

Letters

by felinefelifelicia

The trio has graduated, and Hermione is back at Hogwarts as Madam Pomfrey's assistant as part of her training to be a Mediwitch while the boys are off training to be Aurors. These are the letters they exchange.

Hermione Starts Her New Job

Chapter 1 of 50

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10 July

Dear Harry and Ron,

I'm settling in well back at Hogwarts. It's a bit strange to be here again, but I'm excited about this internship. The staff is thrilled to have me back -- yes, all of them -- and I'm slowly getting used to eating at the head table and calling everyone by their first names. Poppy promises that we'll begin work tomorrow, so I should not stay up too late writing this.

Work over the summer consists of inventory, restocking, updating and reorganization of records, staff physicals, and whatever may come up. Poppy assures me that the summer is an excellent time to ease into the work but will not be boring by any means. There are always hangovers, minor sprains, sunburns, and at least one exploding potion over the summer. There is apparently something of a bell curve health-wise among the staff. The youngest and oldest always have something wrong with them, while the middle-aged are healthy as horses. I suspect I will be discovering much about the activities of the staff that we never dreamed as students. I have already spotted clotheslines strung out of windows that contain what seem to be bathing suits. Suddenly my wardrobe seems much too formal.

Love,

Hermione

The Boys Respond

Chapter 2 of 50

Harry and Ron respond to Hermione's letter with disbelief, suggestions, and an update on their own lives.

12 July

Dear Hermione,

Bathing suits? Our teachers? I'm scarred for life. Tell me though, do they dress all formal over the summer, too? I'm guessing they don't but I can't picture them any other way.

It sounds like you won't be bored, but not busy either. Plenty of time for reading or recreation. I can just see you sunbathing with a fat book. And don't glare like that, you know I'm just teasing. I can't wait to hear what hijinks the teachers get up to when the students aren't around, so keep me posted.

We're doing well here in London, staying busy with training. There isn't much to report, as we're mainly reviewing and strengthening our basics at the moment, but if you get to be good at making Bruise Ointment, send some by. We get knocked on our tails a lot.

Love,

Harry

13 July

Dear Hermione,

I'm sure Harry already gave you all the news about our Auror training, which is just bruises and basics so far, so I'll tell you about the twins. They expanded their shop into the two on either side, and are doing a roaring business. I'll try to send you samples of any new products that could hurt someone, so you can be prepared when the students show up with them. I would also advise figuring out some antidote or indicator for the Skiving Snackboxes. Of course, I only suggest that because I'm no longer in a position to use them. Plus, it might keep Snape out of your hair for a while.

Can you get pictures of the teachers acting like fools? I would treasure them forever. Charm a shampoo bottle to chase Snape around, or something. And turn McGonagall's robes pink. Anything that'll be funny, so I can have a good laugh.

For that matter, keep me posted on anything funny that happens. After getting knocked around at training every day, Firewhiskey and comic relief are greatly needed. Send by some Bruise Ointment if you have any extra.

Love,

Ron

The Pranks Begin

Chapter 3 of 50

Hermione tells off the boys for suggesting that she should play jokes on the rest of the staff, but reveals that they have the jokes covered without her help.

14 July

Dear Harry,

The teachers do not dress formally over the summer. Not in any sense of the word. I'm fairly certain that I have not yet seen Severus wear trousers since term ended. The other teachers occasionally put on shorts or jeans or skirts, but every time I've seen him he's been wearing swim trunks and some t-shirt, usually in support of either the Slytherin Quiddich team or some rock band. The other teachers tease him about his refusal to look respectable unless there are students around to see him. That's news to me, but Minerva tells me that he sometimes does this during the school year as well, to the point of occasionally showing up for staff meetings in his pajamas just to make the others feel as though they're keeping him from more pleasant things. I think during the school year he only does it for amusement -- and I really can't blame him for relaxing and having a little fun now that Voldemort is gone -- but in the summer months it's a necessity, since it must be awful slaving over potions in this heat. Plus, we all spend more time in the lake than out of it. Minerva is really the only one who dresses nicely for day-to-day living in the summer, and even she relaxes a lot. She doesn't bother to put her hair up, for one thing.

No hijinks so far, I'm afraid, except a few people getting dunked in the lake. I can't entirely blame whoever dunked Poppy. She was trying to discourage the men from starting a polar bear club, and I imagine that I would have found it tiresome too had her fussing been directed at me. (If you don't know, a polar bear club is a group that goes for predawn swims in very cold water every day. It's a way of proving one's manliness, I'm told.)

I have not yet learned to make Bruise Ointment, as so far we have only done inventory, but I will send some when I do. In the meantime, try not to fall so much.

Love,

Hermione

15 July

Dear Ron,

Yes, I've heard all about your bruises. They're just toughening you up before they kick your arse for real. Ask Tonks.

Sending me samples would be a wonderful idea. I talked to Poppy about it, and she thinks that not only will it prepare us for the school year, it will not increase our

workload very much as the entire staff will be more than happy to help. I foresee a lot of amusement during the trial period.

I will purchase a camera next time I'm shopping, but I will not use it for mischief. Honestly Ron, grow up. I wouldn't play jokes on my colleagues just for your amusement. If I get dunked in the lake fully clothed as has happened to a few people, however, I might just have to get revenge. I doubt I'll be able to get pictures of that either, as I'll be running for my life!

Amusement factor: Poppy getting dunked in the lake. Remus's pink hair. Everybody denying knowing anything about how Remus's hair turned pink. Bets in the staff room about whether or not his fur will be pink in wolf form. I almost feel sorry for him.

As I told Harry, I'll send Bruise Ointment when I learn how to make it, but I don't know when that will be.

Love,

Hermione

You Mean The Teachers Play Pranks? Wicked!

Chapter 4 of 50

The boys are getting quite a bit of amusement out of the discovery that the teachers play jokes on one another.

16 July

Dear Hermione,

Your third sentence nearly gave me a heart attack. Don't do that to me. That insight into what happens behind the scenes is quite amusing though. I wish we'd caught him that way while we were at school. Talk about blackmail potential!

Send pictures? I know Ron already asked you to, but I'm asking again. I want to see the teachers out of uniform, so to speak. I'm not asking you to play any jokes, unlike him, so maybe you'll oblige me a little more willingly?

I can just imagine Madam Pomfrey getting dunked for fussing too much. If you don't know who did it, was it a spell? Could be useful to know, so inform me if you learn it. Playing in the lake sounds fun, but when do you find the time for getting any work done?

I still eagerly await that ointment! We're working on Shielding Charms now, which apparently are a whole class of charms. Who knew there were so many different ones?

Love,

Harry

17 July

Dear Hermione,

I asked. Tonks just smiled evilly.

The whole staff testing out the products? Wicked. I want to come help, and by help I mean have an excuse to try all these things on my dear old teachers. I wonder if I can get off training for that. Enclosed are the first shipment of samples.

I can't wait to see pictures, even if they're not of you playing jokes on people. I just want to see teachers doing stuff they'd never do in front of students. As to revenge if you get dunked... Well, I see your point. I've talked to Colin Creevey, and he says there's a good camera shop in Hogsmeade. It's called the Magical Memory Emporium, and they'll also develop your photos there if you don't dare ask Snape for the potion to do it yourself.

Pink hair, eh? Any guesses on who did that? More importantly, can you get the recipe/spell for me?

I had dinner with my family last night, and they asked about you. I told them that you're having a fun and educational time with your internship. I trust that was what you wanted them to hear? They are all well. The twins are rather rich now, so they've been helping with household expenses a bit. Mum's so tickled by the fancy cloak they bought her, she doesn't even mind the occasional trick wand or transformation pastry around the house. We'll see how long that lasts. Percy is as pompous as ever. Bill and Charlie are both engaged, but trying to keep it from Mum until the last minute so she won't try to help them plan the weddings. Ginny is thrilled that she'll get to see you around school come fall. They all send their best wishes.

Love,

Ron

A Look At The Photos

Chapter 5 of 50

18 July

Dear Harry,

Sorry. I'll try not to scare you like that again.

I now have a camera, but no pictures to send. I've taken a few, but I haven't had time to get them developed yet. Among them are, I believe, a bright pink wolf*, Crookshanks trying to romance a certain tabby cat (who did not appreciate it but didn't have enough space to transform because she'd been napping under her desk when he cornered her), the polar bear club getting caught sneaking out and being lectured by Poppy, Argus being chased around by one of his own brooms, and Pomona with a vine trailing out of her pocket and Mrs. Norris stalking the vine. I'll send them when I get a chance.

Yes, many dunkings are done with spells. I think the incantation is Aquasubris, but I'm not sure, so please don't try it until I confirm that.

We do spend a great deal of time swimming, but rest assured that we're working when we're not in the water. We started the staff physicals today, which more or less consist of kidnapping people straight out of the lake and giving them full checkups. I really don't see what's so bad about them, but everyone seems awfully reluctant. The only time anything unpleasant happens to them is when they resist it, and I haven't seen what happens to those people yet. Poppy sent me to confiscate all of Severus's Gillyweed stores while he was outside swimming today. Apparently most of the staff have tried to use it to avoid their checkups in the past. She gave me his passwords, but his supply cupboard was booby-trapped. We lost some time in removing my resulting tentacles, but at least we hid the Gillyweed and are certain that Aurora, Remus, Pomona, and ourselves are healthy, though Remus got a talking-to about eating healthy.

Love,

Hermione

19 July

Dear Ron,

I think the staff will have enough fun with the new products without your help. Septima tried to make off with the Lizard Lollies already, so I suspect things will get interesting quickly. There is debate about whether or not they will work on ghosts, and although she says she was going to try it on Cuthbert, I'm sure he wouldn't have been the only one.

Thank you for the tip about the camera shop. I dropped off a batch of photos to be developed today, so I'll have some funny shots to show you when I next get a chance to go in and pick them up.

Remus is convinced that Severus had something to do with the pink hair. Admittedly, he is the most likely candidate for something like that. He's denying it though, so I can't get the recipe from him. I'm waiting to see how Remus will retaliate, though I personally wouldn't dare, especially without really really conclusive proof that he did it.

Tell Bill, Charlie, and the twins all congratulations from me. Also, tell Ginny to please not get herself hurt just to see me more. I'd be happy to socialize with her any time that I don't have my hands full.

Love,

Hermione

*An illustration of a very pink wolf can be found at <http://persevero.deviantart.com/art/Pink-Wolf-211969589>, courtesy of Persevero.

More Details Please

Chapter 6 of 50

The boys pelt Hermione with questions about the staff's antics.

20 July

Dear Hermione,

It sounds like the castle is a madhouse over the summer. I'm laughing just imagining the pictures you mentioned. Have you confirmed that incantation yet? I bet you have a lot of opportunities.

The staff physicals sound like an adventure, and the staff a little childish about it. What does Madam Pomfrey do to them when they try to hide from her? Have you found out yet?

I'm sorry about the tentacles, but that does seem the type of thing Snape would do. Has Madam Pomfrey punished him for hexing her intern? I bet she was pissed at him.

I ran into Neville in Diagon Alley the other day. He was buying an engagement ring and planning on proposing to Luna very soon. I expect she'll say yes, so I'm sure you'll be getting a wedding invitation soon.

Love,

Harry

21 July

Dear Hermione,

Fred and George want to know if their products will work on ghosts too. Please let us know when you find out so we can tell them. Has anyone else tried swiping anything?

Hurry up with the pictures! I want to see Lupin as a bright pink wolf! Do you have any of Filch and Pince together? I hear they've got a little romance going.

I'm with Lupin that it had to be Snape that turned him pink. The idea of Snape playing a joke on anyone is completely absurd, but who else could do it? A spell wouldn't last this long, so it had to be a potion, right? And I doubt anyone but him could brew up a really permanent hair dye on the staff. I bet he dyes his own hair anyway; he's the only one not going grey.

Tell Lupin to be careful with his revenge. I would not want to annoy Snape.

I passed on your messages. Mum says to tell you to pop in for dinner any time; they'd love to see you. You're probably used to gourmet fare from the house-elves though, so I don't blame you if you don't. For that matter, come visit your bruised and tired Auror apprentice friends in London! We miss you.

Love,

Ron

More Photos

Chapter 7 of 50

More fun is had and the contents of more photos are revealed.

22 July

Dear Harry,

Yes, I confirmed the incantation. Albus himself was using it on people this morning. The first roll of film has been developed, and copies of the best few are enclosed. My personal favorite is Aurora, Septima, and Sybil being chased around the lake by the remote control shark that the twins sent while Remus and Severus sit in a tree fighting over the remote control and laughing their arses off. It was taken right before the two men fell out of the tree and had to come get patched up. Which is your favorite?

Poppy claims that she has actually spanked a few teachers for being especially childish about trying to avoid staff physicals. Not for a few years, but she swears that if anyone tries gillyweed one more time, she'll start again. They did not try it this year as I seem to have been able to hide all of it, so I have yet to witness this. I may later, as her defense of the practice was that Minerva has done it too. Whether or not that's true I think I'll behave myself (at least for the most part). And no, she has not done anything to Severus yet. I think she would have if she hadn't been distracted by the need to lecture him about taking his medicine. I don't know what that was about, as I was finishing up with Sybil at the time and I haven't read all the staff records yet.

I've sent my congratulations to Neville and Luna already. The invitation arrived in the morning post today. I'm glad that they're settling down together; they're such a cute couple.

Love,

Hermione

23 July

Dear Ron,

The samples you sent seem to have no effect on the ghosts. Cuthbert didn't even notice; the others seemed merely amused. As Harry may have passed on to you, Remus and Severus managed to make off with the remote control shark and spent the afternoon chasing swimmers around with it until they fell out of the tree where they were hiding, resulting in a fractured tailbone and a fractured arm. Poppy was much less amused than I was, but at least I got some practice healing broken bones. Other prank items have been steadily disappearing as well and reappearing in amusing places, but we haven't caught the culprit(s). (Does that tell you something about how different the staff is over the summer?)

How did you like the pictures? I haven't caught Argus and Irma together, but I think I had a few good ones in there.

I agree with your reasons that Severus was probably the one who turned Remus pink, and by the way, I've gotten the impression that he is the main perpetrator of jokes around here. Shocking, huh? However, he does not dye his hair. He's just the youngest teacher and not malnourished, unlike the next youngest (Remus, of course). Remus is trying to get his hands on some Muggle hair dye. I think you can guess why.

I'll come by and visit you two poor bruised boys when we have down time, which should be just before the students arrive. Poppy thinks we'll be done plenty early for that. Same for dinner with your family.

Love,

Hermione

Dunkings and Friends

Many people get wet, Harry proves that he's matured (kind of), and we hear news of some people we haven't seen yet.

24 July

Dear Hermione,

Thanks for the spell. I dunked Ron in a rain barrel this morning on the way to training. We were a little bit late and a little bit wet, and our excuse that we were practicing sparring on our way in got us used for demonstrations (and therefore knocked down even more) but it was totally worth it.

The photos are brilliant. I did like the shark incident one quite a lot, but I think my favorite was Dumbledore's swim trunks. I am curious to know though, how did Trelawney get lobsters stuck in her hair? I don't remember any products involving lobsters being sent. Then again, if Fred and George can come up with these things, why not our dear old teachers? It sounds from your letters like they are very much capable of getting into mischief.

If Pomfrey or McGonagall lose their tempers with anyone, please get photos? I would pay a fortune for them.

Huh. Something wrong with Snape? Ron made a few nasty cracks when he read that part over my shoulder, but I'm intrigued. Git though he is, I wouldn't want anything to happen to him. He's just part of the Hogwarts experience. Besides, from what all you've written about him, he seems a lot more human now than when we were students. I bet you're not allowed to share information like that about patients though, so I won't get my hopes up too high about finding out.

Love,

Harry

25 July

Dear Hermione,

Thanks so much for teaching Harry that spell. I haven't been dry since.

I can imagine Madam Pomfrey's reaction to their broken bones. I'm with you (and presumably Lupin and Snape) on that though, the entertainment would have been worth it. And as you said, at least you got some valuable practice out of it! The picture was amazing. Almost as good as being there. I showed all the pictures to the twins, and they got a kick out of them too. I liked the human skipping stone one. Did Vector know she was going to bounce off the water?

Fred says he's going to send a dye catalogue to Lupin. Let me know what happens, will you?

We started doing wrestling in training today. I seriously regretted the big dinner and drinks I had last night with Seamus and Dean. Both of them are doing well, by the way. Seamus asks that you give his best regards to Madam Pomfrey and tell her that he hasn't blown himself up a single time since leaving school. That is a pretty impressive feat for him. Remember when he tried to turn water into rum first year?

Love,

Ron

Hermione Joins in the Fun

Hermione has loosened up to participate in the occasional joke on her new colleagues.

26 July

Dear Harry,

Do try to stay out of trouble, will you? That goes for Ron as well.

Oh, Albus's trunks. I don't know where he finds those patterns. I'm sure they must all be gag gifts, but he loves them.

Yes, the teachers are very capable of playing pranks without any help from young joke shop proprietors. A new game seems to have sprung up, involving transfiguring hair ties and clips into various things. I myself have found a garter snake wrapped around my ponytail. Severus and I got into a spat over which one of us got to keep her. I think she's cute, and she seems to like me. You'll have to come visit and find out her preference to settle the debate though.

We've finished all the staff physicals and updated the files, and are now getting to work on our fix-it list, as Poppy calls it. This whole time we've just written down the things to which we need to give special attention but aren't urgent, and now we have time to deal with them. Restocking of medicines is being taken care of: we just hand the list of how much of everything we need over to Severus, and he does the brewing. We've given the orders for bandages and the like to Minerva to have it approved when she goes over the rest of the school budget, and she'll send it in once she's looked over it. Filius does the repairs of the equipment. We're just left with cleaning everything and dealing with whatever we put on the fix-it list. The items on the list at the moment are things we picked up on during the physicals. Not serious stuff, just follow-up exams to focus on things we found and thought needed a bit more attention, like seeing if Remus has managed to gain any more weight since getting lectured on his eating habits. I don't think he has.

Love,

Hermione

27 July

Dear Ron,

I've already told Harry to stay out of mischief, the same goes for you.

No, poor Septima got quite the shock when she bounced. Somebody turned the water to rubber just as she hit it. By someone I mean a few mischievous colleagues of hers. I confess that I was in on that one.

The dye catalogue will not be necessary; Remus has already gotten his revenge. Pink bows were involved. I'll send photos when I get them developed. By the way, the pink dye faded with a few washings. Once Remus discovered that it was in his shampoo bottle and thereby being constantly renewed, of course! I have to admit, it was a good prank.

I passed on Seamus's regards, and Poppy and I shared a laugh over some old exploits. She was properly impressed by his not blown up status, and I do remember the rum. That was one of the more absurd "spells" I've seen attempted.

Love,

Hermione

Relative Tamelessness

Chapter 10 of 50

Things appear to have calmed down. But have they?

28 July

Dear Hermione,

Of course I'll settle the debate. Bring the snake by when you come to visit us. It sounds like you're wrapping things up, so I imagine that will be soon? I'm looking forward to seeing you, and you can show us the rest of the photos and tell us the stories behind them.

With all that behind you, are you finding lots of time for reading and relaxing? I don't expect you'll get any rest once the students arrive.

I'll pester Lupin about eating enough when I next talk to him. He is my friend, after all. Perhaps I'll sic Molly Weasley on him as well. She'll set him straight in no time!

Love,

Harry

29 July

Dear Hermione,

That thing with the rubber water is bloody brilliant. I can't wait to try it on somebody. What's the incantation?

I told Fred not to send the catalogue after all. Just as well, since he couldn't find it. Do send the photos of Snape in pink bows though. I could use a good laugh. Training has been brutal.

We have to combine physical and magical combat now, and I've never been so tired or sore in my life. Do you have anything for that?

Love,

Ron

Where Are You?

Chapter 11 of 50

Hermione stops writing for a while. The boys worry.

12 August

Dear Hermione,

Is everything alright? You haven't written in a couple weeks. We're a bit worried about you. Let us know you're okay.

Love,

Harry and Ron

19 August

Dear Harry and Ron,

Sorry for not returning your letters. We've been extremely busy the past few weeks. Some sort of pesky midsummer flu passed through, so we've had a steady stream of sick teachers to tend. Poppy and I both caught it just like everyone else, but not at the same time and not very badly. Almost everyone is over it now, but I won't be able to visit just yet as we're going to keep the castle under quarantine another week. We're probably still contagious and we'd rather not introduce more germs just yet as there are a few still-weakened immune systems.

Overall we've been lucky. The only people who really got hit hard were Severus and Remus, and Poppy tells me that's normal. (Remus really does need to put on some weight.) Apparently any kind of respiratory bug that goes through hits Severus harder than anyone else because it turns out he's rather severely asthmatic in the first place. I never knew that, poor guy. It really humanizes him, and once you see someone as human, it's hard to dislike them.

I suppose this is why I'm in medicine because I have such a soft heart for my patients.

Love,

Hermione

Cue The Fireworks

Chapter 12 of 50

Now that all's well... things may soon get unwell.

21 August

Dear Hermione,

Something similar has been going around the Ministry, but we've only caught it mildly. Can't imagine being a Mediwizard during it, that must be awful. I suppose there's a reason that we're going into law enforcement not medicine though.

It's a shock to hear about Snape being so ill. We've always thought of him as an invincible great evil bat, but as you said, it takes seeing him weak to realize that he's only human. Hopefully everyone will have recovered soon, even him. It's not entirely a surprise to hear that he's asthmatic though. Now I think about it I remember him getting wheezy under stress. And I only thought he was trying to curb his temper with deep breaths.

With any luck, the bug will pass and normal life can resume so you can come visit us.

Love,

Harry and Ron

23 August

Dear Harry and Ron,

Thank you for your sympathy. Everyone is recovering well enough, and with their recoveries comes more sleep for Poppy and me. Everyone is getting back to work, as much as can be expected. We've started the brewing ourselves, as Poppy is refusing to let Severus "overexert himself." Bullshit if you ask me. He's plenty healthy for brewing at this point, and now in a rotten mood as well because she won't let him do anything. If you think you've seen him in a rotten mood before, you're wrong. He's merely a little snarky with students, but when they're not around... well, then we see what his rotten mood really looks like.

Enclosed is the recipe for Bruise Ointment. I figure you ought to learn how to make it yourselves, seeing as you're going into a very physical career.

Love,

Hermione

Thanks... Or Not

Chapter 13 of 50

The boys thank Hermione for her help. Well, kind of.

25 August

Dear Hermione,

Thank you for the recipe. It's wonderful stuff. Ron complained about having to make it ourselves, so I brewed it last night after he went to sleep and kept it all for myself. If he wants to use it he needs to quit complaining about the work and help with the next batch.

I'm rather pleased not to have to see Snape in a real rotten mood. What we saw as students is more than enough for me! Not that I blame him at all for his frustration at not being allowed to work, of course. I hope for your sake that he can get back to his brewing soon before he hexes everyone in the vicinity to let off some steam.

Training continues to be fun but hard. I guess that means I'm in the right job.

Love,

Harry

25 August

Dear Hermione,

Why couldn't you have sent us the Bruise Ointment instead of the bloody recipe? We're Aurors, 'Mione, we're too busy saving the world to have time to brew it ourselves. Due to my bruised backside I'm having trouble feeling sorry for you having to deal with Snape in a snit. Serves you right for being unhelpful.

Love,

Ron

The Beginning of Something

Chapter 14 of 50

Things have calmed down, and Hermione is finally visiting the boys. But what's this? Might she have a new friend?

27 August

Dear Harry,

Severus read the letters from you and Ron over my shoulder at breakfast. He wants me to pass on the message that you seem to finally be learning something and that you are correct in assuming that he will start hexing everything in sight if Poppy doesn't quit her infernal hovering. I told him that I completely agreed, and we ended up going for a long walk after breakfast together. He's actually quite good company when he wants to be. He shows his true wit in more sophisticated company rather than the much less subtle wit he shows with his students. I'm afraid I was the only one laughing when he gave a smartarse response entirely in Shakespeare quotes yesterday. I think that the fact that I got the joke raised his respect for me several notches.

Things here are quiet again, thankfully. We're actually done with everything now, so long as nothing more comes up. If you'll still have me, I'll drop by this weekend.

Love,

Hermione

27 August

Dear Ron,

Did Harry tell you that Severus read your latest letters over my shoulder when I opened them? He did. He would like me to tell you that you're a lazy pretentious git and need to get off your arse and... well, I'm not repeating the last bit. I think you get the drift. He is right. If you want Bruise Ointment, brew it yourself.

I'll see you two trolls this weekend. You both had better be clean when I get there.

Love,

Hermione

Finally A Visit

Chapter 15 of 50

Hermione finds time to see the boys before school starts.

30 August

Dear Harry and Ron,

It was wonderful seeing you this weekend. I'm sorry that I had to leave so soon, but I really had to get back since the students will be arriving tomorrow.

I was pleased to see that you two managed to make your flat look semi-presentable for my visit, though I hold no illusions that it actually looks that way under normal circumstances. By the way, I charmed the dust bunnies. If you don't remove them within a week they'll begin biting you. I trust that will be sufficient encouragement to clean once in a while? Quit making faces. Fair's fair, boys.

I'm excited for the school year to start. This summer was just an easing in period, but the real job starts tomorrow. It's a little daunting, yes, but I've got such good friends among the staff after this summer's hijinks that I know I'll always have a support system here.

Love,

Hermione

The Year Begins

Chapter 16 of 50

Term has begun, and new responsibilities are gained by all.

2 September

Dear Hermione,

I assume you survived your first Sorting Feast as a staff member, congratulations. Did they announce your appointment like they do the new teachers? It must have been terrifying having the whole school looking at you. Oh, wait. We're all way too used to that. Ah, the days of our crazy youth. Personally, I'm glad those days are behind us all.

What are the first years like this year? Are they still getting smaller by the year? Has anyone managed a dramatic entrance this year to compare with ours? Has your workload picked up any yet? Tell me all about it. I'm really excited for you.

Training here has finally taken a turn for the better, or at least for the more interesting. We're going out on patrols with the full Aurors sometimes now. I haven't had any action yet, unless you count a few instances of messing with Muggles. (Nothing bad, just silly little pranks in a couple of movie theaters, seats closing on people for no reason, that sort of thing.) We couldn't catch the culprits, but we did lay a trap for them. Ron got more action though, which I'll let him tell you about. You know how much of it to write off as his imagination of course.

Love,

Harry

3 September

Dear Hermione,

We've started shadowing the full Aurors on patrols now and it's wicked exciting. I've already gotten to take part in a skirmish. Kingsley and I caught this bunch of ex-Death Eaters roughing someone up in an alley and jumped them. It was a bloody brilliant fight, and I took out one of them. Then I chatted up a Healer at St. Mungo's when we were getting patched up. I think she's sweet on me.

Is my sister behaving herself? I wouldn't ask you, but Mum wants to know. Seems to think that Ginny can't take care of herself.

Are the ickle firsties as tiny as ever?

Love,

Ron

More Revelations

Chapter 17 of 50

The school year begins, and Hermione finds out new information.

5 September

Dear Harry,

I'm glad those days are behind us too! It was a bit unnerving to have all the students look at me (Yes, they did announce my appointment.) but somebody was kind enough

to distract me with a Pinching Hex under the table. Seeing as I was sitting between the two youngest teachers...Well, I'm not sure which of them was responsible. I have reason to suspect that both of them like teasing their seatmates. Men, honestly.

Nobody has compared to your dramatic entrances yet, and we all hope that nobody will. The first years are indeed tiny, but not so much different from the other students. They all look so young now. I must be getting old.

The only students who've come in so far are one firstie with a food allergy, who we patched up quickly and then taught a spell to determine the ingredients in her food before eating it, and the abuse cases. I never knew there were so many kids abused by their parents at Hogwarts. The older ones slipped in discretely and waited for us in a back section, and just as we finished up with them Severus brought a handful of firsties to us. Poor things were terrified. Poppy says that he can pick out the abused kids at a glance when he inspects his house for the first time of the year. How the hell does he do it? The other heads of house don't, certainly.

Sounds like patrols are a nice change for you, and not too challenging yet. That's how it should be. One easy step at a time. I have no doubt that Ron will exaggerate his story, so don't worry. I know how much to believe!

Love,

Hermione

6 September

Dear Ron,

That sounds exciting. I'm glad you're having fun at work now.

Yes, Ginny is being a perfect angel. Not that how she spends her time is any of my business, so you can tell your mum that I will not spy for her. Ginny is of age now and can take care of herself.

The firsties are indeed small, but all the students seem it from my lofty vantage point at the High Table. Very few of them have been to the hospital wing so far, so I guess our frequent trips there were abnormal. I certainly hope they were at least. Otherwise I'm in for a lot of work.

Love,

Hermione

Information Is Let Slip

Chapter 18 of 50

The boys mention some things that they probably weren't supposed to say.

7 September

Dear Hermione,

They tried that in the middle of Dumbledore's welcoming speech? In front of the whole school? Live and learn, I guess. Same with the size of the students. I thought they'd keep looking tinier by the year, but I guess not.

The abused kids, huh? I knew that there was abuse even in Wizarding families, but I never really thought about the poor kids all trooping up to be patched up after break. I suppose the older ones would just get used to it, and the younger ones must be terrified the first time, especially if it's Snape who brings them up. I don't suppose he takes no for an answer. Most of them would be in Slytherin of course. Abuse does often bring about distinctly Slytherin traits. And Snape was abused as a kid himself, so he'd be really good at spotting the signs. I bet you didn't know that. I saw it when I broke into his memories in Occlumency lessons once.

Patrols are great. I still haven't had much action, but just enough to keep it interesting. By the way, what really happened on Ron's patrol was that they stumbled across a couple of hobos fighting over a bread crust and he tripped over his own feet, dropped his wand, and broke his arm falling down. Obviously, Kingsley wasn't impressed.

Love,

Harry

8 September

Dear Hermione,

I do not dare pass on that message to Mum. Tell her yourself. Honestly, I agree that what she does isn't our business. Mum just is afraid of being an empty nester. That said, I'll wring the neck of the boy to despoil my sister.

Really? It's abnormal to almost always have one of our trio in the hospital wing? I never would have guessed. Kids these days are so boring.

I ran into Malfoy in a bar while on patrol last night. He wasn't being rowdy, just doing his best to drink himself to death, so we didn't have to bring him in. He looks awful. I didn't talk to him, and I don't think he noticed me. It's good to see him suffering a bit, after all he put us through at school.

Love,

Ron

She's Not Surprised

Chapter 19 of 50

The information that the boys let slip is no surprise.

10 September

Dear Harry,

You bet they tried it! They love teasing me. They've been taking every opportunity to pester me, both of them. Then when I get mad, they just smile sweetly. Men, honestly.

You are right about that. Most of the abused kids are in Slytherin. I asked Severus about them, since he pays the most attention to them, and he told me that that's why Slytherins have such a reputation as bullies. That's just how most of them were raised, Death Eater parents and such. I'm not surprised that he was once one of them. He has certain... quirks, shall we say?... that suggest that.

I'm glad to hear that patrols are still interesting, and yes, that was about what I imagined had really happened to Ron. Kingsley must have been really mad at him.

We've had nothing but the usual falling down the stairs and first flying lesson kind of injuries so far. Nice and tame.

Love,

Hermione

11 September

Dear Ron,

You're a hypocrite. And no, kids aren't boring, they're just more sane than we ever were, thankfully.

Don't you feel a little bit sorry for the poor man? He must be going through hell if he's completely plastered and looking terrible in a common bar. Git though he was, he's clearly got something really wrong. The decent thing would be to extend a hand of kindness to him, but I don't suppose you'll do that. Not your style, is it?

Love,

Hermione

News About Malfoy

Chapter 20 of 50

The story comes out.

12 September

Dear Hermione,

I think you've definitely got an admirer (or two). Good for you, you deserve it. I of course did not mention this observation to Ron, and suggest that you don't either. I'm not daft enough to think that he would take it well to hear that anyone is pursuing you, especially if it's Snape. Me, I'm fine with it. I want you to be happy. And he deserves happiness too, so if anything develops between you two (don't scowl at me, it's obvious you like him), you have my blessing. As if you need it.

You clearly know Ron's penchant for exaggeration all too well. And, yes, Kingsley is still a little miffed at his ineptitude and the fact that Ron ignored orders to stay back and let him handle it.

My work has turned interesting. I suppose Ron told you that he saw Malfoy in a bar? Last night Tonks and I got called to a domestic violence case. Turns out that Draco and Pansy are having marital troubles. Which explains why he's been in the bottle. Lady Malfoy senior Floo'd for help after Pansy pushed Draco down several flights of stairs and continued to kick and scream at him even though he was unconscious by then. Escorting a crazed woman from the manor to her holding cell at the Ministry was really quite unpleasant, and I'll have to be at all sorts of hearings and such because of it. I'm not looking forward to all that, but I would like to hear Draco's side of it once he wakes up. I'm sure it's a quite interesting story. It has to be, really.

Love,

Harry

13 September

Dear Hermione,

Of course I'm a hypocrite. I'm her brother.

Okay, maybe I feel a little bad now. I've heard way more than I wanted to know about him and his personal life lately, thanks to Harry having been called in because he got beaten up by a girl. That is a little sad, and a bit scary, that a grown man was nearly killed by his crazed wife. Even if it was Malfoy.

My work has been nowhere near as interesting as Harry's. I seem to be going on fewer patrols. I'm really not sure why.

Love,

Ron

It's Official

Chapter 21 of 50

Romance and injuries are discussed.

15 September

Dear Harry,

You mean all those walks and meetings for drinks count as dates? In that case, yes, I am dating Severus. And I have no intention of telling Ron. I don't fancy another one of his tantrums.

My God, is Malfoy going to be alright? I never liked him, but I wouldn't wish that on anyone. Pansy off the deep end is a scary concept. Keep me posted, if you're allowed to of course.

Love,

Hermione

16 September

Dear Ron,

Yes, Harry told me all about it. It is indeed sad and scary, but that is reality. Domestic violence is a very real threat, and many people think that it's only men beating women and forget that it can be the other way around.

Work here is fairly tame. Some idiot thought to steal twigs from the Whomping Willow and make things out of them as a prank. Hence, we've had a steady stream of students who've been mauled by a fake wand or an ivy crown or something of the sort.

Love,

Hermione

An Explanation

Chapter 22 of 50

Draco has suffered a lot.

17 September

Dear Hermione,

Oh, you're funny. I'm not going to tell on you, for exactly the reason you cited.

Draco has finally come around, so he'll probably recover. It'll just take a long time and a lot of therapy. I got to sit in on the questioning about what happened. He actually cried. It was quite unnerving.

Apparently they just didn't get along well in the first place, but Draco wanted to end it quietly because he didn't dislike her enough to tell anyone that she'd used the Imperius Curse on him. Pansy wanted to stay together and completely lost it when he came out of the closet and admitted to being gay. I'm not really surprised. Anyway, she turned abusive, and he was raised to never hit a girl and was already suffering from depression, so he didn't defend himself. It was just a downward spiral of alcoholism and abuse from there. She was convinced that he would straighten out if she hit him enough, and she refused to sign the divorce papers. Now that she's put him in St. Mungo's, the papers have been filed, signature or not, as well as a restraining order. She'll do time in Azkaban anyway. I'm hoping that Draco's lawyer will be able to convince the Wizengamot that pushing him down the stairs was attempted murder.

So that's been my life lately. Red tape and hearings related to this case.

Love,

Harry

18 September

Dear Hermione,

I'm glad that Fred and George never tried that one. I can just see the destruction they would have strewn in their wakes. For that matter, why would anyone think any part of the Whomping-bloody-Willow was safe to touch under any circumstances? That thing just about killed us so many times!

Patrol last night was surprisingly productive. We actually caught one of the loonies that escaped from Azkaban last month. Luckily the bloke had been there so long he was totally insane. Thought we were his Great Auntie Harriet taking him to bed, so he came without a fuss. I'm starting to see why Harry's so put out about the post-arrest paperwork though. There's a ton of it!

Love,

Ron

Pick Up Lines

Chapter 23 of 50

The relationship moves along

20 September

Dear Harry,

Since you're so approving, I'll let you in on a secret. Severus actually flirted with me. Legitimately tried some corny pickup line. I'm used to him being a tease, but this was still a surprise. He read it out of a book and burst out laughing halfway through. It was so utterly comical that I had to laugh at him. He got all hurt and I had to cuddle up to him and tell him that he could indeed stir my cauldron all day if he truly wished it. Which confused him further. I think he's learned his lesson about not reading the lines before saying them aloud.

I certainly hope that that Parkinson bitch does time. Abuse is just wrong, no matter who does it. And beating up on him because he was honest about why it wasn't working out? That's just awful. He deserves better than that. Keep me posted on his condition.

Someone threw a firecracker in a potion today. First years with firecrackers in Potions class are just a recipe for trouble. The whole class's potions were ruined, and several students came up to see us. Little monsters.

Love,

Hermione

21 September

Dear Ron,

Thankfully, your brothers had more brains than that. Regrowing eyes is tricky business, and rather unpleasant to boot.

Good thing you caught the escapee, and good thing he was too loony to cause you any trouble. Nice tame work is always nice, as I'm sure you're discovering. I certainly am! As to the paperwork, I'm sure it's a lot, but it's a lot less than Harry must be doing, since he's got a much bigger case than you do. I'm sure your hand isn't going to fall off, as much as it may feel like it.

Love,

Hermione

More Updates on Draco

Chapter 24 of 50

Pansy goes to trial

22 September

Dear Hermione,

Dear Merlin, Snape trying out pickup lines out of a book without reading them first. I can just imagine his confusion, he probably isn't exactly familiar with them, is he? Poor man must feel quite the fool.

As you may have read in the papers, the trial was today. Parkinson got life! Apparently as well as using the Imperius Curse to get him to marry her in the first place, she also used the Cruciatus on multiple occasions after he came out of the closet. Who knew she had it in her?

Draco is (obviously) well enough that he could testify in court today, although he has not actually been released from St. Mungo's yet. He still looks awful, and he's quite weak. His back and skull were both fractured when he was pushed *cough*thrown*cough* down the stairs, and there was already some internal damage from drinking until he passed out every night.

I seem to recall that you told me to throw a firecracker in a potion once. Oh, wait, but that was second year. Makes a world of difference, doesn't it? Did the culprit get caught?

Love,

Harry

23 September

Dear Hermione,

Regrowing eyes? Bloody hell, that's even possible? I suppose you would know how nice it is when work is tame, if that's part of your job.

We didn't find anything on my latest patrol, though we're now expected to do everything nonverbally in training. Bugger. I'm rubbish at nonverbal spells. Harry seems to think it's easy. Do you have any more prank spells from the summer to give me so he'll quit gloating?

By the way, do the teachers still get into mischief at all during the school year?

Love,

Ron

Scary Women and Scarier Tattoos

Chapter 25 of 50

Pansy, Myrtle, and tattoos are dangerous.

25 September

Dear Harry,

Severus threw his book of pickup lines in a toilet. Sound like a recipe for the reemergence of our friend Myrtle? It was. She drenched him in toilet water and chased him through the castle. I will send pictures when I get them developed.

I wouldn't have imagined Parkinson having the nerve to use the Unforgivables, but I'm glad she got what she deserved. It sounds like she did enough damage to warrant life in Azkaban in the first place, but I doubt that she would have gotten it without having used the Unforgivables. I mean, with what else could they have charged her? Domestic abuse unfortunately has a limited sentence.

We probably shouldn't have pulled that whole stunt in the first place. I mean, we didn't learn much and I got turned into a cat for our troubles! (No, we don't know who did it.)

Love,

Hermione

26 September

Dear Ron,

You bet I know it! Students get into such trouble, it's a wonder that they survive to graduate.

I suggest that you forget about the prank spells and get to work practicing your nonverbal casting. In my experience that's a much better way to achieve things.

Funny you should ask about teachers getting into mischief. Somebody turned my tea into lemon juice this morning. Yes, they certainly do. Not in front of the students of course, but they do. There is a "contagious hex" going around currently. If you've never heard of them, contagious hexes are hexes that spread to anyone who tries to cure them. Half the staff now has "tramp stamp" tattoos of various things. So far Filius has some sort of Muggle food, Albus has a dog licking its nuts, Minerva has "Argus Filch is a sexy bitch," and Poppy has the Playwitch logo. I have been smart and not tried to do anything to these interesting little tattoos of theirs, except refer them to Muggle tattoo removal treatments. Hopefully that will work because none of us can figure out how to undo this.

Love,

Hermione

A New Friendship

Chapter 26 of 50

Things are looking up for everyone.

27 September

Dear Hermione,

Oh, Myrtle. Our dear departed bathroom-haunting touchy transparent friend. However has she been managing without us to brew illicit potions in her bathroom? Please do send those pictures.

You are correct. Without having used the Unforgivables, the sentence would have been quite short and scum like that shouldn't be allowed to walk free.

Thinking of the case, Draco is doing better. I did the honorable thing and extended him the hand of friendship, which he seems to appreciate quite a lot. He is at home again and I have been by a number of times for tea and strolls on the property. The Healers insist that he walk outdoors for a certain length of time each day as a part of his therapy, accompanied by someone of course. He prefers my company on these walks to that of his mother or a Healer, and has actually admitted as much to me. Shocking, huh? The Healers won't let him pause a moment to rest once in a while and are terrible company, and his mother won't stop fussing over him. I can see how that might be rather annoying on both parts. Not to mention, company his own age must be a relief after being cooped up with his mother and Healers all the time.

How is work going for you? Anything happening on the romantic front?

Love,

Harry

28 September

Dear Hermione,

I personally can't believe that we survived to graduate. Talk about a crazy childhood and getting into trouble!

I have been practicing my nonverbal spells, I swear. They just don't come easy to me. I just want a good laugh, something to lighten the mood a bit after training. Please teach me some of those pranks?

I'm curious enough about these contagious hexes that I actually asked our trainer about them. He says they're bloody impossible to undo, but they'll fade in time. How long it takes them to fade depends on the strength of the caster though, so if it was one of the teachers those tattoos could be there forever. Somebody there sure has got a sense of humor, alright. At least it wasn't horns or anything like that.

Love,

Ron

Suggestions

Chapter 27 of 50

Hermione makes some suggestions that could lead to good things or bad things.

30 September

Dear Harry,

The pictures are enclosed.

I'm glad that you've made friends with Draco; he certainly seems to need it. Give him my best wishes, will you? I think this chance to spend some time with someone other than Ron and the Aurors will be good for you as well. You may even learn some new things. I've heard that the Malfoys have quite impressive gardens and stables. Have you seen their horses? I've heard Draco mention them a few times, and I would imagine that he is just as comfortable on horseback as on a broom, perhaps more so.

... When did we start using his given name?

Anyway, I think you'll enjoy the experience.

On the romantic front, yes, there has been action. I seem to spend a lot of nights in Severus's quarters. No, I'm kidding. You can start breathing again. All that's happened is a bit of snogging.

Love,

Hermione

2 October

Dear Ron,

The fact that we have survived this long is nothing short of miraculous, I agree. Knock on wood!

If you are still struggling with the nonverbal spells, I advise reading *Magic of the Mind* by Bartleby Fallon. It may help suspect that you are having difficulty because your trainer hasn't explained it in a way that makes sense to you. Unfortunately, that often happens when the teacher's job is primarily something other than a teacher.

The tattoos are gone already. They seem to have some sort of time span spelled into them, so I'm glad I didn't try to do anything with them. Definitely a teacher's work though. The time-sensitive elements of the spellwork are far beyond the abilities of a student. I'd put my money on Rolanda or Septima, personally, although the other teachers find it quite amusing as well. Last night Severus asked me to put some Blemish-B-Gone on a green spot on his back. I jumped out of my skin when I discovered that the spot was part of a large tattoo. He laughed at me for about fifteen minutes and then removed the spell. It was a glamour. Cast just to scare me. Needless to say, I wasn't laughing.

Love,

Hermione

Advice Taken

Chapter 28 of 50

The boys take Hermione's advice to mixed results.

4 October

Dear Hermione,

The pictures are brilliant. Myrtle looks like she's in fine form. Please don't tell her I said that though, or she'll start writing sappy love poems to me again. For that matter, if I die and become a ghost, please don't tell her. I'd sort of rather not have that spectral romance she likes to go on about us having when I die.

On your suggestion, I asked Draco about the stables and found myself promptly dragged there. He's quite enthusiastic about the horses, and I have to admit that they're beautiful creatures. He has now gotten it into his head that he will teach me how to ride. I'm hoping for a growth spurt so that he will decide that I'm too tall to learn on his childhood pony.

This pony has got to be some sort of dark creature in disguise. His parents bought a little pinto pony for him for his eighth birthday, after his first one broke a leg stepping in a gnome-hole and had to be put down. This pony's hobby is abusing people in any way he can. It's only Draco's love of the little devil that kept his father from hexing the saucy little thing into oblivion. Anyway, I'd rather not ride Dandelion the Evil. I'd rather ride one of their bigger but tamer horses. Draco's own mount, Frostbite, is quite the gentleman, but I doubt I'll get to learn on him.

Good progress on the romantic front! I'm happy for you two.

Love,

Harry

6 October

Dear Hermione,

My trainer suggested the same book. I tried to read it but it's awfully heavy reading. Isn't there anything easier?

I made the mistake of leaving your last letter lying around and Fred saw it. Expect a lot of new WWW products based on those contagious hexes. Sorry about that in advance.

Ewww, touching Snape. I can't imagine going into medicine at all, but having to touch the greasy bat of the dungeons? I think I'd quit.

Rounds are boring. Nothing seems to happen. Why am I stuck with the boring rounds? Harry keeps having wicked adventures.

Love,

Ron

Oh, Just Say It Already

Chapter 29 of 50

Hermione tries to get the boys to realize things

8 October

Dear Harry,

Don't worry, I rarely talk to Myrtle anyway and when I do it isn't about you. It's generally about whether or not so-and-so who we think is depressed has been hiding in her bathroom to cry on a regular basis.

Dandelion, the little devil. Severus has taken to reading your letters over my shoulder, and he tells me that your assessment of the pony is quite accurate. He would like me to warn you against having anything in your back pockets while in the stables and reassure you that Draco is just messing with you and would never put a beginner on Dandy. If he's still around you'll get to learn on Raven, who by this point is quite possibly too arthritic to buck you off, not to mention too sweet-tempered in the first place. And yes, Frosty is a sweetheart, but he's also far too much horse for you, as are Dandy, Dalton and Leah.

Be frank with me, Harry. There's chemistry between you and Draco. Between your letters to me and his to Severus, it's quite obvious. Stop denying it because he definitely returns your feelings.

Work is uneventful. I'm quite settled in and have time to read. If you have time, Justifiable Risk is a wonderful book and you might find it pertinent to your training.

Love,

Hermione

10 October

Dear Ron,

If you put some genuine thought into it, you could answer your own questions.

Love,

Hermione

What A Surprise

Chapter 30 of 50

The boys' news is less of a surprise than it should be.

12 October

Dear Hermione,

Okay, you caught us. There is definite mutual attraction between us. I didn't realize we were quite that obvious. We haven't done more than talk and sit close though. Don't you worry, Miss Healer, I'm not letting him overexert himself.

Professor Snape was right, I'm learning on Raven. He's a very sweet old horse, if a little higher off the ground than he looks. Now that I've discovered how difficult riding a horse is, I have no urge to try any of the harder to handle ones, let alone do the kind of riding that Draco does. Somehow I doubt that when the Healers told Draco he could resume normal activity they realized that he would go foxhunting the very next day. He did. His foxhunter, Lover's Laine, is a pretty mare but quite frankly she scares the shit out of me, as do the jumps and the high speeds. I got the pleasure of watching the hunt from a tower window with Narcissa. She gave me a thorough lecture on foxhunting and the people and horses taking part in the hunt that day. She can recite pedigrees of riders and horses alike. I think she needs to get out of the house more.

Rounds are interesting. We usually have a little bit of action, some fight to break up or something. Not too much though, and I'm used to the paperwork now. All in all, it's a very comfortable amount of work. I may actually have time to read that book.

Love,

Harry

14 October

Hermione—

I'm not speaking to you anymore.

—Ron

Author's Note I'm nearly at the end of what I have already written now. The story is far from over, but I may post other things instead of new chapters once in a while to keep you all happy while I write more of this. I have a few side stories that fit with the events of this story (Draco's childhood adventures with Dandelion, etc.) so you'll probably see those soon.

Stubborn All Around

Chapter 31 of 50

Nobody plans on backing down.

16 October

Dear Harry,

It sounds like he's a handful. And no, I'm certain that his Healers did not anticipate that one. I won't tell on him though. I suspect that despite it all he does know not to overdo it. Furthermore, I doubt you could stop him. I'm informed that he is extremely stubborn.

You should be warned that Raven will simply ignore you if he disagrees with you about what is going to happen next. He's a crabby old man that way. It is inadvisable to lose your temper when he does so, as he is even more stubborn than Draco. Just passing on the warning.

Things are fairly quiet here. The Whomping Willow wands are gone now, so we see just the usual stupidity. Well, that and Remus losing his marbles. He's convinced that his hair is green, which it's not. Somebody seems to have been practicing targeted illusion spells. Please don't pass that on to the twins. They'd have a field day with that idea.

Love,

Hermione

Official

Chapter 32 of 50

Harry has found love, maybe. Remus has found an upside to his transformations, maybe.

20 October

Dear Hermione,

Well, Draco and I finally had "the talk." We're definitely a couple. That is bizarre, isn't it? Draco and I dating, who would have thought! It's a bit awkward hiding it from Ron of course, but I don't dare tell him any more than you dare tell him about you and Snape. Severus. I suppose I ought to be calling him by his given name if he's my best friend's boyfriend, shouldn't I? How are things going with the two of you? Any more silly pickup lines? (And does the rest of the staff know? I feel like McGonagall would disapprove of the age difference.)

I'm enjoying training. Incarceration spells are actually pretty interesting. The trick is visualization; we've got to picture what we want to happen. We had to bring in that prick Mundungus Fletcher the other day for selling jewelry that attacks the wearer, so I got to practice one on him. I doubt he intended harm, but he was still breaking the law and I can't say as I felt too bad for him.

At this point, my riding lessons make me more sore than training does. Raven is less than accommodating of my inexperience, and Draco is a demanding teacher. I think he might be enjoying the chance to torture me a little.

As to Remus's hair, are werewolves colorblind? If they are, he may actually enjoy his transformation for once! But seriously, did Severus do this to him? It seems like he plays an awful lot of jokes on people, and he WAS responsible for the last time Remus turned colors.

Love,

Harry

Relative Peace

Chapter 33 of 50

Remus may be in luck this full moon...

24 October

Dear Harry,

Just because we didn't expect to end up where we are doesn't mean we don't belong there. We all seem to be happy with it, you and Draco and Severus and I, so why question it? As for Ron, maybe he'll come around and maybe he won't. That's not under our control.

I'm sure Minerva must have noticed something by now. We're not as careful as we maybe should be, but nobody has said anything about it. Go figure.

I feel bad for laughing at the image of Mundungus in a cage (please tell me you visualized a gilded bird cage) but as usual he did deserve what happened to him. He never

was good for much.

Remus is in luck: werewolves are probably partially colorblind. Obviously nobody can administer a color vision test to a transformed werewolf, but studies suggest that ordinary wolves don't see green or blue. As to the culprit, Severus denies knowing anything about the joke.

Love,

Hermione

Author's Note Yeah, I'm back. Maybe. Still busy with school, but my boyfriend's parents are in town, and he doesn't want them knowing that he's dating a guy, so I have a bit of unanticipated free time right now.

Predictable

Chapter 34 of 50

People are acting as can be expected of them.

28 October

Dear Hermione,

I don't see Ron coming around any time soon. He walked in on me Floo-calling Draco this morning and went ballistic. And he hadn't even heard anything suggestive! Gave Draco a bit of a scare, certainly. He says I'm welcome to move in with him any time I need to get away from Ron. I am rather disappointed in him. You'd think he'd be a little more open, considering the number of prostitutes he's brought home.

...Why a gilded birdcage? Okay, I guess you know me. It was. I couldn't quite resist the temptation.

Patrols have been very quiet. I'm a little worried that all the delinquents are resting up for Halloween.

Love,

Harry

Peeves

Chapter 35 of 50

Peeves is a pain.

1 November

Dear Harry,

I hope you had a quieter Halloween than I did. The Bloody Baron has gone missing, and that means that Peeves is utterly out of control. He's been chucking (lit) jack-o-lanterns EVERYWHERE. Thankfully stones aren't flammable, but tapestries and people and animals all are. We spent the entire day chasing him around, putting out fires and repairing damage. Thank Merlin for the jack-o-lanterns disappearing at midnight.

It really is a shame about Ron's reaction. Perhaps you should consider Draco's offer if he reacted so badly to just seeing you talking. While I'd like to believe that Ron wouldn't hurt you, homophobia does lead people to do horrible things sometimes, and so far it doesn't seem as though he's likely to be very accepting of you.

Love,

Hermione

Author's Note Well, I'm back for a bit. I had a hellish semester, but it's over and I have free time again for about a month. I'm looking forward to wrapping this story up (although I haven't the faintest idea how it's going to end) so I can focus on some others that I have in the works. Perhaps by the time I go back to school, I'll have enough written in advance to keep posting regularly for a while before having to find the time to write more.

Unpleasant Realization

Chapter 36 of 50

Harry admits that things have changed

5 November

Dear Hermione,

We were kept up all night with Muggle-baiting incidents, but I'm told that that's typical of Halloween. Any news on the Baron's whereabouts? He gives me the willies, but uncontrolled Peeves is way worse. Besides, it's not like I'm there to be given the willies anymore.

I commented on an article in the *Prophet* this morning about rumors that the senior undersecretary of something or other is gay just to see how Ron would react. Poorly, it turns out. I'd rather not believe that my best mate would hurt me either, but I can't help but wonder how he'd react if he knew about me. I think I'll casually mention tomorrow that I'm considering moving out when the lease is up, let him think whatever he wants. I'd rather be moved out on good terms before he realizes, you know?

How are things going for you and Severus? Spare me the details, but I am curious.

Love,

Harry

Antics

Chapter 37 of 50

Drunk ghosts, jealous gossip writers, embarrassing questions, and spiked refreshments.

9 November

Dear Harry,

Apparently the Baron had a little too much fun at Nick's deathday party. No, I am not kidding. I did not realize that ghosts could become intoxicated, but it seems that all that is necessary is a little creativity. (And a lot of mess; Filch isn't too happy.)

I remember that article. Silly little thing in Skeeter's gossip column with zero supporting evidence, right? Severus happens to know the man in question and reports that he had recently turned down Skeeter's advances. Nice to know she's still herself, isn't it?

All is well on my end. Poppy rather embarrassed us both by pulling us both aside after lunch today to quiz us on our knowledge of birth control. Turns out she'd cast Muffliato beforehand, but we didn't realize it until she dropped the spell. I just hope that nobody here can lipread. Otherwise it's been peaceful. No fights (unless you count arguing over papers from the latest *Potions Today*, which I don't) and no surprising new developments.

If you see the twins, let them know that the latest batch of daydream potions are a little on the strong side. Somebody spiked the refreshments at the last staff meeting.

Love,

Hermione

Author's Note: I'm running out of ideas. Please feel free to send me suggestions of what you'd like to see happen.

Moving On

Chapter 38 of 50

Harry moves on with his life.

13 November

Dear Hermione,

Is it bad that I'm really curious as to how to get a ghost drunk?

Oh yes, Skeeter does seem to be herself. Draco and I are a little paranoid about her, but nobody can get through the wards without permission and he's been having the house elves liberally dose the entire property with some sort of pesticide just in case she can get through while transformed. Which we doubt that she could.

It's official by the way, I'll be moving in with Draco at the end of this month. Ron was just as happy to hear that I'd be moving out, more surfaces to bugger his prostitutes on in privacy. I wonder if he'll feel the same when he realizes his rent has doubled.

Training is fun. We're getting a little less bruised in training these days, but more so on patrols now that they're sending us out on slightly riskier ones. I'm enjoying it. I can put up with increased paperwork and injuries just fine (it's not as if I'm not *used* to being hurt all the time) but a lot of the training class has dropped out.

Love,

Harry

So THAT'S How You Do It

Chapter 39 of 50

Just because she's loosened up enough to laugh at drunk ghosts doesn't mean Hermione doesn't take everyone's well-being seriously.

17 November

Dear Harry,

I'm actually not certain how they did it. I think the ghosts were literally taking baths in it, same as Poppy had to do with the potion to un-petrify Nick in second year.

Have the Malfoys had their wards checked by a security expert recently? I'm sure that Bill would do it if you were to ask, and they really ought to get it done. They've got an awful lot of enemies.

How are the riding lessons going? Has Draco graduated you to a tougher mount yet? I'd imagine that Raven is feeling a little stiff and sore lately now that the weather is getting cold.

Love,

Hermione

In Which Harry Demonstrates That He's Learned to Value Safety

Chapter 40 of 50

The title says it all.

21 November

Dear Hermione,

I suppose the ghosts taking baths in liquor would explain the mess that you mentioned Filch being so miffed about cleaning up. (Let me guess, Myrtle is a depressed drunk.)

On your suggestion, a security consultation has been set up. They'd had their wards managed by a rather unsavory crowd in the past, so Draco agreed that getting another opinion would be good. I wouldn't be surprised if a few of the warding spells were illegal, and think of the scandal if *that* was found out down the road! Especially if I'm still living with him at that point, being a ministry employee and all. No, thank you!

I'm still riding Raven, although Draco did put me on Frosty for a short while the other day. After he'd thoroughly worn him out, of course. Even tired, Frosty was a challenge for me. On that note, I've been informed that I'll be accompanying Draco to buy his mother a new horse for her birthday. He's hoping to coax her out of the house for fresh air and exercise on a more regular basis, not to mention a distraction from her husband being in Azkaban, of course. I suspect that he's hoping to find me a more suitable mount while he's at it as well.

I got to help bring in Fenrir Greyback last night! He was stalking his intended next victim and somebody reported that they'd seen him skulking around near their neighbor's children several times in the past day or two, so we went out to head him off. Normally we'd only be able to detain him until after the full moon, but the parents are going to press stalking charges so he may actually get a real sentence this time.

Love,

Harry

Advice From Severus

Chapter 41 of 50

A good idea.

25 November

Dear Harry,

Oh, yes. Myrtle being a depressed drunk is rivaled only by Myrtle with a hangover.

I approve of Draco's thinking there. Getting her out of the house and occupied with something can only help. Severus was reading over my shoulder and suggests getting her a mare of breeding age. He thinks she might benefit from something to mother, and by the time the mare got to be too pregnant for riding, the weather would be miserable enough that Narcissa wouldn't want to go outside and ride anyway.

Oh, wow. Remus did a happy dance when I told him about Greyback. I take it there isn't enough evidence of his Death Eater antics to lock him up on that?

Love,

Hermione

Ron Returns

Chapter 42 of 50

While Harry's relationship is going great, Hermione might be about to hit a bump in the road.

3 December

Dear Hermione,

Sorry for the delay. I've been busy with the move. I'm all settled in here at the Manor now and really enjoying it. For the record, Draco pays the house-elves and gave them a suite of rooms complete with elf-sized furniture for their living quarters. I knew you would ask if I didn't assure you of that immediately.

We've gone to visit a few places to look at horses. I have to admit to being rather taken by a couple of them, though what criteria he's using to choose is very much over my head.

No, there isn't enough evidence. Most of what Greyback did was bite people, and he can't legally be held responsible for what he does while transformed due to Werewolf transformations falling under the mantle of temporary insanity.

Love,

Harry

5 December

Dear Hermione,

Did you hear that Harry moved out? I've got the flat to myself, so we could, you know, get back together. I'm single, you're single, we should do this.

Love,

Ron

Disappointment

Chapter 43 of 50

None of the trio has what they want, but that's not the end of the world.

7 December

Dear Harry,

I'm glad to hear that you're settled in (and yes, glad to hear about the house-elves too) and I hope you're enjoying life there. Hopefully the easy life won't spoil you too much. Any sign that Ron knows where you're living now? He owled me, by the way, saying that since he had the flat to himself, we should get back together.

It sounds like you're very much being immersed in the life of the country gentleman. Next thing I know, you'll be going foxhunting and wearing designer shirts.

It's a shame that you can't put Greyback away for good, but any time off the streets and away from people is an improvement.

The students are getting antsy for the winter holidays. We've had a steady stream of classroom mishaps come through because of their distraction, but nothing we can't handle.

Love,

Hermione

9 December

Dear Ron,

It's nice to hear from you. How is your Auror training going?

No, I'm not interested in dating you. While our romance at school was fun, I've moved on with my life.

Love,

Hermione

Consistent

Chapter 44 of 50

Our favorite wand wavers stay the course for better or worse.

11 December

Dear Hermione,

I hope Ron hasn't been causing you too much trouble. He's acting even cockier than ever in training. But no, I don't think he realizes. I shrank all my things down and took them in one trip, so there was no chance for him to offer help with transport.

Foxhunting still scares me... And designer clothes? Ugh. I'll stick with my well-worn jeans and jumpers thankyouverymuch. That said, I could definitely get used to sipping brandy in front of the fire with a bloodhound snoring on my feet.

What are your plans for the holidays? Draco is thinking about throwing some sort of party, and you and Severus are invited of course.

Love,

Harry

13 December

Dear Hermione,

You think you're too good for me now or something? You should be grateful I'm willing to take you, because I can guarantee that I'm the only man who will.

Love,

Ron

An Accurate Assessment

Chapter 45 of 50

Hermione loses her temper a bit with Ron.

15 December

Dear Harry,

Ron is a prat.

As I said, you're going to become spoilt. And ruin your liver if you drink too much brandy.

A Christmas party sounds lovely, so count us in. We'll be staying here over the holidays as neither of us has anywhere else to go.

Love,

Hermione

17 December

Dear Ron,

It would interest you to know that I am currently in a committed relationship.

Love,

Hermione

United Front

Chapter 46 of 50

Harry is frustrated too.

19 December

Dear Hermione,

Draco says he's sent out the formal invitations, so you and Severus should be receiving yours soon if you haven't already.

And yes, Ron is a prat. He was fuming in training about your having turned him down. I tried to persuade him to calm down and not say anything he'd regret, but I suspect he didn't take my advice. He also didn't take the trainer's advice that he needed to calm down and quit taking it out on his training partners, so, um, yeah. I'll leave the rest of that scene to your imagination. Suffice to say, he's on probation for a while.

Draco has picked out a horse for his mother already. A pale grey Welsh Cob called Tess, of breeding age as per Severus's suggestion. Really sweet horse, and I can definitely see Narcissa touring the grounds on a white mare. He's decided that she will be a Christmas gift rather than a birthday gift since he was able to get her so quickly.

Love,

Harry

21 December

Dear Hermione,

With what, your hand?

Love,

Ron

Holiday

Chapter 47 of 50

The lovers take a break from their sources of annoyance.

5 January

Dear Harry and Draco,

Merlin, what a holiday. Thank you so much for hosting us; we had a wonderful time. The dinners and parties were amazing, and the horseback tour was a thrill. May the new year bring you the best!

Love,

Hermione and Severus

Karma

Chapter 48 of 50

Karma is a wonderful thing, on all ends.

9 January

Dear Hermione,

It was indeed an amazing holiday. My favorite part was the look on your face when you opened that last present. Congratulations again on the engagement!

I've been doing a lot of riding the past week trying to get used to my new mount. I'm still impressed that Draco managed to hide Rayu from me and Tess from his mother without either of us catching on. Those sneaky Slytherins, huh?

Oh, uh, just a warning. Ron saw the announcement in the *Prophet* about you and Severus. And got himself booted from training. And is now living at home because he got evicted for paying only half the rent. Yeah. I don't think I really need to say more on that.

Love,

Harry

Author's Note Rayu is short for Rayuela, which is Spanish for "hopscotch." She is a dark brown Andalusian because would you *really* put it past any of the Malfoys to import a horse from Spain?

I have about two more chapters written after this, and I think the story will wind up ending there. I need to figure out which of my other stories in progress will be next. I suppose the question is which pairings/children people want to see. SS/OC? SS/HG? Riddle/OC? SS/Lily? Canon pairings? No pairings? (And is the OC male or female?) Mischievous kids? (And whose?)

In Hand

Chapter 49 of 50

All may go well after all.

13 January

Dear Harry,

Thank you! We're planning on a summer wedding. During the Ministry elections, I think, so that everyone (especially the press) is too distracted to notice when we just *happen* to be in the vicinity of a small Muggle church that day. So don't tell anyone.

It was not just Slytherins keeping that secret. I knew because Draco told Severus. I have to say, he made a good choice for you. *bold* you that you were going to turn into a country gentleman.

As to Ron, it might be for the best. He needs someone to take him down a couple notches and set him in the right direction, and if anyone can do that it'll be his mother. Which is not to say that I'm looking forward to running into him now that he knows about Severus and me.

Love,

Hermione

Author's Note: Here's another idea for what I should pursue next: anyone want to see a disabled character? I've been hesitating on that for a while because I felt like magical healing would make most disabilities nonexistent in the wizarding world, but then on the other hand, they don't (or choose not to) correct people's vision, so... Any interest?

Link to a survey for what you want to see next <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GJGY2CV>

Resolution

Chapter 50 of 50

All is shaping up as it should be.

17 January

Dear Hermione,

That is a very good idea. I may have to take a leaf out of your book when the time comes. Not that I'm about to pop the question just yet; I mean, we've only been living together a little over a month and Draco is freshly out of an abusive marriage. I don't think now is the best time. But it'll come, I'm sure of that. Narcissa is already quizzing us about our plans for adoption/surrogacy of an heir. Eek!

You probably needn't worry *too* much about Ron. It seems as though he's being kept on a very short leash. Draco and I ran into him and Molly shopping in Diagon Alley yesterday. Dear Merlin, the fireworks. He *might* have witnessed a kiss. And it became abundantly clear immediately afterwards that Molly is not letting him out of her sight and is taking quite a firm hand in keeping him out of trouble. I think you're pretty safe!

Love,

Harry

Author's Note: Wow. Last chapter. If you haven't already, please put in your two cents about which of my WIPs you want to see next.