

The Resolution

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Harry and his crew's seventh year at Hogwarts. Watch as they cope with new romances, the absence of a loved one, surprising secrets, and, of course, Voldemort. Written before Half-Blood Prince was released.

Settling In

Chapter 1 of 2

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Author's Note: I finished and posted this fanfic (on another site) days before the sixth book was released, so it has no connection to Half-Blood Prince. You will notice in this first chapter that they went camping over the summer and something happened. Don't be confused. That story is in a prequel that I might release at a later date. They will make references to what has happened during their sixth year, but you are not expected to know what happened. It will all be revealed later on. That's the mystery part. Enjoy!

Chapter One: Settling In

Harry Potter walked slowly up to the gloriously red train to Hogwarts. He was well aware that if he did survive that year, there were only two more trips on that train left. Had he taken the trip for granted? Would he miss the cart full of sweets or the rain splashing against the train windows? He had never really thought about it. That train was where he met his two best friends. It was precious.

Harry was pulled out of his trance by two small hands covering his eyes. He reached behind him and poked the sides of a small body. Ginny squealed and her hands were quickly taken away from his eyes. Harry spun around and engulfed the girl in a strong hug. He felt her red hair tickle his nose, and he breathed in her sweet scent. He only let go of her when someone nearby gave a very fake cough.

"Hey, Ron," Harry said, smiling awkwardly, feeling his face grow a little warm. He let Ginny down and gave Ron a quick hug. Then before he could react, Mrs. Weasley's arms were around him. "Hey Miffiz Weasley," Harry mumbled, his head buried deep in her flowery dress. She let go of him so he could breathe. She looked ready to cry. "You okay?" he asked her quietly.

Mrs. Weasley nodded vigorously, but kept her mouth tightly closed. She closed her eyes and then breathed in and out very slowly. She opened her eyes again and looked more normal, making Harry feel a little better. He knew she was worried about her children, especially at times like these.

"The train has to leave soon, Mum," said Ginny, looking worried for her mother. Mrs. Weasley nodded again and began bustling them all forward towards the train.

Ron tried to linger behind as he looked around the crowd of students for a specific face. Or rather specific hair. But his mother kept pushing him forward, and before he had time to find the right person, he was on the train, and it was getting ready to leave.

"You coming?" Harry asked, walking behind a few second years. "We have to find a compartment before they're all filled."

Ron was standing near the entrance, watching each student who got on the train carefully. "You go on ahead. I'll find you."

Harry shrugged, then made sure he could see where Ginny was standing outside as he found a compartment. But he didn't get far before he heard a very distinct voice.

"Ron!" Hermione exclaimed, throwing her arms around the tall red head, who was grinning like mad. He looked very relieved. "I almost missed the train!" she said, her eyes wide. She stood to the side to let a few first years pass. "Hi, Harry!" she called, waving to her best friend. "I have to hurry and get to the Prefect compartment."

"Do I have to go?" Ron asked wearily.

"No, it's only for fifth year Prefects."

"Good. I'll go with you and wait outside," Ron said, following the speedy Hermione. She nodded, then walked in the opposite direction of Harry, Ron at her heels.

Harry took as little time as possible to find an empty compartment. The moment he did, he pulled down the small window and reached his hand out to Ginny, who was at his window in no time. Harry felt about ready to cry, but Ginny looked very collected. She grabbed his hand and smiled widely. "It was fun camping," she said, trying to sound funny. Harry only shook his head.

"Wish we were still there."

This time Ginny shook her head. "I don't. You know I can't live without my wand."

"Good thing it wasn't destroyed then."

Ginny nodded. She let go of his hand when the train whistle went off. "You'll be seeing me soon," she said, looking completely convinced. "Tell me all about the Opening Feast and the Sorting Ceremony in an owl. Those are my favorite moments of the year." Ginny was beginning to look a little lost and hurt as the train gave off another loud whistle. The train began to move slowly forward.

"I'll miss you!" Harry called as the train sped up. Ginny didn't go after it. She stayed put and waved with a large smile.

"I'll miss you, too!" she yelled back, hoping he'd hear her. He did. And then she was out of sight.

Ron jumped up from his sitting position on the floor when the Prefect compartment door opened. Slowly, the Prefects filed out of the room, each looking at him with a look of confusion and slight distaste. He narrowed his eyes. He wasn't that ugly, was he?

Hermione came out after the Prefects and smiled at him, an improvement from the other looks he was getting. He opened his mouth to say something when another person walked out after Hermione. It was Terry Boot.

"You two know each other, right?" Hermione asked, looking at both of them. "From Dumbledore's Army, remember?"

"Right," Ron said, sticking out his hand. Terry nodded politely and shook it.

"We're thinking of doing it again," Hermione told Terry. "You know, the D.A."

"Oh, really? I didn't think Harry would be quite up to it."

"We'll be teaching," Ron said, pointing to himself and Hermione. "We've learned nearly as much as Harry knows after last year."

Terry nodded again. "I'll make sure to join then. As long as it's not against school policy. I have to set an example as Head Boy."

Hermione looked at him as if he had said a very noble and, in her eyes, courageous thing. Ron nodded, just as Terry had done. "Congratulations on getting Head Boy. Nice of you to take it so seriously."

"How else would I take it?"

Ron opened his mouth, but Hermione broke in. "We've got to find Harry, right, Ron?" Hermione took a hold of his hand and looked up at him sweetly.

Any unnerving thoughts he had had of Terry were gone when he looked at her and felt her hand in his. He nodded. "Yeah, he's probably moping about from lack of Ginny."

"We'll see you," Hermione said to Terry. Ron turned and walked along the moving train, pulling Hermione along behind him the best he could without their trunks getting in the way. He suddenly felt very proud to have the Head Girl latched onto his hand. And she was giving no signs of letting go.

After peering into compartment after compartment, Harry was finally spotted. He was sitting in the corner, staring blankly out the window at the dreary fields. Dean, Seamus, Neville, Luna, Parvati, and Lavender were all squeezed into the same compartment, talking avidly, their trunks squeezed into the compartment with them. Ron wrenched the sliding door open, and the whole group looked in their direction.

"Hey!" they all said with excitement, each side of the compartment moving over as far as they could possibly go to make room. Harry was pushed even farther into the wall, but he didn't seem to care.

Ron and Hermione were about to take a seat when Seamus pointed at their hands which were still locked together. "What's that?" he said, beginning the grin. The whole compartment went quiet as everyone stared at the two hands grasped onto one another. Hermione and Ron looked at each other, before they both began to blush fervently.

Lavender gasped, late on the intake. "Are you two together!?" she squealed, her eyes widening. This only made the two blush even more. They weren't sure if they were blushing because everyone was staring at them or because they weren't even sure whether they were together or not.

"Oh, don't ask them that!" Parvati exclaimed. "Sit down," she told the two, and they did gladly, sitting opposite from one another after letting go of each other's hands. They managed to get their trunks in with them, but to make enough room, everyone had to prop their feet on everyone else's trunk. It was quite the scene. Ron and Hermione struggled to slide the door shut. The compartment was so full, their legs were blocking the doorway. But after a lot of leg compression and sucking in their stomachs so they could all squish together more easily, the door finally slid shut. And the loud chatting had begun again.

"Where's Ginny?" Dean asked, finally seeing who was missing. The group went silent again as they each looked around for the answer.

"She's not coming this year," Hermione said quietly. Harry finally dragged his eyes away from the window and watched her.

"What do you mean?" Seamus asked, narrowing his eyes. "What happened to her?"

"It's a long story, but she ended up using magic out of school and now she's expelled."

Lavender and Parvati gasped, the rest gaped (except for Luna whose eyes only widened even more), but Ron didn't look convinced. "She's sure she's coming back, though. She has no means of giving up."

Harry now looked at Ron, and a small tinge of hope leaped into his heart. He had heard the same thing from Ginny, but coming from another person made it sound more

believable. Hermione sighed tiredly. "Ron, there's no way"

"She can try," Ron said gently, hoping he wouldn't spark an argument.

"Her wand wasn't broken," Harry said, talking for the first time that day. Everyone turned their heads to look at him, some acting as though they had no idea he was there all that time.

Neville was looking very confused. "But isn't that what they do?"

"Yes, but Dumbledore convinced them to let him keep it," Harry said. "He told them he should since she was one of his students. I think that's a sign that he's got a plan." Harry looked at Ron with slightly eager eyes. Ron nodded in agreement. Harry started to feel much better.

"How terrible," said Dean. He seemed deeply hurt in the loss of Ginny.

Ron cleared his throat. "Could we not talk about Ginny?"

Luna seemed eager to do that very thing. "My father wants you to get interviewed again, Harry."

"But I was interviewed in June."

"Right, but that wasn't published because you didn't exactly make much sense."

Ron coughed, trying to cover his laughter. Out of all people, Luna was accusing *Harry* of making no sense.

Harry sighed, knowing that if others were able to read his story, the rumors about him wouldn't be so exaggerated. "As long as it's not Rita Skeeter who interviews me."

"Oh, come on, Harry, she's better now!" Hermione exclaimed. "I think I've scared her enough so that she keeps to the truth now. I'm even letting her interview Ron and me about the D.A."

Everyone went quiet again. "The D.A.?" Neville asked. "I had no idea that was still going on."

"We're starting it up again," Ron said. "Publicly and legally this time. Hermione and I will be teaching."

Everyone's faces lit up. Dumbledore's Army was one of the best things that had happened to them, and being able to experience it again (especially at those times) was enough to lift all their spirits.

The compartment door slid open and the food cart came into view. "My goodness!" the dimply woman said, holding her hand to her bosom. "How did you all fit in here!?"

The group looked around at one another and laughed. They began digging into their pockets to retrieve money, and soon all sorts of sweets were spread over their laps. Harry began to enjoy himself once more, remembering his thoughts earlier that day about the train. He had to enjoy every moment of it. And having his friends around him made him feel even better.

"Firs' years! Firs' years follow me!"

Harry almost felt like following Hagrid just to feel that first year excitement again, but his feet followed Ron and Hermione into a carriage. The rain began to fall hard. Luna squeezed into the carriage with them; then they were off. Millions of lights were seen from the castle windows, and everyone could almost feel the cozy feeling, even in the rain.

Draco Malfoy hadn't been spotted so far, much to Harry's relief. After Ginny getting expelled, Malfoy would make everything so much worse, and that was the last thing Harry needed.

Ron made sure to take a hold of Hermione's hand as they entered the Great Hall and found a seat with the rest of the seventh-year Gryffindors. He had a feeling of importance and maturity when he saw the other Gryffindors who were only at the beginning of their Hogwarts life. He tried to grasp the idea for a moment that those twelve- and thirteen-year-olds had so much time left with those professors and lessons. It was strange how fast it had all gone. They were almost done.

A very timid looking group of first years followed Professor McGonagall to the Sorting Hat, which was sitting lazily on a stool in front of the staff table. The ceremony went normally with the Hat giving a song (it said nothing unusual this time), and then one by one, the first years were sorted. There was only one thing that seemed very out of place.

Not one first year was sorted into Slytherin.

"Well this is quite unusual," said Professor Dumbledore, standing up after the Sorting Ceremony was done. He looked over at the Slytherin table and the group of empty seats. The other Slytherins were looking very confused and a bit hurt. "But!" exclaimed Dumbledore, clasping his hands together. "Things like this do happen! We must be prepared at all times for unusual happenings. They often surprise us and catch us off guard. If we are not prepared, we will be knocked backwards and may never recover. That goes for many things."

The Hall went silent. The older students knew exactly what he was talking about, having experienced so much in the past six years. The younger students were the only ones who were looking confused and, frankly, a little scared of the old man.

Dumbledore went on to explain the rules and regulations to the first years, then announced the new Head Girl and Boy, making sure everyone knew who they were. Hermione blushed but kept her head high and mighty.

"Quidditch tryouts will be held next week on Wednesday. I do hope you all get involved. We also have a new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher this year. I would like to welcome Professor Longbottom." Everyone's attention was turned towards a tall and somewhat plump man with flat blonde hair and very recognizable eyes. Many Gryffindors turned their heads to Neville, who mouthed, 'I'll explain later.' The traditional clapping died when Dumbledore lifted his hand and smiled lightly. "With that, I would like to officially announce the beginning of another year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry."

Dumbledore sat down and a glorious amount of food appeared on all four tables, causing everyone to cheer. The last year had finally begun.

Ups and Downs

Chapter 2 of 2

Harry tries to decide how he's feeling. Ron tries to decide how Hermione's feeling. Hermione has a mysterious mirror. And Seamus gives one hell of a motivational speech.

"Your uncle?"

"Yes, my uncle."

"I didn't know you had an uncle."

"You don't know anything, Stupid."

"Don't call me stupid!"

Neville rolled his eyes and lay down on his bed. Dean and Seamus were back to their old habits of calling each other names. And it was only the first night. Neville had just informed his roommates that Professor Longbottom was his uncle.

"I had no idea your uncle was a professor," Ron said, staring out the window. He seemed more calm than usual.

Neville shrugged. "It never really came up in conversation, did it? I just had no idea he'd ever work *here*. But Dumbledore asked me to ask my uncle to send Dumbledore an owl about the job last June. Right after ... you know."

The dorm room went silent for a moment, as though in memory of the losses from last May, when another close call had happened, and a few more loved ones were gone.

Dean cleared his throat. "Excited for Quidditch try-outs?" he asked Harry, attempting to light up the situation.

Harry shrugged. Compared to Ginny, Quidditch was nothing. But since she wasn't there, it was one of the few things he had left. "There's only one spot open," he drawled.

"Oh, right," stuttered Dean. "Ginny's spot." Ginny had been one of the Chasers on the Gryffindor team since the previous year.

Seamus stared around at his roommates' gloomy expressions. He jumped up from the floor where he had been sitting. "Why are you all looking so depressed!? This is our last year! After this year no more Snape, no more stupid school rules ... we'll be free!" He looked eagerly at Neville, who smirked a little, then glanced at Ron, whose mouth also curled up a little. "Listen," continued Seamus, "I know Ginny's gone this year, and that's heartbreaking. But we can't let that bring our spirits down!" Harry gave Seamus a sullen look. "Right, the whole You-Know-Who thing. I have to admit, it's not exactly something we look forward to every year. But how many times have we been through this crap? Since our first year! We should be used to the pain and suffering by now!"

"Nice, Seamus, nice," noted Dean sarcastically.

"Sorry, that came out wrong. All I'm trying to say is that we can't spend our last year being depressed. We'll just regret it in the future."

"It's not that easy, Seamus," said Ron. "You remember what happened in May. That's not something we can just forget."

Seamus closed his eyes and took an aggravated deep breath. "I *know*. But we've been through this sort of stuff before. Remember our fifth year? We didn't exactly end that year with laughs and smiles." He eyed Harry nervously. "But we got back to normal in our sixth year, remember? We got through it!"

The others looked at him a little unsure. "Fine," he said, as if settling the matter. He turned to Harry. "Give us the heads up, Harry. What's the deal with You-Know-Who?"

"He's still out there," Harry said blankly. "You know that."

"And the Order?" Seamus asked. He the others had learned of the group at the end of their sixth year. "Do they have any leads?"

Harry nodded. He had been told that the Order, among others, were on Voldemort's tail. The search for him was narrowing now that he was much weaker. Even though Harry knew he'd have to be the one to kill him, the Order still had power to capture him. And according to the experts, they weren't far behind Voldemort and the last of his followers. The ones who weren't in Azkaban. It was Ginny he was so depressed about. He had had his ups and downs so far that day. He would be happy one moment, depressed the next.

Harry reassured his roommates that they did have leads and Hogwarts was very safe, especially with Dumbledore still there. Their reactions were different when Harry said the words.

"You see?" Seamus said, smiling with satisfaction. "Let's try to enjoy this year, okay? You-Know-Who is weaker, as we all know. It won't be long now. And we can all send Ginny letters. We'll get the whole House to send her letters!"

Seamus's energy was very contagious. Neville and Dean grinned at each other while Ron walked away from the window and nudged Seamus approvingly in the arm. He didn't feel half as bad now to concentrate on Hermione. He didn't want to appear as happy as he felt because of the Voldemort issues. But Seamus seemed to have made it all right for him to enjoy his growing relationship with Hermione. "I'm going to sleep," he announced, reaching into his trunk and pulling out his night clothes. The others followed his lead.

Down the stairs and up another set of stairs was the seventh year girls' dorm room. Lavender, Parvati, and Hermione were all seated in a circle in the middle of the floor. Parvati and Lavender were playing a casual game of cards while Hermione sat staring at a large book in her lap.

"When are you going to tell us about Ron?" Lavender asked Hermione, trying to catch her off guard. Hermione didn't fall for it.

"There's really not much to tell," she teased. Her eyes didn't move from the pages of the book.

"I guess we'll just have to ask Ron then," Parvati said, winking at Lavender, who stifled a giggle. Hermione wasn't falling for that, either.

"He'd just tell you bug off," said Hermione, yawning. She finally shut the book and leaned forward, lazily watching the game.

Lavender passed her a few cards. "You can play if you want."

Hermione shook her head. "No thanks. I have a lot of studying to do before tomorrow."

Parvati groaned. "We had summer homework, didn't we? Are either of you taking Advanced Ancient Runes this year?"

Both Hermione and Lavender shook their heads. "I had a lot of stuff to do for Potions, though," Lavender said, leaning back and straining to reach into her trunk. She dragged out a heavy book and a few pieces of parchment. "It's not done yet. Do you think Snape will be upset?" She looked at the two girls with hopefulness. "Right, stupid question."

Hermione laughed. "You two will be fine. You never did your summer homework before now, and you've passed your classes." She stood up and stretched. "I'm going to get lots of sleep tonight. Busy day tomorrow!"

Parvati sat up on her knees and shook her head mournfully. "Pity you can't stay here with us anymore," she said to Hermione, who had just opened the door. "You really get your own room?"

"I do," said Hermione, also feeling a little put down. Those girls were almost her complete opposites, but they had lived together for so long. Now that she was Head Girl, she was granted with her own dorm room. She had no idea how much she'd miss being kept awake by Lavender and Parvati. "I'm not that much fun, anyway," she joked.

"You're loads of fun," said Parvati, walking up to Hermione. Then she did something she had never done before. She gave Hermione a hug. "Just thought I'd tell you before we graduate." She winked at the bushy-haired girl. Hermione laughed, but only to cover her urge to cry. She said goodnight to both of them, then went out of the room and shut the door behind her. She climbed a small set of stairs across the way and found her room tidied and waiting for her.

It wasn't a very large dorm room but, then again, she was the only one sleeping in it. It reminded her of the Gryffindor common room with its battered but softened sofa and the gold and red walls. It even had its own little fireplace. Her bed was against the far wall under a large window, which had its red curtains pulled back to reveal the dark rain clouds looming in the sky. Hermione sat down on her bed and studied her surroundings. Her trunk was at the end of her bed, waiting to be opened. A dresser was on the other side of the room, along with her very own body-length mirror. The mirror fascinated the Head Girl.

The crystal clear glass was surrounded by a thick border. The border was made of hair-thin strands of gold twisted together in swirling patterns. Hermione slowly stood up from her bed and walked across the room to the mirror; she looked almost hypnotized. She stood before the mirror and tilted her head a little as she examined herself. The rain had made her hair even bigger than before, and her school robe was dragged low from dampness. "Still the same," she mumbled, neither approvingly nor disapprovingly. In her eyes she saw the same Hermione that boarded the train back in first year. The adult form she had developed and the mature features in her face weren't visible to the young woman standing before the mysterious mirror. She turned away and got ready for bed.

The following morning, everyone arrived to breakfast in much more upbeat moods than the night before. Hermione found a seat next to Ron, but her attention was completely taken by Neville. "Well?" she asked her plump friend, who was seated across from her. She began buttering a piece of toast.

"What?" Neville asked, somewhat confused.

Hermione nodded at the staff table. "Who is he? Professor Longbottom."

"My uncle," Neville said, louder than normal. He looked a bit tired from explaining and wanted to make sure no one else asked him. Hermione nodded, sensing Neville's tension. He obviously didn't want to talk about his relative very much.

Several Gryffindor Prefects were walking beside the table, handing out everyone's class schedules. The moment Hermione's landed on her buttered toast, she grabbed it and read it very quickly.

"Checking to see if you'll have to use the Time Turner again?" Ron asked her, smirking. She rolled her eyes.

"No, Ron. I'm just making sure everything's here. I don't want to miss out on any classes." She eyed Ron's schedule, which he had barely even glanced at. She slowly picked it up and compared their classes. Her heart sank when she noticed they only had Defense Against the Dark Arts, Potions, and Care of Magical Creatures together. "You're barely taking any classes this year," she said disapprovingly. Ron snatched his schedule from her hand defensively.

"I'm taking what I need."

"Owls!" Harry said with a little too much enthusiasm. He had been having a conversation with Parvati, but his attention was now one hundred percent on the ceiling. He searched the swarm of owls for a particular white one. Hedwig came soaring down and dropped a single envelope on his plate. Harry opened it quickly and his eyes flew to the bottom of the letter. He grinned. "I'll see you in Defense," he said vaguely to his fellow Gryffindors, not taking his eyes off the letter. He got up from his seat and left the Great Hall, reading.

"Ginny," Hermione said plainly, sticking her fork roughly into her scrambled eggs. The bell rang. "Come on!" she exclaimed, grabbing Ron by the arm and pulling him up from the table. "We get Hagrid first today."

Ron felt his stomach grumble and stared down at his nearly full plate of food. He barely had time to grab his bag before Hermione had him halfway across the Hall in a race to the doors. "A little excited?" he asked her, stumbling along. His foot nailed the back of her heel.

"Ow!" she cried, stopping.

"Sorry!" he said almost frantically. But a smile was creeping onto his face. He tried to hide the grin as Hermione glared at him.

"Abuse," she mumbled, a smirk playing lazily on her lips. She and Ron reached the doors, but not before Draco Malfoy and his two body guards.

"Absolutely ridiculous," Hermione and Ron heard Malfoy grumble, as they followed him out of the Great Hall. He hadn't seemed to notice them. They trailed behind him towards the front doors. "If my father wasn't in Azkaban, I'd be Head Boy this year. It's all that Potter's fault and his Muggle-loving posse. I swear, this world is going to Hell because of them. I'm sure they had something to do with the Slytherin deal. I'll bet Dumbledore made sure that stupid Hat wouldn't send anyone to Slytherin."

Hermione and Ron looked at each other, each trying to hold back their laughter. Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle found their way to the Greenhouses as Hermione and Ron went their own way to Hagrid's cabin. They were the first to arrive.

"Ron! Hermione! 'Ow was camping?" Hagrid asked, greeting them with a large smile.

"It was fun most of the time," Ron answered, he and Hermione following Hagrid to the door of his cabin. The half-giant reached just inside the front door and dragged out a large cage covered with a dirty sheet.

"I heard 'bout Ginny," Hagrid said, placing the cage in the middle of his garden. "A shame, really. You two look a'right, though!"

"She'll be coming back, that's why," Hermione said. But even Hagrid didn't fall for the unsure statement.

"'Ere they come!" Hagrid exclaimed, staring over Ron and Hermione's heads. The two Gryffindors looked over their shoulders and saw the rest of the class making its way down to the cabin. There weren't many taking that class by the looks of things.

There were many things that felt different as a seventh year, but the most noticeable change involved their classes. It always felt so comforting to have everyone in the same age group and House together in a class. Everyone shared the same homework and same pains from the teachers. But now they were lucky to have one or two friends from their House in the same class. The lessons were very challenging and the number of students small. Fortunately for Hermione and Ron, there were only three Slytherins in their Advanced Care of Magical Creatures class.

"Welcome ter Advanced Care o' Magical Creatures!" Hagrid exclaimed, beaming at the students gathered around. Hermione and Ron looked at each other and grinned. The year was starting out fairly normal, just the way they liked it.