

Context: Events will not always adhere to canon in this fanfic. I want to create my own twist on the Harry Potter world. This will be a slow burn story. There will eventually be smut, but for the first few chapters, I want it to be heavily plot focused. Feedback is appreciated as this is my first fanfic.

Chapter 1: Pilot Chapter – The Forest.

Hermione and Harry walked hand in hand through the cold Forest of Dean, slowly making their way to a small clearing covered in dense foliage. As they cleared the trees, Hermione removed the blindfold she had Harry wearing. After wearing the blindfold for hours, he shielded his eyes against the sudden brightness. His heart was still racing from the not being able to see where he was going.

“Where are we Hermione?” Harry asked.

“Unfortunately”, Hermione started, “Seeing as your link to Voldemort is still rampant, I don’t want you to know our location. We are safe here though.”

Turning away from him, Hermione rummaged through her pack and produced a tent bag before swishing her wand and making the tent magically assemble itself.

"Come on," Hermione said, leading the way to the tent. "Let's get inside before it gets any colder."

As they walked inside, Harry once again marveled at how much magic could do. Instead of a small two person tent, he was looking at a moderately sized living quarters complete with a resting area, kitchen, separate beds, shower and the loo which was their own partitions separated by a tent flap. The tent offered a semblance of comfort and warmth. It was a temporary home in their relentless flight from Voldemort and his Death Eaters hunting them.

Walking to the rest area, they settled next to each other on a comfortable couch. Hermione conjured a small fire in the hearth in front of them, its warm glow fighting back the chill from the weather outside. They settled down, each lost in their own thoughts. The silence between them filled with worries of what the future would hold.

Harry broke the silence first, his voice low. "Do you ever think about how much longer we can keep doing this? Running, hiding... It feels like we're always one step ahead, but for how long?"

Hermione sighed, drawing her knees up to her chest and wrapping her arms around them. "All the time. But then I remember what we're fighting for. It's not just about us, Harry. It's about everyone. We can't give up, not when so many are counting on us."

"I know," Harry admitted, staring into the flames. "It's just hard sometimes. It feels like this might never end. And I can't help but worry about what we're missing, the fights we're not there for."

Hermione reached out, her hand finding his in the flickering light. "We're doing what we can, Harry. And we're making a difference, even if it doesn't feel like it every day. We've already destroyed several Horcruxes. We're getting closer."

Harry nodded, the weight of their journey pressing down on him. "I just wish we had more to go on. Every clue feels like it's wrapped in riddles. And I hate feeling like we're always on the back foot."

"We'll figure it out, we always do," Hermione said with a determined glint in her eye. "We've got each other, and that's more than Voldemort has. He doesn't understand friendship, or love, or any of the things that make us stronger." A small smile tugged at Harry's lips. "Yeah. Together."

They sat in silence for a while longer, watching the flames dance and crackle. In that moment, the tent felt like the entire world. They were just two friends, bound by destiny, fighting in a war they did not want to be in, in hopes that they could create a peaceful future for their friends and family.

"Let's get some rest," Hermione finally said, standing and stretching. "Tomorrow's another day, and who knows what it'll bring. But we'll face it, like we always do. Together."

"Together," Harry echoed, feeling a surge of gratitude for Hermione's unwavering presence by his side. They retreated to their separate beds. The challenges of tomorrow weighing on their minds. At least for tonight, they found solace in their shared resolve, the flicker of the flames was gentle reminder of the light they fought to preserve in the world.

As Harry rolled over onto his side to try and relax, he couldn't help but feel as if Ron abandoned the two of them. Salazar's Locket brought out the worst of Ron's insecurities by showing him flashes of Harry and Hermione together. This caused him to lash out at Harry and Hermione in a blind fit of jealousy.

"Hermione", Harry said quietly, "Thank you for sticking with me. I can't lose both of my best friends."

"Think nothing of it Harry," Hermione acknowledged. "I've always been by your side, and always will be. Now get some sleep. We have a long day ahead of us in the morning."

"Goodnight Hermione," whispered Harry.

"Goodnight Harry." She whispered back.

Awaking early in the morning, Hermione headed to the kitchen area and put on some tea. Instead of immediately waking up Harry, she decided to start working on a list of potential solutions to their Horcrux hunt.

As she pondered their options she began to mumble to herself while writing.

“Option one, we find more information on Horcruxes somehow, and see if they can be tracked. Unlikely, but a potential option.”

“Option two, we utilize the link between Harry and Voldemort again,” She pauses to nibble on her bottom lip, “However, that would put Harry in jeopardy. I don’t want to risk that.”

“Option three, we go to the goblins. As they hire curse breakers and train them, perhaps they know of a way to remove the link to Voldemort.”

As she kept contemplating more solutions, the kettle started whistling that it was boiling, which in turn, roused Harry from his deep sleep. Rolling to a sitting position Harry groggily rubbed his eyes and groaned “Wh’time is it ‘Mione?”

As she grabbed the Kettle and made tea for both of them she responded “A quarter after seven. Sleep well then I take it?”

As she handed Harry a tea mug, he took a sip. “No nightmares. Think we can just stay here? Just enjoy the temporary peace for a little bit?”

“Unfortunately Harry,” Hermione sat next to him on the couch and turned to him, “While you were asleep, I came up with several options we can go through. That is the final option, but not one either of us would choose lightly. However, a few weeks won’t hurt any worse than they have.” Taking a small sip she continued, “I think our best action right now, is to go to the goblins and see if they can assist us in breaking the link to Voldemort. This would allow us to move freely without worry of him spying on us.”

Harry sat absorbing the information. A frown marring his face. "How would we convince the Goblins to break a curse for us? Money isn't always the answer for them. Their trade secrets are more valuable. Even the wizard curse breakers they train are hardly a fraction of their skill level."

"I thought about that while making the list," said Hermione. "As the only member of the Potter family remaining, and of legal age, we can access the main Potter family vault, and not just the trust fund that Dumbledore allowed you. Even if it takes a huge amount, I am sure you can come to an agreement with them concerning the cost."

She paused for a minute in thought. "Perhaps we could learn some of their customs in the meantime, and try to show respect. It couldn't hurt. You know how most wizards treat goblin-kind."

"True," Harry said, "However, where would we learn about their customs? We're not exactly able to go out to a library and ask around while being hunted now can we?"

Staring at Harry, Hermione just shook her head. "By now, I'm surprised you don't know." She pulled her pack open again and rummaged inside until she found a book titled 'Goblin Customs Through The Ages', set it on the table, and then pulled out another one titled 'Gobbledygook for the aspiring wizard'.

"I figure we can spend a few hours a day studying the goblin language, as well as their etiquette and customs."

Harry chuckled at Hermione always being prepared for unusual circumstances such as this one. "Once I take a shower, I will cook us some food, and then we can begin the studying. Can't believe we're away from school, and still managing to have homework."

Harry turned and walked to the shower. Without thinking about it, he slipped his sleeping shirt off of his torso and began to open the flap to the shower. Before he entered the partition, Hermione turned to ask him something, but stopped short.

She got a clear look at his back covered in scars from the previous abuse of his childhood with the Dursleys. Combined with his obvious undernourishment over the years, it was a wonder that Harry was able to trust anyone. The sight, though gruesome, made her proud that Harry put his faith in her.

After fifteen minutes in the shower washing away the aches and pains from the long walk to the clearing, Harry came out smelling like fresh mint. With Hermione facing away from him, once more absorbed in a book, he decided to pull a page from Sirius's book. He crept quietly behind her. When he got close enough, he whispered "Making any progress over there Mione?"

With a girlish shriek and one dropped book later, Hermione was out of the couch faster than a firebolt. She quickly walked around the side of the couch and began smacking Harry's arm.

"How. Dare. You. Scare. Me. Harry. James. Potter." Each word was accentuated with another smack to the arm as her face turned pink with embarrassment. All the while, Harry just kept laughing heartily.

"I honestly couldn't help myself 'Mione." With a Cheshire grin plastered on his face and his tangled mop of hair still dripping from the shower, he asked her what she would like for breakfast before she could continue her tirade.

“You know how to cook?”, she asked incredulously.

Harry nodded his head. “Unfortunately, living with the Dursleys imparted a lot of important household skills onto me. Not by choice mind you.” With Hermione’s eyes going wide, she began to protest, but before she could he continued. “Cooking is one of the few things that I enjoyed over the years ‘Mione. So what shall it be?”

With a sigh and a quiet voice, she relented. “Surprise me then.”

With another grin to lighten the mood, Harry began to rummage through the cupboards in search of ingredients while Hermione sat back down and continued reading her book.

Thirty minutes later, Harry had a savory English breakfast comprised of bacon, bangers, beans, grilled tomatoes, sunny side up eggs, mushrooms, and toast laid out on the dining room table.

With the sound of plates hitting the tabletop, Hermione sat her book down, and walked over to the table. Harry pulled out her chair for her, and she sat down, surprised once more by Harry's manners.

Harry sat on the other side of the small dining room table from her, and let her pick what she wanted before he loaded his plate with primarily bangers and beans. Once his plate was filled, he looked at Hermione, waiting to see her reaction.

As she stared at the food in wonder, and smelled the rich aromas wafting from the dishes, she took her fork and knife and cut a banger in three pieces before popping one into her mouth. Immediately an involuntary moan escaped her mouth as the flavour coated her taste buds and assaulted her senses.

Once she was done with the first bite, she looked at him and smiled. Harry truly did have a hidden talent. "Thank you for the food Harry. It's fantastic." she said before continuing to eat.

With the praise for his food, Harry began to dig in to his own plate, ready to start the day right.

The next few weeks were a blur of culture shock for the two teens. Each day they would wake up, take their showers, cook together, and begin studying the relations between the goblins and wizards for a couple hours a day. According to the books, goblins weren't always the nicest lot, especially seeing all of the wars over the centuries between goblins and wizard-kind. Harry really should have paid more attention in Mr. Binns class.

At least goblins were willing to listen to people who managed to shower them with an appropriate monetary value, and if not, respect, and combat prowess, were second in the rankings for most deals made over the times.

After studying, they would practice duels to make sure they were in fighting shape. They didn't want to become lazy even though they were safe, and off the grid.

Three weeks after their initial arrival to the clearing, Harry was walking out of the shower in a pair of sweat pants and the towel draped over his shoulders, walking to the chest by his bed to grab a shirt.

Hermione, seeing this, finally mustered the courage to ask him about the scars. "Harry, I don't mean to pry into your personal life but," She paused, "The scars on your back. How did you get them?"

Harry turned to look at her and she could see the him tense up at the question.

"These scars were punishments from the Dursleys for not doing household chores correctly, on time, or any other excuse they needed to beat me." He could see the pained look in her eyes and looked away, quickly finding a shirt to put on before continuing. "Dumbledore knew about the situation I was in with them. He said I had to stay there for my protection. When you helped me free Sirius, I honestly thought I could finally be free of their petty wrath against me. That I finally had a family that would treat me properly."

He crossed the tent, and sat down on the couch next to her, the smell of Hermione's Vanilla and Lavender toiletries quickly wafting through his nose and calming him down. "After the battle at the ministry, after loosing Sirius, the beatings and taunts became worse. They were informed by Dumbledore that Sirius died, as well as his relation to me.

There were many times where I wanted to run away, to hurt them like they hurt me, and in the worst event, I wanted to kill them when Voldemort was inside my mind whispering constantly."

She could hear the pain in his voice as he talked about it. She quickly scooted closer to him and held her in a tight hug. Tears of her own slowly spilled from her eyes as she imaged how painful and lonely it must have been for him.

Harry just held her, allowing the grief of losing Sirius to truly claim him for once. In his best friends arms, he was finally able to shed the guilt of that night and cry.

After fifteen minutes of holding each other, and calming down slowly, they broke apart, and looked into each others puffy, bloodshot eyes. With his hands resting on her shoulders still, Harry gently cradled Hermione's cheek with his hand and smiled. She was his best friend. Where Ron abandoned both of them, she stood by him through it all. Time and again she proved her loyalty to him without question.

He stared at her for a moment longer before pulling her forward and gently placing a kiss against her lips.

Shocked from the contact, Hermione just stared at him. Pink quickly overtook her facial features she squeaked his name.

“I don’t know why I did that Hermione.” Harry stated with a sheepish look on his face. He was clearly embarrassed just like her. “I just realized how much you truly mean to me, and I wanted to show you how I felt, and the scent of your hair, and your lotions all combined into a very distracting manner...” He continued rambling.

Hermione slowly came out of her shocked state and pressed a finger to his lips. “Harry, I have been your best friend for seven long years. You don’t have to explain your actions to me. I was just surprised at you is all.”

Before he could say anything else, she pulled him to her again, and kissed him, this time, in a languid, love filled manner. Their hearts both beat loudly as they pulled apart. Both green and brown eyes sparkling with the newfound step in their relationship.

Once Hermione realized how forward she was, she quickly stammered a quick “Let’s cook lunch,” before rushing into the kitchen to prepare food. After a couple of minutes laughing at their reactions, Harry followed her into the kitchen and began chopping some onions, carrots, and potatoes for a mirepoix. Hermione on the other hand was cutting beef into cubes and had rice going in another pot to prepare beef tips on rice.

After a month in the forest, Hermione awoke in the middle of the night to Harry screaming in pain. She knew this typically meant Voldemort was assaulting Harry with visions. She quickly rushed to his bed and shook him awake. He awoke sitting up immediately panting. It hurt her to see him in this much pain. She immediately held him in her arms and kept stroking her hand through his messy hair trying to calm him down. Once the shaking calmed enough, Hermione climbed into bed with Harry and pulled him against her to keep him company for the rest of the night. They both needed sleep, and with this recent anomaly, she planned to execute the plan later in the day. Till then, they went back to sleep. Harry was too shaken to even question why Hermione climbed into bed with him. He just knew he was safe.

Later that morning

They knew entering Diagon Alley would be dangerous. However, once they got their morning routines done, they held hands and side-along apparated to the Leaky Cauldron.

Once they arrived, they immediately headed to the back alley, and Hermione tapped the order of the bricks in the wall to open the entrance to Diagon Alley. Once the entrance was open, they donned the hoods of their travel cloaks and headed inside, walking at a calm, but cautious pace not wanting to draw attention to themselves.

Nowadays the streets of Diagon Alley were almost deserted for fear of Death Eaters. With little worry of being spotted, they quickly made their way to the bank and opened the heavy doors.

Inside, Harry quickly found his vault manager Griphook and in Gobbleygook gave a friendly greeting, "Greetings Griphook, May your enemies spill rivers of blood before you, and the vaults of Gringotts flow with the spoils of war."

To say Griphook was shocked was an understatement. He quickly looked at 17 year old Harry Potter and smiled his sharp toothed grin. "Good day to you as well Mr. Potter. May your business prosper and your enemies tremble at your name." After a quick bow, Griphook continued. "What is it that Mr. Potter is needing in Gringotts today?"

Harry bowed himself as well, and without hesitation stated "I need to speak with your King about a sensitive subject. If he would deign an audience with us, I would be forever grateful, and will be willing to part with a large sum of the value of House Potter, as well as House Blacks fortunes."

Griphook quickly pulled up the financial records of both Houses, and smiled again at the young wizard. "I am sure his Majesty would be willing to listen to your request. Forty percent should suffice from both houses. Gold only. Any artifacts shall remain untouched. Are we agreed?"

Harry turned to Hermione and let out the breath he was holding from nervousness, smiled, and then turned back to Griphook. "Very well Griphook. This is an urgent matter. Make it fifty percent. I need to talk to him now."

Griphook was enjoying this day more and more. It had been ages since a wizard spoke Gobbledygook and learned their traditions. With a wave of his hand, an attendant next to him rushed to relay the message.

Thirty minutes later, the messenger came back and spoke quickly to Griphook before stepping to the side. Griphook with an even greater smile than ever, motioned for Harry and Hermione to follow him into a hallway behind his desk.

After a ten minute walk, they appeared at a door made of goblin metal, intricate gold inlays, and jewels. Griphook knocked once, and announced "Griphook, Harry Potter, and Hermione Granger to see his Majesty.

The door silently swung open. Griphook calmly walked in, bowed, and remained so as the teenagers came behind him, and did the same.

If Harry was nervous before, now, he was petrified. The king of the goblins Ripshank was sitting on a literal throne made of gold, weapons of every caliber behind it on the walls, and an aura that emanated power and authority. Then he spoke.

"Mr. Potter. We shall ignore formalities due to your urgency. What is it that you want from me?" The voice was deep, and dangerous.

"I have a connection to the dark lord Voldemort. I hear his voice, see things in dreams, and any time I am near him, my scar burns like the cruciatus curse is affecting me. Is there any way for your ward breakers to remove this connection?"

Ripshank laughed immediately and asked "The sum of that knowledge is very expensive Mr. Potter. The meeting was forty percent of your assets, yet you added an additional ten without request. Seeing as you were willing to increase our agreement first, I shall only increase it once. The deal is now sixty percent of your assets. Do you accept?"

Bowing deeply, Harry looked at Ripshank, and said in a firm voice "Without hesitation your majesty."

"Very well Mr. Potter. So it shall be. Griphook, see to it immediately." With that, Ripshank waved them to a room adjacent to his office. The three quickly moved to the room. Inside, Harry sat down in a chair and waited, unsure of what sort of procedure would occur.

"Mr. Potter, this procedure will hurt, but do not be afraid. All will be well in less than two minutes." Griphook grabbed a jar off a shelf and produced a wand.

Hermione was shocked because in the last rebellion, goblins were forbidden from wielding wands due to them being too powerful as it was. Knowing the situation however, she remained silent and just watched.

"Griphook strapped Harry into the chair to restrain him, and without waiting, put the wand to Harry's temple and, just like a memory pulled for a pensieve, began extracting an inky dark mist from Harry who began thrashing about in the restraints. The pain from the cruciatus curse

paled drastically in comparison to this onslaught on his senses. He tried to scream, but even his vocal chords were unable to function with all the pain. For two minutes Griphook worked just as he said.

Once Griphook retrieved the soul piece, he trapped it in the unbreakable jar, and cast several more seals on it before vanishing it to the lowest depths of Gringotts.

As soon as the soul piece was removed, Harry immediately calmed down. The pain of the severance ceased immediately. Griphook quickly unlatched Harry's restraints and waved Hermione over to help the lad stand up. She quickly obeyed.

Wrapping an arm behind his back and under his arm, she pulled him up and walked him out of the room and back into Ripshanks office. Griphook followed behind them, and Harry quietly asked him, "Griphook, while we have your attention, may I access the Potter family vaults? I need to check if there are any relics that may help us against Voldemort."

"With pleasure Mr. Potter. Let us make haste. After expending that much magic, I too need rest. It is no question that the two of you will remain silent about what happened today, yes?"

Both Hermione and Harry agreed.

After a quick cart ride through the winding depths of Gringotts, Harry, Hermione, and Griphook arrived at the Potter family vault. With a drop of Harry's blood on the door, it began unlatching itself. Once it swung open, they two teens stepped inside the massive room. Griphook, stayed outside. The large piles of gold were diminished quite drastically. On the far wall, sat a single glass case with what looked to be a pendant in it. Harry opened the case, and inspected it with Hermione. Both of them immediately recognized it. It was a time turner. But nothing like they had ever seen before. It was ornate, and far older than the others by a large margin with a giant E settled between the hourglass partitions.

"It's beautiful." Breathed Hermione. As ancient as the Sword of Godric Gryffindor, and Rowena Ravenclaws Diadem, it shined brilliantly and pulsed with strong magic. As they stared entranced, all hell broke loose with one quick shout. "Avada Kedavra!"

The two quickly turned and drew their wands towards the entrance of the vault just in time to see Griphooks lifeless body fall to the ground as if in slow motion. Standing behind him was none other than Voldemort with a feral grin on his face. With a look of triumph, his cold, evil voice rasped out "You cannot hide any longer Harry Potter! I have finally cornered you and it is time to pay with your life!" He looked from him to Hermione, and then said "You and that mudblood."

Immediately jumping into action, Harry and Hermione quickly ducked behind one of the piles of gold. Neither said a thing. They put the time turner on, and spun it. It didn't matter how far back it put them, so long as it kept them from Voldemort.

They held hands and closed their eyes. Without a sound they disappeared.