls, Marissa and her friends, were making fun of Hermione in their science class. There had been this tank full of frogs, you know, like class pets. Well, suddenly the glass broke and all the frogs jumped out and started after the girls. The frogs wouldn’t stop hopping after the girls for the whole day.”

Calvin chuckled and Remus couldn’t help but join him. The image in his mind was too perfect. Jocelyn looked at him as if he was crazy and he stopped, coughing in hopes of covering it up.

Remus looked down at Hermione and smiled gently. “Hermione, there is nothing wrong with you. I promise you. There’s a reason you can do what you can.” Hermione looked up at him, her curiosity taking over. Remus took a deep breath. It’s now or never, he thought. “Hermione . . . you’re a witch.”

“What?” Hermione exclaimed, tearing up again.

“Remus!” Jocelyn yelled in astonishment. Calvin guffawed in disbelief.

“No, no, no!” Remus yelled, shaking his head frantically. “I didn’t mean it as an insult. No, of course not! What I meant was you’re an actual witch, as in the magical kind.” This shut everyone up as everyone, but Rose, stared at him in surprise and confusion.

“Remus,” Jocelyn said cautiously, “what are you talking about?” she asked.

Remus ran a hand through his hair, a sign that told Jocelyn he was getting frustrated.

“Okay,” he said, taking a deep breath. “Jocelyn, Hermione is a witch. Just as Rose is. And I am a wizard, as is Kingsley. Yes, witches and wizards are real. And I know you think I’m completely insane, but I can prove it,” he said all this very quickly, but clearly. He handed Hermione to her mother and took out his wand. Jocelyn, Calvin, and Hermione were all looking at him in caution, but also in curiosity.

Remus pointed his wand at the bookshelf and, with a flick of his wrist, all the books on the shelves started to float around the room. They all stared in complete wonder at the books, wondering if this were real or not.

“Is this really happening?” Jocelyn whispered, eyes wide.

“Yeah,” Remus replied, staring at her, afraid of her reaction.

“Awesome!” Calvin yelled, a wide smile on his face as he flicked a book and it floated away from him. Remus chuckled and used his wand to put the books back in their original place.
Remus took Hermione back and placed her in his lap again. He looked into her eyes and said softly, “Hermione, there is nothing wrong with you. You’re not a freak or a weirdo. You’re a witch. If anything, you’re more special than any of those girls that teased you. You have even more power to be something great one day, more so than those girls could ever dream of being. Always remember that, Hermione.”

Hermione stared at him, slowly getting over the shock that not only was magic real, but she was also a witch. She could do magic! Hermione felt as if a huge weight had been lifted off her shoulders after finally learning why exactly she could do what she could. Remus smiled at her before turning to Jocelyn, his expression becoming apprehensive. “How are you doing, you know, with all of this?” he asked.

Jocelyn blinked a few times, getting her thoughts together. “Well,” she finally said, “it’s a lot to take in. I mean all my life the only magic you’d ever find was in a fairytale. And now I find out that magic is, in fact, real. It destroys all laws of logic,” she laughed, a little hysterically. She twisted a strand of hair frantically around her finger, trying to stay calm. Then she looked at Remus. She looked at his worried expression, at how his hand slightly shook as he held her child, the fear that was hiding in the corner of his heart that you could only see if you looked hard enough. He was scared she’d reject him. That they all would reject him.

But she never could. Remus could tell her he was the Devil himself and she probably still couldn’t reject him. And being magic didn’t seem to be a bad thing.

“But . . . if you’re a wizard then being magical can’t be bad. You turned out great.” The expression that came to Remus’ face couldn’t be described, but it sent a pleasurable shiver down her spine and suddenly she was breathless.

“S-So, what happens now?” she stuttered slightly, her face heating up.

Remus cleared his throat. “Well, first things first, not a word of this can be spoken to anyone else. Not other family members, no friends. This stays between the people in this room and Kingsley. Understood?” When everyone nodded he continued, “Okay, next; Hogwarts.”

“Hoggy-what?” Calvin asked, his face contorting in disgust.

Remus chuckled. “Hogwarts. It’s a school for young wizards and witches.”

Calvin’s expression didn’t change. “Were they on drugs when they named that school?” he asked.

“Calvin!” Jocelyn reprimanded while Remus just laughed.

“Anyways,” Remus continued, looking at Hermione, “when you turn eleven years old you’ll get a letter of acceptance from a boarding school called Hogwarts, School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Every young witch or wizard must go to this school so they can learn how to control their magic.” Remus was now speaking to both Hermione and Jocelyn. “If you don’t go you won’t learn how to control your magic or how to even use it properly. Rose will be attending too.” Rose nodded, grinning.

“I wanna go!” Hermione exclaimed excitedly, all traces of tears gone. She turned to her mother and pouted. “Pleeeeeease.”

Jocelyn laughed, petting her hair. “Of course you’re going! I’d never deny you your education,” she said.

Both Hermione and Rose squealed. Both stood and started dancing around holding hands. “We’re
Calvin got up and started dancing with them. “I’m not going to Hogwarts, but yay!” he yelled. The adults smiled fondly at the scene of Calvin twirling around with a giggling Rose and Hermione in his arms.

“There’s one more thing I have to tell you guys!” Remus yelled above the noise. The children immediately sobered up at the serious look on his face. He sighed and Jocelyn could see how troubled he was.

She placed her hand on top of his and he looked at her with a start. Jocelyn smiled. “It’s okay. You can tell us anything.”

Remus took a deep breath. Now was as good a time as any. “You know that condition I told you I have?” he asked and everyone nodded. “Well it’s a magical one. You see... I’m a werewolf.” He looked around at their shocked expressions. Though he didn’t want to, he carried on. “The reason I’m out at least three days a month is because I turn into a werewolf every full moon.”

There was a moment of silence as everyone thought over what he just told them. Remus held his breath, waiting for them to kick him out, not wanting such a dangerous beast around.

Instead, Calvin laughed in disbelief. “That’s so awesome!”

Remus’ eyes widened. He shook his head frantically and said, “No, it is anything but awesome! I am dangerous! I am a monster!”

“No you’re not,” the exasperating, but firm voice of Kingsley said as he entered the room. He walked over and leant on the desk directly in front of Remus.

The two glared at each other.

“Kingsley—”

“Don’t ‘Kingsley’ me, Remus,” Kingsley said, crossing his arms over his chest. “You are not a monster. You need to get that through your head! You want to know who’s a monster? Greyback. That’s a monster. He’s evil and ruthless and uses his form to harm others. He loves being a werewolf just because it gives him power over the weak. You are nothing like that, Remus!”

Remus shook his head, running his hand through his hair for the third time today. “I would never voluntarily harm another, but in my wolf form I don’t have control over what I do!”

“You do when you take the Wolfsbane Potion!”

“Even then I don’t have complete control!”

“Have you ever harmed someone?” Jocelyn cut in abruptly.

Remus stared at her, for a moment forgetting that they were all still there. He shook his head.

“Ever killed anybody?”

Another shake of the head.

“Then I say you have a good enough control over yourself,” Jocelyn stated.

Remus stared at her, his mouth slightly agape. Slowly getting out of his shock, he shook his head.
“Jocelyn—”

“No,” Jocelyn said firmly, glaring at him. Remus knew that when she glared it meant shut up and shut up quickly. “Now you listen to me. We accept you for everything that you are. Wizard, werewolf—”

“Dork,” Calvin cut in.

Jocelyn laughed. “That too.” Her face grew serious again. “So, you’re a werewolf. Who cares if you turn into a dog with big teeth once a month? That is a part of you, but it does not define you. Remus you are one of the sweetest guys I’ve ever met. Whether you like it or not, you are a part of this family. No condition is going to change that,” she lectured with passion and Remus admired the way her eyes lit up.

Remus didn’t know what to do. Family. She said he was a part of her family. That’s all he ever really wanted, really. A family of his own. He was speechless, not knowing how to argue. They were new to all this. They didn’t know just how dangerous a werewolf is. They didn’t understand what they were getting themselves into.

Remus was knocked out of his musings by the feeling of little arms wrapping around his torso. He looked down to see Hermione standing between his legs, hugging him tightly with her head buried in his chest.

“You’re not bad, Moony,” she said into his chest. She looked up at him with her eyes wide with innocence. “I love you, Moony,” she said softly, burying her head back into his chest.

Remus looked down at her in shock. And slowly, as she continued to hug him, he was filled with complete and utter bliss. Moony purred in content.

And so did Remus.

xxXxx

To say that Remus was living the dream would be an understatement. Remus was the happiest he’s ever been in his entire life.

After revealing his secret to his new friends Remus felt like a huge weight had been lifted off his shoulders. And over the past three months things seemed to be even better than before.

Hermione was nothing but curious about the wizarding world and took every moment she could to learn about it. She asked both Remus and Kingsley, who was now a regular visitor, a million questions a day, and Remus was only too happy to answer, loving to see her so happy and excited. And with Kingsley coming over at least two to three times a week now, Rose would always tag along, wanting to hang out with her new friend.

When September rolled around so did Hermione’s ninth birthday. They had celebrated it, of course, and Remus went to the Grangers house for the first time. It was a nice, cozy little home that he had thought was perfect for the duo. The party was small, but it was great all the same. Kingsley and Rose had showed up, Rose giving Hermione a wizarding children's book ‘The Tales of Beedle the Bard’, which she absolutely adored. They had all had a nice dinner full of stories and laughter, which warmed all of their hearts. Jocelyn had informed Remus after the party that it was the best she’d ever had.

Remus and Calvin had formed a sort of brotherly bond, and Remus finally got to meet his mother, Armelle, at Hermione’s party. She was a petite woman with milk chocolate skin, an abundance of
brown curls on her head, a large, playful smile, and brown eyes that sparkled with the same mischief as Calvin’s. They had immediately gotten along upon meeting, and he could see where Calvin got his playful and cheerful attitude from.

On top of everything else, Remus and Jocelyn had gotten extremely close. Where one was the other was close by. Whether it was while they were working, Remus working the front counter and Jocelyn putting books away nearby, or after work, hanging out at the Granger’s house or the two of them and Hermione going out for dinner. To anyone that didn’t know any better they looked like a typical couple. And the secret looks they’d shoot each other when they thought the other wasn’t looking didn’t help the matter. But no matter how many glances and soft smiles they passed to each other, Remus still couldn’t work up the courage to ask her out. Calvin thought he’d pull his eyeballs out if Remus didn’t ask her out soon. His exact words being, “Remus if you don’t hike up your skirt and ask that woman out I may die from suffocating on all of this thick, disgusting, sexual tension.”

Remus didn’t know what exactly was holding him back from doing so. He figured it was a mixture of fear of rejection and losing the family he had come to care about so dearly.

Christmas had come and gone in a flash, but it was the best Christmas he’d ever had. Jocelyn had invited him to sleep over on Christmas Eve, claiming that no one should be alone during this time of the year. The next morning he was promptly awoken by Hermione jumping on his bed screaming at him to get up. Usually not a morning person, Remus couldn’t help but wake with a smile as he watched Hermione giggle and sing as she jumped on his bed, wishing he could spend every Christmas like this. The morning had proceeded with exchanging gifts and joyous laughter. And it stayed that way up until dinner, where Calvin and Armelle had joined them for dinner.

And now it was New Year's Eve and Remus truly believed that he had had the best year ever. He couldn’t wait for the next one to come.

“Hermione, dear, are you ready to go see the fireworks?” Remus yelled up the stairs. He was currently in the Granger house waiting for the girls to come down from getting changed. They were going to meet Calvin, Armelle, Kingsley, and Rose in the park for the annual New Year’s dance.

Remus heard the sound of tiny feet pattering against the rug flooring upstairs and grinned as Hermione rounded the corner and stood at the top of the stairs. She wore a red dress that had a glittery skirt and had a glittery, silver headband in her hair. “Why, don’t you look pretty.”

Hermione giggled and twirled, looking down at the dress. “Why, thank you, kind sir,” she said, while curtseying. He chuckled as she skipped down the stairs and came to stand beside him. “Mommy looks pretty, too.”

At that moment the clicking of heels brought his attention back to the top of the stair case. When Jocelyn rounded the corner Remus felt his breath catch in his throat. Her soft curls were elegantly pinned up with a few strands falling loose. She wore a blue dress that stopped just above her knees and stuck to her body like a second skin, accentuating her curves. Diamonds went up the sides of the dress and on the straps that went around her neck. She wore little to no makeup, but Remus didn’t think she needed any.

As she descended and came to stand in front of him and Hermione he couldn’t stop staring into her eyes.

“You look . . .” he started, trying to find the word to define her beauty, “exquisite.”

She smiled warmly at him, her eyes filled with joy. “Thank you,” she said softly. She looked him up and down and her smile widened. “And may I say, you look quite dashing yourself.”
He chuckled and looked down at the suit he was wearing. “Why thank you,” he replied, and looked at her again.

They stood there staring at one another until Hermione decided to interrupt. “Can we go now?” she asked impatiently.

The two looked away from one another, abashed.

Remus chuckled down at her. “Of course, m’lady,” he said, and she giggled. He offered her his hand and Jocelyn his arm. Jocelyn’s smile brightened as she took his arm, and he reveled in the touch of her hand. He grinned as he took a hold of Hermione’s small hand, and together they left the house and started the walk to the park, which was right around the corner.

Upon arriving at the park they could see the dance in full swing. The whole neighborhood was there, all in their best dresses and suits. They were dancing and eating, and some of the kids were playing on the playground.

The group of three quickly spotted the others sitting at one of the picnic tables and headed their way.

Calvin was the first to spot them and whistled when he saw Jocelyn.

“Mama Lynn, you’re lookin’ fine tonight,” he said, standing up to kiss her cheek. Jocelyn laughed and thanked him before letting go of Remus to hug and kiss Armelle. Calvin turned towards Hermione and his grin widened. “But no one can hold a candle to this gorgeous beauty,” he said, picking her up and twirling her around. She laughed and kissed his cheek as he held her in his arms. “Now, if ya’l don’t mind, I am going to take these two lovely ladies,” he held out a hand to Rose, who grinned and took it, “and go dance.”

With that Calvin took the two giggling girls to the dance floor, where he proceeded to twirl them around and dance. Jocelyn and Armelle smiled at the sight of their children and smirked at the looks other girls were giving Calvin.

“Handsome, funny,” Armelle started.

“And great with kids,” Jocelyn continued, shaking her head with a smile. “He’s going to be a heartthrob.”

“If he isn’t already,” Kingsley laughed, watching the young boy twirl his niece.

They all laughed and spent the next few hours talking and laughing and just having a good time together.

A few minutes before midnight the girls left to get a drink and Kingsley took this time to talk to Remus.

“Remus,” he started and Remus groaned, causing Kingsley to grin.

“Are we going to do this now?”

“Yes! It’s New Year’s Eve, Remus! Wouldn’t you rather start the new year with her on your arm rather than still pining after her?”

“I’m not pining,” Remus denied.

“You’re pining,” Kingsley deadpanned.
Remus sighed, nodding. “I am pining.”

Kingsley chuckled. “Then finally do something about it! For goodness sakes, man, you’re a Gryffindor, God dammit!” he exclaimed.

Remus looked at him, deep in thought. He knew Kingsley was right. For the past six months he had done nothing but pine after this woman that stole his heart the moment he laid eyes on her. Maybe Calvin was right. Maybe it was time for him to ‘hike up his skirt’ and do something about it.

And as a slow song came on and the girls came back to the table he made up his mind.

“Jocelyn, would you do me the honor of dancing with me?” Remus asked, standing and offering his hand.

Jocelyn looked shocked for a moment before a bright smile lit up her face. Putting down her drink she gently took his hand, shocks flying up both of their arms, and said, “I’d love to, Remus.”

Remus grinned and led her to the dance floor.

Armelle smiled happily, saying, “About damn time.”

Kingsley laughed. “I know.”

Armelle smiled and grabbed his hand. “Well, come on, sugar. Let’s dance!”

Kingsley boomed a laugh and stood. “Don’t mind if I do,” he said and let her drag him onto the dance floor.

Jocelyn smiled as Remus wrapped his arms around her waist, and she wrapped her arms around his neck. As they swayed to the music they just looked at each other, unable to tear their eyes away from one another.

“One minute until midnight!”

Remus took a deep breath. It was now or never.

“Jocelyn there’s something I’ve been meaning to tell you. These past few months have been fantastic. The best few months of my life. The day I met Hermione I had no idea how much my life would change for the better. She truly is the greatest gift life has ever given me.”

Jocelyn’s heart warmed at the obvious love in his voice.

“I can’t thank you enough for all that you have done for me. Letting me stay in Hermione’s life, letting me into yours, giving me a job. You’ve also given me people to love. Calvin, Hermione . . .”

“Time to start the countdown!”

“Ten!”

“You . . .” Jocelyn’s heart skipped a beat as she listened to him.

“Nine!”

“Everyday that we spend together I find something new to love about you,”

“Eight!”
“Your eyes, your smile, your laugh,”

“Seven!”

“Your mind, your humor,”

“Six!”

“Your warmth, and your kindness,”

“Five!”

“And soon enough I found myself completely in love with you.”

“Four!”

“And all I can think about is how I want to wake up everyday beside you and eat every meal with you.”

“Three!”

“And how I want to spend the rest of my life with you.”

“Two!”

Jocelyn’s smile was full of joy as she caressed Remus’ cheek. “And what do you plan to do about that?”

And at that moment Remus knew exactly what he wanted to do.

“One!”

Their lips finally connected and electric shocks flew through their bodies as a pleasurable chill ran down their spines. The cheers of the crowd around them echoed in the background. They hardly noticed the fireworks shooting into the sky behind them, their focus only being on one another and the feeling of completion as they finally came together.

Remus could have sworn he heard Calvin shout “Finally! Jesus freakin’ Christ, I can finally breathe!” and he smiled into the kiss.

And as he pulled Jocelyn closer to his body he knew that this was going to be a great year.
Hey guys! I’m so happy that so many people liked the first chapter! It meant so much! It made me even more excited to write this story! Here’s chapter two for you! I’ve decided I’m going to try my hardest to update every weekend. Right now I’m only working Sundays, you know with the slow winter months and all, but that may change soon. I’ll let you all know. WARNING!! I am not a Ron Weasley fan whatsoever. As of right now I haven’t decided if I’m going to make him a total jerk or not, but please beware of possible bashing in future chapters. But for now, enjoy!

Hermione bounced excitedly where she stood in front of the living room window, her eyes never straying from the sky. Her taller body leaning forward in anticipation as her longer, more tamed curls fell in her face, causing her to blow them away. Today was June 1st. This meant that Hermione’s letter would be coming in today. Kingsley had informed them that kids that had early birthdays got their letters on June 1st along with a visit from a professor. Hermione was beyond excited, having been waiting for the past three years for this.

And what an eventful three years it’s been.

After the kiss her mother and Remus had shared on New Year’s, Hermione’s life had drastically changed. The two had immediately gotten together, much to the relief of all of their friends. They had decided to take things slow, going on a few dates. But after a few months of taking things slow, Remus had moved in, much to Hermione’s pleasure.

Hermione and Remus were closer than ever. She saw him as a father figure and he saw her as one of his own. They still had their little dates in the park every Wednesday, neither willing to give those up. Hermione was a little sad that they wouldn’t be able to do those anymore when she went of to Hogwarts, but she knew they’d make up for it when she came back.

When Remus’ parents had found out that he was now dating again (thanks to Kingsley) they had immediately demanded to meet the Grangers. So the three went to the Lupin’s for dinner and everything had gone well. They both took an immediate liking to Jocelyn and absolutely adored and doted on Hermione. Later that night Hope had informed Jocelyn that, though there were very few, she was the best girlfriend that they had met.

Kingsley and Rose visited daily, and they finally met Rose’s mother, Annaliese, who had gotten along swimmingly with Jocelyn and Armelle and was now also a regular visitor. Hermione and Rose were inseparable, going everywhere and doing everything with one another. Rose had gotten her letter on her birthday, which was on Valentine’s Day, a fact that Rose hated to admit. Rose had grown a lot over the past three years. She was now a whole two inches taller the Hermione, which she she hated because she thought that made her a ‘giant’. Gone were her braids, her hair now just ask curly as Hermione’s, but a little shorter. Her fiery attitude was even hotter than before, but that was only when you got on her bad side.
After the New Year’s dance Kingsley and Armelle had gotten a lot closer. But what started as a
friendship slowly turned into romantic feelings and before they knew it Kingsley had asked her out
on a date. They have now been dating for the past six months and they couldn’t be happier. He had
ev even told her about the wizarding world after Rose had a spurt of accidental magic, blowing up the
water pipes in the Grangers house.

Calvin had quickly taken Rose under his wing, happy to have another sister in his life. Last year
Calvin graduated high school with flying colors and will now be starting college for the Culinary
Arts this upcoming September, something that surprised everyone because no one knew he had an
interest in it. Hermione was just happy that he was going to school the same time she was, that way
she didn’t have to deal with missing him not being around her home or the bookstore.

And now here they were, three years of a pretty good life later, with the day they’ve all been
anticipating for finally arriving. Hermione had been studying nonstop for this moment; reading and
researching all she could about the magical world. She already knew all of the first year spells; their
pronunciation and wand movements. Now all she needed was a wand to practice them.

“Mia,” Rose groaned from the couch behind her. “Will you please stop jumping up and down like a
hyperactive puppy? You’re making me feel sick.”

Hermione rolled her eyes and turned to look at her best friend. “I’m just excited. I’ve been waiting
for this day for—if you must know.”

“For three years, I know, I know,” Rose groaned, throwing her head back. “I wish this letter would
get here already so I can stop hearing about it.”

Hermione glared and put her hands on her hips. “Leave me alone. I’m just excited.”

Rose picked up her head and grinned. “I know you are. I’m just teasing,” she said, standing up and
moving to Hermione’s side at the window. “I’ll admit, I’m excited too. All my life I’ve heard stories
of my parents’ and Kingsley’s experience at Hogwarts. And now I’ll get to make my own. And,”
she threw her arm around Hermione’s shoulder, “with my best friend.”

Hermione grinned, throwing her arm around Rose’s waist. “Ditto,” she said. “I’ve always thought I
was a freak for what I’ve been able to do. When I found out that I wasn’t, that there was a place that
I belonged, a feeling of completion came over me. This is who I am supposed to be. A witch.”

Rose smiled, which only grew when she looked out the window. “Then this is where your story
begins.”

Hermione looked out the window and grinned when she saw the owl heading towards her house.

“And so it begins.”

Jocelyn watched as Hermione and Rose talked excitedly about Hogwarts as they ate their lunch and
sighed. Don’t get her wrong, she was beyond happy that Hermione was getting such an amazing
opportunity. But she was sad that her daughter was leaving and worried about her entering a whole
new world by herself.
Strong arms wrapped around her waist and she smiled contently as she leaned back into the familiar, warm body.

“She’ll be okay, you know,” Remus whispered in her ear. “She’s a strong little girl, that one.”

“I know she is,” Jocelyn sighed. “I just wasn’t expecting her to be leaving me until she was eighteen and going to college. I never expected this. Not that it’s an unwelcome surprise.” Jocelyn smiled back at Remus. “I just hope this turns out to be great for her.”

Remus smiled softly at her and kissed her forehead. “It will be.” At that moment the doorbell rang and everyone paused. Hermione and Rose shared an excited look, hoping it was who they thought it was.

“I’ll get it,” Remus laughed, separating himself from his lovely girlfriend and walking into the foyer. As he neared the door he grinned, knowing that whoever was on the other side was in for a surprise.

He finally opened the door and his grin widened when he saw his old Transfiguration professor, Minerva McGonagall, standing there.

"Remus?" McGonagall said surprised, staring at the man in front of her in shock. "What are you doing here?"

"I live here," he said, chuckling at her startled expression.

McGonagall pulled out her list of muggleborn addresses and flicked through them. "I didn't know you lived in this area. Silly me, I must have gotten the wrong house."

"If you're looking for Hermione Granger, which I am assuming you are, then you have the right house," he says with an amused tone, causing McGonagall to look up in confusion.

But before she could ask a voice boomed from behind Remus. "Are you from Hogwarts?!"

Remus looked behind him and moved to the side to allow McGonagall to see the little girl standing there with a large smile on her face. Behind her stood an equally excited Rose and an amused Jocelyn.

McGonagall looked absolutely shocked at the question, glancing at Remus questionably. “Yes, I am. My name is Minerva McGonagall," she said to the little girl.

“Pleasure to meet you,” Hermione said, bounding up to Remus’ side. “I’m Hermione Granger,” she said, sticking out her hand. McGonagall was once again shocked by her manners as she shook her hands. “Remus has told me all about you and other teachers at Hogwarts. He’s also taught me all about Hogwarts and the wizarding world. I’m so very excited to see it all! Did you know that there are a hundred and forty two staircases in Hogwarts? I read that in Hogwarts, a History! I also learned that the ceilings in the Great Hall are enchanted to look like the night sky! I can’t wait to see it! Remus says—”

Rose walked forward and, throwing her arm around Hermione’s shoulders, covered her best friends mouth. She smiled charmingly up at the professor. “Sorry about that. She’s a rambler.” Hermione nodded in agreement behind her best friend’s hand.

McGonagall, after getting over the initial shock, chuckled a little. “That’s quite alright, child. Tell, me dear Hermione, how do you know Remus?” she asked, looking up at the man.

Rose removed her hand and Hermione said happily. “We met in the park when I was eight. Now
he’s dating my mum!”

Rose smirked and turned to look at Jocelyn, who pinched the bridge of her nose and shook her head, but she was wearing a smile which told them that she was amused.

McGonagall’s eyebrows shot up and he looked at Remus, who looked to be enjoying this immensely, and then Jocelyn, who seemed both amused and embarrassed.

Suddenly a deep chuckling came from behind her and she turned to see Kingsley Shacklebolt standing there with a large grin on his face. “Minerva! Lovely to see you!” he boomed.

“Kingsley,” McGonagall said. “What are you doing here?”

“Well, my niece Rose,” he said, gesturing to the still smirking girl, “and I are having dinner with Remus and the Grangers.”

McGonagall nodded, remembering how close Remus and Kingsley had gotten after the Potters’ death.

“Why don’t you come in, Minerva,” Remus chuckled. She nodded and they all filed inside the house and into the living room. McGonagall didn’t miss the way Remus immediately went to Jocelyn, gently pulling her into his side. She also didn’t miss the tender look they shared and she couldn’t help but smile.

Hermione and Rose sat on either side of McGonagall as she took a seat on the couch. They smiled up at her and she couldn’t help but smile back.

“Minerva, this is Jocelyn, Hermione’s mother,” Remus introduced the woman.

Jocelyn smiled warmly and held out her hand. “It’s so nice to finally meet you.”

Minerva smiled, already getting a good feeling about this woman. If Remus cared this much for her then she had to be something special.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you,” McGonagall said, shaking her head.

“You’re here to tell me about Hogwarts, right?” Hermione asked happily.

“Well, I was here to inform you that you were a witch, but it seems like Remus already beat me to it,” McGonagall said, looking at Remus.

Remus shrugged. “I was here during an episode of accidental magic,” Remus said.

“I blew up a sandbox,” Hermione said innocently.

“It was so funny!” Rose laughed, high fiving Hermione behind McGonagall’s back.

“Girls,” Jocelyn sighed. She shot a look at Remus and Kingsley, who were also laughing, and they immediately quieted.

McGonagall continued, “I was also going to tell you about Hogwarts, but by the looks of it you already know most about it. So I guess my job here is done.” At Hermione’s put out look McGonagall felt bad. “But, I can answer whatever questions you have.” At this Hermione immediately perked and Rose tried not to groan.

They’d be here for a while.
Two hours later showed Hermione still asking away. McGonagall was astounded by her curiosity and the intelligence level this little girl showed, and knew that she’d grow up to be someone great.

“Okay, Hermione,” Jocelyn finally interrupted, “I’m sure McGonagall has a whole list of children she has to visit, so we should be letting her go.” It was true, McGonagall did have a few more kids to visit today.

Hermione pouted slightly, but nodded in understanding. She smiled at the older woman. “Thank you for answering my questions,” she said politely.

McGonagall gave her a soft smile. “You are very welcome child. I hope both of you,” she smiled at Rose too, “have a great time at Hogwarts. I shall see you both September 1st.”

She stood to leave and Remus stepped forward. “I’ll walk you out.”

Together they started towards the foyer.

“Goodbye!” Hermione and Rose shouted.

McGonagall turned and waved. “Goodbye children. And good luck.”

Remus led McGonagall into the foyer and stopped by the door.

“You care very deeply for those two girls,” McGonagall said with a fond smile.


“It’s nice to see you happy. It’s been a while since I’ve seen you this happy. You deserve it. “

Remus looked at the direction of the living room and smiled a smile full of love. “They are my family. That’s all I’ve ever wanted.”

“I’m glad you got it,” McGonagall said, patting his shoulder.

Remus looked at her, slight worry in his eyes. “May I ask a favor from you?”

McGonagall tilted her head. “Anything.”

“Look after her,” he said, motioning to the living room. “With her being a muggleborn I know there will be kids who look down at her. She knows about who she is and I’ve warned her about the beliefs that some have, but I still worry. She’s a strong girl, and I know she has Rose, but I just want to make sure . . .” he trailed off.

McGonagall looked at him, the worry and love for that little girl evident in his eyes. “You have my word,” she said sincerely.

Remus nodded, some of his worry vanishing. “Thank you,” he said.

McGonagall nodded. “Goodnight, Remus,” she said, opening the door to leave.
“Goodnight, Minerva,” he replied, and watched her as she left.

He sighed, willing his worries to go away, and headed back into the living room where his family was waiting.

Hermione was excited. No, scratch that. Hermione was beyond excited. So beyond excited that she couldn’t even think of a word to describe it.

It had been three days since Professor McGonagall had visited and they were finally going to visit Diagon Alley to get her school supplies.

“Come on, Remus!” Hermione said impatiently, but the older man just laughed. Rose smirked from her place on the couch, her clutch purse strapped around her right wrist full of her money. Calvin sat on the arm of the couch with a large, amused grin on his face. Seeing as Kingsley and Jocelyn both had work today Rose was coming with them to do her shopping and Calvin wanted to tag along to see what the magical town looked like.

Calvin had grown a lot over the past three years. He was even taller now, standing only an inch below Kingsley. His features were more defined, and his muscles were more toned. He even had a little stubble growing on his chin. Gone was a boy, now stood a man . . . sort of. Manchild, maybe?

Remus laughed as he entered the living room. “Okay, okay, I’m ready Miss Impatient,” he teased. Hermione stuck her tongue out at him, but smiled in excitement.

“It’s really not that exciting, Mia,” Rose said, standing.

Hermione looked at her. “Maybe not to you because you’ve been there a million times.”

Rose nodded. “True,” she agreed, stepping to her side.

Calvin also stood. “Well, I’m just ready to check out the fine lady witches,” he laughed, rubbing his hands together.

Hermione and Rose both scrunched up their noses in disgust.

“Gross,” Hermione said.

“Pig,” Rose added.

Calvin just laughed at them and threw an arm over both of their shoulders. “Just wait until you hit puberty, kiddies, and the hormones kick in,” he teased.

“Ew!” they both exclaimed, knocking his arms off their shoulders, causing Calvin to laugh even harder.

“Can we go now,” Hermione asked, looking up at Remus.

Remus nodded, not wanting to think about what will happen when Hermione reaches puberty. He opened the pouch full of floo powder. “Rose, you’ve used the Floo Network before, right?” he asked, and Rose nodded. “Okay, you’ll go with Calvin while I’ll go with Hermione. Remember to
say ‘Leaky Cauldron’ very clearly.” Rose nodded in understanding, taking a handful of floo powder. Hermione turned to Hermione and grinned. “Ready?”

Hermione gave him an ‘are you serious?’ look with her hands on her hips. Remus laughed and held out his hand. She took it and together they stepped into the fireplace. “Okay, Hermione I want you to take some floo powder, throw it on the ground, and yell ‘Leaky Cauldron’,” Remus instructed.

Hermione nodded, taking a handful of floo powder. When Remus put the rest in his pocket and nodded she threw it on the ground and yelled “Leaky Cauldron!”

Suddenly it felt as if the floor had dropped from under them and Hermione squealed as she dropped down, air hitting her body and blowing her hair all over the place. She felt like being on a rollercoaster without actually sitting. Suddenly it stopped and luckily Remus was able to catch Hermione before she fell. As they stepped away from the fireplace Hermione kept her eyes closed, trying to push down the bile that was fighting to come up.

“Hermione, dear, are you alright?” Remus asked, kneeling down to her height and rubbing her back. Hermione stayed still for a moment, trying to breathe. Finally she nodded and opened her eyes. Her eyes met his and she immediately felt calm. “I’m fine,” she reassured.

Remus nodded, his worry vanishing. “Good,” he said, hugging her closely.

The fire roared behind them and they turned just in time to see Rose step out and Calvin face plant. The two girls immediately started to laugh and Remus fought hard not to.

Calvin groaned and stood, putting a hand to his hand as the other dusted off his body. He glared at the giggling girls. “Oh yeah, just laugh it up as I suffer from a painful headache,” he mocked.

“We planned to,” Rose giggled. Calvin stuck his tongue out at her, an action that she copied.

Remus chuckled and placed a hand on Hermione’s back. “Ok, let’s get moving,” he said. They started towards the back exit, Remus nodding to Tom on his way out. They entered the back alley and Remus pulled out his wand. Hermione’s face brightened. She loved watching him do magic. He tapped five different bricks with his wand and slowly they started to move. The wall started to shift and the next moment there was a doorway. What was on the other side was something had Hermione and Calvin in awe. On the other side was a huge town with buildings all different sizes and shapes and so colorful that it was almost hard to look at. There were stores with the weirdest names like ‘Twilflitt and Tatting’s’ and ‘Slug & Jiggers Apothecary’. The streets were filled with people dressed in robes and carrying shopping bags, some that made weird noises as they walked by. Things were flying and bouncing around. Owls were flying in the skies, and adults were doing magic with their wands. All in all, it was even better than what Hermione had imagined.

Rose looked at the two and smirked. “Speechless. I like it,” she said. Remus chuckled as the two glared at her.

“This is amazing.” Hermione said, turning back to the view in front of her.

Rose nodded. “Yeah, the wizarding world is pretty awesome.” The two laughed.

Remus pulled out a pouch of coins and handed them to Hermione. “I already have money for you, so there’s no need to go to Gringotts. Do you remember how our currency works?”

Hermione nodded. “There are 17 Sickles in a Galleon, and 29 Knuts in a Sickle. This means there are 493 Knuts to a Galleon,” she states proudly.
Remus smiled proudly down at her. “Good. Then let’s get going,” he said and started to lead the group down the road. “First thing’s first; robes.”

Remus led them to Madam Malkin's and Hermione gasped upon entering. The place was beautiful and Hermione never thought she’d love the sight of a store filled with dresses.

Rose on the other hand was not happy, hating dresses with a burning passion.

"Hello dearies. Hogwarts I presume?” a plump lady asked and the girls nodded. She led them to a pair of stools and asked them to stand on them so she could get them measured.

Calvin decided to look around the store, finding wizard clothing weird and intriguing. How can they wear these everyday? he thought, picking up a purple robe for women. This doesn’t look remotely comfortable. Maybe I should get this for my mom, though, so she can match Kingsley. He started laughing to himself, still looking at the robes in his hand. He was so engrossed in his own thoughts he didn’t notice the girl walking up to him from behind.

“That doesn’t really look your color,” a teasing voice said and Calvin swiftly turned around. He came face to face with a girl that seemed to be around his age, possibly younger. She was a petite girl with tan skin and brown eyes that seemed to twinkle with mirth. But what stood out most to Calvin was her short, bright pink hair. Calvin was never usually into girls who dye their hair outrageous colors, but he thought it worked for this girl.

After getting over the initial shock of her sudden appearance he smirked and looked at the dress. “What a shame. How about pink? Would that suit me better?” he joked, picking up a pink set of robes.

The girl laughed and Calvin grinned.

“A sense of humor. I like it,” she laughed.

“Why, thank you,” Calvin said, bowing. He grinned as she laughed again.

“So, I’m going to take a guess and say that you’re a muggleborn,” she said, looking down at his outfit.

He put back the dresses and shook his head. “Close. Just a muggle,” he said, shrugging. He pointed to where Hermione and Rose were being fitted. “My sisters are starting Hogwarts this year.”

The girl looked at the girls and raised her eyebrows when she saw Hermione, looking between her and Calvin.

Calvin laughed and answered her suspicions. “Neither one of them are actually my blood sisters. They’re practically my sisters, so I just call them that.” A look of understanding came to the girl’s face and she smiled sweetly. “The brown haired girl is Hermione. She’s a muggleborn. And the other one is Rose. She’s a pureblood pain in my butt,” he joked and the girl laughed.

“And what about you?” she asked, turning back to him. “What’s your name?”

“Calvin Garza, at your service,” he said, bowing dramatically.

She laughed again, a sound that Calvin was coming to like.

“Nice to meet you,” she giggled. “I’m—” she glanced at the door and paused, wincing. Calvin looked at see an older lady waiting impatiently at the door, looking right at the girl in front of him.

"And a look of understanding came to the girl’s face when she saw the older lady waiting impatiently at the door, looking right at the girl in front of her.
“in trouble,” she finished. She looked at him remorsefully. “I have to go. But it was great meeting you!”

With that she started to hurry away, but Calvin caught her elbow. “Wait, I didn’t get your name,” he said.

The girl looked at him and smiled playfully. “See, I could tell you my name, but that’d be too easy,” she said. “I guess you’ll just have to wait until we meet again.”

Calvin looked at her, stunned. “If we meet again,” he emphasized.

She smiled sweetly. “We’ll meet again,” she said matter-of-factly. She turned to walk away again and this time Calvin let her. He watched, both stunned and amused, as she walked out with who he guessed to be her mother, apologizing profusely to the annoyed woman and tripping on her way out.

“Who was that?” Hermione asked as she came to stand beside him.

Calvin shrugged. “Your guess is as good as mine.”

xxXxx

The next hour went by in a blur. They visited Scribbulus Everchanging Inks to get quills, ink, and parchment. After leaving that store they headed over to the Apothecary to get potions supplies. Rose had practically ran inside when they arrived, dragging Hermione along, and looked at all the potion ingredients with hunger in her eyes. Rose was most excited for their Potions class. Her mother had a mastery in potions and her love for the subject had obviously been passed down to her daughter.

After having to drag Rose away from the store they headed to the one store Hermione had been waiting to go to.

“Flourish and Botts!” she squealed when they arrived and quickly ran inside.

Calvin groaned. “We’re going to be here forever;” he moaned and Remus grinned.

When they walked inside they spotted Hermione sitting in one of the rows with a book open in her lap already.

Remus chuckled. “Hermione, dear, we need to get your school books,” he said softly. Without looking up Hermione quickly handed him her supply list and promptly shushed him.

Calvin snorted and Rose rolled her eyes, amused. Remus chuckled and stood. “I guess we’re on book duty;” he said, turning to the others.

They laughed and left Hermione to her book.

*Muffliato (muf-lee-AH-to), ”muffle”*, Eng. to deaden a sound, making it more difficult to hear Fills the ears of target persons near the caster with an unidentifiable buzzing, so that the caster can hold lengthy conversations without being overheard

“Excuse me.”

Hermione looked up at the person who interrupted her reading. In front of her stood a tall, brown
skinned boy that seemed to be around her age. He had kind brown eyes and a small afro on his head. He smiled down at her apologetically and said, “Sorry to interrupt you, but I need a book that you’re sitting in front of.”

Hermione immediately stood up and moved out of his way. “I’m so sorry! I probably shouldn’t be reading in the middle of the aisle anyways,” she said hurriedly.

The boy grabbed the book he was looking at and turned to her with a kind smile. “It’s okay. Honestly,” he reassured her. He held out his hand. “I’m Dean Thomas.”

Hermione smiled shyly and shook his hand. “Hermione Granger.”

“Nice to meet you,” he said. He motioned to her book. “So what’s this book that’s captured all of your attention?”

Hermione immediately brightened, all of her shyness disappearing. “Oh! This is just the *Standard Book of Spells* by Miranda Goshawk. I was just rereading it because with most of the kids who are starting Hogwarts having been born into the wizarding world I didn’t want to be behind on anything,” she explained hurriedly.

Dean’s eyes lit up. “Are you a muggleborn?” he asked excitedly. Hermione nodded. “Me too! Oh, it’s so great knowing someone who’s in the same boat as me,” he sighed happily. “How did you take all of this?”

“Actually I’ve known since I was eight,” she told him. He tilted his head in question. “Well, you see, I might have blown up a sandbox in the middle of a park and the sand might have stuck onto this mean girl and her cronies.” Dean started laughing at the image and Hermione smiled. “This man, who is now dating my mom, explained to us what happened and what I was.”

Dean calmed down and scoffed. “Lucky you. The biggest thing I’ve done was make fire ants in the school playground chase this kid that was bullying my friend until they finally caught him and burnt him. And I had to deal with everyone calling me a freak for the rest of the year,” he said, but he laughed through the whole thing, showing Hermione that it no longer bothered him.

At that moment Rose came running around the corner. “Mia, Remus says it’s time to go.”

“Okay, I’ll be there in a second.” Rose nodded and ran off, not before shooting Dean a curious look. Hermione smiled at him sadly. “I have to go,” she said, but then she perked up. “Hey, find me on the train! We can sit together.”

Dean smiled brightly. “Sounds like a plan. See you then!”

“See you! Bye!” Hermione waved before running out of the store to where Remus, Calvin, and Rose were waiting.

“Okay, now that the bookworm has re-entered the real world,” Remus joked, and Hermione blushed, “it’s time to get the final thing on your list.”

The girls grinned widely. “Wands!” they exclaimed together.

Remus laughed. “That’s right. Let’s head to Ollivander’s.”

They walked to the small, rickety looking shop. Upon entering they saw that the room was filled to the ceiling with boxes upon boxes of wands and there were dust covering the walls. Rose started to
sneeze and glared at the dust accusingly.

"Why, hello," a soft voice said and they turned to see an elderly man come from behind a shelf of wands. "I am Ollivander. First years, I assume?" he asked kindly and Hermione and Rose nodded. "Delightful! Let's get started, shall we?"

To say it was easy would be the understatement of the year. Rose had gone first. She had gone through twenty wands, each one even more dastardly than the next. After a half hour full of colorful blasts and sneezes she finally found her match; eleven inches, oak wood, and a dragon heartstring core. Afterwards Calvin took her outside to get her away from all the dust.

Hermione’s had taken even longer to find. An hour of endless tries and no matches. At one point she started to think that she wasn’t a witch at all and this had all just been some cruel joke. But when Ollivander had handed her her thirty seventh wand her hand seemed to warm up. When she waved it gold sparks flew out the end and she immediately perked up in relief and happiness. She had found it! She had found her wand!

“Ten inch cherry wood with a phoenix feather core,” Ollivander said jovially. Hermione smiled in relief at Remus and he rubbed her back.

Hermione was over the moon. She finally had the one thing that proved all of this was real, that this was who she was and where she was supposed to be.

Hermione Granger is a witch.

xxXxx

The rest of the summer had flown by pretty quickly after their Diagon Alley trip, and before they knew it, it was September 1st.

Hermione smiled as she packed the last book in her trunk, thinking back on her summer. She had been determined to both study for her first year of Hogwarts and spending as much time with her family as possible. She’d go with her mother and Remus to the bookstore everyday, where she’d have just as much fun as she’d always had. She’d help Calvin work most of the time, seeing as she saw her mom and Remus at home. Calvin started Culinary school September 20th and he was beyond excited, but he would miss everyone dearly, never having been away from them for so long. She still kept up her Wednesday tradition with Remus in the park, something she’d miss dearly at Hogwarts. Most of the week the Garzas, Kingsley, and Rose would be at the Granger’s house for dinner.

But now it was the day they’d been waiting for and though Hermione was excited, she was also very nervous. What if the kids there didn’t like her like the kids here didn’t? What if she was behind everyone else? What if she couldn’t be sorted? What if she was kicked out for not being smart enough? What if she didn’t make a good witch?

Hermione looked out of the window, more ‘what ifs’ filling her head.

What if she didn’t belong?
“Remus!” Jocelyn’s panicked voice rang through the house, and Remus immediately stood, rushing into the foyer.


“She’s not here!” she cried, running her fingers worriedly through her hair.

Remus froze. The wolf in him growled. “What do you mean she’s not here?” he asked stiffly.

“I mean she’s not here!” she snapped. “I went to her room to see if she was almost ready to leave and she wasn’t there! I checked everywhere and she is nowhere to be found!” she yelled hysterically.

“Okay, Jocelyn look at me,” Remus said firmly, taking Jocelyn’s hands in his own. Her tear filled green eyes connected with his and the wolf inside him whined. “It’s going to be okay. She probably got nervous and ran off somewhere to clear her head. That’s what you do, right? When you’re stressed?”

Jocelyn closed her eyes and willed herself to calm down. She took a few deeps breaths before nodding her head. “Yeah,” she said slowly. “Yeah, that’s what I’d do.”

Remus nodded comfortably. “Okay.”

Jocelyn nodded, calmer now. “Okay, but where would she go?” she asked.

Both adults thought for a moment before Remus’ face cleared in understanding. “I know where she went.”

Hermione willed the worried thoughts to leave her head as the calming wind blew through her hair. She sat stiffly on the bench as she watched the little kids scream and laugh as they played on the playground.

“I thought you’d be here,”

Hermione didn’t need to look to know who had just sat beside her. It was the same person who sat on this bench with her every Wednesday.

“You gave us quite the fright when we couldn’t find you.”

Hermione winced, regretting her sudden leaving without telling them.

“I didn’t mean to scare you guys,” she said, her eyes never leaving the playing children. “I just needed to clear my head.”

“I understand,” Remus said softly, joining her in watching the kids play. “You’re nervous.” It wasn’t a question.
Hermione narrowed her eyes in thought. “All i’ve ever known is the muggle world. What if I don’t belong in the wizarding world? What if no one likes me at Hogwarts? What if I fall behind everyone just because I’m a muggleborn? What if I can’t even get sorted and get kicked out the first night?!” she fretted, her voice edging the tone of hysteria.

“Hermione Granger, you listen to me right now,” Remus said with such a firm tone that Hermione immediately looked at him. “First off, there are going to be people at Hogwarts who aren’t going to like you. Whether it be because of your intelligence or because of your blood, there are going to those petty kids that are going to try to make you feel less than you are. That’s just life. But you are strong and smart. You are kind and warm. You are so much than those kids will ever be, and that’s all you need to remember, Hermione. Don’t ever let anyone tell you who you are. You know who you are and you decide who you want to be. Do you understand?” Hermione nodded, her eyes starting to swell up. “Good. second of all, you are a witch, Hermione Granger. You were born to be a witch. And fall behind? If anything you’ll be ten steps ahead. Everyone starts Hogwarts knowing just as much as the next person, no matter what their blood status is. But you? You’ve been studying for this since you were eight years old. So if anything, you’re three years ahead of everyone.”

Hermione laughed tearfully and nodded her head in understanding. Now that she thought about it, she never had anything to worry about. Remus was right, there were going to people who didn’t like her. But she was stronger than she was when she was eight years old. She could handle it now. And she prided herself on her knowledge. It wasn’t something she should be ashamed of. So she was going to walk into that school and walk out on top.

She smiled up at the man who had become her father figure. “Thank you.”

Remus smiled and wiped her tears. “You’re welcome, my child,” he whispered as he pulled her into a hug. “Now, I believe there is someone at home who is very worried about you,” he said.

Hermione winced again, knowing she was in for it.

xxXxx

Hermione looked at the train station as they pulled into the parking lot. This was it. In a few minutes they’d be boarding the Hogwarts Express and heading towards their new lives.

Calvin sat in the back seat with Hermione, gripping her hand tightly. Calvin was taking this harder than he let on. Hermione was the person that had pulled him out of his depression. She’ll never truly understand how much her birth had saved his life. And now they were separating for the first time in eleven years, and Calvin was filled with sadness, though he wouldn’t let it show and ruin her day. He’d miss her dearly, and even Rose, who he had grown to view as a little sister.

As they parked they all filed out of the car. Remus grabbed her trunk and they walked into the train station where they found Kingsley, Rose, Annaliese, and Armelle. Rose had said goodbye to her father that morning, who couldn’t take the day off of work to see his daughter off.

“You girls ready?” Kingsley asked. The girls shared an excited smile and nodded. With that they grabbed a trolley for their trunks and headed towards the barrier between platform nine and ten.

They reached the barrier and Kingsley turned to them. “Okay, you guys know the deal, right?” he asked. Everyone nodded.
“And you’re sure we’re going to be able to get through?” Jocelyn asked nervously, playing with Hermione’s hair from behind.

Kingsley nodded. “I’m positive.”

Jocelyn nodded, reassured.

Hermione looked up at Calvin, who still had a tight grip on her hand. “Come through with me?” she asked.

Calvin smiled softly down at her. “Try and stop me,” he tease and she laughed lightly. He held out his hand to Rose. “Come on, brat. You too,” he said.

Rose glared playfully, but still took his hand. “Only because you asked so kindly,” she sarcastically and Calvin grinned.

They held hands and together they ran towards the barrier. They closed their eyes when they were about to hit the wall, but they felt no impact. They opened their eyes and gasped at the big, red train in front of them that said ‘Hogwarts Express’ on it. They were early, so not a lot of people were there yet.

The rest soon came through, Remus pushing the trolley with their trunks on it. The next few minutes passed with ease. Kingsley and Remus helped the girls find an empty compartment and load in their trunks.

It was the departing that was the hard part.

After the girls settled their stuff in the compartment they went back out onto the platform to say their goodbyes.

Hermione immediately ran into her mother’s arms, tears flowing down both of their cheeks.

“You grew up so fast,” Jocelyn cried quietly, clutching her daughter tightly to her body. “I’m going to miss you so much.”

“Me too,” Hermione sniffed.

Jocelyn backed away and gently framed her daughter’s face with her hands. “My beautiful baby. I hope you have a great time at Hogwarts. Mommy loves you so much,” she said, kissing her nose.

Hermione smiled tearfully. “I love you, too.”

Jocelyn gave her one more kiss before moving away. Calvin stepped in front of her, tears in his eyes. Hermione looked at him in surprise. “Calvin . . . are you crying?”

Calvin kneeled down so he was her height. “Yeah, Little Bit,” he said, wiping at his eyes. “I am.” He placed his large hands on her tiny waist and pulled her closer. “We’ve been together for eleven years. Now we’re being separated. What am I going to do without my bright, ray of sunshine every day?” he joked lightly, getting a small giggle out of the girl in front of him. “Now you listen to me,” he croaked firmly, “if anyone over there messes with you, you tell me. My muggle butt will be over there faster than you can say ‘Calvin is the sexiest best to ever live’”

This earned him even more laughter out of Hermione and a scoff out of Rose, who had just separated from her mom.
“Yeah, cause she’d ever tell such a lie,” Rose said.

Calvin grinned. “You’ll miss me too, brat,” he said.

Rose shrugged. “Maybe a little bit,” she teased.

Calvin laughed before turning back to Hermione. He brought the girl into his arms and hugged her tightly, breathing in the scent that was purely her. “I’m going to miss you so much,” he whispered.

Hermione hugged him just as tightly. “I’m going to miss you too.”

Calvin finally let go of her and grinned down at her. “Go kick some ass,” he whispered.

Hermione gasped. “Language!” she scolded.

Calvin laughed. “I’m going to miss that too.” He kissed her forehead before backing away.

Lastly Remus came forward and the tears that she had just wiped away came back. She ran forward and jumped into his arms. He held her tightly to himself, not wanting to ever put her down.

“Remember, my dear. You are strong. You are smart. You are beautiful. Always remember that,” he whispered to her. Moony whined and whimpered inside, not ready to let his pup go.

Hermione nodded from where her head was buried in his neck. “I will,” she said softly. “I love you, Moony.”

Remus smiled while his wolf howled. “I love you too, dear. So very much.” He kissed her forehead and looked into her eyes. “Thank you for coming into my life.”

Hermione smiled sadly. “Thank you for staying in mine.”

Remus smiled tearfully and kissed her once again before placing her down on her feet. He backed away and stood beside Jocelyn, holding her crying body to his side.

Hermione quickly said goodbye to Kingsley, Armelle, and Annaliese. They looked at the time. Two minutes until the train leaves. With one more tearful goodbye the two girls climbed aboard the train and quickly went to their compartment. As the train started to move they hurried to the window and waved their last goodbye. Their family waved back, the women blowing them kisses. They kept waving to their family until the train left the station and they were no longer in sight.

The two girls looked at each other.

“So it begins,” Rose said.

Hermione sighed and nodded happily. “So it begins.”

xxXxx

“Bleh!” Rose cried, spitting the bean out of her mouth and swiping at her tongue.

Hermione laughed from her seat across from Rose, taking another bite out of her chocolate wand. A woman with a trolley full of sweets had come a few minutes ago and both girls had immediately
bought as much as they could.

“Spinach!” Rose said angrily, looking down at the box of Bertie Bott’s Every Flavour Beans accusingly. “Who came up with this nasty stuff?” she asked.

Hermione giggled again. “You’ve been eating those since the day you were born, Rose. You knew what you were getting yourself into,” she said.

Rose stuck her tongue out at her, but this just caused Hermione to laugh even more.

At that moment the compartment door opened again and the girls looked to see Dean Thomas grinning in the doorway.

“Dean,” Hermione said with a wide smile, standing up to greet her new friend.

Dean stepped in and hugged her tightly, taking her by surprise. She hesitantly hugged him back, not quite sure to do with the unusual situation.

Dean laughed and stepped back. “Sorry, I’m a hugger!” he said joyfully. Hermione’s awkwardness vanished and she laughed. “But it’s great to see you again,” he continued. “I literally just went all over the train trying to find you.”

“Well, here I am!” Hermione said excitedly, a happy feeling filling her body after hearing the fact that he had been looking for her. She turned and motioned for Rose to stand. “This is my best friend, Rose Wriley. Rose, this is Dean Thomas.”

“Nice to meet you,” Rose said sweetly. “You’re not going to hug me too, are you?” she asked cautiously.

Dean just laughed cheerfully. Hermione felt a pang in her chest, Dean reminding her a lot of Calvin. “No,” Dean said. “Next time,” he promised and Rose looked wary. “Oh!” he suddenly said. “How rude of me. This is,” he turned and paused, seeing no one behind him. “Well, there was someone there. Excuse me for a moment,” he said, disappearing. He suddenly appeared again. “I promise I’m not crazy,” he said, then shook his head with a charming smile. “Well, not that crazy.” Then he was gone again.


Dean was back, but this time he had a boy trailing behind him. The boy was short, only an inch or two taller than Hermione, and had a slender body. His hair was short and the same light brown color as Hermione’s. He had green eyes that looked at them cautiously as he shoved his hands into his pockets.

“This is Theodore Nott,” Dean introduced.

“Theo,” the boy said quietly, nodding to the girls in greeting.

“Theo,” Dean corrected himself. “He doesn’t talk much, but that’s okay, he’s cool.” Dean grinned at Theo, whose lips quirked up a little at the corner.

Hermione smiled sweetly at both boys. “Well, it’s nice to meet you, Theo,” she said kindly and Theo looked at her. “Would you boys like to join us in here?”

“I thought that had been the plan we made,” Dean joked and Hermione laughed. The girls moved back to their seats and the boys entered with their trunks. Dean, who was taller and stronger than any
of them, easily placed their trunks onto the top racks.

“Jelly bean?” Rose asked him as he sat beside her.

Dean smiled and happily took one. Rose watched in anticipation as he ate it. “Mmm, Cherry,” Dean said happily.

“Seriously?!” Rose yelled incredulously, looking down at the box in her hands accusingly. Hermione laughed as Dean looked startled at her exclamation. Theo shook his head from his place beside her, smirking as if he had an idea why she was so bent out of shape.

“Did I do something wrong?” Dean asked worriedly, watching Rose glare at the candy box.

Hermione laughed again and shook her head. “No. She’s just mad that she’s only been getting the bad tasting ones,” she explained. Dean tilted his head, confused. “When they say every flavour bean they mean every flavour bean.”

A look of understanding came to his face and he turned to Rose. “Well, maybe you ate all of the bad ones and now all that’s left are the good ones,” he tried to cheer her up.

Rose looked thoughtful, still glaring at the box. Finally, with hesitance, she took another bean and popped it into her mouth. Less than a second later she spit it out. “Mayonnaise?!?” she yelled in disgust, swiping at her tongue once again.

The others, even Theo, roared in laughter as Rose continued to bat at her tongue.

xxXxx

The train ride to Hogwarts passed uneventfully after Rose’s bean incident. They spent the time getting to know one another and talking about Hogwarts.

“I’ll be a Slytherin,” Theo said quietly. Hermione had quickly learned that Theo wasn’t quiet because he was shy, but because he just had that mysterious, silent nature. “My whole family has been in Slytherin, so there’s no doubt I will be too. But I wouldn’t mind it.”

“I might be a Slytherin,” Rose added. “My father was a Slytherin while my mom was a Gryffindor. They had a hard time dating, you know, with the rivalry between the two Houses.” Rose had explained the rivalry to Hermione and Dean, and Hermione couldn’t help but roll her eyes. The Houses fought because their founders did? How ridiculous and immature. “But they’re still together today, which gives hope.”

“But, isn’t the sorting based on you and not your family?” Hermione asked.

“Yeah, but I have the Slytherin traits. Cunning, sly, ambitious, a good planner and thinker. Then again, I could also be a Gryffindor; I’m brave, courageous, and a risk taker. I guess we’ll see.”

“Well,” Dean started, “I think I’ll either be a Gryffindor or a Hufflepuff.”

Theo scrunched his nose. “Why a Hufflepuff?” he asked.

Dean shrugged. “Well, I’m friendly to everyone and a hard worker.”
“You’re also happy all the freaking time,” Rose joked and Dean grinned.

“That too,” he said.

Theo stared at him with a thoughtful expression for a minute before shaking his head. “Nah, you’ll be a Gryffindor,” he said confidently.

Dean quirked an eyebrow. “What makes you say that?”

Theo shrugged. “I just know,” he said.

Dean laughed. “I guess we’ll see,” he mimicked Rose’s earlier words. He turned to Hermione with a grin. “What about you, Hermione?”

Hermione shrugged and looked at Rose. “What do you think?” she asked.

Rose smirked. “You’ll be in either Gryffindor or Ravenclaw,” she said with confidence. “You’ve got the brains and love for learning of a Ravenclaw but the courage and loyalty of a Gryffindor.”

Hermione smiled before it dropped in thought. “But if I do end up in Gryffindor and you end up in Slytherin—”

“What’s going to happen?” Rose finished, and Hermione nodded. “Nothing. Our friendship is way too strong to be broken up by some stupid school rivalry. Hermione and Rose against the world, right?” she said with a teasing grin.

Hermione smiled, her worry leaving. “Right.”

Dean started sniffing and wiped away an imaginary tear. “That was so beautiful,” he sobbed. Rose punched him in the arm and he laughed. Theo shook his head at his friend.

Suddenly the compartment door opened and they looked up to see a small, chubby boy with short, brown hair and brown eyes standing there. He had tears streaming down his face and a worried expression.

“Excuse me,” he said sadly. “Have any of you seen a toad?”

Dean shook his head. “Sorry, mate, no toad in here.”

Neville let out a wail of despair and Rose’s eye widened in surprise. “That blasted toad going to be the death of me!” he cried. “I’ve looked all over the train for him, but he’s nowhere to be found! Oh, my grandmother is going to kill me!”

The girls stood and went to his sides. “Don’t worry, uh . . .” Rose trailed off.

“Neville,” the boy sniffed, wiping his tears away.

“Neville,” Rose said.

“We’ll help you,” Hermione finished. She turned to the boys. “Won’t we, boys?” she said sternly, placing a hand on her hip. Rose smirked, knowing that neither boy actually had a choice.

Dean jumped up and yanked Theo out of his seat. “Of course, m’lady,” Dean bowed and Hermione smiled. Theo reluctantly nodded. Neville looked up in hope.

“Good,” Hermione said. “Neville, Theo, and I will start left. Rose and Dean, you guys go right.”
“Aye aye, captain,” Dean said, saluting to Hermione. He walked into the hallway and looked at Rose over his shoulder. “Coming, sweet cheeks?” he teased, walking away.

Rose rolled her eyes and growled. “Call me that again, I dare you,” she said, marching after him.

Hermione and Theo looked at each other before shaking their heads.

Neville looked between the two nervously. “Honestly, yo-you don’t have to help me look,” he stuttered.

Hermione smiled at him kindly. “Don’t be silly. You need help and we’re here to help you. So let’s go.” With that said she grabbed his arm and dragged him out of the compartment. Theo trailed after them, arms crossed and still shaking his head.

What kind of friends had he made?

xxXxx

A half hour passed and the toad was still yet to be found. They had gone door to door with no luck. They had gotten different reactions; annoyance, sympathy, mockery, but ultimately they had gotten the same answer. No. Theo was growing aggravated, Hermione was tired, and Neville became hopeless.

“This is hopeless,” Theo muttered. “We’re never going to find that toad.”

Hermione shot him a glare as Neville whimpered, but he just shrugged it off.

“We still have one more compartment,” she said.

Neville looked at the compartment and shook his head. “No, I already checked that one,” he said dejectedly.

Hermione looked at him sympathetically. “Well, there’s no harm in checking again.” With that said she opened the compartment door to see two boys. One was a lanky kid with red hair and dirt on his nose. The second was a scrawny boy with messy black hair and glasses.

The boys looked up as they entered. "Has anyone seen a toad? Neville's lost one," she said in a demanding tone. She was tired and aggravated, so the time to be pleasant was over.

"We've already told him we haven't seen it," said the redhead.

Hermione looked at him and noticed his annoyed expression. “Just double checking,” she said. She took notice of the wand in his hand and her curiosity peaked. “Are you doing magic? Let’s see then,” she said, taking a seat across from him. She had met the redhead twins earlier on their search and the friendly duo had told her about their big, pureblood family. She could only guess this was their younger brother. If anyone should know how to do spells, it would be him.

Both boys looked taken back and Theo couldn’t help but smirk at Hermione’s bluntness.

“Er — okay,” the redhead said, clearing his throat. “Sunshine, daisies, butter mellow, Turn this stupid, fat rat yellow.” He proceeded to wave his wand, but nothing happened. The rat by his side didn’t change, but stayed peacefully asleep.
Theo snorted from where he was leaning against the door frame. Hermione stared at the redhead, highly unimpressed. Even Neville looked embarrassed for him, momentarily forgetting about his toad.

“That’s not a real spell,” Theo drawled, crossing his arms over his chest and looking down at the redhead.

The redhead glared at him and glowered at his wand. “Stupid spell. My brother, George, gave it to me.”

Hermione started to giggle. “Oh, that boy with the twin? What was his name, Fred?” she looked at Theo for confirmation, and he nodded. “Oh, even I know not to believe those two.” The redhead glowered at her, which she chose to ignore. “I’ve tried a few simple spells just for practice and it’s all worked for me. Nobody in my family’s magic at all, but it wasn’t a surprise when I got my letter. My mother is dating a wizard who helped me through my first spout of accidental magic—”

“Really?” the black haired boy interrupted, scooting forward a little.

Hermione nodded happily. “His name is Remus Lupin. They’ve been dating for three years now. He’s taught me a lot about the wizarding world.”

“Lucky you,” the boy said sadly.

Hermione tilted her head. “Are you a muggleborn, too?”

He shook his head hesitantly. “Well, no, but I’ve never known about the wizarding world.”

Hermione looked at him questionably before something on his forehead caught her eye. She gasped when she saw what it was. “You’re Harry Potter!” she exclaimed. “I know all about you, of course - - I got a few extra books. for background reading, and you're in Modern Magical History and The Rise and Fall of the Dark Arts and Great Wizarding Events of the Twentieth Century.” Theo rolled his eyes as the bookworm he’s gotten to know the past few hours came out.

"Am I?" said Harry, feeling dazed.

"Goodness, didn't you know, I'd have found out everything I could if it was me," said Hermione hurriedly. She always spoke quickly when she was stating facts or got excited. Hermione finally came down from her quick high and noticed how uncomfortable he looked. She felt guilty, remembering that his parents had died to save him and the world. “Not that books are always true,” she said, even though it pained her to do so. “I mean, to know someone and their story you have to actually get to know them, not believe a book written by someone who's never even met the person.”

Harry looked at her in surprise before smiling gratefully. She turned to the redhead to get the attention off of poor Harry. “And you are?”

He looked surprised at the sudden change of subject. “Uh, Ron Weasley.”

Hermione nodded. “Anyways, as I was saying before, I was ever so pleased, of course, when I had gotten my letter. I mean, it's the very best school of witchcraft there is! I've learned all our course books by heart, of course, I just hope it will be enough -- I'm Hermione Granger, by the way.”

Even Theo looked at her, stunned, as she rambled on. He wondered if this was a regular thing and made a mental note to ask Rose.
Do either of you know what house you'll be in? I’m kind of hoping I'm in Gryffindor, it sounds by far one of the best; I hear Dumbledore himself was in it, but I suppose Ravenclaw wouldn't be bad either—"

Theo swiftly covered her mouth and smirked at the boys. “Sorry about this one. She tends to ramble.” Ron was staring at her, looking overwhelmed, while Harry looked amused.

Hermione pushed Theo’s hand away, glaring up at his amused face. “Anyways,” she said, turning back to Ron and Harry, “we'd better go back to looking for Neville's toad. You two had better change, you know, I expect we'll be there soon.”

With that she stood and exited the compartment, once again dragging Neville out with her. “Oh, by the way, you have some dirt on your nose,” she told Ron on her way out.

Theo chuckled lowly and slowly made his way out behind them. He paused as he heard Ron tell Harry, “Whatever house I'm in, I hope she's not in it.” Theo frowned as he closed their compartment door. He was glad Hermione hadn’t heard. She came off as very strong and confident, but he knew under that was a fragile little girl.

He trailed after the other two, vows to himself to protect Hermione from anyone that’d try to do anything against her.

xxXxx

The three had met the other two back at the compartment, toadless. Neville, defeated, gave up. He thanked them for their help before leaving to go back to his compartment.

The next hour passed uneventfully. After changing into their robes they all found different ways to keep busy. Hermione buried herself in one of her books, Rose doodled on some paper, and Theo taught Dean how to play Exploding Snap.

Finally a voice came onto the intercom telling them that’d they’d be arriving soon. With that said they packed their stuff in their trunks, which would be staying on the train to be brought to their rooms.

After a few minutes the train came to a full stop and it didn’t take long for the corridor to fill with excited children. As they joined the kids in the corridor, holding onto one each other so they weren’t separated, Hermione became anxious. She clutched onto Rose’s hand tighter and Rose squeezed in understanding.

Finally they exited the train and they all sighed in relief.

“That just reminded me why I hate people,” Theo muttered and they couldn’t help but laugh.

"Firs' years! Firs' years over here!” a voice boomed and they all looked to see a giant man that had to be at least eleven feet tall. Hermione’s eyes widened, slightly with fear, and Rose squeezed her hand in comfort. They walked over to where he was standing and all the first years crowded around him. "Are all ye firs' years here? Okay, follow me!” he shouted and started walking down a path. The kids followed after him through the thick trees, slipping and sliding a few times. Rose laughed when Dean fell on his butt, but he just laughed along with her. The group turned around a bend and the path opened.
"Wow," all four whispered as a huge, black lake was revealed. The stars reflected in the water, making it look even more beautiful. On the other side, on a high mountain, sat a beautiful castle with many towers and turrets, its windows glittering with light. It looked like a picture straight from a fairytale book.

"No more'n four to a boat!" shouted the man. The four quickly claimed a boat together; Hermione and Rose in the front, Theo and Dean behind them. "FORWARD!" the giant shouted after checking they were all in a boat. All at once the boats glided forward. The kids couldn't take their eyes off the great castle. They neared the cliff the castle sat on and the giant shouted, "Heads down!". They all quickly bent their heads and the boats sailed through a tunnel which, Hermione assumed, was taking them right under the bridge. When they were out of the tunnel the boats stopped at a small harbor.

Looking up Hermione saw the front entrance of the castle and grew even more nervous. The children exited the boats and onto the rocky ground.

"Oy, you there! Is this your toad?" said the giant, who was checking the boats as people climbed out of them.

"Trevor!" cried Neville blissfully, holding out his hands. The four smiled happily, glad he had found his toad.

They trailed behind the giant as he led them up to the huge, oak doors. They entered the castle and all were amazed. The whole front entrance was illuminated in bright light and had a high ceiling. There were portraits covering the walls and they were moving! Hermione had been told about the moving pictures, but to see them for herself was a totally different thing. As they walked up the grand staircase some smiled at them and waved. Hermione turned her attention to the top of the stairs and there stood at women dressed in green robes, her black hair tied up and covered by her pointed hat. Hermione smiled as she met McGonagall’s eyes. The woman smiled swiftly to her before the stern expression came back.

"Firs' years, Professor McGonagall," the giant said.

"Thank you, Hagrid. I will take it from here," she said and Hagrid nodded. He walked through the oak doors behind her. Loud voices came rang through the foyer before Hagrid shut the door behind him. The children all looked up at Professor McGonagall as she spoke, "Welcome. The start-of-term feast will begin shortly, but before you take your seats in the Great Hall, you will be sorted into your houses. The Sorting is a very important ceremony because, while you are here, your house will be something like your family within Hogwarts. You will have classes with the rest of your house, sleep in your house dormitory, and spend free time in your house common room."

The four shared a look, all thinking the amount of time they were expected to share with their house was a little excessive.

"The four houses are called Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. While you are here your house will be like your family in Hogwarts. You will have classes with the rest of your house, sleep in your house dormitory, and spend time in your house common room. While at Hogwarts, your triumphs will earn you house points, and rule breaking will lose house points."

Hermione hung onto every word. She was determined to win her house as many points as she could. Rose took one look at her face and snorted, causing Hermione to glare at her.

"At the end of the year, the house with the most points will win the house cup. I hope each of you will be a credit to whichever house becomes yours."
Rose gave Hermione a pointed look, which made her smile.

"The Sorting Ceremony will take place shortly." She finished and walked into the Great Hall. The foyer filled with chatter as they waited.

Hermione turned to Rose, a worried expression on her face.

Rose gave her a warning look. “Don’t even start with the ‘what ifs’ again. We’re best friends. That’s a fact that will never change. You could wake up one day and decide to be the next Dark Lord and I would be right there next to you. No house is going to change that,” she said matter-of-factly. “And Dean, if you start to pretend cry again I will slap you.”

Dean, who was standing behind her, had been reaching to wipe away a fake tear, but paused. He laughed and threw an arm around her shoulders. “Only met me a few hours ago and already you know me so well.”

Rose rolled her eyes and shrugged off his arm. She smiled warmly at Hermione. “We are going to be just fine,” she reassured her.

Hermione smiled, feeling a little calmer now. “We will be just fine,” she repeated with a nod.

Suddenly someone screamed behind them and they swiftly turned. They gasped; about twenty ghost glided through the back wall, pearly white and slightly transparent. They seemed to not have noticed that they were even here. They glided across the room talking to one another and hardly glancing at the first years. They seemed to be arguing. What looked like a fat little monk was saying: "Forgive and forget, I say, we ought to give him a second chance --"

"My dear Friar, haven't we given Peeves all the chances he deserves? He gives us all a bad name and you know, he's not really even a ghost -- I say, what are you all doing here?"

A ghost wearing a ruff and tights had suddenly noticed them.

Nobody answered, not quite knowing how to react.

"New students!" said the Fat Friar, smiling around at them. "About to be Sorted, I suppose?"

A few people nodded mutely.

"Hope to see you in Hufflepuff!" said the Friar. "My old house, you know."

"Move along now," said a sharp voice. "The Sorting Ceremony is about to start."

Professor McGonagall had returned. One by one, the ghosts floated away through the opposite wall.

“I like them,” Dean whispered.

“Give me a few days and you can be just like them,” Rose whispered back. Dean grinned, unfazed.

"Now, form a line," Professor McGonagall told the first years, "and follow me."

The first years scrambled into a line. Hermione stood behind Rose with Theo behind her and Dean in front of Rose.

Hermione shook a little, her nerves coming back. She felt a hand on her shoulder and jumped a little. “It’s going to be alright,” Theo whispered in her ear. Hermione smiled at him gratefully over her shoulder before facing forward again.
They entered the Great Hall and many gasped. Hermione had never seen anything so beautiful. It was lit by thousands and thousands of candles that were floating in midair over four long tables, where the rest of the students were sitting.

Hermione whispered, "It’s bewitched to look like the sky outside. I read about it in Hogwarts, A History." Rose turned to smile at her while Theo chuckled lowly behind her.

These tables were laid with glittering golden plates and goblets. At the top of the hall was another long table where the teachers were sitting. Professor McGonagall led the first years up here, and the first years spread out in between the Gryffindor and Ravenclaw tables. They faced the front where there was a stool with an old, raggedy hat on it in front of the teachers table.

Rose scrunched her nose in disgust. "That’s the Sorting Hat?" she whispered. Hermione smiled fondly and rolled her eyes.

For a few seconds, there was complete silence. Then the hat twitched. A rip near the brim opened wide like a mouth -- and the hat began to sing:

"Oh, you may not think I'm pretty,
But don't judge on what you see,
I'll eat myself if you can find
A smarter hat than me.
You can keep your bowlers black,
Your top hats sleek and tall,
For I'm the Hogwarts Sorting Hat
And I can cap them all.
There's nothing hidden in your head
The Sorting Hat can't see,
So try me on and I will tell you
Where you ought to be.
You might belong in Gryffindor,
Where dwell the brave at heart,
Their daring, nerve, and chivalry Set Gryffindors apart;
You might belong in Hufflepuff,
Where they are just and loyal,
Those patient Hufflepuffis are true And unafraid of toil;
Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw,
If you've a ready mind,
Where those of wit and learning,
Will always find their kind;
Or perhaps in Slytherin
You'll make your real friends,
Those cunning folk use any means
To achieve their ends.
So put me on! Don't be afraid!
And don't get in a flap!
You're in safe hands (though I have none)
For I'm a Thinking Cap!"

The whole hall burst into applause as the hat finished its song. Hermione laughed joyfully as she clapped. It bowed to each of the four tables and then became quite still again.

“I'll kill Fred, he was going on about wrestling a troll." They heard Ron not so quietly whisper. Theo rolled his eyes and Hermione giggled. Theo looked at her and smiled a little. He had spoken to Dean on the boat. He had told the other boy about their meeting with Harry and Ron and what Ron had said when they left. Both had made a promise to each other that they would protect both girls no matter what. In just a few hours the four had grown quite close, so neither boy would allow anything to happen to either girl.

Professor McGonagall now stepped forward holding a long roll of parchment.

"When I call your name, you will put on the hat and sit on the stool to be sorted," she said. Rose and Hermione held each other’s hands tightly. Rose reached out and took Dean’s while Hermione took Theo’s, surprising both boys but neither pulled away.

“Abbott, Hannah!” McGonagall started.

A pink-faced girl with blonde pigtails stumbled out of line, put on the hat, which fell right down over her eyes, and sat down. A moments pause --

"HUFFLEPUFF!" shouted the hat.

The table on the right cheered and clapped as Hannah went to sit down at the Hufflepuff table. Hermione saw the Fat Friar waving merrily at her. She could only hope her house would be just as welcoming.

"Bones, Susan!"

"HUFFLEPUFF!" shouted the hat again, and Susan scuttled off to sit next to Hannah.

Theo looked over at Dean. “Still think that could be you?” he asked.

Dean looked at the Hufflepuffs and shrugged. “You never know.”

“Oh, but I do,” Theo smirked.
"Boot, Terry!"

"RAVENCLAW!"

The table on their left clapped this time; several Ravenclaws stood up to shake hands with Terry as he joined them.

"Brocklehurst, Mandy" went to Ravenclaw too, and Rose felt bad for the girl’s unfortunate bad name. "Brown, Lavender" became the first new Gryffindor, and the table on their right exploded with cheers. Hermione could see Ron's twin brothers catcalling, causing Lavender to blush.

"Bulstrode, Millicent" then became the first Slytherin.

The closer they got to her name the more nervous Hermione got. What if she couldn’t be sorted? What if Rose made new, better friends and didn’t want to be around her anymore? What if her house hated her?

"Finch-Fletchley, Justin!"

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

Hermione noticed that for some the hat shouted out the house at once, but for others it took a little while to decide. "Finnigan, Seamus," a sandy-haired boy, sat on the stool for almost a whole minute before the hat declared him a Gryffindor.

"Granger, Hermione!"

Hermione’s eyes widened and she stood frozen for a moment.

“It’s time, Mia,” Rose said softly. “You’ll be okay.”

Theo squeezed her hand reassuringly while Dean shot her a gentle smile. Hermione took a deep breath before nodding. Reluctantly she let go of their hands and slowly made her way through the crowd and up to the stool. Picking up the hat she sat down and, shooting McGonagall a small, nervous smile, she placed the hat on her head and closed her eyes.

Hello dear, a voice suddenly rang through her head and she jumped slightly. Do not be scared my child, just the Sorting Hat here. Now, let’s get you sorted, yes? Let’s see . . . hmm . . . you are a very intelligent young lady. This is one of the most advanced minds I’ve seen since I sorted young Lily Evans. Your thirst for knowledge is almost overwhelming. You would excel in Ravenclaw. But . . . you are also very brave. You also have the loyalty of a true lion. The willingness to protect your loved ones is strong and powerful. Yes, you’d do well in Gryffindor. Hermione smiled. Rose was right. Yes, I see nothing but greatness in your future, surrounded by family, friends, and success. Now where to put you . . . I shall go with . . .

“GRYFFINDOR!” the hat shouted. Hermione grinned widely and opened her eyes. As she took the hat off she saw Rose and Dean cheering madly for her while Theo just smirked and clapped politely. Hermione smiled, knowing he was happy for her.

“Welcome to Gryffindor, Miss Granger,” McGonagall said quietly.

Hermione smiled brightly up at her. “Thank you, Professor,” she said. With a final wave to her friends she joined her new house, who were all cheering madly. She took a seat next to, who looked to be, the oldest Weasley at Hogwarts.
“Welcome to Gryffindor!” he said cheerfully, holding out his hand. “Percy Weasley.”

Hermione shook his head happily. “Thank you, and nice to meet you.”

She turned to watch the rest of the ceremony. When Neville Longbottom, the boy who had lost his toad, was called, he fell over on his way to the stool. The hat took a long time to decide with Neville. When it finally shouted, "GRYFFINDOR," Hermione was wildly surprised, but clapped happily with the rest of her house. Neville, in his nervous excitement, ran off still wearing it, and had to jog back amid gales of laughter to give it to "MacDougal, Morag."

Neville sat in front of Hermione with a happy grin.

“Malfoy Draco!”

A short, pale boy with platinum blonde hair that was slicked back swaggered up to the stool. The hat had barely touched his head when it screamed, "SLYTHERIN!"

The boy smirked and went to join his friends “Crabbe, Vincent,” and “Goyle, Gregory,” at the Slytherin table. Looking at them Hermione got the feeling that they were the type of kids Remus had warned her about.

Not many first years were left now.

“Nott, Theodore!”

Hermione immediately sat straighter. Theo calmly walked up to the stool and took a seat. Theo shot her a quick, sad smile, seemingly to already know his fate, before placing the hat on his head.

Surprisingly his sorting took a good three minutes before the hat shouted, “SLYTHERIN!”

Theo took of the hat, his expression stunned before it turned blank, and walked over to his cheering table. He sat across from Millicent Bulstrode and as far away from Draco Malfoy and his friends as possible.

Hermione sighed sadly, but she guessed she knew it was coming. I mean, Theo had even told them it was going to happen. But she didn’t give up hope that he wouldn’t let the rivalry between their houses get in the way of their new friendship.

The names continued. "Parkinson" then a pair of twin girls, "Patil" and "Patil", who were sorted into different houses, and then "Perks, Sally-Anne".

"Potter, Harry!"

The hall went silent. Then the excited chatter rose.

"Potter, did she say?"

"The Harry Potter?"

Students all over the hall craned their necks to watch as Harry nervously put the hat on his head. Hermione grimaced, not realizing how bad his fame was. She couldn’t imagine being in his shoes, and immediately felt bad for her reaction towards him on the train.

He sat there for a minute or two before the hat shouted “GRYFFINDOR!” The Gryffindor table erupted with loud, happy and excited cheers. Harry took off the hat, looking relieved, and made his way over to the table. The Gryffindors were in uproar; Percy got up and shook his hand vigorously,
while the Weasley twins yelled, "We got Potter! We got Potter!"

Harry laughed as he sat between Neville and George and across from Hermione. Hermione smiled brightly at him, which he returned.

There were now only five people left to be sorted. Rose, Dean, Ron, a blonde girl, and another brown skinned boy who was almost as tall as Dean with no expression on his face.

"Thomas, Dean!"

Dean hugged Rose before jogging up to the stool. He shot both Theo and Hermione a quick grin before placing the hat on his head. A moment later the hat yelled, “GRYFFINDOR!” and Hermione jumped up with the rest of her table, happy to at least have gotten one of her friends in her house.

Dean grinned widely as he took off the hat. He winked at Theo, who gave him a look that clearly said ‘I told you so’, and blew Rose a kiss, who rolled her eyes, before running over to Hermione and crushing her in a hug. Hermione laughed joyously, ready for it this time. They separated, Dean taking the seat beside her.

“Turpin, Lisa,” became a Ravenclaw and then it was Ron’s turn. After a second under the hat it shouted “GRYFFINDOR!”

Harry clapped loudly with the rest as Ron collapsed onto the seat next to him. Hermione tried to hide her slight disdain as she clapped with everyone else, not being the fondest of this boy.

"Well done, Ron, excellent," said Percy next to her.

Rose looked at the last boy standing beside her. He met her eyes and nodded in greeting. She smiled slightly and nodded back, before they both faced the front.

“Wriley, Rose!”

Hermione, Dean, and Theo immediately snapped to attention, each holding in their breaths. Rose took a deep breath and walked forward to the stool. She sat down and shot a gentle smile to the worried Hermione before placing the hat on her head.

Hermione watched anxiously, gripping Dean’s hand tightly. A few minutes passed and Hermione grew scared, wondering what was taking the hat so long.

Finally it made a decision.

“SLYTHERIN!”

Hermione’s heart fell. Dean looked at her sadly as she stared at Rose. Rose slowly took off the hat and looked at her. She shot Hermione a gentle, but confident, smile and blew her a kiss.

Hermione smiled sadly, but warmly, at her. Somewhere in her heart she knew this would happen. Anyone with two eyes could have seen it. Rose was witty and cunning. She had more determination and ambition in one finger than some had in their whole body. She’d make the perfect Slytherin. But that didn’t stop the sadness seeping into Hermione’s heart as she watched Rose walk over to her cheering housemates and to her new home. Her home that was not with Hermione.

But Hermione put on a brave smile and clapped with the rest of the hall as she watched Rose sit next to Theo at the Slytherin table.
And as “Zabini, Blaise,” joined them she repeated Rose’s words in her head.

_We are going to be just fine_

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**Chapter End Notes**

I hope you guys enjoyed this chapter! I got emotional just writing it. Ultimately the main group here will be Hermione, Rose, Dean, Theo, and I’m thinking of two more people. Please review and tell me what you think! I absolutely love hearing from you guys! And if you have any suggestions or things you’d like to see in this story please let me know! Love,

Oliviaa Rose
Hermione met Rose’s eyes across the room and they shared a smile. Rose nodded to her and Hermione knew she was telling her that everything would be alright. Hermione smiled sadly and nodded back, showing her reluctant acceptance. She was just happy that they both at least had a friend in their houses. Hermione shot Theo a smile and his lips quirked into a small smile, and Hermione knew that's all she’d get. Hermione looked away and observed those in her house. She sighed. For now she’d let her worries wash away and enjoy tonight with her new classmates.

Dean nudged her with his shoulder and she turned to him with a wide smile.

Albus Dumbledore stood on his feet. He was beaming at the students, his arms opened wide in greeting.

"Welcome," he said. "Welcome to a new year at Hogwarts! Before we begin our banquet, I would like to say a few words. And here they are: Nitwit! Blubber! Oddment! Tweak! Thank you!"

He sat back down and everybody clapped and cheered. Hermione and Dean shared a bewildered look.

"Is he -- a bit mad?" Harry asked Percy uncertainly.

"Mad?" said Percy airily. "He's a genius! Best wizard in the world! But he is a bit mad, yes.” Dean snorted and Hermione elbowed him in his side. “Potatoes, Harry?"

Hermione looked down at the table, confused, and matched Harry’s gasp. The recently empty dishes were now filled to the brim with food. There were all kinds of different foods; roast beef, roast chicken, pork chops and lamb chops, sausages, bacon and steak, boiled potatoes, roast potatoes, fries, Yorkshire pudding, peas, carrots, gravy, ketchup, and even peppermint humbugs.

“Food,” Dean moaned happily and started to pile his plate. Hermione mumbled something about boys and rolled her eyes before putting some food on her plate as well.

“Pass the ketchup, mate?” a brown haired boy said beside Dean.

Dean passed him the ketchup with a grin. “Here you go.”

“Thanks,” the boy said. Hermione and Dean both watched as he smothered his roast beef in ketchup.

“I take it you like ketchup,” Dean teased lightly while smirking.

The boy looked at them with a large grin. “What gave it away?” he joked and the three laughed.

“Seamus Finnigan’s the name,” he said.

“Dean Thomas. And this is my friend Hermione Granger.”

“Hello,” Hermione said softly.

“Hello, pretty lass,” Seamus said with a wide smile. Hermione blushed and looked away, not quite knowing how to respond. Dean smiled, amused. “So, what’s your stories?” he asked.

Dean quirked an eyebrow. “Story?”

“Yeah, your story. Your first burst of accidental magic.”
“Oh,” Dean said in understanding. “I sent a pack of fire ants on a bully at my school and they burned all of his clothes off before they burned him.”

Seamus whistled as he looked at him with wide eyes. “Dang, mate,” he said, impressed and Dean smirked. Seamus looked over Dean to Hermione. “What about you, pretty lady?” he said innocently.

Hermione blushed again and cleared her throat. “Uh, I made a sandbox explode and all the sand stuck to these three mean girls that had been making fun of me. It took them a week to get it all off.”

Seamus whistled again. “I’d hate to be on your bad side,” he laughed good heartedly.

Hermione smiled shyly, her blush slowly going away. “What about you?” she asked as she started to cut her bacon and steak.

“Well,” he started after swallowing what was in his mouth, “nothing as big as the two of you. My first spout of magic blew up the pipes in me home. Our whole house flooded with water,” he chuckled. “Mum was raging mad, but she knew it wasn’t something I could have controlled.” He turned to the two. “What about your family?”

"That does look good," a voice interrupted. The three looked up to see a ghost watching Harry cut up his steak,

Harry looked up in surprise. "Can't you --?"

“I haven't eaten for nearly four hundred years," interrupted the ghost. "I don't need to, of course, but one does miss it. I don't think I've introduced myself? Sir Nicholas de Mimsy-Porpington at your service. Resident ghost of Gryffindor Tower."

"I know who you are!" said Ron suddenly. "My brothers told me about you -- you're Nearly Headless Nick!" Hermione wrinkled her nose at his rude bluntness.

"I would prefer you to call me Sir Nicholas de Mimsy --" the ghost began stiffly, but Seamus interrupted.

"Nearly Headless? How can you be nearly headless?" he asked curiously. Hermione groaned at his blunt question as well and mumbled something again about boys, which caused Dean to chuckled quietly and Seamus to grin.

Sir Nicholas looked extremely miffed, and Hermione felt bad for him.

"Like this," he said irritably. He seized his left ear and pulled. His whole head swung off his neck and fell onto his shoulder as if it was on a hinge. Hermione looked away immediately. She could feel the bile rising in her throat. Remus had told her about Nearly Headless Nick and his story, but seeing it for herself was another thing. He looked immensely pleased at the stunned looks on their faces and Nearly Headless Nick flipped his head back onto his neck. It took all of her strength not to throw up when she heard the ‘plop’ of his head falling back into place. He coughed awkwardly, and said, “So -- new Gryffindors! I hope you're going to help us win the house championship this year? Gryffindors have never gone so long without winning. Slytherins have got the cup six years in a row!” Hermione almost groaned, knowing that would go to Rose’s head. “The Bloody Baron's becoming almost unbearable -- he's the Slytherin ghost.”

Most of the kids turned to look over at the Slytherin table and saw a horrible ghost sitting there, with blank staring eyes, a gaunt face, and robes stained with silver blood. He was right next to the Malfoy boy who didn't look too pleased. Rose, who was on the other side of the ghost, was talking to him enthusiastically while the Bloody Baron just looked at her blankly.
“She scares me sometimes,” Hermione whispered to Dean, who chuckled and nodded in agreement.

"How did he get covered in blood?” asked Seamus with great interest.

Dean looked at him with a smirk. “Ever hear the saying ‘curiosity killed the cat’?” Seamus didn’t reply, but matched Dean’s smirk.

"I've never asked,” said Nearly Headless Nick delicately before floating away.

“Bye to you too, mate,” Seamus joked and the kids laughed. He turned back to Dean and Hermione. “Back to the topic, what about your family?”

“I'm muggleborn,” Dean said. “To simply put it, dad left when I was five, mom remarried, and I have five younger siblings.” Dean shrugged as if it was no big deal, but wouldn’t meet anyone’s eye.

Seamus smiled sympathetically before turning to Hermione, wanting to get the attention off of Dean. “What about you, love?” he asked charmingly.

Hermione coughed awkwardly. “Uh, I’m also a muggleborn. I found out about the wizarding world when I was eight. After my accidental burst of magic a friend of my family, who’s a wizard, explained everything to me. He’s now dating my mom, so I've been learning about the wizarding world for a few years now.”

“What about your dad?” Ron asked through a mouthful of food.

Hermione looked down uncomfortably. “Uh, he died,” she said quietly, pushing her food around on her plate. Those around her fell silent. Her eyes connected with Dean’s understanding one’s.

Dean sent her a reassuring smile and turned to Seamus. “What about you?” he asked, diverting everyone’s attention to the Irish.

Seamus nodded in understanding and his wide grin came back. "I'm half-and-half," said Seamus. "Me dad's a Muggle. Mum didn't tell him she was a witch 'til after they were married. Bit of a nasty shock for him."

The others laughed, but Hermione couldn’t help but feel like that could have gone horribly wrong.

"What about you, Neville?” said Ron.

Hermione tuned out the rest of the conversation at that point, still pushing around the food on her plate. It’s been awhile since she’s thought of her father’s death, and she felt both guilt and sadness crawl into her body. She tried to push the feelings away, not wanting those thoughts to cloud her mind right now.

At that moment the food disappeared off their plates and the desserts appeared. Hermione’s eyes widened as she looked around at all the goodies. Blocks of ice cream in every flavor you could think of, apple pies, treacle tarts, chocolate eclairs, jam doughnuts, trifle, strawberries, Jell-O, rice pudding, and so much more.

As she scooped some ice cream onto her plate, Hermione turned to her left and listened as Percy raved about classes this year. She immediately perked.

“I do hope they start right away,” Hermione excitedly added. Percy turned to her in surprise, “there's so much to learn. I'm particularly interested in Transfiguration, you know, turning something into something else, of course, it's supposed to be very difficult—”
“You'll be starting small, just matches into needles and that sort of thing,” Percy told her.

Hermione pouted a little, but her excitement didn’t deter. “Well, it makes sense. You can’t start beginners off with something too hard. But I am excited to get started. I just hope i’m not too behind everyone else.”

Dean laughed as he turned into their conversation. “Trust me, Hermione, I don’t think it's possible for you to be behind.” Hermione smiled at the teasing compliment.

“Besides,” Percy added, “Every first year starts off their classes knowing just as much as another. Whether you’re a muggleborn or a pureblood, everything Hogwarts teaches you is new to everyone.”

Hermione sighed in relief at this. Being behind all of the pureblood first years was a major worry that Hermione had had.

"Ouch!" Harry exclaimed, clapping a hand to his head. Hermione looked at him, startled.

"What is it?" asked Percy.

"N-nothing,” Harry stuttered.

Hermione’s eyebrows furrowed in curiosity and worry, but decided not to comment.

"Who's that teacher talking to Professor Quirrell?" Harry asked Percy.

"Oh, you know Quirrell already, do you? No wonder he's looking so nervous, that's Professor Snape. He teaches Potions, but he doesn't want to -- everyone knows he's after Quirrell's job. Knows an awful lot about the Dark Arts, Snape."

Hermione looked up at the teacher they were talking about and cringed. He was a lanky man with greasy black hair, a hooked nose, and sallow, pale skin. His black, beady eyes were cold as he stared down the teacher beside him wearing a turban on his head.

“Well, doesn’t he look pleasant,” Dean said sarcastically and Seamus snorted.

Everyone went back to eating their desserts and chatting animatedly to each other, getting to know their housemates. Finally the desserts disappeared too, and Dumbledore once again stood.

"Ahern -- just a few more words now that we are all fed and watered. I have a few start-of-term notices to give you. First years should note that the forest on the grounds is forbidden to all pupils. And a few of our older students would do well to remember that as well.” Dumbledore’s eyes flashed to the Weasley twins, who shot him innocent smiles. "I have also been asked by Mr. Filch, the caretaker, to remind you all that no magic should be used between classes in the corridors. Quidditch trials will be held in the second week of the term. Anyone interested in playing for their house teams should contact Madam Hooch. And finally, I must tell you that this year, the third-floor corridor on the right-hand side is out of bounds to everyone who does not wish to die a very painful death.”

Hermione’s eyes widened at the blunt statement, wondering if he was joking or not. A few awkwardly laughed, but Hermione couldn’t find the amusement in it.

"And now, before we go to bed, let us sing the school song!” cried Dumbledore.

“Sing?” Dean groaned, hoping he wasn’t serious. Hermione looked around the hall, noticing the
fallen expressions, and had a feeling he was very serious.

Dumbledore gave his wand a little flick, as if he was trying to get a fly off the end, and a long golden ribbon flew out of it, which rose high above the tables and twisted itself, snakelike, into words.

"Everyone pick their favorite tune," said Dumbledore, "and off we go!"

And the school bellowed:

"Hogwarts, Hogwarts, Hoggy Warty Hogwarts,
Teach us something please,
Whether we be old and bald
Or young with scabby knees,
Our heads could do with filling
With some interesting stuff,
For now they're bare and full of air,
Dead flies and bits of fluff,
So teach us things worth knowing,
Bring back what we've forgot,
just do your best, we'll do the rest,
And learn until our brains all rot."

Everybody finished the song at different times. At last, only the Weasley twins were left singing along to a very slow funeral march. Hermione couldn’t help but laugh at the lyrics. She looked across the hall at Rose, who had a pained expression on her face, along with most of the students in the hall, and she laughed again.

When they had finished, Dumbledore was one of those who clapped loudest.

"Ah, music," he said, wiping his eyes. "A magic beyond all we do here! And now, bedtime. Off you trot!"

With that said everyone rose to follow their House Prefects out of the hall to their common rooms. Hermione smiled at Rose once more in the hall, which she returned before following her fellow Slytherins to their common room. Hermione sighed. She knew this was going to be hard, but it wouldn’t be the first hard thing she’s had to get through.

Hermione smiled as an arm wrapped around her shoulders and looked up at Dean, who grinned down at her.

“Let’s go home,” he said softly.

Hermione nodded, her smile growing. “Let’s go home,” she repeated.

Together they walked over to where Seamus was waiting for them, and all three of them trailed up
Hermione groaned and stretched as the morning light hit her eyes. She sat up and looked around
groggily, forgetting for a moment where she was. When her eyes found the red walls and two other
beds the events of last night hit her and she smiled. She was at Hogwarts.

She sat for a moment and just looked around, remembering how amazing it had felt walking through
the castle and how beautiful the Gryffindor common room was. Knowing that Remus had once
called Gryffindor his home, Hermione felt a comforting presence as she entered through the Fat
Lady’s portrait, as if he was here with her.

Hermione looked at the clock and saw that it was six in the morning. Breakfast started at seven and
classes didn’t start until eight. Hermione looked at her two roommates, Lavender Brown and Parvati
Patil, and sighed. She didn’t think they’d be close friends. They reminded her too much of Marissa
and her two cronies. Not that they had been mean to her, but they were too girly, giggly, and boy
crazy for her tastes.

Hermione rose from her bed and started getting ready for her first day of classes. She was beyond
excited to start learning everything that she could. She practically bounced around the room, taking a
quick shower and getting dressed before trying to contain her bush of hair. After a minute of trying
she gave up and just let the wild curls fall around her shoulders. After checking her bag to make sure
she had all that she needed she grabbed her tie and skipped out of the room. She never learned how
to tie a tie, much to her annoyance, so she’d just have to ask Dean when she saw him.

Speaking of the devil, as she descended the steps to the common room, much to her surprise, her
friend was sitting on the couch looking at a magazine.

“What are you doing up?” Hermione asked in surprise.

Dean turned to her with a cocky grin. “I pegged you as an early riser,” he said as he stood and
stuffed the magazine in his bag. “So I decided to get up and walk with you to breakfast.”

Hermione smiled warmly. She couldn’t believe how thoughtful he had been. “Aw, you didn’t have
to do that.”

Dean smiled and threw an arm around her shoulders as they began to walk out. “Friends have to
stick together in this big, great world,” he said dramatically. “Plus, remember this when I need help
with my homework.”

Hermione’s laugh rang through the common room as they exited to the halls, beginning their trek to
the Great Hall for breakfast.

Luckily for Dean, Hermione had a great memory. They made it to the Great Hall in no time.

“Remind me to never go anywhere without you, okay?” Dean laughed as they took a seat at the
Gryffindor table.

Hermione grinned as she put some eggs onto her plate. It was nice to be around someone who
actually wanted her around. After having Rose as her only friend for a few years, and before that
having no friends at all, it was great to be making another great friend.

“Good morning!” A chirpy voice said and both Hermione and Dean looked up in shock as Rose took a seat across from them. They continued to stare at her as she piled food onto her plate. Finally she looked up and smirked at their surprised faces. “What, no ‘Good morning, Rose. How are you?’” she asked teasingly.

“Good morning, Rose!” Dean said cheerfully, getting over his shock. “How are you?”

“I am fantastic, Dean. Thank you so much for asking,” Rose said just as cheerfully.

Hermione snapped out of her shock and shook her head. “You just couldn’t help but break the rules on your first day, could you?” she asked as she took a bite from her bacon.

Rose shook her head and swallowed what was in her mouth. “There’s no rule that says students can’t sit with other Houses at meal times. I asked Kingsley before we came. It’s only mandatory at the start of the year meal and the end of the year meal,” she said matter-of-factly, and smirked smugly.

Hermione rolled her eyes at her best friend, but was happy that she was there.

“So, how was it with the Slytherins last night?” she asked.

Rose rolled her eyes and sighed. “Annoying. They’re all either really gloomy and cold or egotistical and self-centered.”

Dean smirked. “So you’ll fit in great,” he said slyly, and ducked as she threw a roll at his head.

Rose stuck her tongue out at him before turning back to Hermione. “You’d hate Pansy Parkinson and Daphne Greengrass. They’re both terribly like Marissa and her cronies; mean, nasty, and self-obsessed,” she growled, ripping of a piece of her sausage with her teeth.

Hermione cringed. “You’d despise Lavender Brown and Parvati Patil. They’re like Marissa and her cronies, too; girly, giggly, and boy crazy.”

Both girls shivered at the same time.

“Oh, did they say anything about me?” Dean asked excitedly. He was met with heated glares and shrunk away. “Bloody hell, nevermind.”

Both girl smiled, satisfied.

“Oh yeah, and I already got into a fight with someone,” Rose said nonchalantly.

Hermione placed her fork down and pinched her nose.

“Who?”

“Draco Malfoy,”

“Why?”

“He was being a prick.”

“Language. How?”
“He was ranting about how muggleborns are disgusting and was saying all this bad stuff about Gryffindors and about Harry Potter, and I wasn’t having it.”

“What did you do?” Dean asked, his expression serious.

“I told him to shut up because he was a dumb little boy who didn’t know what he was talking about. I told him how most muggleborns have an IQ that’s bigger than his and his friends’ combined. He got in my face and asked why I was defending ‘such disgusting creatures’ and I told him because one of my best friends is a muggleborn and that she’s outstanding and smarter than he’ll ever be. I then warned him that if he ever did anything to you or any of my friends I would make his world hell and destroy his will to live.” She said all of this very casually and when she finished she continued to eat her food as if nothing happened.

Someone whistled behind Hermione and suddenly Seamus appeared in the seat on her left. “Who knew a snake could be so feisty,” he chirped happily. He held out his hand. “Seamus Finnigan.”

Rose looked surprised at his sudden appearance, but took his hand. “Rose Wriley,” she responded with a warm smile.

Seamus grinned. “Feisty, nice, and warm. Slytherin or not, you’re okay in my book.” He turned to the other two and said. “Good morning Dean, pretty lass.”

Rose quirked an eyebrow as she watched the Irish boy pile food on his plate. She then turned to Hermione with a smirk. Pretty lass?, she mouthed to her.

“Thanks for standing up for me,” Hermione said loudly before Rose could comment on anything.

Rose smiled cockily, but let the subject pass. “Always.”

At that moment Hermione noticed how much the Hall was starting to fill up with students and the stares Rose was getting from the Gryffindors and Slytherins.

“You always were one for attention,” Hermione said, shaking her head.

Rose didn’t need to look around to know what she was talking about.

“The eyes are usually attracted to the most beautiful thing in the room,” she joked.

“Or it could just be the fact that you’re a snake sitting with the herd of lions,” one of the Weasley twins said as they sat beside her.

She rolled her eyes as she looked at them. “I have a name you know, and it’s not snake.”

“Oh?” said the other twin. “Well, we are truly sorry, m’lady, and what would that fair name be?”

Rose quirked an eyebrow at his dramaticism. “Rose.”

Both twins smiled. “Nice to meet you,” they said.

“I’m Fred,” said the one who had first spoken.

“And I’m George,”

“No,” Hermione immediately shook her head, drawing all the attention to herself. She blushed, but continued. “You’re George,” she pointed to the first one, “and you’re Fred,” she said pointing to the second one.
Both looked truly surprised, but Rose just smirked.

“How did you know that?” Fred asked.

Hermione turned a darker shade of red, and shrunk back a little into her seat, embarrassed. “Well, I have an eidetic memory. I remember from on the train who was who and remembered the little physicalities that one of you had but the other didn’t. Like Fred has a tiny mole on his neck and George has more freckles on his nose.”

The twins stared at her for a moment, making her squirm. Finally they grinned widely.

“And who, may we ask, are you little lady?” they asked together.

Rose started at them. “God, that’s gotta get annoying,” she muttered, and they shot her a quick smile before turning back to Hermione.

“Hermione Granger,” she said more confidently.

They grinned even wider, causing Rose to cringe. “Well, welcome to Gryffindor,” they said together once again. “We’re assuming she’s with you,” they said, looking at Rose.

Hermione smiled and nodded while Rose looked at them with a challenge in her eyes.

They nodded, “Then welcome to Gryffindor,” they said to Rose, who quirked her eyebrow again.

“Thanks,” she said cautiously.

At that moment Harry and Ron made their way to the table, slightly out of breath.

“What happened to you two?” Dean asked them.

Harry plopped down beside Rose with Ron on his other side. “We got lost three times,” Ron heaved out as he started piling his plate with a large amount of food. Hermione rolled her eyes. Honestly, it wasn’t that hard to find their way to the Great Hall.

It was then that Ron noticed Rose.

“Hey, what is a Slytherin doing here?” he asked with disgust.

Rose turned to him with a defiant stare. “She has a name, and she is sitting with her best friend.”

Ron looked truly confused. “What Gryffindor would be friends with a Slytherin?” he asked as if it was the most ridiculous thing in the world.


“Me too,” Dean glared.

“Me as well, mate,” Seamus added.

“Us too!” the twin exclaimed happily.

Rose looked smug as she glared at Ron.

Harry looked at Ron warily. “Come on, mate, it’s not that big of a deal. She’s their friend.”

Ron continued to glare. “No, it’s not allowed! It’s against the rules for her to sit here!” he said
angrily.

The twins rolled their eyes at their dramatic little brother.

Rose laughed, not at all taking the situation seriously. “Until you get me a rulebook that says such a thing, my butt will be at this table as many times as it so pleases. Until then, I highly suggest shutting your piggy mouth because obviously you don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Everyone around them stared at her wide eyed, not expecting that. The twins snorted as she shut their brother down, agreeing with the fact that their brother was being ridiculous. Hermione just continued to eat calmly, knowing how her friend was and being used to it already.

Ron looked shocked while Harry looked down at his plate. Harry didn’t agree with how Ron was acting, but didn’t have the courage to speak up to his new friend either.

“But—” he started again, but was interrupted by McGonagall’s arrival. Ron smirked, believing that Rose was about to get into trouble.

Rose smiled up at her teacher. “Good morning, Professor,” she and Hermione said at the same time.

McGonagall nodded to them both. “Girls,” she said, handing Hermione her schedule. “And how was your first night in your Houses?” she asked as she continued passing out the schedules to the other students.

“Great,” Hermione smiled.

“Okay,” Rose shrugged.

McGonagall nodded. “Well, I hope it gets better, Miss Wriley,” she said. Rose nodded in thanks. “Oh, I almost forgot,” McGonagall said, reaching into her robes and pulling out two envelopes.

“Miss Granger, I have a letter here from Remus for you. He asked me to inform him of how your sorting went.” Hermione beamed brightly as she took the letter. “And Miss Wriley, I also have one here from Kingsley for you.” Rose smiled and took the letter.

“Thank you,” they both said.

McGonagall nodded. “I shall see you both in class.” And with that, she swept away to hand out the rest of the schedules.

Rose smirked at the flabbergasted expression on Ron’s face as he watched her walk away.

“Problem?” she asked innocently.

Ron growled before turning away and mumbling into his food.

Hermione giggled before opening her letter, smiling at the familiar handwriting.

Hello Love,

_McGonagall informed your mother and I of your sorting into Gryffindor. We are so immensely proud of you. Mind you, we would have been proud wherever you were placed, but I can’t lie and say a small part of me wasn’t wishing for you to be put into Gryffindor. I had the best years of my life in that House, and I can only hope that you will too. Now if I know you as much as I know I do, you are probably fretting over the fact that Rose was sorted into Slytherin. I will not lie to you and_
say that it won’t be hard because there will be people that judge your friendship and try to tear it apart. But your friendship is too strong for that. You girls are too strong for that. So just fight through it because a friendship like yours is one worth fighting for.

We wish to hear how your first day goes today, little one. Your mother is a worrying mess over here. I will admit, I slightly am too. But we know you’ll be okay. We hope the kids are nice and that you’ve made some friends. Please try to socialize, yeah? There’s a whole world outside of your books just waiting for you to explore. (But you know, keep a few books nearby too. For safe keeping).

We wish you luck, our little lioness.

We love you,

Mooney and Momma

Hermione smiled sadly as she finished reading the letter. She missed her family so much. She’s never been so far away from them.

“Everything okay?” Dean whispered to her.

Hermione turned to him and nodded. He smiled and squeezed her shoulder.

A throat cleared and they all turned to see Theo standing behind Rose.

“Theo!” exclaimed Dean excitedly. “Big T! Snake man! Silent killer! My main mate! I thought you had forgotten all about little ol’ me! What is good?!”

Theo stared at him like he was crazy and Dean laughed.

Hermione shook her head and smiled at the boy sweetly. “Good morning, Theo.”

Theo’s lips quirked. “Hermione,” he said gently.

“Oh, I see how it is!” Dean said, throwing up his hands. “I thought we had a bond, Theo, but you can’t even say ‘hello’ to me?!”

Theo shook his head. “Hello,” he said quietly.

Dean let out a big breath of air and deflated on Hermione’s side. “Good lordy, I can breathe now,” he said, and laughed as Hermione tried to push him off of her.

Rose laughed and turned back to Theo. “Have you come to join me?” she asked, moving over and teasingly patting the spot next to her.

Theo raised an eyebrow, looking at the Gryffindors apprehensively, especially the ticking time bomb Ron.

“I just came to give you your schedule,” he said smoothly, handing her the piece of paper.

Rose shoved the paper in her bag before patting the empty seat again. “I think you should join me.” Theo looked at her warily. Rose placed a hand on her heart and gave him an innocent look. “I am a lone Slytherin in a pit of Gryffindors. Are you really going to leave me to fend for myself?” she asked, batting her eyes at him.
Theo rolled his eyes, but still looked apprehensive. He looked over his shoulder at the Slytherin table. Hermione looked over and saw Draco Malfoy glaring at them, especially Theo and Rose. It was then that Hermione realized that if he sat with them, he was sealing his fate. He’d forever be an outcast of Slytherin and forever be on Malfoy’s bad side. Rose already knew what she did by sitting with us, now it was Theo’s turn to decide.

Hermione stared at him, slight hope in her eyes. She liked Theo and didn’t think she was ready to lose him yet.

Theo turned back around and met her eyes. Everyone watched him, waiting to see what he’d do. He stared at her, and she met his eyes head on. He stood there for a moment, seemingly trying to find something in her, before glancing at Ron. Suddenly his expression hardened before going blank again. Hermione wondered what that was about before he met her eyes again and sighed. Slowly he moved forward and cautiously sat down beside Rose.

He was as stiff as a board, but he was there and that’s all that mattered to Hermione as she beamed at him. Dean whooped excitedly as Rose laughed and the twins and Seamus cheered. Theo looked extremely uncomfortable as they drew attention to him, but smiled slightly. He had to admit, the atmosphere was a lot warmer at this table than at the Slytherin table.

“Two snakes in one morning? What a great beginning to a great school year!” Fred exclaimed and they all laughed while Theo smirked. With the new additions they all began to talk and get to know each other more.

Hermione spotted Theo looking at her tie on the table and blushed in embarrassment. At his curious look she responded, “I have no idea how to tie a tie.”

Theo smirked in amusement and reached for the tie. Leaning over the table he looped it around her neck and began tying it for her. She looked at him shyly as he continued, not use to a boy being so close to her. He shot her a quick smile as he finished and sat back.

“Thank you,” she said, touching the perfectly tied tie.

Theo nodded and continued to eat.

Rose smirked at her and she narrowed her eyes in warning.

Rose grinned. “So, who’s ready to head to class?”

xxXxx

To Hermione, classes had been amazing. There was so much more to magic than just waving a wand and saying a spell. Just like muggle school students had tons of paperwork to do and chapters to read, much to Hermione’s enjoyment. They studied stars in Astronomy and worked with plants in Herbology. They learned about the history of the wizarding world in History of Magic, which was one of Hermione’s favorite classes. Sure, Professor Binns was pretty boring, but what he taught was so fascinating. Rose didn’t agree. History was one class that the Gryffindors had with the Slytherins and Rose was knocked out ten minutes into the class.

Hermione found her Charms class and the teacher to be interesting. Professor Flitwick, the Charms teacher, was a tiny little wizard who had to stand on a pile of books to see over his desk, something
Dean and Seamus couldn’t stop laughing about. At the start of their first class he took the roll call, and when he reached Harry's name he gave an excited squeak and toppled out of sight. This, of course, led both Dean and Seamus to fall into another fit of laughter.

Transfiguration, Hermione had decided, was by far her favorite class. Not only because of Professor McGonagall, who, Hermione couldn’t lie, was her favorite teacher, but because the subject itself was very interesting. She loved the fact that she’d be able to turn one thing into another totally different thing with just one spell. After taking a lot of complicated notes, they were each given a match and started trying to turn it into a needle. By the end of the lesson, only Hermione had made any difference to her match, much to her happiness and excitement. Professor McGonagall showed the class how it had gone all silver and pointy and gave Hermione a rare smile. Dean and Seamus patted her on the back as she beamed proudly. She couldn’t wait to write to Remus later about it!

Defense Against the Dark Arts was a complete joke to Hermione. She’s never hated a class before in her life, but she was on the verge of hating that class. The classroom itself smelled strongly of garlic, which, rumor said, was to ward off a vampire he’d met in Romania and was afraid would be coming back to get him one of these days. Hermione was skeptical about this, but in the wizarding world anything was possible. His turban, he told them, had been given to him by an African prince as a thank-you for getting rid of a troublesome zombie, but they weren’t sure they believed this story. For one thing, when Seamus Finnigan asked eagerly to hear how Quirrell had fought off the zombie, Quirrell went pink and started talking about the weather. The rest of the class droned on. His constant stuttering made it hard for them to follow along with what he was trying to teach them, and half the time it didn’t seem like he knew what he was talking about. Hermione reminded herself to visit the library later to double check his facts.

Potions was their last class of the day and Hermione both loved and hated the class. She loved it because the art of potions itself was unbelievably fascinating to her. She hated it because Professor Snape was just as horrible as everyone had described him, and it didn’t help that they shared the class with the Slytherins, who he favored beyond belief. The class itself took place in the freezing dungeons, giving it a creepy air on top of all the disgusting ingredients floating around in jars around the room. When Snape started taking roll call he paused with a nasty glint in his eyes when he reached Harry’s name. Hermione was appalled when Snape started to unfairly ask Harry questions that no first year would know...except for her, of course. So she raised her hand, hoping to take the attention off of Harry and show Snape that some first years did read ahead. When Snape ignored her and snapped at her to sit down it took all her might to keep Rose seated.

That was another problem in itself. Malfoy and the other Slytherins had been none too happy with Rose and Theo’s friendship with the Gryffindors. They called them blood traitors because apparently hanging out with muggleborns was dirtying their perfect blood. All Rose responded with was if she hung around Malfoy he would dirty her brain with stupidity, so she’ll take her chances.

The rest of the class was just a disaster. They were put into pairs and instructed to make a potion. Luckily Hermione had been put with Dean. Their potion was going great and they were ignoring Snape’s boasting about Malfoy’s potion when clouds of acid green smoke and a loud hissing filled the dungeon. They had turned to see that poor Neville had somehow managed to melt Seamus's cauldron into a twisted blob, and their potion was seeping across the stone floor, burning holes in people's shoes. Within seconds, the whole class was standing on their stools while Neville, who had been drenched in the potion when the cauldron collapsed, moaned in pain as angry red boils sprang up all over his arms and legs. Hermione wanted to jump of her seat and help him, but didn’t want to risk getting hurt herself.

"Idiot boy!" snarled Snape, clearing the spilled potion away with one wave of his wand. "I suppose you added the porcupine quills before taking the cauldron off the fire?" Hermione watched with
wide eyes as Snape yelled at Neville. That was no way to talk to a child! If the situation wasn’t so serious, she would have laughed as she thought about how her mother probably would have slapped him for talking to a child that way.

Neville whimpered as boils started to pop up all over his nose.

"Take him up to the hospital wing," Snape spat at Seamus. Dean's frown deepened at the way his new friend was spoken to. Snape then rounded on Harry and Ron, who had been working next to Neville.

"You -- Potter -- why didn't you tell him not to add the quills? Thought he'd make you look good if he got it wrong, did you? That's another point you've lost for Gryffindor."

Hermione, and all the other Gryffindors, thought it was so unfair! Harry opened his mouth to respond, but someone beat him to the punch.

“That’s so unfair!” Rose exclaimed. She looked quite funny, standing on her stool with her hands on her hips, looking like a disapproving mother. “He had nothing to do with the accident! You can’t penalize him for that!”

Snape looked absolutely shocked that a student, a Slytherin no less, was standing up to him.

“Sit down, Miss Wriley,” Snape snapped.

“No,” Rose said, crossing her arms defiantly. “It’s wrong for you, as an adult, to yell at a child like that, no matter how much they mess up. Then to blame someone else for another’s mistake? So not cool!”

Hermione looked at her best friend with wide eyes, but she couldn’t help but smile. Rose was very outspoken, and you were going to hear what she had to say whether you wanted to or not, no matter who you were.

“Shut up, Wriley!” Pansy hissed from her seat.

Rose whirled on her with a hot glare. “Tell me to shut up again, I dare you,” she snarled. Pansy shrunk back into her seat and Rose turned back around, satisfied.

Snape’s frown deepened as he met her eyes once again. “Miss Wriley, sit down and mind your business.”

“It becomes my business when a teacher treats some of my good classmates unfairly. First throwing Harry difficult questions you knew he wouldn’t know. Then snapping at my best friend when she wanted to answer the questions. Then yelling at a poor boy who caused an accident, which could be expected in a group of first years who had never touched a potion before. And now you’re once again targeting poor Harry who had nothing to do with that accident. You’re a bully!”

“Miss Wriley, detention for a week!” Snape roared.

“It’s a date!” Rose yelled right back at him. At that moment the bell rang, signaling the end of class.

“OUT!” Snape bellowed and everyone, except for Rose, rushed out of the door. Hermione, Dean, and Theo waited outside and a minute later Rose confidently strolled out of the classroom. Together the four of them headed up to the Great Hall.

“Detention on your first day of school.”
“Yup,”

“That’s got to be a record.”

“Uh-huh,”

“You know you just sealed your fate with him for the next seven years, right?”

“I regret nothing,” Rose smirked.

xxXxx

Dear Momma and Mooney,

I was so very pleased to hear from you. I’m sorry that it’s taken me so long to reply, but this week has been so crazy.

Classes are great. I love almost all of them. Transfiguration is by far my favorite. I guess like father like daughter, right Mooney? Defense Against the Dark Arts with Professor Quirrell is kind of a joke. Honestly, this man has no idea what he’s talking about. Almost everything he teaches us is wrong, so I have to go to the library and get the proper facts from books. Not that I mind, but it is quite frustrating having a teacher that can’t teach their own subject. And then there’s Potions. Professor Snape is just awful! He favors the Slytherins so much and it’s so not fair! Just this week Gryffindor has lost thirty points for the smallest reasons. But sometimes it’s worth it because Rose makes it a point to let him know how stupid she finds it. I’m sure by now you’ve heard of the incident that happened on our first day. She’s been scrubbing cauldrons all week because of it, but she says it’s worth it.

I know you guys have been worried about me making friends, I was too, but I’ve made so many! First there’s Dean Thomas, a muggleborn that I had actually met in Flourish and Blotts over the summer. He was sorted into Gryffindor with me. We’re almost always together. He’s super funny and sweet. Momma would love him. Then there’s Theodore Nott, a pureblood that Dean introduced Rose and I to on the train. He was sorted into Slytherin with Rose. Theo is really quiet, but not in a shy way. More of a ‘he just prefers to watch and observe than speak and be seen’ kind of way. He and Rose always sit with us at meals, which kind of made them the outcasts of Slytherin, but they don’t seem to mind. Seamus Finnigan is another friend that we’ve made. He’s in Gryffindor with Dean and I. He’s...very strange to say the least. In a good way, though. I don’t think there’s anyone quite like him out there. And lastly there are the Weasley twins, Fred and George. They’re two years ahead of us, but for some reason they like to hang around us from time to time. They’re the big jokesters at Hogwarts, always playing pranks on anything that moves. Kind of like the Marauders, Mooney! Rose absolutely loves them, sometimes helping them with their pranks. Watch out for them! I’ll never admit this to them, but they really are quite intelligent with the stuff they come up with. And that’s it for now! I’m quite surprised that I made this many friends in one week!

Guess who I met Mooney? Harry Potter! I remember all the stories you told me of his parents and vaguely of what happened the night they died, but you didn’t tell me we’d start Hogwarts the same year! He’s really sweet, Mooney, though the company he keeps isn’t. Ronald Weasley and I don’t get along too well. He doesn’t agree with my choice of friends (Rose and Theo), and I think he’s jealous of how smart I am. But that sucks for him because I’m not changing any time soon, so he’ll have to learn to deal with it. Anyways, they’re already getting themselves into trouble. At Flying
Lessons today Draco Malfoy, being the bully that he is, took Neville Longbottom’s Remembrall after he got hurt. Harry, trying to get it back, flew after Malfoy on his broom, after Madam Hooch SPECIFICALLY told everyone to stay on the ground. Long story short, Malfoy threw the Remembrall, Harry caught it, and now Harry’s the new Seeker of the Gryffindor Quidditch team. The first ever first year to make the team, might I add. Though I am highly impressed, I am also absolutely dumbfounded by the stupidity of these boys. Do you know how many points they could have cost their Houses?! And to top it all off, Malfoy challenged Harry to a duel tonight, and guess who stupidly agreed? Yup, Harry Potter! And Ron is supposedly his second! I tried to reason with them about how this is a bad idea, but they just brushed me off. Boys, I swear! They’re going to lose all of the points I earned for Gryffindor. Slytherin can’t win again this year, i’ll never hear the end of it from Rose! Don’t worry though, i’ll stop them one way or another.

Anyways, how is everything at home? How’s Calvin? I miss him terribly. I wish I could have seen him off to school. Please tell him I wish him luck and to write me soon! And tell Aunty Armelle that I love and miss her too!

I know you guys were really worried about me, but you can rest now. I’m having a great time here. Sure there were little incidents with other students here and there, but nothing I can’t handle. Plus I have my friends to back me up. I’m okay, guys.

I love you,

Hermione

xxXxxx

Jocelyn teared up as she read her daughter’s letter out loud to Remus as they rested in bed. She put the letter to her heart and sighed in relief.

“I’m so happy she’s having a good time,” she said as she rested back against Remus’ chest. “And that she’s made so many friends, She made friends, Remus!” she said joyfully. “Oh, I can’t wait to meet them all!”

Remus’ chest rumbled as he chuckled. “Don’t go scaring them off, love,” he joked lightly, and laughed as she swatted the arm that was wrapped around her waist.

She looked up at him and noticed his far off stare. “What’s wrong?” she asked gently.

Remus sighed, knowing that there was no way he’d be able to lie to her. “She met Harry...James’ Harry,” he said quietly. Jocelyn’s eyes lit up in understanding as she finally connected the dots. “It totally slipped my mind that he’d be starting the same year as her.”

Remus felt a twinge of guilt in his heart that he had totally forgotten about Harry the past years. The thought of Harry would sneak up here and there, but he always pushed them away, not wanting to recall that horrible night. He felt guilty for doing so, feeling that he was dishonoring James and Lily in the act, but it was the only thing he could do to help himself move on.

“Don’t do that,” Jocelyn warned, knowing the turmoil that was happening in his head. “It wasn’t your fault what happened and it never will be. You fought for him, but in the end the Ministry and Dumbledore won. I’m sure he’s in safe hands. Just be glad that he’s at Hogwarts where our little Hermione is watching over him. Okay?”
Remus smiled down at her, thankful to have such a beautiful soul in his life. “Okay,” he whispered. He took the letter from her and read it again. He didn’t say anything, but he couldn’t stop rereading a specific line that made his heart jump for joy. *I guess like father like daughter, right Mooney?* She had called him her father. He wondered if she did that on purpose or if she didn’t even notice that she wrote it. Either way, his heart warmed at the thought of her thinking of him as her father. He sure looked at her as his daughter.

Jocelyn smiled and lightly kissed him on the lips before taking the letter back. “I’m so happy she’s doing okay,” she whispered.

Remus held her tighter to his side as he looked at the letter over her shoulder. “I knew she would,” he said gently. “She’s Hermione Granger. She can do anything she wants to.”

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Hermione huffed in annoyance as she watched Harry and Ron run off with what was obviously a new broom for Harry. After last night’s events with her trying to stop them from going to that stupid duel, trailing after them to that stupid duel, and then realizing that the stupid duel was a set up to get the stupid boys in trouble, and then almost getting caught by Filch because stupid Ron angered stupid Peeves and lastly almost being eaten by a stupid three headed dog, Hermione was a little annoyed. Everything had just been so...stupid. And what do they get for their stupidity? A freaking stupid broom.

“It’s ridiculous!” She exclaimed as she watched them exit the hall. “They break so many rules and almost get us killed, and they’re rewarded!” she hissed quietly to Rose, Dean, and Theo.

Rose shook her head in both disgust and anger. “I can’t believe the school has a three headed dog hiding here. What were they thinking?! Seriously, in a school full of children that could walk in on it at any moment?”

“And locked with a simple spell like ‘*Alohomora*’,” Dean scoffed in disbelief.

Theo looked thoughtful as he stared into his goblet. “You said there was a trap door under the Cerberus, right?” he asked, finally looking at her since she told them what happened. Hermione nodded, wondering what he was getting at. “Okay, then, like you said earlier, it’s probably protecting something. But, to have something so big and so dangerous in a school full of children just to protect whatever is under the trap door—”

“Means there must be something extremely important under that door,” Hermione realized.

Theo nodded. “So the only question is, what’s under that trap door that’s so important?”

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Hermione hated Halloween. No, that was a lie. She loved Halloween, but she hated celebrating it without her family. Halloween has always been a special night for Hermione’s family. When it was just her, Jocelyn, Calvin, and Armelle, they would all decorate the Granger house weeks before with
all the creepy Halloween decorations they could find. On the Halloween morning Jocelyn would make Hermione pancakes that looked like pumpkins, something she did since the day she was born. Later at night Jocelyn and Calvin would take Hermione out trick or treating all over town, while Armelle stayed behind to hand out candy. Then they’d return home and eat all of the food they had made beforehand while watching movies until Hermione fell asleep. When Remus, Rose, and Kingsley joined the family it just became a greater day to celebrate. It was Hermione’s favorite holiday, but at Hogwarts, without her family and their traditions, she just wasn’t looking forward to the day as much as she usually did.

Hermione stared at the plain pancakes on her plate and quietly sighed sadly to herself. She had never felt so homesick in the two months that she’s been here.

“Is everything okay, love?” Seamus asked gently, noticing her forlorn expression. Hermione smiled slightly, used to his terms of endearment by now.

“Yeah,” she said with a smile that didn’t quite reach her eyes. She pushed away her plate and stood, not really wanting to look at all of the Halloween decorations in the Great Hall. “I’m going to head to class early. I’ll see you guys,” she said with fake cheer, and quickly made her way out of the hall before they could say anything.

Rose watched her leave with a sad expression. She knew today would be a hard day for Hermione. Don’t get her wrong, she wasn’t too much in the mood for Halloween this year either, but Hermione had been celebrating those traditions since the day she was born.

“What’s wrong with her?” Dean asked worriedly.

Rose sighed. “Halloween was always a big holiday for us and our families. Especially hers though, because they’ve been celebrating it big since the day she was born. They have all these traditions that they do.”

Dean nodded in understanding. “She’s homesick,” he clarified.

Rose nodded. “Bad.”

The rest of the day dragged on for Hermione, and she never wished for Halloween to end so much before. All of her classes just droned on and as the day went on she found herself becoming more and more irritated. She just wanted to go to her room and go to sleep.

Fortunately it was time for her last class of the day; Charms. Unfortunately they had to work in pairs to practice the ‘Wingardium Leviosa’ spell and she was stuck with the person she disliked the most; Ron Weasley. If she wasn’t in a bad mood already, she sure was now. She hadn’t spoken to neither him nor Harry since the incident, and hadn’t planned to either.

After Flitwick showed us how to do the spell he left us to our own devices, which is where Hermione’s aggravation with the world grew. It was obvious that Ron had no idea what he was doing as he pronounced the words wrong and flung his wand around in the air like a madman. When he almost hit Hermione in the face with another failed attempt she finally snapped.

“Stop!” I snapped loudly, snatching his wand out of his hand and almost throwing down on the desk. "You're saying it wrong. It's Wing-gar-dium Levi-o-sa, make the 'gar' nice and long,” she explained irritably. Honestly, it wasn’t that hard.

Ron glared at her. "You do it, then, if you're so clever,” Ron snarled.

Hermione met his glare head on and rolled up the sleeves of her gown. Flicking her wand, she said,
"Wingardium Leviosa!"

Their feather rose off the desk and hovered about four feet above their heads.

"Oh, well done!" cried Professor Flitwick, clapping. "Everyone see here, Miss Granger's done it!"

No matter how horrible of a mood she was in, she could help the swell of pride and smugness that swelled inside of her at her teacher’s praise and Ron’s angry expression.

When the class ended she was slow in packing her things, telling Dean and Seamus to go on without her. She didn’t feel like talking to anyone right now, knowing they’d want to talk about her mood. She was the last to exit the classroom, trailing behind Harry, Ron, Dean, Seamus, and Neville.

"It's no wonder no one can stand her," she heard Ron say to them as they pushed their way into the crowded corridor, "she's a nightmare, honestly."

Hermione stopped and suddenly she couldn’t see clearly. That was the last drop that broke the dam. Before she knew it tears were rolling down her cheeks at rapid pace as all of her frustration and anger that had built up that day finally broke her down. She sucked in a sob as she pushed her way through them, rushing down the hall. She heard Dean and Seamus call out to her as she ran away, but she didn’t stop running. She just wanted to get away from everything and everyone.

Dean watched in horror as Hermione ran away with a stream of tears falling down her face. As she rounded the corner and ran out of site Dean’s horror turned into anger and he whirled around to face the idiot red head that dared to make his friend cry, especially today. Dean walked forward until he was inches from his face and growled, “What the hell is wrong with you?!”

The boys looked shocked at his tone and language, except for Seamus, who looked just as mad.

Ron snapped out of his shock and glared heatedly. “What? Did she finally notice that no one likes her?”

Dean growled and pushed him so hard that if Harry hadn’t caught him he would have fell on his butt. “Are you serious?” he snarled, hot, ferocious anger building inside of him.

“Are you that dumb, mate?” Seamus asked in disgust.

“She has people who like her. She has friends, way more than you do. Besides Harry and Neville can you name anyone else who even likes you? No, you can’t. And that’s because you’re a bloody prick who is mean and rude and no one wants to be around someone like that. Hermione has people who love her and that are true friends. Me, Seamus, Rose, Theo, Neville, your own brothers. The sooner you realize that you’re just jealous of her the sooner you can move the hell on and stop being a prick that nobody likes,” Dean yelled in his face, absolutely stunning him.

Dean had had it with Ron’s attitude. His constant mean comments to Hermione, the sweetest girl he’s ever met. His rude and hostile attitude towards Rose and Theo just because they were Slytherins. Those were his best friends that Ron was messing with, and he was done letting it happen.

Dean stepped into Ron’s space again. “You are going to leave my friends alone from now on. If hear one negative thing about any of them come out of your mouth again, next time I won’t be so nice to let you leave without a mark,” he warned the red head in a threatening tone, Ron’s eyes widened in slight fear, not used to seeing the usual cheerful boy so angry.

Seamus put a hand on the visibly shaking boy’s shoulder and pulled him away. “Come on, Dean.
Let’s go fine Hermione, yeah?”

Dean let out a heavy breath and nodded. “Yeah,” he agreed. With one last glare towards Ron he turned and started running down the hall in hopes of finding Hermione.

_Oh, Hermione_, he thought, _where are you?_

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Rose and Theo looked around at all of the empty seats surrounding them at the Gryffindor table. They were at the Halloween feast and it was unusual that all of the Gryffindor first year boys would be missing from such a big meal.

“Where _is_ everyone?” Rose asked worriedly. She hadn’t seen Hermione since that morning and was growing worried that neither her or Dean and Seamus were there. She just hoped nothing bad had happened.

At that moment Ron, Harry, and Neville rushed in and plopped down a few seats away.

“Hey, do you guys know where Hermione and the boys are?” Rose asked them. Neither she nor Theo missed the looks they exchanged, from Harry’s accusing look, to Neville’s worried one, to Ron’s slightly guilty one. Rose narrowed her eyes as they all shook their heads. “What happened?” Rose demanded.

“Nothing,” Ron snapped.

“You’re lying,” Theo frowned. He knew Ron would be trouble eventually.

Just then Dean and Seamus came rushing into the Hall, looking around frantically. When it seemed that neither had found what they were looking for their faces fell in disappointment. They made their way over to the group and Theo could see Ron visibly pale as they got closer.

“We can’t find Hermione anywhere,” Dean growled, glaring at Ron, who didn’t look up from his plate.

Rose’s eyebrows shot up as she stared at Dean. “What do you mean you can’t find Hermione?”

Dean continued to glare at the red head. “This idiot was a jerk to her and said no one liked her and she ran off crying. After I told him off Seamus and I went looking for her, but she’s nowhere to be found.”

Both Rose and Theo turned to look at Ron with the deadliest glares that they could muster.

“Nothing happened, huh?” Rose hissed, shooting out of her seat to tower over the pale boy. Theo slowly following her lead. Rose knew the deep insecurity Hermione had when it came to others liking her. All she ever wanted was to be accepted, and just when she finds a group of friends that do, Ron Weasley just had to tear her down.

“No,” Dean demanded, placing his hand firmly on her shoulder. “Now is not the time. Our best friend is somewhere in this castle, an emotional wreck. She needs us right now. If you blow up right here, right now, you’ll get kicked out of the Gryffindor table and get in trouble and that’s the last
thing Hermione needs. I already handled him. Now we have to go find her and reassure her that everything is okay and that she does have people that care.”

Rose listened to what he had to say and reluctantly nodded. But this wasn’t the end of this. As she left her seat to follow the boys out she leaned down and whispered in Ron’s ear, “I will destroy you.” Ron shivered and Rose smirked. She turned to the boys and nodded, telling them that she was ready to go.

On their way out of the hall they crossed paths with a worried looking Padma Patil, who had just entered the hall. Her eyes brightened when she saw them. “Oh, guys! I was just about to come see you. Hermione is in the girl’s bathroom, crying. She locked herself in a stall so I couldn’t get in to help her.”

They all brightened, relieved to finally know where Hermione had been hiding out. “Thank you so much, Padma,” Rose said gratefully as they started to make their way quickly out the door.

Padma nodded as she watched them leave. “Of course. I hope everything’s okay!” she called after them.

Rose and the boys ran through the halls to get to the girl’s bathroom. When they arrived Rose rushed in while the boys stopped short outside the door. They looked at each other awkwardly as they tried to decide whether or not to go in or leave Rose to it.

Suddenly the door swung open again and they were met with a frowning Rose. “Oh, bloody hell! Get your arses in here!” she snapped before walking away. The boys scurried in after her, both wanting to see Hermione and being scared of Rose’s wrath.

As they entered the bathroom they could hear small sniffles coming from the last stall that Rose was standing in front of.

“Hermione,” Rose said softly, “please let me in.”

“No!” Hermione sobbed. “Please just leave me alone.”

“Yeah, probably not going to happen,” Theo drawled as he sat on the ground and leaned back against the stall. The others followed his lead, sitting in front of the stall.

Hermione let out another choked sob and Dean became angry again, remembering why she was crying. “Hermione, Weasley is a jerk. He’s jealous of you, of your intelligence, of the friends you have. All he has is Harry. He’s a jerk that shouldn’t have said those horrible things and doesn’t deserve your tears.”

“It doesn’t stop it from hurting!” Hermione sobbed. “You don’t understand how hard it was being me growing up. To be the girl that nobody liked, that everyone picked on. I was the town’s freak. I didn’t have a single friend growing up until Rose came along, and even then I only got to see her a couple of times a week. It took me a long time to accept who I am because I always felt like I couldn’t be me and have friends. When I came here and met you guys who accepted me for me I thought the impossible had finally become possible. It was surreal. I was so happy, but there was always that fear in the back of my mind that eventually it would all end and that you guys would leave me to find a better friend. I love you guys so much and I know you could do so much better—”

“Stop,” Theo demanded, and silence filled the bathroom. “Stop speaking like that Hermione Granger. You have no idea how much of a privilege it is to have a friend like you. You’re such a kind person with a big heart. You accept everyone around you. You’re intelligent beyond belief. If
some dumb little kid can’t see how great you are then he lost out on the greatest friend anyone could have. Who cares if you didn’t have friends in your hometown, you have friends now. We’ll never leave you for someone better because there is no one better than you.” The bathroom was filled with deafening silence as Rose, Dean, and Seamus stared at Theo in shock, hardly ever hearing him speak more than a few sentences, let alone show so much emotion. Hermione’s sobs had ceased, now there were just small sniffles echoing from inside the stall.

“There’s no one quite like you, pretty lass,” Seamus whispered quietly. “And luckily for us, we’re fortunate enough to have you to brighten up our lives.”

“We love you, Hermione,” Rose said. “We always will.”

They sat in silence as Hermione’s sniffles slowly died away and they could just hear her heavy breathing. Suddenly there was a slow scuffling noise coming from inside the stall and they all quickly stood and backed up. Slowly the stall door creaked open and Hermione’s tear streaked face and shaking body appeared. She looked at them all sadly before locking eyes with Rose.

“Today has been awful,” Hermione said softly. Rose looked at her sadly before moving forward to embrace her in a tight hug. The boys quickly joined, surrounding the girls on all sides and making a group hug. “I love you guys. Thank you,” Hermione whispered.

They stayed like that for a while before suddenly a loud BANG! rang through the bathroom. All five of them jumped in surprise as they turned towards the commotion. Their eyes widened in horror at the sight before them. Twelve feet tall, its skin was a dull, granite gray, it’s great lumpy body like a boulder with its small bald head perched on top like a coconut. It had short legs thick as tree trunks with flat, horny feet. The smell coming from it was incredible. It was holding a huge wooden club, which dragged along the floor because its arms were so long. It was a troll, the ugliest troll one could imagine.

The troll stopped when it spotted the frozen group of kids and started grunting lowly. No one moved, petrified of what would happen. The troll’s grunting grew louder as he dumberly studied them.

“How did a troll get in the school?” Rose asked frightenedly, making sure not to move anything but her lips.

“I have no idea,” Theo responded, not taking his eyes off of it.

“What do we do?” Hermione whimpered.

The troll suddenly let out an angry sound and started advancing towards them. He swung up his club and slammed it down hard onto the sinks, smashing them into little pieces. He picked up his club again, and this time pointed it towards them.

“MOVE!” Dean screamed and everyone ran in different directions with a scream of terror as the club came smashing down on the spot they had just vacated. Theo and Dean ended up near the door, Rose skidded under the remaining sinks, and Seamus and Hermione dived into an open stall. The floor cracked under the force of the club and the kids all gasped in terror.

“What do we do?!” Dean yelled, causing the troll to swerve in a circle towards him and Theo.

“Distract it!” Rose yelled, causing the troll to turn towards her this time. He raised his club again, and Rose screamed and scurried away towards the back wall before the club came crashing down and smashing the sinks she had just been hiding under. “Confuse it!”

They all got the hint and started yelling at it at the same time and throwing objects at it. The troll
turned in circles, trying to figure out where to go and what to do. Rose took the chance to run towards the exit where Theo and Dean were.

“Oy, you ugly brute! Over here!” Seamus yelled at the troll in order to let Rose get through. Fortunately she was able to get to the other boys. Unfortunately that put the troll’s attention towards Seamus and Hermione.

“Oh no,” Hermione whispered.

The three by the door started yelling in hopes to stray the trolls attention, but their attempts failed this time. Before anyone could see it coming the troll raised his club and swung at the stalls. Seamus barely had enough time to push Hermione as hard as he could out of the stalls and near the others before the stall walls smashed and fell into pieces around him and on top of him. Before their eyes the lower half of Seamus’ body was buried under concrete walls and he screamed out in pain.

“Seamus!” Hermione screamed, and tried to run to him but Rose quickly ran forward and grabbed her arm, dragging her to the rest of them. “We can’t just leave him there!”

“And we’re not, but we can’t just run in there without a plan and get everyone, including him, killed!” Rose yelled, looking toward the obviously pained Seamus, who looked like he was trying his hardest not to cry.

It was then, as Dean watched one of his best friends suffer in pain while the troll slowly advanced on him, that Dean came up with the bravest, dumbest plan anyone could think of. With a deep breath he took a great running jump and managed to fasten his arms around the troll’s neck from behind. He heard the girls scream his name in fright behind him, but focused on the task at hand. When the troll took no notice of him he did the first thing that came to his mind; he shoved his wand as far as he could up the troll’s nose.

Howling with pain, the troll twisted and flailed its club, with Dean clinging on for dear life; any second, the troll was going to rip him off or catch him a terrible blow with the club. Seamus laid as flat as he could on top of all the ruble to avoid being hit with the swing club.

As Hermione watched the flailing club in horror an idea popped into her head. She had no idea if it’d work, but it was better than standing there not knowing what else to do. She whipped out her wand, pointed it at the club, and screamed, “Wingardium Leviosa!”

Everyone watched in shock as the club flew suddenly out of the troll's hand, rose high, high up into the air, turned slowly over, and dropped, with a sickening crack, onto its owner's head. The troll swayed on the spot and then fell flat on its face, with a thud that made the whole room tremble, bringing Dean down with it with a shout.

The room stilled in silence as they all took a moment to realize what just happened. Hermione snapped out of her stupor and rushed straight to Seamus, Theo and Rose following soon after. Dean shakily stood. He bent down and pulled his wand out of the troll's nose. It was covered in what looked like lumpy gray glue.

“Ugh, that’s just gross,” he groaned, wiping it on the trolls back. He pocketed his wand and joined the others in trying to get the rubble off of Seamus with no success.

“Is it dead?” Seamus asked weakly, his eye fluttering.

“Don’t you close those eyes, mate,” Theo muttered. “And no, just knocked out.”

“What were you thinking?” Hermione asked as she tried with all her might to push the heavy rubble
Seamus smiled weakly at her. “I couldn’t let anything ruin that pretty face of yours,” he joked.

“If you get out of this alive I’m going to ruin that little pretty face of yours.”

Seamus smiled cheekily. “So you’re admitting my face is pretty?” he teased. Hermione shook her head incredulously, not believing that he could joke at a time like this.

Luckily at that moment they heard the sound of loud footsteps nearing the room and Professor McGonagall came bursting into the room, closely followed by Snape, with Quirrell bringing up the rear. Quirrell took one look at the troll, let out a faint whimper, and sat quickly down on a toilet, clutching his heart. Snape bent over the troll. Professor McGonagall was looking at all of them. Hermione had never seen her look so angry. Her lips were white and her hands were shaking.

“What were you all thinking?” McGonagall hissed. Snape finally looked at them and quickly made his way over. The kids quickly moved out of his way as he stopped in front of them and flicked his wand. Suddenly the rubble disappeared from on top of Seamus, and the boy hissed in pain. Hermione couldn’t look at the sight of his mangled legs and the blood surrounding them. McGonagall conjured a floating stretcher and flicked her wand towards Seamus, causing him to slowly float in the air and onto the stretcher. Seamus let out a pained groan, not looking down in fear to see how bad the damage was.

“Quirrell, if you wouldn’t mind taking Mr. Finnigan down to the Hospital Wing. Quickly,” Snape drawled, not taking his cold eyes off of the remaining four children.

Quirrell quickly stood and made his way out, the stretcher floating after him.

McGonagall and Snape stared down at the shaking children who were dirty and coated in sweat.


Rose glared at them. The build up of mixed emotions from the long, awful day were starting to overflow. Her anger towards Ron, worry for Hermione, fright for all of them, and the terror from the troll was just too much for her to handle and finally, she snapped.

“What happened? What happened? I’ll tell you what happened! That idiot Weasley boy was a raging arse to Hermione after the already shit day she was having and made her run here and cry in the stalls. So we came here to comfort her and lo and behold, in strolls a freaking troll! We, a bunch of eleven year olds might I remind you, then had to fight for our lives! That boy you just floated out of here risked his life to save Hermione’s! Dean had to jump on the trolls back to stop it from hurting Seamus anymore and Hermione used that floating charm to knock the troll out with its own club. And through all of this where were you? Huh?! Because you sure as hell weren’t here!” Rose screamed her heart out, tears of frustration rolling down her cheeks. This was not how her first year of Hogwarts was supposed to go. This wasn’t how Halloween was supposed to be. She wished she and Hermione were home, having a normal, happy Halloween with their family. But no, instead they were here almost getting beaten by trolls.

McGonagall’s expression turned shocked and sad, not having expected such a reaction from the young girl. Snape’s expression didn’t change, but they could tell he was a little shocked as well by the way his eyes slightly widened a little.

McGonagall studied all of them and for the first time truly noticed their appearances. They were all shaking in the aftershocks of their fear. Dust from all of the rubble covered them head to toe and they
had little marks here and there. Suddenly McGonagall was no longer mad, but appalled by what they had just suffered through.

“I am sorry that you children had to experience this,” she said sympathetically. “Five points each for bravely working together to defeat a full-grown mountain troll. Not many could. You are dismissed,” she said softly.

The kids all looked at her in shock, not believing what they just heard, but the scurried out before either teacher could say anything else. No one spoke. Instead they ran through the halls and didn’t stop until they reached the Hospital Wing. They rushed inside and looked around until they spotted their Irish friend resting peacefully on a hospital bed to their left. Both of his legs were in thick casts, but the rest of his body seemed to be fine.

“Seamus,” Hermione whimpered, hurrying to his side and throwing herself onto him and hugging him tightly. Seamus grunted at the impact, but tightly returned her hug. “I’m so sorry,” she whispered.

Seamus shook his head. “You have nothing to be sorry for, Hermione. I pushed you out of the way. And I’d do it again.”

Hermione separated from him and smacked his arm. “Don’t you ever do that again,” she ordered, and he laughed. Her face softened. “Thank you, though.”

Seamus smiled. “Anytime.”

Dean came to stand on his other side. “I’m glad to see you’re okay, mate,” he said. He looked at his legs. “What’s the verdict?” he asked.

Seamus sighed. “Shattered.” They all flinched. “Yeah, luckily Madam Pomfrey gave me some Skele-Gro to grow my bones back. By tomorrow afternoon they should be as good as new, but it’ll be a painful night.”

Rose smiled slightly. “Well, we’re glad you’re okay.” The others nodded in agreement and Seamus smiled.

At that moment Madam Pomfrey entered from her office and stopped when she saw them.

“I am sorry, but visiting hours are over. It is late and you children should be in your commons. Out you go,” she shooed them.

They all said goodnight to Seamus before heading to the door. As the others left Hermione quickly turned and rushed back to Seamus to give him another quick hug. Before letting him go she pecked him on the cheek and whispered, “Thanks again, Shay,” in his ear before scurrying out of the room. Seamus’ face turned red as he watched her leave, bringing a hand up to touch his cheek and smiling contently.

Outside the Hospital Wing Hermione was met with only Theo. She looked around confused, wondering where the others had gone.

“I urged them to go to their commons,” he said quietly. “I figured you might not feel like facing everyone that would still be up having the Halloween feast in your common room. Plus I wanted to show you something.”

Hermione smiled sweetly at how thoughtful he had been. He was right. After the day she’d had all she wanted was some peace and quiet, and who better to get that from than Theo?
She followed him as he led her into the dungeons. She looked around curiously, wondering where he was leading her. They stopped in front of a random painting of a fruit bowl. Her eyebrows furrowed as he reached up and started tickling the pear.

“What are you doing?” she asked. Before he could answer she heard a small giggle come from the pear and watched as it squirmed around in the bowl before transforming into a green door-knob. Theo shot her a small smile as he twisted the door-knob and pulled open the painting. “Oh my,” Hermione gasped at what she saw on the other side.

She was met with the sight of a high-ceilinged room with five tables identical to the ones in the Great Hall above; they are also in the exact same position. There are large quantities of pots and pans heaped around the stone walls, presumably on counter-tops or stoves, and a large brick fireplace at the other end of the hall from the door. Scurrying around the room were about a hundred little big eared and wide eyed creatures.

“Welcome to the Hogwarts Kitchen,” Theo said gently.

“Oh my gosh,” she said quietly, stepping into the room and taking in her surroundings. “Who are they?” she asked.

“Those are house elves,” Theo stated. “They’re magical creatures that are born to serve a person or family. They’re immensely devoted and loyal to their Masters.”

“Masters?” Hermione asked in disgust. “Are they slaves?”

“Not really,” Theo said, unsure of how to explain it. “They do have to follow everything their Master says unless they are freed, but they were born to work. They enjoy it. If they don’t work then eventually their magic fades away and they die,” he said sadly. Hermione looked around at all the little creatures and noticed that they do look happy. It still didn’t sit well with her, but for now she’d let it go. “Why don’t you go sit down and I’ll have one of the house elves bring us some food.”

Hermione nodded and went to take a seat at the end of the Gryffindor table. She smiled at the house elves that were nearby, a guesture they all returned joyously. Theo soon joined her and sat across from her.

“I can’t wait for this day to be over,” Hermione said softly.

Theo looked at her sympathetically. “It will be soon. I’m sorry that today was so awful.”

Hermione smiled. “Well, hopefully tomorrow will be better.”

One of the house elves scurried over with a covered platter and two plates. Theo thanked him, causing the house-elf to squeal happily as he hurried away.

“Well, I didn’t think your favorite holiday should end on such a low note, so…” Theo said as he took the cover off the platter to reveal a platter of pumpkin designed pancakes.

Hermione teared up when she laid eyes on them. They looked just like her Momma’s. Her heart swelled with so much joy at the thoughtful gesture that she almost cried out. That’s all she’s wanted all day. A little piece of home. Her brown eyes met his green ones across the table and no words needed to be said for her to communicate how thankful she was. He nodded slightly, telling her that she was welcome.

Together they dug into their food, leaving the day behind them and preparing themselves for the next to come.
What did you guys think? I know, it's extremely long, but when I start her years at Hogwarts each year is only going to be a few chapters, so they'll all be pretty long. I hope you enjoyed this chapter! Please let me know what you think!
With Love,
Olivia Rose

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