

## CHAPTER 24

### HANNAH'S LIFE LESSON

Harry spent the next three weeks without the companionship of his two best friends, Ron and Hermione, who were both thoroughly intent on punishing him with a long lasting, very well deserved silent treatment. Likewise, Ginny showed no desire to speak to him. She had instead taken to hexing him behind his back whenever he crossed her path out of Remus's view. As a result of her ruthless hexes, Harry suddenly found himself spending the better part of his miserable school week in the infirmary, as he didn't even attempt to retaliate, nor reveal his tormentor to Remus or anyone else who asked. To further his dismay, Ron and Hermione made certain to seat themselves as far away as possible from him in class and during meals. They didn't appear to show the slightest bit of desire to so much as acknowledge his existence.

Somehow, though, he was never left alone, as he had unexpectedly become the most popular bloke in school once word of his overnight "tryst" with Hannah spread throughout the castle. Even the Slytherin students had taken a newfound interest in befriending him, knowing that Hannah had been sorted into their house when she studied at Hogwarts. He was shocked by how many pats on his back, thumbs ups, and spirited words of encouragement he received from people he didn't even know. Even the girls appeared to be entirely impressed with how he'd managed to "land" such an incredibly beautiful woman. The more he denied the filthy rumors, the more people admired him, *especially* the girls. This only intensified the effects of Ginny's hexes on him and the frequency and duration of his visits to the infirmary, as she was entirely disenchanted by it.

On Friday morning in late November, Harry found himself shuffling across the school grounds at Remus's side after having spent another one of his early free mornings by the Black Lake, bewitching stones, and skipping them across the surface of the waters, staring blankly into oblivion. It was nearing ten a.m. and was time for his favorite class, *Defense Against the Dark Arts*. It was the only part of the week that he actually looked forward to anymore, as his skills in the class far exceeded any one else's, and it gave him a temporary boost in his morale to be doing something he thoroughly enjoyed doing, so well.

"Here you are, Harry," said Remus, motioning for Harry to make his entrance into the classroom. "I'll be waiting out here for you. Have a great lesson."

"Thanks. See you soon," murmured Harry, and he crossed the threshold of the entryway.

He was five minutes early for his lesson, entering the classroom to the unexpected absence of Tonks. However, his heart instantly soared to new heights when he glanced up to where the teacher's desk sat, high atop a platform stage in the front of the classroom.

There, on the other side of it, stood a beautiful dark-haired woman donning a low cut, skin-tight black cat suit and a pair of black high-heeled boots. It was Hannah. She was surrounded by at least a dozen anxious teenage boys, all of whom were carrying on performing a mass of intricate spells they had mastered in a vain attempt at impressing her. Harry shook his head and chuckled to himself, thinking how entirely inappropriate her outfit was for teaching a room filled with raging male hormones.

He spun his gaze about the space and noted that the girls had seated themselves bitterly at the desks in the far back of the room with their arms folded angrily in front of them. They were gesturing rudely in the direction of their stunning substitute teacher and whispering maliciously to one another about her. Ron sat in the far left hand corner of the class next to Hermione, who sat poised in seething silence, staring into nothingness, equally as discontented as her female counterparts.

Harry grinned. He knew Hannah's presence annoyed her entirely because she had to have known how happy it had made him. He was certain to take the best available seat at the front center of the classroom, since his male peers were far too enamored by Hannah to leave her side long enough to do so. He swore he heard Hermione scoff aloud in disapproval the moment his bum met the seat of the chair, and for the first time in three weeks, he honestly didn't give a damn.

A short while later, he spotted Hannah shooing away the crowd and calling for everyone's attention. Her lips broke out into a broad contented smile at the sight of him, which he cheerfully returned. All the while, the gaggle of lovesick teenage boys, who had once surrounded her, swiftly took to scrambling for their seats, firing off minor jinxes at one another in a desperate attempt to acquire the one's closest to her desk.

Following a swell of anxious minutes and several of Hannah's stark warning glares, the boys eventually managed to settle themselves down. The girls, however, remained fully discontented, continuing to gossip with one another, making clear audible rude remarks, and totally ignoring her call to order.

Unexpectedly, **BAM!** There came an ear-piercing thud, followed by a blinding cloud of awesome red smoking light, which left everyone in the classroom screaming. When the smoke cleared, there stood Hannah atop the teacher's desk with her wand raised high in the air. She looked riotous. Her eyes were filled with a biting rage that made every single student recoil into their seats; all with the exception of Harry, who sat sniggering at his desk at the sheer stupidity of his classmates as he thought to himself, *You have NO IDEA who you're dealing with, people.*

“THAT WILL BE *QUITE* ENOUGH!” bellowed Hannah.

An eerie silence took over the room as she leapt off the top of her desk and high into the air, tucking into several front areoles, and landing perfectly poised with her high-heeled feet planted solid on the floor. Several students gasped in awe of her, but quickly fell

silent again. They didn't dare challenge the overwhelming energy that had now emanated from her mere presence.

"Good morning, class!" her voice rang out. "As most of you know, my name is Hannah Black. I have been elected to instruct you today since Professor Tonks has fallen ill with a dreadful bout of the flu. Not to worry, *LADIES*," she sneered. "You'll have your dear Professor Tonks back in time for your next lesson. For now, I am certain you can arrange to tuck away those little *bitter-green attitudes* into your knapsacks long enough to get through today's lesson with me. Anyone who has a problem with that, well, I am confident that you are capable of finding your way to the door." She motioned arrogantly toward the back of the classroom.

Harry sniggered at the sound of the girls' offended gasps in response to Hannah's bold and nasty proclamation, which he thought she had so artfully delivered.

"Today, I should like to teach you a few things aside from Occlumency and Silent Spells. You will have plenty of time to work on those once Professor Tonks returns." She wove her way about the class toward the corner of the room where Ron and Hermione were sitting. "I want to show you a different side of magic, one that many of you neglect to ever acknowledge. Perhaps, this is because it does not necessarily have so much to do with a magical act, per se, as it does with one's *perception* of it. Throughout my life, I have found it to be one of the most important lessons that can be learned, one that can mean the difference between a *GOOD* wizard...and a *GREAT* one," she said articulately, zigzagging in and out of the desks, certain to make eye contact with each student she passed. Coming to a standstill at the desk in the far left corner of the room, her eyes rested coldly on Hermione and her lip curled upward as she spoke, "Ms. Granger?"

Hermione sunk into herself when she met Hannah's harsh expression and she replied softly, "Yes?"

"Mr. Potter tells me you're one of the brightest and most intuitive witches he's ever known. Perhaps *YOU* can tell me to what magic am I referring?"

Hermione shot Harry a heartrending look and swiftly returned her focus to Hannah, answering her in an uncharacteristically submissive voice. "It's the ability to read between the lines, to dig beneath the surface, to seek the truth with your mind and not with your eyes, your heart, or your senses."

"Very good, Ms. Granger," said Hannah silkily, rounding in on her. "Although, I must say, for some who seem so intent on seeking *truth*, I tend to find that many make the *mistake* of being awfully selective about which *truth* it is that should be sought. *Wouldn't you agree?*" she inquired, eyeing Hermione intently as though she was trying to force a point across without actually making one. Harry saw Hermione gasp slightly and nod before looking over to him with an expression of deepest remorse.

“To summarize Hermione’s explanation into six basic words: *NOT everything is as it seems*. It sounds simple, perhaps even frivolous, but it is often true. Now, I’m only a few years older than the rest of you, but I can assure you that once you leave the safety of these castle walls and your parents’ homes, you will awaken to an entirely different world. You will surely find that if there is any advice you will do well to carry with you from now until the end of your time here on this earth, it is those six words: *NOT-everything- is-as-it-seems*. The ability to see BEYOND the magic, or to ‘*Read between the lines*,’ as Ms. Granger has so eloquently put it, could very well mean the difference between *life* — and — *death*.”

Harry noted the eyes of every student in the entire room were now clinging to Hannah’s every move, and their ears gripping her every word. It was almost as if she had bewitched the entire classroom, she had captivated everyone so entirely.

“For your next assignment, I should like you to give me a two to four page parchment, selecting some instances where you have bared witness to such an event. I wish for you to explain each instance, what your first instincts told you about it, what the *actual* outcome of each instance was, OR, upon further investigation, what you revealed the *truth* of each instance to be, and *finally* — what you learned from it.”

She stared directly at Hermione and Ron while she delivered every word she spoke. They returned her gaze with clear shame-faced expressions.

“Now,” continued Hannah, “for the second half of our lesson, I should like for us to practice a little something I’d like to call, ‘Performing magic *under the influence*.’”

The students in the room began to mumble to one another in confusion until she clarified her instruction.

“And, *no*, I don’t mean that we are going to be scarfing down liquor before we get to work, as tempting as that sounds to me about now,” she joked dryly.

Several students broke into scattered chuckles. Harry laughed too.

Hannah smirked and said, “What I mean is this: I am going to pair you off and have each of you perform a spell while the other watches. Next, I’m going to have you work together to perform that same spell. Finally, I will come around to those of you who have mastered it and influence your magic with evil — stir you up a bit to try to keep you from properly executing your spell.”

Out of nowhere, she conjured several dozen blue and yellow teapots, large clear glass teacups, and numerous pairs of burn blocking gloves, scattering them across the students’ desks.

“Now, this exercise has an underlying message to it,” said Hannah. “That message being: ‘*Every action in magic has its reaction*’.

“You see, the magical universe needs a balance of *good and evil* to flourish. When you have too much or too little of either, nature is thrown off balance, causing chaos. I figured the clearest method of demonstrating this would be to use hot and cold teas and have you pour yourself the perfect cup of immediately drinkable, tepid tea, using equal amounts of hot and cold.

“Now, I have bewitched the liquids inside the pots with a Color Change Charm so that they will turn a brilliant shade of green when your tea has reached the perfect blend. This should hopefully keep the burns down to a minimum. I hear Madam Pomfrey has been busy enough having to cure the ill effects of the *sorely abused* magical talents that have been ruthlessly used to seek *childish vengeance* amongst your peers.” She shot a subtle, sideways glance at Harry, who, in turn, felt his face burn with embarrassment.

“The hot tea is blue and signifies evil, and the cold tea is yellow and signifies good. Let’s pair off and begin. And, don’t forget to put on your burn-blocking gloves! I shall come around to note your progress. Whichever group is ready for me as I make my way through, I shall begin there.”

The students scrambled anxiously to their feet and paired off. Harry ended up working with Neville, and Hermione coupled herself with Ron. The class began eagerly executing their spells with absolute reverence, trying to make the perfect cup of tea. Everyone seemed entirely intent on being the first to please her.

Much to Harry’s delight, he and Neville had perfected their spells long before anyone else in the class. However, Hannah walked briskly past them, giving Harry a quick wink. He knew she was up to something. *But, what?* he wondered.

After circling the room several times, Hannah came to a halt before Hermione and Ron, both of whom had finally perfected their spells after many of Ron’s painstaking attempts.

“Granger, Weasley; let’s see your spell, then,” requested Hannah flatly.

Hermione straightened up with her wand at the ready and nodded to Ron, who readied his wand as well.

“One, two, three, *Inductos!*” they called out in unison and, sure enough, equal amounts of tea poured into the cup, turning a brilliant shade of green.

“Very good!” Hannah shouted. “Everyone, I’d like you to come over here with us. Come now, quickly! Let’s gather ‘round and watch as Ron and I attempt to keep the tea green, and Hermione, you shall be the one to intervene; alright? Here, Ronald, come here,” she said, motioning for him to stand next to her. “Hermione, you stand directly across from us. I see you both have your gloves on securely. Are you ready?”

“Yes,” replied Ron and Hermione in unison.

“When I give the word, I want us all to begin,” said Hannah. “One, two, three, *Inductos!*”

Hannah and Ron pointed their wands at the cold teapot. Hermione pointed hers at the evil teapot, shaking with fierce determination to make the tea blue while Hannah and Ron fought equally as hard to keep the tea green.

Just then, Hannah leaned into Ron suggestively, put her arm around him, and began whispering in his ear. His face *instantly* went as red as his hair. Hermione raged on with a vengeance, shooting her wand furiously at her teapot, sparks bursting forth in every direction. Next moment, both of the teapots exploded, drenching Hermione, and leaving a sizable sweltering burn mark along the top of Hannah’s wrist.

The class gasped and groaned. Hannah remained silent and unruffled as she continued to stare back and forth between a soaking wet Hermione, to the blistering mark on her own wrist. Hermione cupped her hand over her mouth and stood in awe, eyeing over Hannah’s nasty, yet extraordinary wound: It was in the shape of a broken heart; one half of it was blue, and the other was yellow.

A wicked grin stretched across Hannah’s face as she addressed Hermione in a cold, chilling manner. “Interesting, *isn’t it*, Ms. Granger? The power that a frightened and angry soul can conjure, yet, at the same time be defeated by, leaving a scar with one’s selfishness that ends up, in the end, handing a piece of one’s self over to the control of the very thing one fears the most.”

Ron took several steps backward expecting a catfight to ensue, as did practically everyone else. But much to their amazement, there was nothing to be seen or heard within the entire space except for the gaping, speechless other students, who were darting their gazes back and forth anxiously between a troubled Hermione and an overly stoic Hannah.

Harry stared nervously between the two of them, as well. He knew EXACTLY the point that Hannah was trying to make to Hermione, but he couldn’t believe it. *Why now?* he wondered.

Hermione stood still, staring blankly at Hannah like she was collecting and replaying the message she had just been given. Then, closing her eyes tightly, she nodded her head with complete conception. Hannah nodded in return and whirled around sharply to face the rest of the class.

“In closing, the message that I had hoped for everyone to acquire here today is simple: A true wizard will not use manipulative magic to negatively influence another for their own personal interests. The whole purpose of following the wizarding path is to live in harmony and balance with the natural rhythms of life, not to manipulate them to suit a selfish goal. By undertaking such an action without the consent or approval of another, you are clearly using your gifts for purely selfish reasons. Therefore, you are setting

forces in motion, which will ultimately have negative impact in one way or another, and you are practicing Dark Magic.

“You must remember that once you create and release this energy as a thought form, it will acquire life, form, and substance. It will run its course, and the final outcome through the laws of cause and effect may not be what you wanted. The potential for great harm to both yourself and others are clearly evident in such a working. This is especially clear when you consider that you will eventually need to absorb this energy back into yourself after it has ruined your life and the lives of countless others. Remember this, and your lives shall not be lived in vain.”

She crossed to the front of the room, and called out, “Very well, then; I look forward to seeing all of you again, soon. I thank you for a great lesson! Good day to you all!”

The class scrambled excitedly over to their desks, retrieving their books, and filing out of the classroom, all the while discussing the incredible intensity of the lesson. It was evident that Hannah had redeemed herself in the eyes of *all* the students, particularly the girls, who were now praising her talents in place of ridiculing her. Ron and Hermione retreated slowly from their desks, dragging their feet as they crept toward the door. They glanced sadly over their shoulders to Harry, who was heading in the opposite direction, straight for Hannah.

“Hey, Potter. How are you?” said Hannah in a soft welcoming tenor.

“I’m fine. I miss you, though,” said Harry earnestly.

Hannah frowned slightly and whispered in reply, “I miss you, too, Harry.”

Harry cleared his throat and said, “That was a brilliant lesson. I think you really got through to everyone.”

“I will agree with you once I know I’ve gotten through to the ones who truly need it most,” she said with a fixed purpose while she slid her lesson planner into her knapsack. Then, slipping out from behind her desk, to meet his form, she began to speak importantly, “Listen, Harry; I know it’s a lot to ask — us having been in so much trouble lately — but — I’ve found the location of the cup.” She eyed him intently, awaiting his response.

“*You have?*”

“Yes.”

“Where is it? When can we get it?” inquired Harry anxiously.

At first, she answered him with what seemed to be a totally off-handed remark: “Harry, do you know what my favorite number is?”

Harry wrenched his face in bewilderment and replied, “Sorry; *what?*”

“My *FAVORITE NUMBER* — do you know what it is?”

Harry’s expression instantly softened, and he approached her with his undeniable understanding, responding swiftly, “No. Tell me.”

“100. I don’t know why, but it is. It’s funny, but so far, I’ve only told that to one other person in my entire life. So, I believe that makes it that now *two* of the most important people to me are sharing the same knowledge; the same *two* people whom I would trust my life to.”

Harry smiled in complete comprehension.

“In that case,” she said, “you’d better hurry off before Remus bursts in here and reprimands us for engaging in idle chit-chat. Moreover, if I’m not mistaken, I do believe your friends are waiting for you just outside the classroom door.”

Harry turned to address the direction in which she had mentioned.

“I shall see you soon, Harry,” said Hannah. “Although, I may need to look *beneath the surface* to find you once you arrive,” she finished cleverly, adding a quick wink.

“Got it. I’ll *SEE* you then,” he said with a feeling of new hope as he rushed off through the entrance and into the hallway.

Moments later, he burst back through the doorway of the classroom, heading straight for Hannah, and coming to a screeching halt when he reached the front of the room where she stood. He wore an unspoken expression of endless gratitude the instant his eyes found hers.

Hannah smiled in recognition and said, “Don’t forget to share my favorite number with your friends. I believe they will find it *worth their while*.”

Harry nodded in affirmation and took off running through the classroom door and into the Hallway again, where, indeed, Ron and Hermione had been waiting for him all along.

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The lunch hour in the Great Hall was packed with excited banter of the seventh year students regarding the spectacular Defense Against the Dark Arts lesson they had experienced and the magnificent teachings of their substitute teacher. The Slytherin students took turns waving proudly to Hannah when she entered the Great Hall and took Tonks’ seat at the teachers table. Harry laughed as he noted the wandering eyes of Hagrid and every other male professor in the hall ogling over her as she crossed the room. He

nearly collapsed to the floor in hysterics when he saw Professor McGonagall's lips disappear beneath her disapproving frown at the sight of Hannah's provocative ensemble.

He was amazed at how quickly the rumors of Halloween night died away. His life appeared to abruptly fall back into place by the lunch hour. He was in his glory since he had fully redeemed himself in the eyes of his friends and his peers, thanks to Hannah's life lesson. Moreover, Ginny had finally stopped hexing him. She was, however, certain to maintain her distance, tossing him an occasional disgusted glare when their eyes would meet, which was a punishment that he was more than willing to tolerate.

At the close of the lunch hour, Harry, Ron, and Hermione returned to the common room to privately discuss the important message they had received that morning.

Hermione looked as though she was about ready to collapse when Harry confirmed her worst fears to her. "So, it's true....you're *SCAR* is a Horcrux?" she said with a gasp.

"Yes," said Harry.

"B-but, how are you going to get that out of you?" sniveled Ron, his lip quivering and his face growing paler by the second. "Look at what happened to Dumbledore when he ingested one of Voldemort's Horcruxes."

"Harry," said Hermione importantly, "surely, there's got to be a way. Surely, Hannah has been working on this for you."

"I suppose so. To be honest, we haven't had the opportunity to discuss it. Remus has cut off all contact between her and me."

"Harry! This is important! You need to find a way to discuss it! This is your LIFE we're talking about, not some inanimate object!" shouted Hermione.

"Hermione, please! I trust Hannah completely. I know if there is a way, she will find it. But first she has to uncover the magic that my mother used on me that night. Something in the charm my mum performed reflected Voldemort's curse off me and attached a piece of his soul to mine, in a sense, handing me the weapons I would need to defeat him, which is why I bear this scar.

Hermione cupped her hand over her mouth, her eyes growing wide as she deduced aloud, "That's what she was doing! Ron, what exactly was Hannah whispering in your ear when we were performing that demonstration in class?"

"Huh? what?" said Ron, still fixed beneath his paled expression of horror from the discovery that his best friend was a physical part of Voldemort's gruesome soul mutilating experiment.

“Wake up, Ronald!” snapped Hermione. “What was it that Hannah was whispering in your ear?”

“Uh, um, I dunno, just a bunch of weird incantations, I guess. I’ve never heard anything like it before,” he said.

Hermione spoke up, “Well, whatever she did, it completely blocked Ron from feeling any of the ill effects of the spell I performed. I’d say she knows precisely the kind of magic your Mother used that night. *THAT’S* the other part of what she was trying to tell us with the scar on her wrist. Harry, *she knows.*”

“She didn’t tell me. Why didn’t she tell me?” Harry inquired, disillusioned.

Hermione replied, “Well, you said so yourself that Remus has broken off all communication between the two of you. Perhaps, she didn’t want to risk sending you the information in an owl, or telling you in class, in case he was around. Or, perhaps she wasn’t entirely sure until now. I mean, think about it. You need to have three people to perform that spell *AND* extenuating circumstances. The magic maker needs to have a selfish goal in mind when performing the evil spell. Quite possibly, she wasn’t entirely certain what the exact outcome would be until the actual spell was performed.”

Harry stared into the flames of the common room fireplace thinking about the day’s lesson. *She’s halfway there. Will she be able to find a way to save my life AND destroy the Horcrux? he wondered.*

Harry’s focus bounced intently between Hermione and Ron as he said, “Guys, Hannah and I are going to retrieve one of the Horcruxes tonight. She wanted me to ask you lot to come along; if you’d like.”

“Absolutely, Harry! You know we’re right there with you!” said Hermione.

“You can count me in,” said Ron.

“Excellent. Tonight it is,” breathed Harry anxiously.

“But, what about McGonagall? She’s commissioned your guards to do those spontaneous nightly inspections. If you’re missing when they check on you, you’re certain to find yourself in loads of trouble. As for Hannah, well she’ll be sacked from the Order, for certain. The Ministry’s been all over her since that night you snuck out to see her,” said Ron.

“I don’t know, Ron. Hannah didn’t say. But, she’s had to have thought up something. I’m sure of it,” said Harry resolutely.

With the close of his words, a bright flash of white in the shape of a beautiful snowy white owl burst through the open window of the common room and flew straight for them.

“Hey, it’s Hedwig!” called Harry.

The snowy white owl was carrying a small purple sack in the sharp hook of her beak. Sweeping directly over Harry, she dropped the tear-shaped cloth parcel onto his lap.

“It’s from Hannah!” he exclaimed. “I can’t believe she managed to break through Remus’s owl post ban!”

“Well, hurry up! Open it before someone barges in here and catches us,” said Hermione impatiently.

“Yeah, mate, c’mon!” pushed Ron.

Harry tore open the thin twine ropes securing the neck of the bundle and peeled back the fabric, revealing a miniature green glass decanter and three small white oval puffs. Tucked neatly between them was a tiny piece of gold trimmed parchment containing a poem.

*To, my hero and his lifelong friends,*

*Just three drops on three is all you need;  
And three hairs for each, but take heed;  
Only three hours you shall have;  
Before what’s here, shall come back.*

*Yours, \*H\**

Harry read and re-read the poem over and over again. Not because he didn’t understand it, but because he couldn’t get over the beginning phrase inscribed on the parchment. “*To my hero.*” Her words melted him.

Hermione snatched the decanter from Harry and waved her wand over it, uttering the incantations to reveal a potion's ingredients.

“Polyjuice Potion?” she said, snatching the note from Harry’s hand and reading it.

“What the bloody hell is that about?” said Ron in bewilderment after having skimmed through the note over Hermione’s shoulder.

“Oh, honestly, Ronald; *can’t you read?*” spat Hermione. “It’s Polyjuice Potion, and these little white puffs symbolize each one of us. We need to place three drops of it and three of our own hairs into each puff, and each one will turn into one of us; no doubt, to fake out anyone who happens to check on us. It’s brilliant magic — using enchanted sponges to maintain the effects of the potion. Generally, you have to ingest it once an hour for it to work properly,” said Hermione, entranced as she studied the full contents of the parcel. “It looks as though the little puffs are bewitched somehow, too. Look; they’re breathing.”

Harry focus on the conversation was gone. He was completely consumed by Hannah’s note. “*My hero,*” he thought to himself, again and again, while Hermione continued speaking. About what, he did not know.

“*Helloooo!* Harry! Is anybody home?” sang Hermione impatiently, knocking against his head.

“S-sorry, what?” said Harry, coming swiftly to his senses.

“I’ve been talking to you for the past five minutes! What’s with you, anyway?” snapped Hermione.

“Sorry, I was lost in thought,” said Harry quickly.

“Yeah lost in ‘*my hero*’ is more like it!” snorted Hermione.

Harry blushed.

“I was asking you what time we are to meet her,” said Hermione articulately.

“Erm, one o’clock. We’re to meet her in the secret room at Grimmauld. Oh, and we’ll need to use my invisibility cloak. No doubt Remus and the others are checking up on her,” said Harry.

“That’s going to be a real treat, the three of us trying to fit under that thing! We’re not exactly eleven anymore, you know!” grumbled Ron.

“Well, it’s all we have. It’ll be interesting, I’m sure,” said Harry. “But, I’m not taking any chances. So, guys, at five till one we’ll meet in my walk-in wardrobe. That should give us plenty of time. My door contains a secret corridor that leads directly into her walk-in wardrobe in the secret room.

“Hermione, you take the Polyjuice potion and your puff. And here,” he said, reaching into his knapsack and pulling out his invisibility cloak,” you’ll need to use this so no one

sees you heading up to our dorm room. You can bring the potion up with you when it's time to head off. Ron and I will take care of our puffs, then."

"Alright, I'll see you both in Charms. I have some research I need to tend to in the Library before the start of class," said Hermione, planting a quick kiss on Ron's lips. She grabbed her knapsack, slung it over her shoulder, and headed off toward the portrait hole.

"Later, Hermione," said Ron.

"Yeah, see you, Hermione," echoed Harry.

Once he was certain that Hermione was through the portrait hole and out of ear shot, Ron asked the question, which undoubtedly had been plaguing him for the past three weeks: "So, what exactly happened between you and Hannah on Halloween night? I heard Dad telling Mum that Remus found you two practically naked in bed together."

"Honestly, Ron, not a thing; I swear. Come on, we're going to be late for Charms." said Harry, swiftly taking to his feet and heading for the portrait hole with a relatively disappointed Ron in toe.