

## CHAPTER 2

### THE CHRONICLES OF REGULUS BLACK

The air was charged with a heightened state of anxious energy with the unexpected arrival of the stunning stranger at #4 Privet Drive. After she had collapsed, Harry had been quick to cart her upstairs with him to hide her from the Dursleys. He knew full well that if they'd have caught so much as a fleeting glimpse of her, he would never have heard the end of having welcomed some "filthy wizarding stranger" into their humble abode. They'd surely toss him out and leave him stranded and at risk for capture.

To further safeguard his plan, Harry had secured his bedroom by surrounding it with a Muffulo Charm to absorb every sound within the room to keep from attracting attention. Then, he sealed the door shut with a Sticking Spell to prevent any unwanted guests, namely his family, from barging in on him.

Afterward, Harry had taken to a series of swift and edgy paces back and forth across the dusty, splintered hardwood flooring of his bedroom, his white trainers squeaking softly with each step he took. His focus was drawn to the beautiful woman he'd just met: She lay haphazardly on her back across his unmade bed, her face turned toward him. As her right arm crossed peacefully over her chest, her left arm lay out-stretched over the top of her head, tangled within the long, wavy locks of her dark hair. The wild asymmetrical hems of her skirt seemed to intertwine chaotically within her long lean legs, to her knees, which were partially bent toward him, creating a gently twisting of her lower body at the waist.

Harry was fast growing impatient awaiting the girl's return to a conscious state, his edgy paces becoming almost frantic in substance. He was desperate to discover her identity and her reasons for openly parading her magic around Little Whinging, particularly at such a late hour and in the midst of a horrible rainstorm.

*She couldn't have been sent by the Order, he thought to himself. They wouldn't send one wizard, not to mention a total stranger, to fetch me, would they? No. Lupin's owl specifically stated that a GROUP of wizards from the advanced guard would come for me at two a.m., sharp.*

Harry checked the timepiece on his nightstand and noted that the time was only half past midnight.

*Is this mysterious stranger a new member of the Order of the Pheonix? He wondered. Could she possibly have been separated from the rest of the group? Could it be that something terrible had happened to everyone else and she was the only one who had managed to escape?*

Harry sought desperately to rationalize this curious and unprecedented turn of events.

Finally, after what seemed like a century's wait to him, the mysterious stranger had begun to stir: She moaned softly, crooking her head from side to side, her eyes still hitched closed and her back flushed against the crumpled and matted covers of his bed. Harry had stopped pacing the floor and made his wary approach toward the young woman, eyeing her over intently with each step he took.

Slowly and steadily, the stranger blinked her eyes open and rolled onto her side, focusing attentively on her surroundings — mostly him. She remained there, completely still, her piercing green eyes penetrating his.

“H-hello?” Harry muttered impatiently, leaning into her. “Can you hear me? Are you alright? Erm, you passed out in back of my house a bit ago.”

The stunning green-eyed beauty nodded her head in wordless acknowledgement of him and took to examining the paled moss-green walls of the room surrounding her: It seemed as though she was absorbing every crack and imperfection, taking in every corner of every square inch of the dismal space. She swept her glance to the moss-green-draped window and below it, to where a shoddy wooden desk and rickety wooden chair stood thoughtlessly arranged. Her eyes danced over the desktop, which was covered by a half a dozen open spell books, several pieces of crumpled parchment, and a tatty, feathered ink-stained quill. Her focus next fell upon the matching chair set beneath a hooded black overcoat and a burgundy and gold Gryffindor scarf. Then, fixing her stare upon a tall wooden armoire that stood partially ajar across from her, she studied several pieces of his clothing that had been layered recklessly over long metal hooks inside of it. She lifted her head to extend the range of her view and focused her attention to the top of a tall mismatched dresser standing off to her left. Upon the dresser sat a large metal birdcage. The stranger smiled serenely as a beautifully amber-eyed snowy-white owl housed inside of it hooted kindly at her.

Harry, who had now taken to hovering over the mysterious young woman, pressed on impatiently, “My name is Harry, Harry Potter. W-who are you?”

In place of an immediate response, the young stranger, looking overly fragile, maintained her speechless meditation on him and placed her palms firmly against the mattress in an attempt to rise. Harry instinctively reached for her to help her sit upright.

“I'm Hannah,” she answered weakly, brushing her hand against her obviously whirling head. “Hannah...Morley.” With those words, she took solidly to her feet, looked him dead in the eyes, and announced in a renewed, strong, and certain tenor, “I've been looking for you...Harry Potter.”

Harry was taken aback.

“Me? Why have you been looking for me?” he asked in bewilderment.

“You’re the one, the one who survived Voldemort and the killing curse. You – have – the – scar.” She pointed to his forehead, her eyes wide with wonder.

Harry pedaled the tips of his fingers repeatedly over the scar his forehead, entirely mystified by her. He knew of only three other wizards that had ever been bold enough to mention Voldemort by name, so casually, and two of them were dead.

He crooked his head and shrugged his shoulders, mumbling humbly, “I, well, yes, I guess I did.” This was all he could think to say to her. It usually annoyed him when people would gawk and stare at his scar and carry on about him having survived the fatal Avada Kedavra curse, as though he were some sort of supernatural exhibit at a Muggle Zoo. Although for some reason, he felt quite proud that she appeared to be so captivated by him. “Sorry, but what is it exactly that you want from me?” He inquired graciously, seating himself on the bed.

Hannah rounded over him, and with her hand crossing her heart, she said insistently, “Harry, I’m here because I can help you... You know, KILL him. I know about the Horcruxes.”

Harry was completely blown away. From the moment he had become privy to the existence of the Horcruxes, he had been endlessly pondering the knowledge he acquired through Dumbledore’s teachings and expanding on his theories: He and Dumbledore had concluded that there were a total of seven in all, seven being the most magical number in wizardry. They believed that Voldemort had most likely inserted some of the parts of his soul into one of each of the four Hogwarts’ founders’ most prized possessions and, quite conceivably, the remaining three parts rested *symbolically* in others.

They knew, for certain, that two of the seven Horcruxes had been recovered and eliminated; Harry had destroyed Tom Riddle’s diary in the Chamber of Secrets his second year at Hogwarts, and Dumbledore had destroyed Marvolo Gaunt’s Ring last year. Last spring, he and Dumbledore attempted to eliminate the Horcrux that lay within the Slytherin locket. Much to Harry’s dismay, when he opened it, he discovered a note inside declaring that the original piece housing the actual Horcrux had already been retrieved by someone with the initials R.A.B. Harry and Dumbledore had also deduced that another three of the Horcruxes were undoubtedly Nagini, Voldemort, and the golden Goblet from Helga Hufflepuff. This left just one remaining one, perhaps something from Rowena Ravenclaw or Godric Gryffindor?

As Harry further pondered the validation of his theories, he felt Hannah’s hand cap his right shoulder, her voice ringing out with validation in his ear, “I see Dumbledore has taught you much of what you need to know. However, there is much more you have yet to discover.”

Harry backed away, eying her over near scandalously.

“H-how did you know what I was thinking?” he inquired in bewilderment.

Hannah shook her head, and resting her palm justifiably against her forehead, she readily confessed, “I’m sorry, Harry. I guess I should have warned you. I’m quite a gifted Legilimens, thanks to—” She abruptly plugged the flow of her words, almost as if she realized she had nearly given too much of herself away.

Harry hadn’t even taken notice, as just hearing the word Legilimens practically threw him into a fit of outrage. He found himself resorting to an angry pacing of the floor with his fists tightly clenched, feeling like he needed to hit something, and for good reason; Legilimens made him think of Professor Snape. He was a master at the skill and had constantly used such intrusive magic over the years to intrude upon Harry’s personal thoughts. Two years earlier, on Dumbledore’s orders, Snape was instructed to teach Harry the ability, but the lessons ended in complete disaster when Harry was caught breaking into Snape’s memory pensive, stealing away with some of Snape’s most highly embarrassing moments.

Hannah examined Harry absorbedly, and in a confirming tone, she said, “Ah, Professor Snape, yes, I know you worked rather closely with him last year. He’s quite a gifted wizard, impeccable in his Legilimency and Occlumency skills, and a fantastic Potions Master too, I might add.”

Harry stopped so suddenly dead in his tracks that he just about fell over: He was entirely stunned by her heavily misguided praise of Snape, along with her relaxed brazen attitude and her remarkable ability to pinpoint his thoughts with such incredible accuracy.

He flashed his eyes rudely in her direction and snapped out bluntly, “Yes. He killed Dumbledore. He’s completely evil.”

“Ah, yes, well,” responded Hannah matter-of-factly, “don’t be so sure of that, Harry. Things are not always as they seem.”

“Huh?” he rebutted, totally floored. “What’s that supposed to mean?” Harry was infuriated. He pointed his wand outward and shook it wildly at her, shouting out, “I was there! I know what I saw! Snape killed my friend, the greatest wizard who ever lived! He killed him! I saw it with my own eyes!”

Hannah seemed to pay him no mind, as she continued to speak with a brusque composure that nearly snapped Harry in two. “Yes, he did. But, Dumbledore was prepared to die. Harry, Dumbledore nearly perished when he fell victim to the terrible curse released from the Marvolo ring when he improperly removed and destroyed the Horcrux within it. He knew that should he be plagued by another, it would most certainly cost him his life. Many more things happened that you cannot possibly grasp, all of which foretold his doom. Why do you think he had suddenly become so intent to offer you private lessons

last year? He knew that his time on this earth was limited.” She reached consolingly for Harry in a gracious attempt to brush her hand sympathetically against his arm.

Harry edged away from her, clearly troubled. He began to interrogate her very existence in his own mind:

*Who in the world is this Hannah Morley and how on earth did she come to know so much about Dumbledore, Hogwarts, Snape, and Voldemort? How could it be that I have never met her, nor heard of her before, yet she has been privileged to come to know so much about my life... and theirs?*

As if Hannah had been privy to each one of his inquiries, she readily admitted, “Harry, I lied to you about something before. My real name isn’t Hannah Morley. It’s Hannah Black. I’m Regulus Black’s daughter.”

Harry about leapt out of his shoes.

“*What* did you just say?” he sneered, lurching toward her with his wand pointed at her chest. At that instant, he felt that he was more than willing to pry her wide open in search of a reasonable explanation for such a terrible affirmation.

Hannah seemed to find his fit of rage a rather amusing one; she smirked defiantly as she threw her head back, and continued coolly, “*I said*, my father was Regulus Black, Sirius Black’s brother.

Harry raised his wand to her throat and barked out wildly, “Get OUT! Get-out-of-here-NOW, before I kill you! You’re a Death Eater! That’s how you’ve come to know so much about me! You’re working for Voldemort, aren’t you? You’ve been sent here to – ARGH!”

Before he could finish his ranting, his wand was struck from his grasp, and he found himself being hurled across the room, cast ruthlessly to the floor by some sort of sharp, invisible energy.

“HOW – DARE – YOU – CALL – ME –A – DEATH EATER!” shrieked Hannah, accelerating toward him with an *explosive* scarlet glower in her eyes. “ACCIO!” she cried, retrieving her wand from Harry’s desk and pointing it square in his face.

Harry was completely mesmerized by her magic. He maintained his position on the floor, his arms outstretched to his sides in a surrendering stance, while he stared at her in wounded disbelief. He couldn’t believe what had just happened: Hannah had performed a powerful, concentrated spell without a wand and without uttering a single incantation.

With the passing of a brief hiatus, he managed to snatch his wand from the corner of the floor and swiftly ascend to his feet, turning to face her in a broken fighter’s stance.

Hannah studied him intently, panting furiously, her wand arm still outstretched. She seemed to be raiding his thoughts again.

Almost instantly, she lowered her wand and began speaking heatedly, “My father, Regulus, met a half-blood witch in Hogsmeade the beginning of his seventh year at Hogwarts, named Delaney Maslin. She had relocated to Hogsmeade in the late summer after graduating from Beauxbatons Academy of Magic and began working as a hostess at the Three Broomsticks.

“The moment my parents met, they fell instantly in love with one other and began a very passionate and highly secret affair. As you well know, Regulus was a pure-blood, and all intimate relations with non-pure-blood witches or wizards were strictly forbidden by his Family.

“When my mother unexpectedly became pregnant with me in January of his seventh year, she left him and moved to Paris to live with her older sister and her husband, my Aunt Grace and Uncle Andrew. Mum did not dare reveal to Regulus she was carrying his child, as she believed that he would never run the risk of being disowned by his family by acknowledging our existence. After all, he had spent their entire affair ruthlessly hiding and denying their relationship to anyone who inquired about it.

“Months after she left him, my mother discovered that during the entire course of their relationship, Regulus had been a full-fledged Death Eater, having joined Voldemort’s forces long before he made her acquaintance. It was only upon his meeting my Mum and falling in love with her that Regulus realized he had made a terrible mistake by joining the Dark Side. He wanted out, but he was afraid. By that time, Voldemort was at the height of his power and gathering more followers who began *brutally* smiting the families of those who dared abandon or defy him.

“When rumors abounded about Regulus’ questionable allegiance to Voldemort, my Mum became exceedingly fearful that it was only a matter of time until Voldemort discovered their affair, found out about me, and would seek to destroy the lot of us. So, she decided to contact Regulus by owl. She told him everything about me and confessed to him that I was his child.

“Regulus was overjoyed to hear from us, as he had never stopped loving my mother. He and one of his friends came for us straight away. They helped Mum create a secret room for me to hide in within #12 Grimmauld Place. My father tried desperately to win back my Mum, but she refused him. She told him she could never allow herself to love a man who had once tangled her up in his deceitfulness and who had been too cowardly to stand up for a love which she so truly believed in. Realizing I would be safest with him, she left me in his care and went into hiding with my Aunt and Uncle.

“It wasn’t long before my mother’s fears came to fruition: Voldemort soon discovered Regulus’ secret betrayal and sent his fellow Death Eaters to kill him and my entire family. My father’s death was secretly staged by the same friend who helped him rescue

me. Days later, Voldemort located my Mum, Aunt Grace, and Uncle Andrew in Southern Australia, and he killed them all.

“My father and I remained in seclusion, even long after Voldemort was said to have been destroyed; we knew better. We knew he’d be back after hearing sporadic rumblings that he was merely temporarily incapacitated somehow, separated from his body. After all, he had long proclaimed that he had taken the proper precautions to ensure his own immortality.

“So, the year before my eleventh birthday, my father called upon Dumbledore and offered his deepest repentance, vowing to seek vengeance against the Dark Lord who murdered my mother and who sought to destroy me. He appealed for Dumbledore to teach me secretly and to advance my skills while keeping me safely concealed from the Dark Side. He insisted that Dumbledore promise never reveal me to anyone, ever, except to you when the time was right.

“Dumbledore obliged; only, he felt that to in order to hide me properly, we would have to create an entirely new identity for me and make it as authentic as possible. So, after doing a quite a bit of research in the Muggle and Ministry libraries, he had me assume the identity of a non-practicing witch by the name of Hannah Morley. He had been able to gather enough information about her that was legitimate, yet vague enough so as not expose us: She was an orphaned child at birth. Her parents, Thomas and Adrian Morley, a witch and a wizard, perished in a house fire when she was a newborn baby. Hannah was rescued and survived. Apparently, neither the Muggle authorities nor the Ministry were able to locate any of her living relatives, so they were forced to place her in the London Memorial Orphanage.

“According to Ministry records, Hannah Morley had been sent her invitation to attend Hogwarts when she turned eleven, but the adoption center refused it. My use of her identity became the perfect alibi, and Dumbledore was completely able to justify why he’d be teaching me separately from the other students: He was to declare that since the Orphanage had denied me the right to attend the school and learn of my true heritage, he had offered me the option of secret, private instruction at my leisure if I was interested, which I graciously accepted. To cover our tracks, he sent the Ministry my information and my pictures to update the real Hannah Morley’s records. We didn’t have to worry about my pictures differing from hers, because the last picture attained by the Ministry was that of her as a newborn. The ministry relies on parents or guardians to keep the information on their wizarding children up-to-date, you see.

“As a further precaution, Dumbledore continued to follow up on the real Hannah Morley’s Muggle life periodically to ensure that nothing about her of any significance would turn up and blow our cover. The last trace of her Dumbledore was able to uncover was when she left the orphanage at the age of seventeen. After that, it was as though she had vanished. As far as The Muggle Orphanage was concerned, their privacy laws prevented them from ever releasing any further information about the real Hannah Morley to anyone except to her, which only further secured our plan.

“Anyway, while I studied with Dumbledore, my father took to researching every form of Dark Magic in the history of wizardry in an attempt to uncover the secrets behind Voldemort’s power: He asked himself, how could one possibly live forever? How could a mortal man die and be born, again? That’s when he discovered the use of Horcruxes. For years, my father worked diligently in an attempt to identify what items Voldemort could have used to house each precious portion of his soul.

“Everyone knew of Voldemort’s blood relation to Salazar Slytherin. It was commonly known that he felt he deserved control over Hogwarts because of his ancestry and his desire to continue Salazar’s ‘noble work’. When Dumbledore refused to allow Voldemort any part of the school, my father concluded that Voldemort did the next logical thing; he demonstrated his power by symbolizing his rightful ownership over Hogwarts, acquiring each house’s founders’ most-prized possession and placing a piece of himself into each one. My father reasoned that the two treasures Voldemort was NEVER able to secure were the Ravenclaw encrusted broach, which was buried with Rowena Ravenclaw upon her death, and the Gryffindor sword, which to this day remains housed safely in Dumbledore’s office. As you well know, much as Voldemort attempted to seize control over the Gryffindor sword, it was too well protected by the many complex, unbreakable ancient charms that Godric Gryffindor himself placed upon it when he co-founded the school. Only a true, fearless, and honorable Gryffindor would ever be able to touch it or have the option to release its ownership to someone else.

“A few years back, my father discovered the genuine Slytherin locket in a small cavern by the ocean, near the Muggle orphanage where Voldemort spent his childhood. With a rare serum brewed by one of his friends, my father was able to neutralize the poisoness potion and lift the locket out. He left a decoy necklace in its place with the note signed R.A.B. inside of it, the one you and Dumbledore retrieved last term. However, after my father preformed the spell to destroy the Horcrux, his health mysteriously began to decline, and he lost all recollection of his retreat and his mission.


“That’s when I revealed his discoveries to Dumbledore, last year, through the means of a diary my father had penned and hidden away. Naturally, Dumbledore was intrigued with how much information my father had uncovered. He himself had long begun to investigate the possible use of Horcruxes, which is why he so desperately needed to acquire the memory that you retrieved from Slughorn last year. It proved our theories and confirmed to us the number of Horcruxes we needed to find.

“After Dumbledore located Tom Marvolo’s ring and destroyed the Horcrux within it, he immediately revealed to me his findings. When we compared experiences, Dumbledore suspected that my father had never actually destroyed a Horcrux; instead, he had released a lethal curse that had been placed within the locket as a deterrent. Dumbledore deduced that the actual Horcrux lay within the poisonous potion surrounding the locket. He believed that in order to destroy the Horcrux, one would have to drink the potion and likely die with it.

“Harry, when you and Dumbledore returned to the castle that fateful night to see the Dark Mark floating above the North Tower of the castle, he already knew that he was going to die for you. Before the two of you left on your mission that night, he called for me. He told me that he would retrieve the decoy locket with my father’s note inside of it and give it to you. That way, you would have something to confirm my story by when I came for you. He had me promise to keep watch over you and to assist you in finding and destroying the remaining Horcruxes needed to complete the prophecy and finish Voldemort, for good.”

Hannah exhaled sharply; then, reaching up to her neck, she plucked the brilliant golden locket from around it.

“Here,” she said, cupping his hand in hers and gently dropping the spectacular golden piece into it.

Harry stared at the wondrous piece in amazement. He couldn’t believe he didn’t notice the necklace she had been wearing around her neck all along: the rich golden hues, the delicately linked chain and an ornate serpentine  that was etched neatly across the heavy heart-shaped face. He noted that it had been slightly warped and scorched along the edges of the opening.

“I don’t believe it! This is it! This is the Slytherin locket! I remember seeing it in a memory in Dumbledore’s pensieve during one of our private lessons last term!” he exclaimed.

“Yes, Harry. It’s the very one retrieved by my father.”

Harry hesitated for a moment, before inquiring curiously, “Regulus — where is he now?”

Hannah’s eyes rested sadly on Harry as she answered brokenly, “He died last year. It was a horribly debilitating death. The life slowly and painfully drained out of him. Near the end, he had lost all recognition of himself, of me, and of his entire life. It nearly destroyed me to watch him suffer that way. The only cause that kept me longing for my own breath was my thirst to complete his mission; that way my family’s death would not have been in vain.”

“Oh. I’m so sorry,” said Harry solemnly, feeling terribly for her. He thought of all the people he had loved who were gone too; he knew, all too well, what it was like to lose someone, not to mention one’s entire family. In a clear attempt to transform the subject, he inquired instantly, “So, where do we go from here?”

“FOREWARD,” said Hannah adamantly. She paused for a mere instant before springing forward and speaking with an abrupt sense of urgency, “Harry, you need to leave this place with me, now! I can hide you some place no one will find you! You’re in grave danger now that Dumbledore is gone and the protective charm that he placed over this

house has expired! Voldemort has discovered your whereabouts and has sent the Death Eaters to retrieve you. I placed a temporary Albus Invisibility Charm over Little Whinging to throw them off track, but it's a difficult spell to execute and it's only temporary. It's also crack-able. A brighter wizard is certain to come along and disable it. The Death Eaters will be sure to find you, kidnap you, and take you to him. We must leave now before it's too late!"

"Wait a minute!" said Harry, backing away and eyeing her suspiciously. "How is it that YOU know Voldemort knows where I am? Surely, the Order would know if I was in any immediate danger, wouldn't they? They would have sent someone to fetch me straight away. I'm sure of it. I was told by my friend, Remus Lupin, to not leave here for any reason until members from the Order of the Phoenix came for me."

Hannah scoffed, but she appeared quite desperate as she pressed on adamantly, "Harry, I am from the Order! I've only just joined! Harry, please!" — Her voice was shaking fiercely now — "Look, I can't tell you how I know, but...I have privileged, inside information, that which is only available to me. No one else from the Order could possibly know about the Dark Lord's plot quite so soon. I've been granted enough time to get you out of here safely, but that's it. If you wait for confirmation from Remus, it will be too late." She looked to Harry in pleading desperation, and by virtue of an emotional whisper, she added, "Harry, you must trust me. I want to see Voldemort finished as much as you do. He killed everyone I loved too." Then, straightening up and approaching him in an utmost insistent manner, she said, "Look, you HAVE to trust me."

There was something about Hannah that had convinced Harry to believe in her *entirely*. Perhaps it was the similarity of their circumstances, or the familiarity of her eyes that swayed him. Somehow, he knew he needn't question her any further. Moreover, he had the impression that there was much more she had to divulge to him. In fact, he had a feeling that she had yet to reveal her biggest secret of all.

"Alright, then," he agreed. "Let's go!"