

Red And Yellow

"Come on, Harry. You've got to come."

"Why?" Harry asked dryly, as he settled comfortably into the huge arm chair and crossed his legs at the ankle.

"It's a Hogsmeade weekend," Hermione explained. "And you've never voluntarily missed one of them."

"First time for everything, isn't there. Look, you four go and have fun in the bitter cold; I'll stay here, nice and warm, and pretend to do my homework while staring in to the fire and thinking about how nice it is to be warm."

"Please, Harry," Ginny said. "It won't be the same without you."

"I certainly hope it won't be the same. This way, you and Dean can have that quiet time you want without me dragging you down, and Ron and Hermione can continue to pretend that they don't care about each other with their eternal bickering, and everyone can be happy, especially me, who will be warm and content."

"Harry!" Ron gasped, blushing.

"Oh please," Harry said dryly. "You can cut the unresolved sexual tension with a quill. Ron, Hermione likes you, deal with it. Hermione, Ron likes you, deal with it."

Ron and Hermione both glared daggers at Harry – a feat which Harry was more than pleased was an analogy. Next to them, Ginny and Dean were on the floor, laughing.

"In fact," Harry said with a smirk. "I am going to do something about it." He whipped his wand out as if faced by a herd of Death Eaters, and cast a couple of quick spells at his two best friends.

"I really hope you two don't need the bathroom," he sniggered. "Because if either of you steps more than three foot away from the other, well... you'll regret it."

"You can't do this to us," Ron and Hermione shouted.

"I just did," Harry pointed out calmly. "*Accio* Ron and Hermione's Wands!"

With two more wands in his hands, Harry thought for a second, studiously ignoring the rather impressive litany of epithets spewing from Ron's mouth. As carefully as he could, he created a fireball, and then attached a destination spell, and a chase me spell to it.

"What is that, Harry James Potter!?" Hermione demanded, her voice rising.

"Less of the screeching, please," Harry said politely. "And it's a fireball with a chase me charm on it, that will only stop chasing you once you get to Hogsmeade. And you have a thirty second start before I let it go."

"I won't forgive you for this," Hermione said seriously.

Harry grinned at her. "Hermione dear, if you and Ron aren't blissfully happy by the end of the day, I'll make any apology you deem necessary. But as much as I'd love to chat, you two have a date to go on." He reached into his pocket and pulled out a small money bag. He chucked it at Ginny, "By them lunch as a bit of an apology," he said as he watched his two friends run out of the Common Room.

"Are you sure you're going to be alright, mate?" Dean asked.

"Of course," Harry smiled. "Like I said, I'm going to sit here and relax. I've got nothing I need from Hogsmeade, and no reason to go."

"What about Butterbeer?" Ginny asked with a grin.

"One of the advantages of being me is that Butterbeer is readily available, if you know who to ask."

"You have a supply and you haven't told me?" Ginny demanded, putting her hands on her hips.

"Exactly," Harry agreed. "It wouldn't be a secret if everyone knew, would it? Now, why don't you to run along before I take even more drastic action."

"We are going to have a talk about your attitude, Potter," Ginny growled.

"Yes, yes," Harry sighed. "Now run along."

But..."

Whatever protest she was about to make was stopped when Harry idly conjured a fireball and bounced it in his hand, while looking at her quizzically.

"Come on, Gin," Dean grinned. "Let's leave Lord Mopington to his devices."

"At last," Harry grinned. "Someone who understands. Oh, Dean, look after her, because if you don't, I'll be holding you personally responsible."

"I can look after myself," Ginny spat, an incensed look on her face.

"I know," Harry agreed. "I was just making sure that Dean understood the rules. Unlike your brothers, I could probably get away with doing him some serious harm."

Dean paled as much as was possible. "You're really scary at times," he complained.

"Thank you," Harry said modestly. "I do try. It comes with spending a lot of time with Mad-Eye, you realise that he maybe an old coot, but he's got more than enough up top to make a Death Monkey contemplate running back to the zoo."

Dean sighed and grabbed Ginny's hand, and pulled the protesting girl out the door, leaving Harry in peace.

"Ahh," he sighed loudly, before jumping to his feet. He pulled another chair in front of his, cast a spell at the fireplace to increase the flames, and sat back down, his feet up.

The fireplace danced next to him, and Harry started to take a deep breath, slowly falling into a light trance. His breathing regular, he embraced the nothingness and relaxed completely.

"Harry?"

Startled, Harry launched out of his trance and out of his chair. He rolled swiftly, two curses flying out of his wand almost before he regained his feet. "Diff..." he chanted, before he managed to stop himself.

In front of him, was a terrified blonde in jeans and a t-shirt, her body pinned to the wall of the Common Room.

"Hannah?" Harry shouted. "What the bloody hell are you doing here?" he asked, as he cancelled the spells attaching her to the wall.

"I wanted to talk to you," Hannah blurted, taking a deep breath as she fell to her knees.

"How did you get in here?"

"Neville let me in."

"Don't move," Harry growled, as he stalked back over to the fire. He sat cross-legged in front of the fire, and sank back into his trance. Internally, he was struggling with the urge to curse her again, as he tried to find the same calm place he had been earlier. Being ripped out of a trance like that was one of the worst possible things for an Occlumentist who was trying to centre themselves. All of the senior Gryffindors were in Hogsmeade, and the younger years knew not to come near him when he was alone, so he had felt safe. He was going to have to have a serious chat with Neville later.

His training had focused on two things: increasing his power and ability, and bringing out his aggressive side. He was pretty sure that Dumbledore had no idea about the second part, but Moody had decided that if he was going to fight, he was going to fight to win, regardless of the effect on the opposition.

As he centred himself, he felt his anger fading away, and he slowly pulled himself back out of the trance, taking care to do it correctly this time.

He breathed deeply and opened his eyes, before sighing. Hannah had followed his instructions to the letter, and was still on her knees.

"Okay," he said gently. "Take a seat."

He pushed his own back a little, creating some space between them, and settled down.

He watched as Hannah nervously settled down in front of him, and looked at him warily.

Hiding another sigh, he looked her in the eyes, and said, "I'm sorry for attacking you. When I'm that deep in a trance, I'm not exactly conscious of my reactions, and my instincts take over."

Hannah nodded, and relaxed a little bit. "I'm sorry for bothering you," she said softly. "I didn't mean to startle you like that. You just looked like you were asleep."

Harry shrugged. "Now that we've got the apologies out of the way, what can I do for you?" He shot her a little crooked smile, and was relieved when she smiled tentatively back.

Hannah took a deep breath, and then exhaled slowly. "I need your help."

"Oh?"

"I need to get some revenge on Draco Malfoy, and you're the only person who he's scared off."

Harry nodded slowly. "Can I ask what he did?"

Hannah blushed, and rolled up her sleeve, showing some bruises. "He didn't like no as an answer," she said in a small voice.

Harry looked at the bruises, then at her face and the blush, and suddenly understood what she had said. He felt the almost familiar coldness descend on him, and he stood, stalking to the door.

"Harry!?" Hannah called.

He ignored her.

She ran from her chair, blocking his exit.

"Out of my way," he ordered coldly.

"No," Hannah squeaked, looking scared again. "Not till you tell me what you are going to do."

"Obliterate him," Harry growled.

"Don't you mean *Obliviate*?"

"I said what I meant," Harry growled.

"No," Hannah stated. "You're not."

"I am," Harry responded.

"Damn it, no you're not. This is not what I asked for help for."

"He's gone too far."

"Please, Harry, sit back down, and let's talk about this."

"What is there to talk about? He tried it with you; he might try with someone else later."

"He is not worth risking your future for."

"I have no future," Harry snarled. "I thought everyone knew that."

Hannah took a step forward and slapped him.

Harry blinked, and shook his head slowly. "You hit me?"

Hannah nodded, blushing furiously.

"A Hufflepuff hit me?"

"Just and loyal does not mean pushover!"

Harry looked at her for a second, and then started to laugh. He noticed that she relaxed considerably as he did.

"Okay, take a seat again," he smiled. "And tell me why I shouldn't go and find Draco and teach him what it feels like to have every cell in your body rip away from the next at once."

Hannah shuddered and looked at him. "No. Let's talk about you."

"Me?"

"Exactly what has happened to you? You were always the nice one. Why are you suddenly serious contemplating murder?"

Harry studied her thoughtfully. "Do I have your word that you won't repeat what I tell you?"

"Of course," she looked insulted that he would even question her.

"Many years ago, our infamous ex Divination Professor made one of her true prophecies, which basically can be summed up with the words: Me, Voldemort, fight to the death."

"You have to fight Voldemort?"

"Exactly. Neither of us can live as long as the other is alive. So I've been having a bit of training with some Auror types to increase my chances of survival."

"You don't sound very hopeful."

"I'm not," he agreed cheerfully. "If there is one thing this training has taught me, is that Voldemort has many years of training and fighting over me, and I'm pretty much screwed."

"So attacking Draco doesn't really matter to you, because you don't think you have a future?"

"Exactly," Harry smiled. "I've done what I can, made my Will, made sure that Ron and Hermione will be happy together and will have each other to lean on."

"Why are you telling me this?" Hannah asked softly.

"Because I felt like talking," Harry admitted. "But don't worry; I will be Obliviating you later."

"What!?"

Harry shrugged. "Constant Vigilance," he parroted. "Can't let my guard down to anyone or with anyone. So even though I have, I'll have to deal with it later."

"What are you?"

Harry paused for a second, thinking hard.

"I'm a weapon," he mused. "But enough about me, what happened with Draco?"

"He asked me out, I refused, he didn't like my refusal, made some comments about who he was et cetera, that as a Mudblood, I should be grateful for his attention, and tried to kiss me. I kneed him, and ran."

"And killing him would be bad because?"

"Because that's not who you are," Hannah stated firmly.

Harry moved suddenly, his wand an inch from her forehead. "You don't know who I am," he whispered.

"I do," she replied, and he was very surprised to see a complete lack of fear in her eyes.

"You're wrong," he said softly.

"Sit back down," she told him gently. "I want to play a prank on him," she continued, as if he hadn't threatened her. "Something humiliating to pay him back."

Harry smiled slightly, "Another Hufflepuff with a backbone."

Hannah nodded softly, "You know we never blamed you?"

"Death happens in war," Harry sighed. "I just hope he is the last student to die in this one."

"What about you?"

"I don't count," he shrugged. "What is this prank that you want to play?"

"I don't know, that's why I came to you."

"And just killing him is out?"

Hannah nodded firmly.

"Spoil sport," he muttered.

The blonde grinned and stuck out her tongue at him.

"Okay," he jumped to his feet. "Revenge is always good, but you're going to owe me for going out into the cold."

"Going out?" Hannah asked, looking surprised.

"Of course, we're not going to find anything of interest around the school. We need the help of some real pranksters."

"Okay," Hannah said slowly. "I need to get my coat."

Harry sighed, and absently waved his wand, muttering an *Accio* spell under his breath. A second later, his coat and scarf flew down from his room, and he opened the portrait, to let Hannah's coat fly in.

"How did you do that?" she gasped. "You have to know where something is to *Accio* it."

Harry grinned and tapped his nose, "Who said I didn't know where it was?"

"But..."

"But nothing now let us depart forth, fifth, and six-with." He looped his arm inside hers, and marched her out of the Gryffindor Common Room.

The air was as cold as he had feared as they walked into the sunshine. It was a beautiful early spring day, a bright cloudless sky that would have been gorgeous in July, was only just above freezing in February.

"So, what's new in the world of the Hufflepuffs?"

Hannah blinked, and slowly smiled. "Harry Potter wanting to hear gossip?" she teased.

"Sure," he agreed with a shrug.

"You know Susan?"

"Red head," Harry replied.

"Yeah. She's going to ask Blaise out today."

"Interesting combination," Harry noted.

"What? No 'Slytherins are evil' comments?"

"Draco is evil; most Slytherins are okay, really."

"I thought that was against the Gryffindor code?"

"Threat assessment," Harry shrugged.

"More Auror training?"

"Yeah. You look at each person and work out exactly what power they possess and how well trained they are."

"What's my threat assessment?"

"Do you really want to know?"

Hannah nodded, her breath forming a soft mist in front of her as she walked along side him.

"You're slightly more powerful than average, limited training from the D.A., and from the Defence class. Threat level negligible."

She smiled slowly, "Some day Harry, I may just prove you wrong."

Harry raised an eyebrow.

"There are some things you training has missed."

He shrugged, "I'll look forward to seeing it."

"Really?"

"Well, no. It seemed the right thing to say though."

"Do you look forward to anything?"

"Seeing my parents, Sirius, and Cedric again."

Hannah nodded slowly. "So, where are we going?"

"You know that secret thing I mentioned earlier?"

She nodded.

He grinned and hugged her, Apparating them both to London.

"How the hell did you do that?" she demanded as she regained her balance. "You're too young to Apparate, and dual Apparition is almost unheard off."

"Ahh," Harry smirked. "But I'm a pawn of prophecy. My destiny is written in stone. It gives me a bit of a leeway here and there."

"So where are we going?" she asked again.

Harry pulled the hood of his coat up, "To the triple W."

"Weasley's Wizard Wheezes?"

"Exactly," Harry whispered. He took her arm and guided her down the street quickly. "I'd really rather not be caught down here," he muttered. "It's like printing a big X on my back and standing in front of a firing squad."

"Then why did you bring me here?"

"Because sometimes, you need to take a risk." He pulled open the door to the shop, and seeing it empty of customers he flipped the sign to closed, pulled down the blinds over the door, as he entered.

"Excuse me?" one of the twins demanded. "What do you think you're doing?"

"Put a sock in it, Fred," Harry grinned, taking off his coat.

"George," Fred yelled. "Troublemaker in the house."

George came running into the store front, and smiled. "Harry, good to see you. And in good company as well. Who's the cute blonde?"

As Hannah blushed, Harry explained. "She's an unfortunate victim of a certain ferret who believes he is Merlin's gift to women, and that no isn't a word a good witch should say."

Fred and George both frowned, and then looked mad as they deciphered their way through Harry's words.

"And you're here for something to pay him back?"

"She wouldn't let me kill him," Harry pouted.

"Good," Fred said seriously. "We wanted to talk to you, anyway."

Harry hopped up onto one of the counters and sat cross legged. He idly picked up a sweet and smiled. He concentrated for a second; cancelling the spell he could feel inside. With a casual flick, he threw it into his mouth and swallowed it whole.

Fred and George gaped at him. "Why aren't you turning purple?"

Harry smiled back. "Good chocolate. What do you want to talk about?"

George and Fred exchanged a long look with each other, and then looked at Hannah.

"Don't worry, I'll be Obliviating her later," Harry said casually.

"That's exactly what we want to talk about," Fred said. "What's happened to you?"

"A question a lot of people have been asking recently," Harry agreed.

"That wasn't an answer," George pointed out.

"Wasn't it?"

"No," Fred replied. "And stop that, we were the master of that for many years, so it won't work with us."

"Pity," Harry shrugged. "You're full Members of the Order, you know about the Prophecy, and that I have to kill someone a lot more powerful than I am and a lot more experienced to boot.

"Add to that I'm a Gryffindor, and you can be sure I'll succeed, and then die heroically on the battlefield, so that no one has to deal with a highly trained murderer."

Hannah gasped, while Fred and George gaped at him.

"But you've got the power he knows not, or something," George said.

"So I've been told. How ever, no one has yet found out exactly what that is."

"Love?"

"What is love?" he asked seriously. "I've not got a clue."

"But," George started.

"We always thought you'd find that out from Ginny," Fred continued smoothly.

"Oh no," Harry shook his head. "Ginny's safe. Dean's going to look after her, and he knows that if he doesn't, he'll be answering to me.

"Ron and Hermione are together now, or will be by the end of the day."

"Damn it Harry, it doesn't have to be this way. You are not going to be fighting him on your own."

"Of course I am," Harry smiled. "Do you really think I'm going to let him set the time and the place? When I'm ready, I'm going Voldemort hunting, and I won't stop till we're both dead."

"Then we're coming with you," Fred said.

"*Obliviate*," Harry replied casually. He looked at the two stunned twins. "We had a conversation, and you convinced me not to go off on my own. You'll report success to Dumbledore when I've gone."

Fred and George both seemed to blink in unison. "Okay, so this prank," Harry smiled.

They looked at Hannah. "Are you looking for something embarrassing?"

Hannah nodded - a strange expression on her face.

"We have just the thing," Fred announced proudly. "We couldn't sell it, but we'll happily donate it to the cause."

George held up a green vial. "It makes clothes invisible, and as an extra touch, it err, shrinks certain key body parts to pre-pubescent state."

Harry blinked, and then threw his head back and roared with laughter. "Oh perfect," he clapped.

Fred and George bowed together, and handed Hannah the potion.

"How do I get him to drink this?"

"Leave that to me," Harry smiled. "Thanks guys, we'll see you later?"

"You will, Harry," Fred said. "And I'm glad you reconsidered. We'll win together, you'll see."

Harry nodded with a fake smile.

"It was nice meeting you, Hannah," George added.

"You too," Hannah replied softly. "Can I pay for the potion?"

"Absolutely not!" Fred stated. "First, Harry's family, he gets everything free anyway. Secondly, it's for a just cause."

Harry flipped up his hood. "Let's go."

"That's really eerie," George mumbled, as he unlocked the door and switched it back to open.

"It's supposed to be," Harry said, smiling beneath his hood.

"So, back to Hogwarts?" Harry asked.

"Why don't you let me buy you lunch as a thank you?" Hannah asked.

"You don't have to do that," Harry shrugged.

"I know, but I want to. Please?"

"Okay," he sighed. "Where?"

"How about Muggle London as we're here anyway?"

Harry nodded, and pulled her into a hug again, vanishing a second later. They reappeared in a deserted Alley.

"How did you know this was empty?"

"It's an Auror spell," Harry explained, throwing his hood back. "It seeks out the nearest spot where you can appear without being seen."

They walked side by side into the main room. "How about a pub?"

"Okay," Harry agreed amiably.

"There's one over the road."

"The Guru and the Snowflake?" Harry said doubtfully. "It sounds like a bad seventies detective show."

Hannah laughed softly. "It's one of those new theme pubs. I hope it's got a pool table."

"What's a pool table?"

Hannah paused for a car, and then pulled him across the road. "I thought you grew up a Muggle?"

"I did," Harry sighed. "Let's just say that my home life wasn't exactly perfect."

Hannah frowned, and walked into the double doors. "Two lager shandies please," she said to the barman.

The barman looked at her suspiciously. "I.D. luv?"

Hannah pulled out a wallet from her coat pocket, and handed over a small card.

"And you?" he asked Harry.

Harry glared at him.

The barman gulped, "Sorry," he mumbled. "Had the old Bill around recently. Company policy and all that, gotta ask."

"It's not a problem," Hannah said cheerfully, as she handed over a tenner, and took the two drinks. "Can I have some change for the pool table."

"Of course, it's fifty pence a frame."

"Cheers. Come on, Harry."

She pocketed the change and walked them through a small archway in a lowered area where a blue baize pool table sat. She handed Harry one of the drinks.

He took it, and stared at her thoughtfully. "Should I ask how you have Muggle money, and an I.D. that says you are older than you are?"

"The money was lucky," she said with a smile, as she took off her coat and pulled her hair back into a pony tail. "I had a summer job, and didn't get around to banking it. The ID is my sisters; we look pretty much alike, now that I've stopped putting my hair in pigtails."

Harry took a sip of the drink she had ordered for him. "What is this?"

"It's a mix of beer and lemonade."

"Nice," he said with a smile. "So, how's Ernie? You're dating him, aren't you?"

Hannah laughed, shaking her head. "Oh no, I could never date Ernie."

"Why not?"

She smiled warmly at him. "Because he's as bent as a three galleon coin."

"Really?"

"I should know," her expression turned self-deprecating. "I spent several years pretending to like those silly cards to get to know him. I finally got up the courage to kiss him, and he told me then he was gay."

Harry laughed softly. "So what's with the personality change?"

Hannah blushed, "You know, a gentleman wouldn't mention that."

Harry shrugged and took a large drink of the shandy. "I'm not really a gentleman."

"Well, after I completely humiliated myself in front of everyone by breaking down last year, my parents made me get a job. My sister got me one bartending in the local pub in Yorkshire where we live, and I learnt to deal with stress and people."

Harry nodded. "So, what's this pool then?"

Hannah placed her drink on a small wooden table, and walked up to the table. She crouched down and fed a coin into a slot, pressing a button. A second later, there was a low rumbling noise, and she walked around and started placing some small round balls into a triangle.

"The game itself is pretty simple," she explained. "You pick up one of those cues."

"The sticks?"

"Yeah. I'll break – which means go first. You have to hit the white ball into the coloured balls. I've got to get at least two of the balls to touch the cushions, and to try and pot a few."

Harry nodded and watched as she bent over smoothly, placed her hand in a strange arch form, and rested the cue on it. She pulled her arm back smoothly, and pushed forwards, sending the white forward.

The triangle of balls separated - several going near the pockets, but none going down.

"Bugger," she mumbled. "Right, because I didn't pot, you can hit either the red or the yellow balls with the white first. As soon as one of us pots a colour, the idea is to pot all of your colours, then the black. If you miss, hit one of mine, or the black, you miss your next turn. If you don't pot a

colour, you're turn is over. If you pot the white, we replace it above that line. If you pot the black early, you lose."

"Okay," Harry nodded. "How do I hold the cue?"

"Place your left hand flat on the table. Then, keeping you fingers closed and your palm on the table bend your fingers. Then raise your thumb, so you've got a bit of a groove. Place the end in that groove, and do what I did."

Harry frowned, and tried to emulate her. Unfortunately, he put too much power into it, and pushed down at the wrong time, so that the tip raised, and he barely brushed the white ball.

Hannah reached over and replaced the ball. "Try that again," she said, walking behind him. She leaned over, and for the first time he was very aware that she was female, as he could feel her pressing against his back. She moved his right arm into the proper place.

"Stroke thought the ball," she said softly, her breath brushing past his ear.

He nodded, and managed to hit the ball straight this time.

"After that," Hannah said, as she walked back to her drink. "All you need is practice."

Harry nodded, and took a long drink. "Want another?" he asked.

"Sure," she said, reaching into her pocket for some money.

He just smiled and shook his head. His transfiguration skills had dramatically improved along with his other training, and it wasn't hard to turn a few galleons into some ten pound notes. He ordered another two drinks, and skimmed the menu. He wandered back over to Hannah and asked her what she wanted to eat.

"Bangers and Mash," she replied. "It's about the only thing you can guarantee will be edible in a place like this."

Harry nodded, and retreated to the bar, ordering two of the dish, figuring that she'd have a better idea than he would.

"I thought I was buying you lunch," Hannah pointed out as he returned with the drinks.

"You earned that money," he said softly, "you don't need to spend it on me."

"And you didn't earn yours?"

"Inheritance."

Hannah nodded, and not for the first time, he had the feeling that she was peering into something she shouldn't be.

"You're turn. I potted a yellow, so you're red."

Harry smiled, "Typical Hufflepuff."

Hannah laughed, "I hadn't thought about that actually. Houses aren't that important."

"I thought they were," Harry said as he bent over the table, and tried to carefully line up a shot. "The Sorting Hat puts you somewhere that suits your personality."

"At eleven," Hannah agreed. "But who knows what they are really like at eleven. Hell, even last year, I was different to how I am now. Don't you think it's a little unfair to be labelled all your life as you were at eleven?"

"Considering I've been labelled all my life, it's not been high on my list of things to contemplate," he said, as he hit the shot, and sighed as the red ball bounced off the angled cushions near the pocket.

Hannah walked around the table, as he moved backwards and grabbed his drink. Rather than watch the table, he found his eyes locked on her rear, as she bent over the table, her jeans hugging every curve.

He looked up, and found that she was looking over her shoulder at him, her blue eyes twinkling.

He shrugged and smiled ruefully at her, not apologising. She turned and played her shot, potting a ball, and moved around the table.

"So who's been training you?"

"Alastor Moody."

"Our Ex-professor?"

"Kind of," Harry smiled.

"What do you mean by kind of?"

"Well, the Mad Eye who taught us wasn't Mad Eye, he was Barty Crouch Jnr. using polyjuice potion to get me, while he kept the real Mad Eye

locked up.”

Hannah blinked, and then shook her head. “You know Harry, there’s a lot about you I really don’t know.”

Harry nodded, and took over at the table. “Want to hear more?”

“As I won’t remember it, only if you feel like talking.”

“I can talk to you,” he said, lining up his shot.

“Good.”

Harry smiled and started to talk quietly, making sure he couldn’t be over heard. They paused as the barman brought over two steaming plates. Hannah walked around the corner and picked up a load of sachets of tomato ketchup and mustard, as well as some salt and pepper.

“So, why exactly where you left to grow up like that?” Hannah asked, as he finished talking about his pre-Hogwarts years.

“Blood protection.”

Hannah sniffed. “Was it worth it?”

“I’m alive.”

“But deeply unhappy.”

“But still alive.” He cut up one of the sausages, dunked it in the onion gravy, and chewed silently.

“So what happened with the Troll in our first year?”

Harry smiled slowly. “I stuck my wand up his nose.”

Hannah coughed, sending a piece of potato flying through the air. “Harry!” she scolded. “At least wait till I’ve swallowed.”

He laughed and grinned unrepentantly. “Nope.” With a deep breath, he launched into the story of his first year, and then the second, third, and fourth.

The food was long finished, and they were on the fifteenth game. The pub was a lot busier, but filled with business people talking into mobile phones, and they were free to continue.

“You should let me remember that,” Hannah said softly, as he finished talking about Cedric and the events of the TriWizard tournament.

“Why?”

“Because people deserve to know the truth. Because our house deserves to know that you were a hero to do what you did.”

“I wasn’t a hero,” Harry said softly. “I’ve never been a hero. I was just lucky.”

Hannah potted the black firmly into the corner, and placed her cue back in the rack. “Let’s get out of here.”

“Okay,” Harry shrugged, pulling on his coat. “Back to Hogwarts?”

“Let’s just walk for a bit. I need some fresh air; the smoke in here is getting worse.”

“So why do you think you weren’t a hero?”

“Cedric died,” Harry replied curtly. “A hero would have saved him.”

“Bollocks.”

Harry paused, and almost lost balance. “Excuse me?”

“I said bollocks,” Hannah grinned at him. “As in: an expression of disbelief in a rather crude form.”

“I’ve not heard anyone swear like that since the summer.”

“I heard a lot worse behind the bar,” she smirked. “And my comment stands. Expecting a fourteen year old to protect the Head Boy is a load of crap.”

“But he died, and I didn’t.”

“Life’s like that, unfortunately. He would have been better off Apparating away.” She paused, and then sighed. “But there would have been no way in hell he would have left you.”

Harry nodded, as they turned and entered a small park. “I know. We didn’t have a clue what was happening. It was so unreal.”

"What do we have here?" A voice interrupted them. "Harry Potter walking in Muggle London, without his precious escort."

Harry and Hannah looked up, and Harry sighed softly. Surrounding them were six Death Eaters, all with their wands pointing at him.

"Let her go," Harry said calmly.

"Why on earth would we do that?" The lead Death Eater asked. "She's a Mudblood, she'll make a good present for the boys."

"Because if you do, I'll come quietly."

"Tell you what," the Death Eater replied, a smirk audible in his voice. "You give me your wand, and we'll let her go. You've not exactly got a good reputation for doing what you are supposed to."

Harry nodded and threw his wand to the Death Eaters. He turned to Hannah. "Get out of here."

She shook her head. "No way in hell."

"Hannah," he said seriously. "Get out of here, please."

"No chance in hell," she responded. "It was my idea to come into Muggle London, now, let's kick their arses, and get back to school."

"You need to add bloody stubborn to that just and loyal thing," he growled.

"When you two lovebirds are quite finished," the Death Eater called.

Harry turned suddenly and grabbed the nearest Death Eater, pointing the man in black's wand at his colleague, he cast a stupefy spell. That done, he rammied his elbow back into the unprotected throat of the Death Eater he was holding.

The new wand felt unfamiliar in his hand, but he was used to that now. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Hannah duelling with one of the Death Eaters, leaving the other three for him.

He didn't pause as he cast several small spells around him, and dropped to the floor. A second later three curses flew over his head, as he bounced off the rubber spells he had cast, and somersaulted to the next Death Eater. Without thinking about it he grabbed him by the neck, braced his feet and twisted violently. His reward was a harsh snap that seemed to echo around the small park.

"What the hell?" The lead Death Eater asked, as the Death Eater who had been attacked by Harry collapsed to the ground.

Harry ignored him, and cast several cutting curses at the other Death Eater. The man fell to the ground, and Harry faced the talker, scowling.

"I was having a pretty good day," he growled.

"Would it help if I apologised?" The Death Eater asked, slowly retreating.

"Wand," Harry demanded.

The Death Eater nodded and threw the wand past Harry. As he turned, he swore as he saw the Death Eater Apparating away out of the corner of his eye. He turned to Hannah, and saw a flash of light, and her drop to the floor.

"*Crucio*," he snarled at the Death Eater. The Death Eater screamed, and fell to the floor.

Harry waited a few seconds. "Go back to Voldemort, you son of a bitch," he growled. "Tell him you failed."

He cancelled the spell and the Death Eater vanished. He ran over to Hannah's still form and dropped to his knees. Now that the fight was over, it all came crashing back to him. He had killed. He had ended another person's life. "Don't be dead," he whispered, picking her up and stroking her hair. "Not another person, I can't deal with another person." He could feel tears running down his face, but didn't care, not anymore.

"It's just a headache," Hannah whispered.

Harry blinked, and pulled her against him hard, burying his face in her hair.

She coughed slightly, "Easy on the ribs there."

"Sorry," Harry mumbled, releasing her.

Hannah looked around the park. The bodies of the Death Eaters vanished, leaving them alone.

Hannah moved so that she was sitting cross legged. "That was one of the scariest things I have ever seen."

"I..."

"Sit down," she said firmly.

Harry nodded and sat opposite her. He watched as she shook herself, and then stretched.

“Okay, mister Potter. It’s damn well time you talked, and you’re going to do it now.”

“I’ve been talking all day.”

“About the past.”

“It’s all I have.”

“Don’t you see the future, at all?”

Harry shook his head. “I can’t see anything at all. I’m just a killer looking for his next victim.”

“Because you killed those Death Eaters?”

He nodded, and took a deep breath. He could feel his stomach rebelling, and swallowed repeatedly.

“Are you planning on killing me?”

“No, but I am planning on wiping your memory.”

“No, not any more you’re not.”

Harry blinked. “Excuse me.”

Hannah leant forwards and took his hand; she lifted it, along with his wand, and pointed it between her eyes. “Do it, Harry,” she whispered.

“What?” He felt panicked, and didn’t understand why.

“Do it. *Obliviate* me. Wipe the memory of the only person you feel comfortable talking to. Do it. It’s what you want. Isn’t it?”

“No,” he said hoarsely. “But what I want doesn’t bloody matter, it never bloody matters. Constant vigilance. Don’t let anyone close, if they do, they’ll betray you.”

“Then do it,” Hannah whispered. He could feel her blue eyes boring into him again. “Make yourself alone, give up. Let the coldness embrace you.”

“I…” he paused, unable to find the words he needed to express himself. Every instinct he had was telling him to do it, to cast the spell.

“I can’t!” he screamed, and threw his wand to one side; he lowered his head and started to sob. He couldn’t help it.

“It’s okay,” he heard her whisper, as warm arms surrounded him. A second later, he could smell her hair again, as he pressed his face into her neck and continued to cry.

He could feel her hands stroke up and down his back through the coat he was wearing. “I don’t know who I am.”

“You’re Harry,” Hannah said simply. “A nice boy, a little quiet, who looks after his friends.”

“But I’m also Harry Potter, destined to kill and be killed by Voldemort.”

“You’re destined to fight him,” Hannah agreed. “But you’re not destined to die.”

“I can’t beat him, and even if I do, it’s more blood on my hands. Oh, god, I killed, Hannah. I killed just now.”

“And you saved my life. And you know what? I refuse to be guilty about you killing torturous slime that felt I’d make a good present for god only knows what.”

“That’s easy for you to say, you didn’t kill them.” He felt her pause for a second, and then continue to stroke his back, before reaching his and stroking the back of his head.

“Your situation sucks, Harry. But you’re going about it the wrong way. You need people around you, you’re not an island.”

“People close to me get killed, Cedric, Sirius, and Moody says…”

“Screw Moody,” Hannah interrupted. “He’s trying to turn you into something you’re not.”

“But they’d survive,” Harry whispered.

“And would spend the rest of their lives in a form of personal hell, because you ran off and left them.”

“They’d be alive.”

“There’s a huge difference between being alive and living.”

“There is?”

“You are alive at the moment Harry, but you’re almost as good as dead. You’re pushing everyone further and further away, you’re planning on killing

yourself on Voldemort's wand. That's not living, that's the slowest form of suicide there is."

"It's not my choice though," he whispered. "I've not got a choice."

"You have," she said with certainty. "You have several choices."

"I do?" he asked, pulling back.

She reached into her pocket and pulled out a tissue, handing it to him.

He blew his nose, and chucked it in a nearby bin.

"One of them isn't much, but it's there."

"What?"

"You can run away."

He shook his head, "Definitely not much," he agreed. "I can't desert my friends."

Hannah smiled gently at him. "Then you're down to two choices, Harry."

"Which are?"

"You can continue as you are, killing your soul slowly, and end up dead, possibly with Voldemort, possibly not."

"Or?"

"You can accept that you are human, that you need people, that you have people who care about you and are willing to fight with you."

"But if I do that, they will get hurt."

"People get hurt crossing the road; they get hurt getting out of bed. Getting hurt is a fact of life, whether you like it or not. Voldemort doesn't just care about the people you care about, he wants to hurt everyone. Look at me, until today, I've not had a long conversation with you, yet Voldemort wants me dead, simply because the rest of my family are Muggles."

"But..."

"There are no buts, Harry. It's life. For better or for worse, people are willing to stand by you, protect you, as you protect them. It's what friendship and family is all about. I know you've not got blood relatives, but you have people who care about you just as much."

"If I go on my own, I can't be betrayed, people won't die, it's only me."

"You're worth something, Harry."

"What?"

"You're talking about yourself as if you're worthless." She reached out and softly touched his chin, raising his chin. "You are not worthless."

"I feel it," he whispered, looking down, avoiding her eyes.

Hannah leaned forwards slowly, and very gently kissed him. He felt his eyes open wide, at the very soft touch of warm lips to his. Bizarrely, his first thought was that it was nice, and didn't taste salty.

"Why?" he asked.

"Because I wanted to," she replied, blushing faintly.

"Not because you felt I needed it?"

She shook her head. "I like you, Harry. And I wouldn't kiss you if I thought you were worthless."

Harry smiled faintly. "I'm a mess."

"I know," Hannah smiled softly. "But now would be a good time for you to ask me out."

Harry shook his head, not quite sure he had heard what she had just said correctly. "I'm sorry?"

"Dating, Harry. It's what a boy and a girl do when they like each other. I certainly like you, and if I read your gaze earlier, you like me – or at least you like my bum."

Harry blushed.

"Dating leads to more kissing too, and that sounds like a lot of fun to me."

But...

"But what about your destiny? What about the chance of getting hurt? What about you being a weapon? What about you killing the Death Eaters?"

Harry nodded silently, not even realising that he was holding his breath.

"My choice, Harry. I can't promise that all of us will survive, but what I can promise is that you, and everyone else, will be a lot happier till it happens. If you let Vol-Voldemort take that away from you, then he's already won. Let us help you, Harry. Let us share the burden with you, let us help you as much as you are trying to help us. Let us be friends."

He studied her silently, comparing the young woman in front of him to the girl he remembered. She had grown up, as had all of his friends, and perhaps he had as well. He didn't know which way to turn. It seemed so selfish to pull his friends in to his battle, but she was telling him that it was selfish of him to leave them out. Choice, it was important. He'd complained for so long about Dumbledore not letting him make his own choices, but as soon as he had, he'd made the same decisions for other people.

Despite everything he'd done, Ron and Hermione were still with him. They'd refused to go, and that probably wasn't going to change. Even if he had tied them together for the day.

He looked inside himself, and realised something that seemed a little silly. "I want to live," he whispered.

Hannah smiled broadly. "Having a girlfriend would be a good step in that direction."

He laughed softly, "Subtle, aren't you?"

She shrugged. "I didn't expect to end the day sitting on the ground in Muggle London having an emotional conversation with Harry Potter. But, as we are, I felt like seizing the moment."

"Carpe Diem?"

"Some thing like that," she grinned.

He smiled back at her, and then realised that he truly felt like smiling, and not smirking. "So, will you go out with me?" he asked shyly.

"On one condition," she replied primly.

"Oh?"

"I want a kiss."

"And then you'll say yes?"

Hannah nodded.

"Well," he teased. "It's a bit of a price, but I think I can afford it." He leant forwards slowly, and touched his lips to her. It felt like before, soft and warm, and he could detect the slightest taste of something new, something he instantly christened Hannah.

"Yes," she breathed against him, and he could feel her breath caressing his face.

He smiled at her again.

"Now I'm bloody cold sitting here."

Harry blinked, and realised that he was frozen as well. "Why didn't you tell me?" he scolded.

"You needed to talk," she said simply.

"Thank you."

"Oh don't thank me yet," Hannah said. "I'm about to take some girlfriend privileges with you."

"Already?"

"Yep. You need to talk to Ron and Hermione. And then we need to talk about your training, because what you are going through now is not right. You need to be trained, but not have the hope drained out of you."

He nodded slowly. "So, this boyfriend, girlfriend thing?"

"Yeah?"

"I'm allowed to kiss you right?"

"When ever you feel like it."

"And hug you?"

"It's encouraged."

"And talk to you about anything."

"Always."

"What do you get out of it?"

She laughed softly, and looped her arms in his. "I get kisses, and hugs, a strong brave protective boyfriend who's going to teach Malfoy a lesson for me. I get a boyfriend who will listen to me when I need to talk, right?"

He smiled and nodded, "Absolutely."

"You see, it's a partnership Harry. We'll both be stronger for it."

Harry nodded. "You do know that Malfoy will think that you're dating me to get back at him?"

"Do you think that?"

"Of course not."

"Then why worry about what he thinks?"

Harry laughed, and pulled her close. "You know, I've always wanted to try something."

"Oh?"

He leaned in and kissed her again, and as he did, he Apparated them both of Hogsmeade.

Hannah laughed against his lips. "Well, I felt the earth move."

He smiled and hugged her tightly, and then stopped. "How are your ribs?"

"If you know any healing spells it would be useful."

He frowned and cast several quickly. "Okay, girlfriend, part of this thing is that you tell me if you're in pain immediately, alright?"

She nodded. "So, where to, boyfriend, and I feel a lot better."

"The pub, Ron and Hermione are there. I can feel the spell I cast on them earlier."

"You cast a spell on them earlier?"

"Yeah, forced them to spend the day together so that they could get over what ever is keeping them apart."

"Oh Harry," Hannah sighed.

"I had to get them together," he explained, suddenly feeling a little more guilt than he had before.

Hannah shook her head and laughed. "Well, let's see if it worked. And by the way, seeing as I know nothing about you, do you prefer long hair or short?"

"Long, preferably blonde," he grinned.

"Oooo, Harry Potter being charming," she teased back.

He nodded. "Trying. Is it working?"

"A little, yeah. Legs, bum, or boobs?"

"Huh?"

"Which do you prefer?"

"I've got no idea," he admitted. "It's not exactly familiar territory for me."

"Me either," she grinned. "So it will be fun for both of us as you find out."

Harry couldn't help smiling goofily at the thought. He actually felt a lot more relaxed than he had in over a year. The nagging guilt of his actions earlier was still there, but he was managing to suppress it at the moment. "What about you?"

"My favourite part?"

"Yeah."

She smiled and hugged him. A second later, he felt her hands slide down and grab his posterior – and squeeze. “You’ve got the sexiest bum,” she whispered into his ear.

He blushed furiously. “Hey, do I get to do that as well?” he asked, trying to regain some pride and maybe make her a bit embarrassed.

“Maybe if you catch me,” she grinned, and danced off.

He shook his head, and followed her down towards the Three Broomsticks. He had a feeling that she let herself be caught as they entered the pub, but he didn’t have any time to do some exploring of his own.

Inside, it was as full as always, with kids laughing and drinking Butterbeer. Ron, Hermione, Ginny, and Dean were sat in a corner, not looking happy. He suddenly realised that they were worried about him, and made a mental note to give Hannah a very big thank you later. He found himself looking forward to it immensely.

He strolled over to the table, pulling his new girlfriend along with him.

“Harry!” Hermione called, a shocked look on her face. “You came!”

Harry smiled. “Ron, Hermione, Ginny, Dean. I’d like to introduce you to my new girlfriend, Hannah Abbot.”

There was a sort of stunned silence at the table; out of the corner of his eye he saw Hannah blushing.

“She’s your what?” Ron blurted, his head swivelling like he was at a Quidditch match.

“Girlfriend,” Harry repeated. “You know, favourite girl, one you trust, talk to, who can kick you when you’re being stupid, and who thinks you’ve got a good bum.”

“Sexy bum,” Hannah corrected, almost inaudibly.

“Since when have you dated anyone, let alone a Hufflepuff?”

“About thirty minutes?” he asked, as he pulled her a little closer and wrapped his arm around her reassuringly.

“I’d say around twenty five,” Hannah replied. “And what’s wrong with Hufflepuffs?”

“Ignore my boyfriend,” Hermione smiled. “He’s not quite realised that we’re not twelve anymore.”

“Boyfried?” Harry asked, pulling a seat over for Hannah, and then sitting down himself.

“Yes,” Hermione replied primly. “Ron has asked me out.”

“How long did it take?”

Hermione and Ron blushed, and Ginny replied, “About the same time you did.”

Harry looked at Dean, “Dean, this is where you need to make a decision,” he said quietly. “I’m going to tell Ron, Hermione, and Ginny a lot of stuff that has happened both today, and over the past year. You can stay, but if you do, it means you are joining us, permanently.”

Dean nodded slowly, “I thought that might be the case. I’m not ready yet.” He stood, and lightly kissed Ginny’s hair. “I’ll see you tonight?”

Ginny nodded and smiled at him.

There was a few minutes silence as they watched him leave. “So, I take it Hannah is joining us?” Ginny asked.

Harry and Hannah both nodded. Harry looked around, and silently cast a privacy spell around them.

He took a deep breath, and looked at his three friends. “I’m sorry,” he said simply.

“For what?” Hermione asked, gently elbowing Ron to keep him quiet.

“For a lot of things,” Harry replied softly. “But mainly for trying to push you away.”

“B…” Ron started.

“Ron,” Hermione interrupted. “This is a really good time for you to practice that listening we were talking about earlier.”

Ron sighed, and nodded. “Don’t forget he’s my friend as well,” he said seriously.

“I know, but let him talk first, then ask any questions at the end.”

Ron nodded.

“Hermione’s right, Ron,” Hannah said. She turned to Harry, “Continue, and don’t leave things out because you think it will make things easier.”

Harry smiled crookedly, already realising that she wasn't going to let him get away with anything like what he had hoped for. His ideas of Hufflepuffs being quiet and retiring wasn't exactly gone, it had just been reshaped.

"At the start of the summer, Dumbledore arranged for me to have some Auror training. The training was handled by Mad Eye. It's been going on ever since. The training taught me three things. How to fight, that I can't win against Voldemort, and that having friends is dangerous. As they'll get hurt and there won't be anything I can do about it."

"That's..."

"Ginny, shut up," Hannah said firmly. "Questions at the end."

Ginny blushed and went silent.

"Thanks," Harry said softly. "I figured it would be best if two things happened. That you all had partners, and that you weren't that close to me. So this morning's spell, which I apologise for now, was premeditated."

"Tell them about your Will," Hannah interrupted.

"How did you know about that?"

"Guessed."

"You three, and Remus, are my sole beneficiaries. I figured that I wouldn't survive the confrontation with Voldemort, so I could at least make sure you were all set for life."

Hermione gasped, while Ron and Ginny looked mad.

"I have to fight Voldemort," Harry continued. "Trelawney made another prophecy. That I have to fight him, as neither can live with the other dies. So I've known for almost a year that I have no choice. I will be fighting Voldemort, and the chances are that he will kill me."

"So this is why you've been so bloody blasé recently," Hermione whispered. "Why we haven't been able to reach you."

Harry nodded.

"So, how are you and Hannah together?"

"I got Neville to let me into the Common Room after you had left this morning. I needed Harry's help with Malfoy."

"Why?" Ron asked.

"He felt that I should be a little more appreciative of his attentions, as a Mudblood, than I was, and didn't take rejection easily. The whole school knows that Harry is the only one who scares him."

Ron, Hermione, and Ginny both had identical expressions on their face.

"Harry was sitting there, and I thought he was asleep."

"Meditating?" Ron interrupted.

Hannah nodded.

"And a second later, you found yourself in pain, against the wall, staring at ice green eyes and wishing you'd had time to kiss your mum goodbye?"

"Happened to you as well?"

Ron grinned. "Twice, but then, I don't learn fast. The whole of Gryffindor knows not to go near Harry when he's like that."

"I was a little petrified," Hannah continued. "And when he told me not to move, you can be positive that moving was the last thing on my mind. He went quiet, and calmed down, before looking at me with a really sad look on his face."

Ron, Hermione, and Ginny nodded together.

"So, I told him what had happened, and had my second surprise. Harry was quite willing to go after Draco immediately, and obliterate him."

"*Oblivate?*"

"No," Harry said dryly. "I got the spell right."

"None of you look that shocked," Hannah pointed out.

Ron shrugged, "That ferret deserves what he gets."

"We have a long history with him," Hermione explained.

Anyway," Hannah continued, "I had to get him out of that mood."

"How?" Ginny asked. "We've tried everything."

"I slapped him," Hannah said, blushing again.

"Except that," Ginny said, before lowering her head to her hands and laughing hard.

"I expected him to be mad," Hannah admitted. "But he wasn't. He seemed amused."

"I'll bet," Ron grinned. "Suddenly finding out that a Hufflepuff has claws probably shocked him back to sanity."

"Something like that," Harry agreed.

"So, I got him to talk about himself, and got him to think of a prank."

"How did you get him to talk?"

"I was going to *Oblivate* her," Harry said softly. "I couldn't do it to any of you, Hannah was, or so I thought at the time, safe."

"Harry agreed to help with a prank on Malfoy, so he took us to see your brothers. When he *Oblivate* d them, I realised just how far into this negative mindset he had fallen."

"Wait, you *Oblivate* d Fred and George?"

"I didn't want them following me when I went Voldemort hunting."

"What!?"

"I was going to finish my training, and then leave, find Voldemort, and kill him or die trying."

"They are going to make your life hell when we tell them," Ginny said.

"I'm going to tell them myself," Harry said.

"Good boy," Hannah said approvingly, and gave him a kiss on the cheek. "Moving on," she said. "I took him into Muggle London."

"Wait a second," Hermione interrupted. "Just how did you get to London?"

"I can Apparate," Harry admitted.

"And Hannah?"

"Dual Apparate," Harry said, as he looked down.

"No bloody wonder you can get Butterbeer when you feel like it," Ginny said with a scowl. "I can't believe you haven't taught us."

"Didn't want you coming after me," Harry explained. "I figured it was safer that way."

"So, over a few shandies, I taught him to play pool and got him to talk some more."

"Under age drinking?" Hermione asked.

"Fake I.D.," Hannah explained. "And well, when Harry does his scowly thing, no one questions him."

The three others nodded as one.

"Was I really that bad?"

"You made Malfoy need a change of robes when you scowled at him," Ron pointed out with a grin.

"After he told me about all your adventures, and err, allow me to say I'm impressed by the way, we were walking back, when we were attacked by Death Eaters."

"What!?" The question came from all around the table.

"I think they must have spotted me earlier. I bargained for them to let Hannah go, and gave them my wand."

"You did what?"

"Exactly what he said," Hannah smiled. "But he soon found out about the lesser known Hufflepuff trait. Stubbornness."

"Yeah," Harry agreed. "She wouldn't go, the lead Death Eater was a little irritated, so I attacked."

"With out your wand?"

"I can use any wand now," Harry shrugged. "One of the things Moody taught me."

He paused, and took a deep breath. "I killed three of them."

Hermione was moving almost before he finished the words, Ginny and Ron a second after her. She wrapped him in a tight hug, and was quickly joined by Ginny, and somewhat awkwardly, Ron.

"You're not mad at me?" Harry asked, suddenly feeling the urge to cry again.

"At you? No," Ginny said, slowly returning to her seat. "At them, yes. We always knew this would come sooner or later, we tried to deny it, but we couldn't. Too many people have died in this war, and well, we hoped it would never come to it, but it hasn't."

"Ginny's right," Hermione whispered. "I hate the thought of killing anyone, but when I read the Prophet and see what is going on in the world, I can't feel sorry for them. You were outnumbered, and didn't have your wand. It's justifiable."

"At the risk of being poked," Ron grinned. "Good on you, mate. It's about bloody time someone taught them that we are going to fight back."

Harry laughed softly.

"Harry broke down after that," Hannah moved back into telling the story. "Big time."

Harry nodded in agreement.

"And basically, it came down to the fact that he was already dying inside, and that he felt worthless."

"Worthless?" Hermione demanded.

"Not now, Hermione," Hannah interrupted again. "We talked for some time about what he felt, and I told him to make a decision, to either *Obliviate* me, or deal with it."

"It wasn't quite like that," Harry interrupted. "She took my hand, with my wand, and pointed it between her eyes, and ordered me to *Obliviate* her, to wipe the memory of the only person I'd felt comfortable talking to."

Hannah blushed. "I was feeling a little reckless. He couldn't do it. And I tried to make him see that if he stands alone he will die, but if he accepts help, there's a chance he could win."

"Damn right," Ron stated firmly.

"He was, of course, more worried about your safety than his own. I kinda told him that it was your choice, as it was my choice not to run, and that we might get hurt, but at least he'd be happier in the short term."

"And well, I kinda realised that I'd been a rather large jerk," Harry finished. "So, we came back here, and I apologised."

"You left one thing out," Ginny pointed out. "How you two got together."

"I kinda kissed him," Hannah blushed.

"And I kinda liked it, a lot. After I realised she kissed me because she wanted to, I well, wanted more."

"And here we are," Hannah grinned.

"So," Hermione said slowly. "Moody needs a firm talking to, Draco needs humiliating, and Dumbledore needs to be told what is going on."

"Would you mind if I joined you?" A new voice asked, and the face of Albus Dumbledore came into sight.

"Professor?"

"I'm sorry," he said, his eyes twinkling. "I but couldn't help notice the privacy charm."

Harry and Hannah blushed, as the Professor pulled over a chair, and with a wave of his hand, refilled their drinks. "I will confess to listening in," he admitted quietly.

"The notion of privacy not one you support?" Harry asked, and then dodged as Hannah elbowed him in the stomach.

"Normally Harry, yes. But I'm afraid that I have been worried about you for some time, and after the strange reports I had earlier, both of your conversation with the Weasley Twins, and your highly impressive fight with the Death Eaters, I felt I needed to be a lot more proactive in my attentions to you."

"About bloody time," Ron snorted.

"Ronald Weasley," Hermione said firmly. "It's enough that you display such a potty mouth in front of your friends, but I will not let you talk about that about our Headmaster."

Dumbledore laughed softly, "Believe me, Ms Granger, I have heard worse in my years."

"See," Ron said back to Hermione.

"Anyway," Harry interrupted. "You were saying?"

"I apologise, Harry. I wasn't willing to acknowledge that our relationship had deteriorated to such an extent that you wouldn't bring this to me."

"No offence, but even when we were talking, I wouldn't have brought this to you."

Dumbledore nodded. "Something that I perhaps, find myself regretting now. And while I apologise for my rather unseemly behaviour in listening in, I am not sorry for what I have learnt. I will have a talk with Alastor this evening. I believe it would be wise if all of you were to be trained in the future."

"Does that include me?" Hannah asked.

"If you so wish," Dumbledore replied.

"I do," Hannah smiled. "I've only just got myself a boyfriend; I have no wish to lose him immediately."

Dumbledore turned his pale blue eyes back to Harry. "I know you're feeling upset at the moment."

"About the Death Eaters? You could say that."

"I remember the first time I was forced to take a life. I'm afraid that the only comfort I can give you is that you did what you had to do. They made their own decisions a long time ago."

Harry nodded, and smiled slightly as he felt Hannah lean against him.

"If it helps, your actions have had far reaching consequences. Our spy in the Death Eaters has informed me that there is uproar. The thought of death was not one they were prepared to accept."

Harry smiled, and Dumbledore climbed to his feet. "I will see you back at school." He turned, and started to walk off. He paused, and looked back, "Oh, Harry, I would so hate for anything to happen to one of my students. Although, I do find that Dobby is masterful at adding potions to drinks."

"That's what I had in mind," Harry replied.

Hannah paused, and as he moved out of earshot, she turned and whispered, "Did he just give permission to prank Malfoy?"

Harry nodded. "I forget that you don't know him that well."

"Try at all," Hannah mumbled. "First time I've talked to him."

"You'll get used to it," Ginny smiled. "So, Harry's back, Draco's going to pay, and Dumbledore's back on the ball."

"Yeah," Harry agreed. "For that alone, it would be a good day, but you forgot one key thing."

"What?" Ginny asked.

"Hannah," Ron, Hermione, and Harry said at the same time.

Hannah blushed, and Harry wrapped his arms around her, and revelled in the feeling of being alive, and for the first time since he had heard about the prophecy, he allowed himself to be cautiously optimistic.

As they walked back towards the school, he fell back with Ron, as the three girls walked ahead.

"You know a prank won't stop him, right?" Ron said quietly.

Harry turned and smiled coldly. "I do," he said softly. "We're going to have to do something a little more on the side."

Ron nodded. "What do you have in mind?"

"I'm going to give him a single warning," Harry replied.

"Is that all?"

Harry scowled at Ron, bringing in the coldness Moody had taught him, bringing in the same sense of nothingness he had felt when he had killed the Death Eaters earlier. He showed his teeth faintly, "If you hurt Hermione," he whispered. "I will kill you."

Ron gulped, and went incredibly white. "Maybe, that is enough," he whispered.

Harry laughed and clapped him on the back, and they continued to walk after the girls.

"Oh, Ron," Harry said.

“Yeah?”

“I meant it.”

He ran off, and as Hannah turned, he picked her up, and swung her around, before lowering her and giving in to the urge to kiss her. An action that he was very pleased that she reciprocated eagerly.

She sighed as he broke the kiss, and leaned against him. “This has been a good day.”

He looked at the faces of his smiling friends, and nodded. “A damn good day.”