

Ron's "Stupid"

Hermione woke up.

This was something that happened every day. The only exceptions she could remember – or not remember, as the case most certainly was – was when she had been petrified.

So in seventeen years of life, she had woken up a lot of times.

And if it hadn't already been one of 'those' days, she would have been able to tell you exactly how many times she had woken up in her life.

Despite only being awake for a few seconds, she already knew that it was going to be one of 'those' days.

No, it wasn't her period. Muggle scientists might be male dominated sexist prigs, who would solve that dilemma if it happened to them, but Magical potion makers had easily found a way to migrate the effects of that particular issue.

It was going to be a "Harry Potter" day.

Seven years of being his best friend meant that she knew, without a doubt, when he was going to do something insane.

That might be a Wronski feint, or taking on a Basilisk. It might be fighting a Dark Lord, or invading the Ministry. It might be blowing up a Horcrux, or pranking the Minister. It didn't matter. Each of those mornings had started with the same sense of unease.

Something was going to happen today, and as much as she wanted to avoid what ever it was, she had to be there, to stop it going wrong.

She climbed out of bed, showered, spent her customary fifteen minutes swearing fulsomely at her hair under her breath, before she dressed and went to meet the boys.

Sadly, they were not there. More proof that something was happening. And it was all down to Harry. Ron was more of a follower in these circumstances.

With a degree of trepidation and fear, she walked down to the Great Hall, to find that they weren't there either.

"Hermione?" Neville asked. "Please tell me that you've got an upset stomach?"

"Excuse me?" she asked.

"You have that look on your face, that either means you're constipated, or that something is going to happen," Lavender explained cheerfully, with no thought about keeping such views under her hat.

Hermione sat down. "I'm fine," she said with a sigh.

Neville nodded. "We know what to do!" He pulled out his wand and started to cast spell after spell on himself.

Dean and Seamus mirrored him, before they started charming Lavender and Parvati.

Hermione admired their preparedness.

The door opened, and Ron walked in. He was wearing some very new looking, very smart, black robes, that appeared tailored for his tall frame, and must have cost a small fortune.

Every one stopped to stare at him.

"Felicitations, beloved school mates," he said. "I do so hope that everyone here is eagerly anticipating a truly remarkable day, full of vim and whimsy."

"Huh?" Dean asked.

"He said 'good morning'," Lavender explained gently.

"Professor McGonagall," he said, "You do look wonderfully austere this morning, a look both relevant and flattering on such an informed and respected head."

"Thank you," she replied dryly.

Ron strolled over to the Gryffindor table. "Beloved house-mates," he greeted them. "What a day, still early, yet splendiferous in nature and epic in proportion."

He sat down and stared at the food. "Cholesterol and calories," he sighed. "What one wouldn't give for a simple bowl of cereal?"

As requested, a bowl appeared before him, along with a jug of milk.

"Truly outstanding," he noted. "Good morning, Hermione. If I may be so bold, you are looking radiant this morn."

"Ron." Hermione was feeling nervous. It was not a feeling that she appreciated. Especially not on a Saturday morning when she should be more concerned with the essay she had due a week on Friday.

"Tell me, do you think that the Mesopotamia sophistication was paramount in their discovery of Alchemy as a working branch of Potions? Or was it more due to the nature of their location, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and the variety of ingredients available to them, that forced this discovery?"

"I think the latter," Hermione replied automatically, before her brain caught up with her mouth, and she had to bite her lip to avoid the gape that threatened to over-take her.

He nodded. "I was thinking that, once we leave Hogwarts, it might be divine to wander across the Middle East, and see for ourselves what we can learn. After all, the library of Alexandria is a wonder all can enjoy."

"Who are you, and what have you done with Ron?" Hermione asked, holding her wand out.

"Surely my loquaciousness is no cause for concern," Ron said, looking a little nervous. "I am willing to desist my responses, and concentrate fully on the joy that is this cereal."

Hermione was by now feeling more than a little faint. And it was almost with relief that she spotted Harry walking in.

"Potter," she yelled.

"Granger?" Harry asked. "I thought we stopped using surnames six year ago."

"Don't give me that," she demanded. "What have you done with Ron?"

"Me?" he asked innocently.

Neville and Seamus shared a look with Dean, and edged themselves away from the danger area.

"Yes," Hermione hissed. "You!"

"That's not how you do it," Harry replied. He hissed for a few seconds, changing pitch and tone. "There, that's how you hiss. Unless," he added with a thoughtful expression, "that you really do want to mate with a...."

"Stop!" Hermione roared, her wand now pointing directly at him. "What is going on?"

"Harry," Ron said, "I believe that prevarication may be counter-productive at this point."

"Really?" Harry asked doubtfully. "I think I can put of explaining for at least another half hour."

"Would you be generous and, perhaps, not allow a precarious situation to deteriorate further?"

Harry sighed. "If you insist."

"Regrettably, I must."

Harry reached into his pocket, and pulled out a three foot long baseball-bat shaped object, that was glowing a sickly white colour.

There was only one question on the minds of everyone in the Great Hall, and Hermione was the person to ask it.

"What," she demanded, "is that?"

"This?" Harry asked, hefting the bat.

"Yes," Hermione insisted. "And how did you get that down your trousers?" She regretted the question as soon as she had asked it.

Harry grinned. "I'm used to carrying around a..."

"Finish that statement and I will see to it that the Potter line ends here," Hermione interrupted.

He pouted at her. "Are you constipated?"

"Harry James Potter!"

A tad unconscionable, to mention such a thing," Ron murmured. "Perhaps a retraction might the order of the day."

"Just stop it, both of you," Hermione shouted.

"Ahh, that time of the month," Harry mumbled, before diving to one side to avoid the curse that was thrown at him automatically.

"Explain!" Hermione roared.

"This," Harry said, holding the club aloft. "Is Ron's stupid."

"Ron's stupid what?" Neville asked warily.

"It's Ron's stupid," Harry said again. "I extracted it this morning."

Hermione felt a king-size headache appear. "You took Ron's stupid," she said slowly. "And made a bat out of it?"

"Of course not," Harry replied. "That would be ridiculous. Stupid is a thought process, it's ethereal."

Hermione nodded in agreement.

"That's why I had to freeze it first."

"Ouch," a voice said from the Ravenclaw table.

"Padma?" Harry asked.

"I tried to follow your logic then," she said. "It was painful."

"Pad," Parvati said with a sigh. "We've talked about this before."

"I know, I'm sorry," Padma apologised. "I won't do it again."

Hermione shook herself. "You extracted Ron's stupid, and froze it," she clarified. "And now Ron is more intelligent."

"An increase of forty-two intelligence quota points," Ron murmured.

"Exactly," Harry agreed.

"Liar," Draco Malfoy called from the Slytherin table.

"And yet the proof is both evident and valid," Ron said. "It is an old maxim of Sherlock Holmes, that when you have excluded the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth."

"Who?" Malfoy asked.

"He was a character from a series of books created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle."

"A Muggle?" Draco asked, disgustedly.

"Intelligence is a gift, Malfoy," Ron sighed. "Fortunately, not one you have received, so your incoherent babbling is hardly of import."

Malfoy frowned, before a cunning smile appeared on his face. "Prove it, Potter."

"How?" Harry asked.

"Use that thing on me."

"Okay," Harry agreed.

It was at this point that every one turned to Hermione.

They expected her to step in.

And she might have, if she didn't detest the ferret.

Draco strolled over. As he neared Harry, Harry poked him in the stomach with the bat, then swung it hard, catching Draco on the chin.

There was a loud cracking noise.

Draco twisted three times on the spot, before he collapsed, unconscious.

"Renervate," Harry called.

"Whuh, ha, wa?" Draco tried to scream, but it came out as a groggy mumble.

It didn't work, Harry," Lavender said. "Do it again."

"You have a go," he suggested, handing the bat to Lavender.

Lavender smirked, wound up, and then swung it as hard as she could.

Every single male in the building crossed their legs. Even though they hated Draco, they felt some sympathy for him.

"When a witch says `no`, she means `no`," Lavender informed the boy who was now clutching his groin, and scrabbling around in a circle. She handed Harry back his club. "Thank you,"

"You're welcome," Harry said, and then looked at Draco. "*Stupefy*," he muttered, showing some mercy.

"Harry," Professor McGonagall said wearily. "I fail to see how that removed anything from Mr Malfoy."

"You mean apart from his ability to pollute the gene pool?" Harry asked. "Of course it didn't remove anything, I told you that beforehand!"

Minerva placed her head in her hands. "You did?"

"Sure, this," he waved his club again. "Is Ron's stupid. It's not how I extracted it, it is it!"

"Quite," Ron agreed. "That procedure looked rather unpleasant."

"Does someone want to take Mr Malfoy to the school nurse?"

No one appeared to volunteer for that duty, until Pansy Parkinson sighed and slowly walked over to them.

"Potter, some thing or some one's gonna get you, at some stage," she recited in an extremely bored voice. "Everyone one you know, have ever talked to, have ever walked past, have ever stopped to ask the time, have ever wandered past, have ever been in the same room, town, city, county, country or planet with."

"Stupidus Extractus," Harry shouted, dramatically pointing his wand at Pansy.

Pansy shuddered, as some white mist emanated from her. "I say," she muttered. "I've had my ideals quite contrary to logic. Why, Pure Bloods interbreeding allows mutations like young Mr Malfoy here. Deformed part-albino's with the reproductive organs of small *Mustela putorius furo*."

"I do so agree," Ron agreed. "And Mr Malfoy is indeed an exemplary example of the ferret family."

Pansy smiled brightly, rumoured plastic surgery over the summer had fixed any remaining pugness of the nose. "Harry," she said, "I've just had a remarkably good idea."

"Oh?" he asked.

Pansy nodded. "Everyone must join together to fight against Voldemort," she announced. "The houses, so erroneously separate must be reunited. And what greater symbol of that could there be, than a relationship betwixt Gryffindor and Slytherin."

Harry looked surprised. "Did you just ask me out?"

"Indubitably," Pansy agreed, regaling him with another large smile.

"Oh, in that case."

"Wait one second," Ginny Weasley interrupted. "If there's dating going on, I should have first refusal."

"Imagine the size of the weapon Harry could get by extracting the stupid from you," Pansy said to Ginny. "Why, it would dwarf Gryffindor tower."

Ginny turned bright red. "I'm better than that Slytherin Slut," she replied to Harry.

"A person, especially a woman, considered sexually promiscuous," Pansy murmured. "One who abides inside a place of glass, should avoid recreational endeavours including petrified matter transportation."

Ginny blinked at her.

"People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones," Lavender translated. "Bitch."

Ginny looked at her. "Pansy didn't say bitch!"

"No, I added it," Lavender replied sweetly. "On her behalf."

Pansy shook herself. "I think it's wearing off," she said. "A little, anyway."

Harry nodded. "I had to extract and solidify Ron's to stop it leaking back."

"A most entertaining experience," Ron agreed.

“Some stupid is lost regardless,” Harry added.

“Which is why I still want to date you?”

Harry grinned at Pansy.

“Harry!” Ginny protested, as she walked over toward Harry, Pansy, and the unconscious Draco.

“Oh bite me,” Pansy muttered to her. “Besides,” she added with a flirtatious grin at Harry, “if we’re going with alliteration, Slytherins swallow!”

There was a curious sound of the male population blinking at once.

“Yeah?” Ginny replied, “well, Gryffindors Ga…”

“Ginevra Molly Weasley,” Hermione interrupted as she joined the group. “You will not finish that statement!”

“Hermione!” Ginny protested. “I could really do with your help here!”

“I think we all know what you were going to say,” Pansy said snidely. “Not that it would have mattered.”

“Oh?”

Pansy looked around, before smirking at Lavender. She stepped forward, one foot on Draco’s chest, the other on his face. There was a cracking noise, as she broke his nose. She grabbed the front of Lavender’s robes, pulled her close, and snogged the life out of her.

“Yeah,” Pansy said, releasing an extremely dazed looking Lavender. “Slytherins share,” she finished with another smirk.

Ginny looked at Hermione.

“Don’t even think about it,” Hermione said flatly.

“We have a winner,” Harry declared. “How about a trip to London with lunch at the Ritz, followed by an afternoon of shopping in Knightsbridge?”

“You’ve extracted your own stupid, I see,” Pansy grinned. She stepped off of Draco. “Coming, Lavender?”

“Shopping? Oh yes,” Lavender agreed eagerly, and the three of them walked out, leaving behind a fuming Ginny, a comatose Draco, a smirking Ron, and a headache-suffering Hermione.

“Hermione,” Ron said. “It pains me to admit that, in my insecurity and ignorance, during the last six years, I have hidden a rather deep and enduring affection for you.”

Hermione turned to stare at him, her headache instantly forgotten. “I’m sorry?”

“I know that I have, perhaps, not acted my best, but I was wondering if you would accompany me to Hogsmeade today, not as a friend, but as something potentially more.”

“Oh,” Hermione said softly. “Yes.”

“Wonderful,” Ron enthused.

“I need to get changed though,” Hermione said.

“In which case, I shall eagerly await your return.”

Hermione almost giggled, before she caught herself and scurried out. Perhaps today wasn’t going to be such a bad day after all.

“Oh thank Merlin for that,” Ron muttered as Hermione left. “I was running out of big words.”

“Ron!” Parvati said, shocked.

“What?” he asked. He turned to Dean. “Pay up.”

Dean smiled and pulled out a small leather bag. He counted out ten Galleons and placed them in front of Ron. “Money well spent,” he agreed.

“What is going on?” Padma asked, as she walked over from the Ravenclaw table.

“Ron wins,” Ron shouted proudly, thrusting his hands in the air in celebration.

“I think, Mr Weasley, that an explanation is now due,” McGonagall said firmly. “Front and centre, please.”

Ron smiled and moved over in front of her.

“Now, exactly what was this bet?”

"Yesterday evening, I bet Dean ten galleons I could get Harry to hit Draco with a bat," he said.

"Mr Thomas," Professor McGonagall said. "You took that bet?"

"Of course, ten galleons is a small price to pay for seeing Draco beaten up," Dean agreed. "And we all know that when Harry is involved, something amusing will happen."

"So I went to Harry, and bet him ten galleons that he couldn't get Draco to volunteer for a beating, and then get himself and me a girlfriend," Ron said. "I figured it was time to grow up."

"So you manipulated Harry?"

"Of course not," Ron said with a roll of his eyes. "Harry was going to do something to Draco anyway, I just made it happen quicker."

"So Harry turned up this morning, with these robes, his bat, and a vocabulary spell. All I had to do was follow his plan, and hey presto, we all get to see Draco get what he deserves."

Dean was the first to giggle, before he roared with laughter – a laugh that was quickly taken up around the Great Hall, even amongst the Slytherin table.

"If Harry doesn't accept the money from me, I'll give it back, Dean," Ron promised.

"Mr Weasley," McGonagall said with another sigh. "Exactly why was Harry going to do something to Mr Malfoy?"

"Because a few days ago, the dirty ferret was caught by Harry trying to persuade a fourth year witch that he deserved certain considerations due to his status. Harry takes that sort of thing very seriously, but was more concerned about helping the witch out at the time, so Draco got away."

Minerva looked shocked. "Why didn't you bring this to me?"

"What? So Draco could go crying to his daddy?" Ron asked. "And before you know it, the girl is in trouble for leading the innocent scum on? Or the ferret's father runs to Voldemort and he attacks the girl's parents or something?"

"Excuse my French, but bollocks. We know you'd like to help, but you're in the same situation as Dumbledore was – Lucius is too powerful for you to go against."

Minerva blinked repeatedly, and opened her mouth, but nothing came out.

"Crabbe and Goyle have already found out what happens when Harry gets mad, and well, it's not pretty," Ron continued.

Everyone turned to look at the two boys, who were staring firmly at their plates.

"This way, no one knows who the girl was, apart from Harry, so there are no recriminations for her, you're not involved either, and Lucius hasn't got the guts to go straight for Harry, and even if he did, Harry can handle him."

"You know Harry," Ron finished cheerfully. "He takes his responsibilities seriously, and well, he'll take care of everyone here who isn't a Death Eater wannabee."

"I'll deal with Mr Potter later," Minerva said softly, before she looked at Ron and changed the subject. "Don't you think that Hermione might be upset when she finds out you tricked her?"

"Nah, I'll tell her over our date," Ron said. "Besides, it's about time I grew up a bit. She'll be a little upset, but she'll be happier that I finally managed to ask her out, that Harry finally has a girlfriend." He paused and shrugged. "Or two, as it might be, and that I did something clever to make it happen. Oh, and I'd just like to point out, that I might be lazy, antagonistic, vaguely prejudiced, and a little envious of others at times, but I am not stupid."

He turned toward the Gryffindor table. "Ginny, I wouldn't try anything foolish about what happened today. You lost, accept it."

"Why should I?" Ginny growled. "It wasn't fair."

"What's fair got to do with it?"

Ginny grumbled under her breath. "She's a Slytherin."

"So?" Ron asked. "You think that Harry would date her if she had the Dark Mark?"

"But, you hate Slytherins."

"Oh, so I should dump my best friend because of a girl, or two?" he asked dryly. "Look, part of growing up is realising that not everyone is a git because of a decision a talking hat made years ago." Ron smiled slightly. "Anyway, I've done my brotherly duty," he announced with a shrug, "anything else and you're on your own."

"Ron," Neville called, "why Pansy, of all people?"

Ron shrugged. "No idea."

"She's my cousin," a pretty blonde fourth Hufflepuff said quietly. "Family means everything to Pansy. That git crossed that when he attacked me. I told Pansy, and she was really upset."

Ron turned to look at her.

She smiled bravely. "Harry saved me, and I don't want him to stand alone against any recriminations. He deserves more."

"He's got the whole Hufflepuff House behind him," Susan Bones said firmly. "He protected one of ours, and we'll help protect him to the end of the world. She looked down the table. "That was very brave, Rosie," she praised.

Rosie blushed, as her friends gathered around her and started to hug her.

"Ravenclaw, too," Lisa Turpin agreed.

"And Slytherin," Daphne Greengrass drawled. "If there is one thing we hate, it's an attempted rapist."

Ron grinned. "And of course, we Gryffindors are now firmly behind him as well. Even if it did take us a while to get there.

"Still, you have to admire the man; I'd be willing to bet that this is the end of Voldemort. Every one knows that Pansy can be a stone cold bitch, and when Lavender isn't playing the airhead, she's almost as clever as Hermione. Combine them two with Harry, and then add in me and Hermione, and poor Voldemort won't know what hit him." With a cheerful whistle, he wandered out to meet Hermione.

At the door, he paused. He turned back to the school. "Any one want to bet that we can't have Voldemort defeated, by next Friday?"

"20 Galleons," Susan Bones shouted.

"I'll pay half," Lisa Turpin called from the Ravenclaw table.

"Done," Ron announced happily. He turned and walked out the door.

Minerva McGonagall sighed deeply as Ron closed the door.

"Will someone please take Mr Malfoy to the nurse?" McGonagall asked.

No one moved.

"Twenty points?" she offered.

No one moved.

"Fifty?"

Luna sighed. "I'm only doing this because he's staining the floor," she muttered. She cast a spell on him and wandered off, Malfoy followed, leaving a trail of blood as he was dragged out of the Great Hall.