

Chapter 18

Harry felt a sense of relief so powerful at knowing what was keeping him trapped in time and finally having at least a chance to escape that he was almost giddy when he woke up the next morning. It also filled him with an odd sense of urgency to try and do some of the things he'd always wanted but hadn't gotten around to.

Even after more than four years of reliving the same day over and over again, there were some things that he'd thought were too unlikely or difficult to pull off that he'd simply put the ideas aside. Now, with a possible end nearing, he wanted to at least try.

For the first time in a long time, Harry had a smile on his face as he entered the Great Hall. Looking around at the familiar faces, it really hit him how much better he now knew classmates that had been little more than acquaintances when this all started. Even some that he'd considered friends had surprised him.

There was Angelina Johnson, a fiercely competitive girl that was a bit of a size queen with an oral fixation. Susan Bones was shy and quiet to most but shockingly submissive. Daphne Greengrass, who was cold and unapproachable even to her housemates, dreamed of a man who would treat her like a queen in public and a whore in private. At only twenty-four, Professor Sinistra, the youngest professor at Hogwarts, was almost desperate for sex and affection. Even Hermione had shocked him with how wanton she could be at times, and she'd been his best friend for years.

And then, of course, there was Suzette. Her natural Legilimency and understanding had been a beacon for him in one of the darkest times of his life. Just when he'd never felt more alone and trapped, she came along and became a friend who could understand him like no one else ever had. The fact that Suzette and Hermione got along fantastically and cared about each other as much as they cared for him had been like a dream come true.

Part of him still occasionally wondered if this was just some magically induced dream that was only happening inside his head. Only the fact that everything looked and felt absolutely real dissuaded him from truly believing that.

Sitting down across from Hermione at the Gryffindor table, Harry absently held a conversation with her, one he'd had thousands of times, while his mind wandered. When Dumbledore made his customary speech about the Yule ball, he looked from his bushy haired friend and another brunette only a few seats away. It had been a while since he'd gone to the Ball with Katie, and he had to admit, she was one of his favorites.

Harry remembered Hermione admitting to having a crush on Katie a while back but had never been able to think of a plausible way for the three of them to go together. Now, though, he couldn't think of a reason not to at least try.

"Hey, Hermione," Harry said when Dumbledore finished his announcement and sat. "I need to talk to you for a minute in private."

"Okay," she said, looking at him curiously and leaning forward to whisper. "Is it about the Tournament?"

"No," Harry smiled.

With all of the studying he'd done over the last four years, he knew of a dozen different ways to get through the task. It almost felt like cheating that he had so much more time than the other Champions, but it wasn't like he had any control over his situation. Besides, they were three years older than him, and it would be a complete waste of an opportunity not to try and improve his magic with all the time he had. Not to mention the fact that he now knew Voldemort was behind his name ending up in the cup and most of what his plans were.

After finishing their breakfast, Harry led Hermione out of the Great Hall and into the nearest empty classroom.

"Take a seat," Harry said, pulling another chair over to hers. "There's something I need to show you."

As Hermione looked at him curiously, he gently pushed his memories into her mind. She gasped, her eyes widening as memories of the four years flashed in front of her eyes.

“Oh, Harry,” she said, jumping up and hugging him tightly.

“I know it’s a bit overwhelming. Just breathe and wait a minute for your mind to catch up,” Harry said.

“Did we really, um...?” Hermione asked, trailing off nervously.

Harry smiled at the familiar question. It was something she asked nearly every time he did this with her. Hugging her tighter, he pulled Hermione into his lap and kissed her softly.

“Frequently,” he whispered.

She blushed, but a bright smile lit up her face, and she leaned her head on his shoulder.

“As much as I’d love to stay like this, I have to go talk to Dumbledore,” Harry said. “I want you to do something for me, though.”

“Anything,” Hermione said, sitting up to look at him intently.

Harry grinned, “Ask Katie to the Ball.”

Hermione’s eyebrows rose sharply, and her mouth worked silently up and down.

“Look, this time travel stuff might not last much longer, and we both know you want the three of us to go together,” Harry said.

"And how does me asking her to the Ball get the three of us to go together?" Hermione asked.

"I'll take care of that," Harry told her with a crooked grin. "I don't know if it'll work, but it's worth a shot."

"Alright," Hermione sighed. "You'll tell me what happens with Professor Dumbledore, won't you?"

"Of course," he said, giving her a peck on the lips.

Hermione squeaked cutely in surprise when Harry suddenly stood up and set her on her feet. Pulling her body flush with his, he gave her a good snog before pulling back, leaving her flushed and breathless.

"I'll see you in a little bit," Harry said.

Leaving the classroom, Hermione headed back to the Great Hall while he made his way up to the second floor. Giving the Gargoyle the password, he rode the stairs up to the headmaster's office.

"Come in," Dumbledore called out before Harry could even knock on the door.

Shaking his head, he pushed open the door and walked into the office. Fawkes chirped in greeting and glided over to land on his shoulder.

"Good morning, Harry," Dumbledore said. "I trust you're here about yesterday's discoveries."

"Yeah," Harry said. "I know you wanted me here at eight, but I don't wake up until after nine, and I can't exactly set an alarm."

"That's understandable," Professor Dumbledore nodded.

"So, do you know how we should deal with this?" Harry asked.

"I need to take a closer look at the Horcrux and the Time-Turner before I can give you a definitive answer," Dumbledore said. "It may take me some time to fully understand what we're up against."

Harry sighed but nodded.

"Is there anything I can do to help?" he asked.

"Give me a couple of days to learn a little more before I bring you with me," the headmaster replied. "This is very dangerous magic. A single mistake could have grave consequences."

"Alright," Harry said.

"In the meantime, I'd like you to read this," Dumbledore said.

Reaching into his desk, he pulled out a book. The black leather cover was cracked in places, and the pages yellowed and warped with age. Harry took it and immediately felt a chill run down his spine. It felt like the dark magic from the book was seeping out and creeping over his hands.

"What is this?" Harry asked, revolted.

"That is what I believe to be the last surviving copy of a book called Secrets of the Darkest Arts by Herpo the Foul," Dumbledore replied. "It is a book I have worked tirelessly to destroy, and the one I believe Voldemort learned the Horcrux ritual from. This book contains some of the darkest, foulest magics ever created."

“Why do you want me to read this?” Harry asked, setting the book on the desk and wiping his hands on his robes.

“In order for you to help me with Voldemort’s Horcruxes, you need to understand everything about them,” Dumbledore said, stroking his beard. “Normally, I would not allow such a dangerous book to leave this office. However, since you are the only one able to remember what happens, I feel it’s safe enough for you to take with you.”

Nodding, Harry grimaced and slipped the book into his pocket.

“I’d also like you to look into studying Runes and Curse Breaking,” he continued. “Even a basic understanding could be useful in our research.”

“I’ve already been learning Runes,” Harry said. “I was hoping to take that instead of Divinations when this was all over.”

“Excellent,” Dumbledore smiled. “That will make things easier. Now, if you’ll excuse me, it seems I have some work to do before the Ball.”

Nodding, Harry stood and headed for the door.

“Stay safe, professor,” Harry said just before leaving.

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Instead of going to find Hermione like he’d planned, Harry ended up going to his dorm to read through the book Dumbledore had given him. He found it horrifically disgusting, and it made him sick to his stomach more than once. After reading about Horcruxes and forcing himself to understand all of the details, he finally put it down.

Feeling dirty from just touching the book, let alone reading it, Harry stuffed it in his trunk next to a pair of Dudley's old socks and took a long, hot shower. By the time he was done, he felt quite a bit better and realized just how hungry he was.

"Where have you been?" Hermione asked exasperatedly when she spotted him coming down to the common room.

"Sorry," Harry said. "I got distracted after my talk with Dumbledore."

"Did you learn anything new?" Hermione asked.

"Nothing really important," Harry lied. "How did things go with Katie?"

It wasn't that he didn't want to tell Hermione about the book or what he'd learned. It was just that he didn't want to think about it anymore tonight. If he told her, there was no way he could stop her from reading it herself, despite the fact she wouldn't remember any of it.

"She said yes," Hermione replied, biting her lips as her cheeks went a light pink. "I still don't see how you're going to talk her into the three of us going together."

"You let me worry about that," Harry said, throwing an arm over her shoulders with a crooked grin. "Come on, let's go get something to eat. I'm starving."

Hermione sighed and shook her head at him as he led her out of the common room.

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Hermione kept looking at Harry expectantly throughout lunch and into the afternoon, but it wasn't until nearly three that he finally made his move. Hermione and Katie were sitting on the

couch next to the fire, talking about Muggle fiction, of all things, while Harry sat in a chair, flipping through an advanced spell book.

“Hey, Katie, Hermione, can I ask you two a favor?” he asked at a pause in their conversation.

“Sure, what do you need?” Katie asked.

“Since I’m a Champion, I have to do the opening dance with someone. I know you two are going together, but I was hoping one of you would have dinner and then do the first dance with me,” Harry said.

Katie and Hermione shared a brief look before Katie turned back to him.

“I don’t mind, but I’m sure we can find you a date if you need one,” she said.

“I’m not really interested in finding a date,” Harry said. “The only girls I wanted to go with are taken, so I’d rather just do the first dance and relax for the rest of the night.”

“Oh, I’m sorry, Harry,” Katie said sympathetically. “Sure, one of us could do the opening dance with you.”

Turning to the side, she looked at Hermione questioningly.

“You can do it,” Hermione smiled. “I’d rather not have the attention, and you know how bad the rumors would be.”

“You don’t mind, do you?” Katie asked.

“Of course not,” Hermione said.

Smiling brightly, Katie leaned forward and kissed her on the cheek before springing to her feet excitedly.

“I’m going to go start getting ready,” she said happily. “Are you going to come up and let me and Alicia help you with your hair.”

“Yeah, I’ll be up in a couple of minutes,” Hermione smiled.

Harry smiled as Katie turned and bounced up the stairs, her ponytail swaying back and forth.

“I don’t know if I like this,” Hermione said quietly.

Harry turned and looked at her in surprise.

“What do you mean?” he asked.

“It just feels sort of – wrong,” Hermione said. “It feels like we’re manipulating her. Can’t you just show her your memories like you did with me and tell her the truth?”

“I – didn’t even think about that,” Harry admitted, surprised with himself.

Why hadn’t he thought about that before, he wondered.

“Should I go get her?” Hermione asked.

Nodding, Harry sat back in his chair thoughtfully as Hermione dashed up the stairs to the girl’s dorm. He wondered if he really was manipulating girls to go on dates with him. But wasn’t that what dating was normally like anyways, boys doing what they thought a girl would like to get

them to go out with them? Suzette had never said anything against it and even encouraged him sometimes.

Harry's thoughts were interrupted when Hermione and Katie came bounding back down the stairs, and he resolved to talk to Hermione and Suzette about it more the next time the three of them were together.

"Hermione said you wanted to tell me something," Katie said, taking a seat on the couch across from him.

"Yeah," Harry said, licking his lips. "Do you know what Legilimency is?"

"No," Katie said, shaking her head with a curious look.

"It's basically magical mind reading," Harry said. "Think of it as a way for a person to connect their mind to another's. I want to use that to show you something. I promise not to look at anything you don't want me to."

"Okay," Katie said slowly, glancing over at Hermione, who smiled encouragingly.

Harry sighed, knowing his description was horrible and Katie didn't really understand. When she looked at him again, he gently entered her mind and fed her some of his memories. He didn't show her everything like he did with Hermione, but he showed her his memories of being stuck in a loop and all their dates to the Ball.

"Whoa!" Katie gasped, her eyes wide.

"Just give it a minute for your memories to settle," Harry said. "I know it's a lot to take in."

“That’s an understatement,” Katie said, rubbing her eyes. “So, we’re all live in some kind of time loop, and you’re the only one who remembers anything?”

“Yeah,” Harry said.

Katie stared at him incredulously.

“How have you not gone insane?” she asked.

“I’m not entirely sure I haven’t.” Harry joked.

Katie snorted and shook her head.

“And we’ve gone to the Ball before?” she asked.

“Quite a few times,” Harry smiled.

“And now you want to go with me and Hermione?” Katie pressed.

“I was hoping to,” Harry said. “It was actually Hermione’s idea.”

“I saw that,” Katie said, smiling as Hermione blushed. “Alright, so we’ll do the first dance, and then Hermione joins us?”

“You’re okay with this?” Hermione asked, surprised.

“Yeah, why not?” Katie asked. “I like both of you, and it’s not like anyone will remember it. Well, besides Harry, and it’s not like we haven’t had sex before. Why not give it a try and see how things go?”

Harry smiled while Hermione goggled at her.

“You’re the best, Katie,” Harry grinned.

“I know,” she smiled.

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Harry, Hermione, and Katie ended up having a great time at the Ball. They certainly got some looks for their classmates but were mostly able to ignore them. Ron, predictably, tried to make a scene until Alicia and Angelina chased him out of the Great Hall with a few mild Hexes.

As the night grew late, it was actually Katie that dragged them up to the seventh floor. Harry smiled as she pulled them into a comfortable looking room clad in Gryffindor colors and surprised Hermione with a passionate kiss. As the two of them staggered over to the bed, giggling when they nearly tripped, taking off their dresses and shoes on the way, Harry shrugged off his cloak.

He began to wonder just how much of Fred and George’s spiked punch they’d had when Hermione fell onto the bed while pulling Katie on top of her, her cheeks bright pink as she took Katie’s pink nipple between her lips. Katie moaned, her back arching and pulling her black panties taught around her full, muscular bum.

Harry slowly stripped out of his clothes as he watched the two roll around on the mattress, the last of their clothes being tossed carelessly to the floor. Smiling, Katie kissed her way down Hermione’s body until her face was buried between her legs. Hermione arched her back and moaned, her hands landing on the top of Katie’s head.

"You taste so good, Hermione," Katie whispered.

Glancing over her shoulder, she looked back at Harry and wiggled her bum with a grin. He smiled, realizing how much he'd missed her playful side. Walking up behind her, he dropped his boxers and climbed onto the bed. Katie moaned as his hands ghosted over her smooth, round curves. Leaning over her back, he kissed her shoulder and sucked at the side of her neck.

"Merlin, that feels big," Katie panted, wiggling her bum against his rigid erection. "Just put it in. I'm so fucking wet right now."

Snorting in laughter, Harry kissed her cheek as her lips descended on Hermione's folds. Straightening up, he rubbed his head between her glistening lips teasingly a couple of times before lining himself up with her entrance. Slowly, he pushed forward, sinking into her sweltering embrace.

"Oh God," Katie gasped.

Harry groaned as he bottomed out and paused, savoring the feeling of her tight depths. Leaning forward again, he ran a hand over her ribs and cupped one of her breasts as he began thrusting. Katie moaned into Hermione's mound, her tongue delving deep into her folds.

"Katie," Hermione moaned, bucking her hips.

Spurred on, Katie attacked her clit enthusiastically, making Hermione moan even louder. Harry smiled at his best friend as she writhed wantonly while thrusting into Katie. Reaching up, Katie grasped one of Hermione's breasts and pinched her nipple lightly. Hermione arched her back, her hands tugging gently at Katie's elegant bun.

Katie's moans grew rapidly until she suddenly screamed out, her folds fluttering wildly around his thrusting shaft. Harry grunted as he was brought to a surprising climax, burying himself in her depths as he exploded.

“Bloody hell,” Harry grunted.

After a moment to catch her breath, Katie crawled forward. Kissing Hermione passionately, she rolled them both over and grinned.

“Now, it’s your turn,” she said.

“I might need a minute,” Harry panted.

“Maybe we should give him a show?” Katie suggested to Hermione.

Smiling, Hermione leaned down and pressed her lips to Katie’s. The two made a show of kissing and groping each other as Harry watched. Smiling and shaking his head at his luck, Harry shuffled over beyond Hermione, his erection rapidly swelling.

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It was over three hours later that the three of them collapsed onto the bed, Katie curling up to Harry’s left side and Hermione on his right.

“Harry?” Katie asked.

“Hmm?” he hummed.

“Will you show me the memories of our time together when this is all over?” she asked.

“If you want me to,” Harry said.

Katie smiled briefly and kissed his cheek.

"I just don't want to forget about this," she said, her smile fading into a frown. "I wish I didn't have to forget about this tomorrow. This has been the best night of my life. Even if we don't end up dating or anything after this, I still want to remember it."

Harry frowned thoughtfully and kissed the top of her head. A moment later, he sat up, climbed off the bed, and walked over to his clothes.

"What are you doing, Harry?" Hermione asked.

"If I use Legilimency to show Katie, she'll only be seeing things from my perspective," he said, pulling his wand from the pocket of his discarded pants. "But, we found a Pensieve in the Room of Lost Things when we searched it."

Looking around, he grabbed a knick knack from the fireplace mantle and transfigured it into a small glass vial.

"What's a Pensieve?" Katie asked.

"It's a device that lets you watch memories," he said, sitting down on the edge of the mattress.

"If you want, I can make a copy of your memory of tonight and show it to you when this is finally over. There's a spell Dumbledore taught me that connects objects to my soul so they stay with me when everything resets."

"Really?" Katie asked excitedly, sitting up.

"Yeah," Harry smiled. "I suppose we don't even need the Pensieve. We could just give it back to you, and you'll remember everything the way you remember it now."

“What do I need to do?” Katie asked.

“Close your eyes and just focus on what you want to remember,” Harry said.

Giving her a moment to focus, he touched the tip of his wand to her temple and muttered the incantation. Pulling away slowly, a long silver thread stuck to the tip. Dropping the silver memory into the vial, he corked it and set it on the nightstand, knowing it would be in his dorm when he woke up.

“Can you do the same for me?” Hermione asked. “I know you’ll show me everything, but I’d like to see some of it from my own point of view.”

Smiling, Harry transfigured another vial and did the same for her.

“Thank you,” Katie said, kissing him passionately.

“You’re welcome,” Harry said.

Wrapping his arms around the girls, they snuggled up to him, and all three quickly fell asleep.