

# Exposition

By: Shivani/Grazhir

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**Pairings:** Harry/Draco

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**Spoilers:** OotP

**Warnings:** AU, crack-ish, slashy, betrayal, character deaths

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**Summary:** Getting lost in the library is frustrating, but also inexplicably rewarding. So to speak.

**Notes:** This was inspired by (of all things) chapter two of [Convergence](#). It's not exactly funny, though it is flippant and slightly cracked. Light on dialogue. It's just, you know, one of those odd ideas that pops up. Very quickly done, so I've not spent any time obsessing over plot holes or details. It's definitely not serious.

He was irritated beyond measure. Hermione had been nagging him, again, not content to take his word for anything. And she did not seem to understand at all what he felt, or even why he would feel that way. Who wouldn't be frustrated and angry over being kept in the dark? At being ignored? At being unfairly maligned? At, well, everything! He had slipped off once she got into full rant mode, knowing it would take a while before she realized he'd had the audacity and daring to walk out on her.

However, he was now lost between the stacks, none of the titles on the book spines seeming the least bit familiar to him. True, he had never exactly been a bookworm, but he had not realized the library was so large. He couldn't see anything that might hint at or suggest he was getting any closer to where Madam Pince played dragon. Not even an examination of the ceiling provided clues; every time he looked up it appeared he was just off center, no matter how far he had gone in a straight line.

He felt, for a moment, fond nostalgia for the Little Whinging Public Library.

An hour later he found a door, barely visible in a wall that seemed to loom up out of nowhere. Curious, and already utterly lost, he decided to go through, only to end up in another room sliced by stacks. A great huge sigh escaped his lips as he sat down right on the spot. He contemplated, briefly, having a tantrum and chucking things hither and yon. He even pulled a book out of the case he was leaning against and weighed it in his hand, wondering how much of an impact it would make.

But then he sighed again; it wasn't the book's fault. As he went to replace it he noticed something wedged between the two sides of stack, bisected by a shelf. That was carefully removed so he could examine it. It looked ancient, like a tome bound by hand ages and ages ago, and a look inside revealed it was hand-written. The handwriting was appalling, actually, but then so was his, so he could decipher it easily enough.

He thought, after a while, that he must have stumbled over some long-since-lost-to-wizardkind spells. Or maybe they were very advanced, which would explain why none of them were familiar. One, though, sounded very interesting indeed, and after a quick read of the function and instructions, Harry gave it a whirl.

*“Expositio Hermione Granger.”*

There, right in front of him, was a cloud of sparkly pink smoke, and from it, as it dissipated, formed a little creature that he had never before seen the like of. The book had told him to expect a daemon, but the red skin, cutely curving little horns, and long tail that ended with a triangular bit wasn't what he had imagined. And then it began to speak.

“Hermione Jean Granger, born 19th September 1979, to Alan Sampson Granger and Jean Catherine Granger née Miller, making her a muggle-born witch and presently 16 years of age. She has long bushy brown hair, lightly-tanned skin, and brown eyes, and is 167cm in height, weighing in at 8.2 stones.

“Granger attended the Shrewsbury School for the Gifted until she received her invitation to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and was sorted into Gryffindor house at the welcoming feast of 1991. Her favorite colour is beige, her favorite food is rice pudding, her favorite subjects are. . . .”

Harry sort of zoned out for a bit, but his attention was handily caught again after only a short time.

“—in a scheme masterminded by the headmaster of Hogwarts, Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore, her present duty to see that Harry James Potter, a fellow Gryffindor, remains irritated and angry so that he will be unlikely to stop and analyze his circumstances and situation, and not go delving for information. She is aided in this by fellow Gryffindor Ronald Bilius Weasley. . . .”

He listened, he did, but his mind was split between the words flowing from the creature’s mouth and the white hot rage building up inside him. Eventually the creature paused longer than normal, said, “End of record,” and disappeared in another puff of sparkly pink smoke.

A while later—he had no idea how long, though several random books ended up shredded somehow—Harry took a deep breath and decided to try the spell again. Perhaps other people he knew were hiding things from him? Directly affecting his welfare? Like, oh, Dumbledore? And others, too. What about Sirius and Remus? What about Peter Pettigrew? Or Voldemort? If the little creature was a mouthpiece for some repository of knowledge, then perhaps. . . .

He was utterly delighted quite a bit later to know where he could reasonably expect to find Pettigrew, such as for capture. And also that Voldemort did, in fact, have at least one exploitable weakness that could, coincidentally, lead to his defeat. Well, death, actually. And a prophecy! All that time spent attending Hogwarts and that slimy slug of an old man had known about his duty, yet never said a word. And that bit about how he was expected to die? Ha!

The book was wedged back where he found it, other books being shifted around to hide it as before, and Harry got up off the floor and looked around, wondering how in hell he could find his way back to familiar territory. As if on cue the door he had entered by creaked open, so he took that for a gentle hint and used it, ending up in a normal corridor; a look out the nearest window showed he was on the south side of the castle.

Chimes alerted him to the fact that dinner was about to be served, so he turned and prepared to muddle his way down to the Great Hall, absently taking in that the door had vanished, and set off. He got there before his ‘friends’ somehow, and when Hermione arrived she looked pissed.

“Harry! Where did you go? I was talking to you!”

He became inexplicably deaf, and reached out to fill his plate so he could appease the hunger pangs he was experiencing. He also became selectively blind, not noticing the nasty looks being shot his way by the girl, and those of confusion from Ron. No, he started a chat with Neville about plants, idly wondering if it was possible to become so angrily worked up as to spontaneously combust.

Only a few days later they were hustled out of their beds at an ungodly hour and up to the headmaster's office. Seemed that Arthur Weasley had been injured and was at St Mungo's. They were packed off by portkey to headquarters, Harry muttering obscenities under his breath the whole time for the insensitivity the man displayed.

The moment he had the chance Harry dragged Sirius, Remus, and Tonks off for a chat, having quietly requested a safe place to meet, preferably one with many wards in place, or to be emplaced. That made them insanely curious, and he was able to relax once they had settled in, especially since a certain someone had cheerfully wandered by all the bedrooms and cast spells to keep people in a deep sleep for hours.

"So, it's like this," he started, then explained about that day. And while he did not tell them the actual spell, he did perform it for them (non-verbally, which he had practiced at very hard), so they, too, could hear things directly. (In point of fact, Remus figured out the incantation on his own after a bit of thought.)

Well, they were all upset, angry, and looking a bit wild around the eyes by the time he was done. Naturally, they agreed to help. Thoughts were discussed, plans hatched and argued over, and schemes devised. The sleep spell and the warded room became quite popular among the four, and Harry went around looking a bit dragged out all the time from the dent to his usual sleeping schedule. His friends even went so far as to distract Hermione and Ron each time they attempted to do their part for the 'greater good'.

One night was given over entirely to being sneaky, the four of them slipping out after the others had been spelled, for a jaunt over to Diagon Alley. Gringotts was their first stop, where the goblin Mishmash (the name found via a torturous bit of experimentation on Harry's part with that spell and keywords) was delighted to assist them with their revenge, and other various things. The idea of it alone was almost more interesting than the money they'd be paying him, Mishmash confided.

They also stopped in for an appointment in Knockturn Alley, appropriately disguised, to pick up some highly illegal yet very useful (and outrageously expensive) trunks with built-in floos. Harry would have a way to escape the school at will, or they to enter Hogwarts without anyone knowing the difference. Naturally, they set their individual floo names to esoteric things, not wanting anyone to pop in unexpectedly, and they were also protected with a password.

It was close to Easter break when things all started to happen. The little issue of Harry sporting a piece of Voldemort's soul had already been taken care of, Tonks having thought it was a brilliantly fun idea to sneak into the Department of Mysteries for a weird sort of magnet

thing that sucked it right out of his head, but left his own soul intact. And really, the security for that place was laughable. It also worked quite well for the other Horcruxes they had learned about during the daemon's expository lecture on Voldemort. Well, and what it had to say when they asked about 'Voldemort's Horcruxes', so as to know how to *safely* remove them from their hiding places.

Pettigrew showed up on the desk of Amelia Bones one fine morning in a charmed cage that had a letter attached. Before the week was out Sirius Black had been declared innocent of the crimes he'd been imprisoned for, and even pardoned for his escape. The ministry reached out an apologetic hand and also gifted him with quite a chunk of change by way of reparations. Sirius immediately moved to gain custody of Harry, as was proper, and Harry enthusiastically backed him up.

And before Dumbledore had a chance to start telling them how disappointed he was, or that Harry would have to continue to live with the Dursleys due to the protections, Dolores Umbridge suffered a nasty accident during class changeover time and took a header off the top of a staircase. The children there as witnesses were too shocked to act, thus Umbridge hit the floor several storeys down and splattered over a wide area. The house-elves were outraged. And nobody looked twice at Harry Potter as he'd been outside, on his way back from Care of Magical Creatures class.

Easter break arrived and was welcomed open-armed by Harry, who though staying, had every intention of sneaking out every night. Besides, Ron and Hermione would try to weasel invitations, and members of the DA had been overheard talking excitedly about getting in more practice sessions.

Voldemort was tracked down during that week, quite late at night, and 'convinced' that continuing to live was a bad idea. They all had a giggle over the man being silly enough to chase them down that dark hallway, allowing for a trap to be sprung, the one that slammed the walls to either side of him against each other . . . with him in between.

A quick spell was tossed at the body to stiffen it up and a base was added so it could stand up, just like those cardboard cutouts of sports people or superheros used for promotional purposes. That found its way, after Harry had returned to school, to the ministry. And while Voldemort's wand was included, sadly it was splintered beyond all hope, so they had sort of glued it back into shape and attached it to his 'hand' with a sticking charm.

Once the bright people over there confirmed that it was He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, celebrations began all throughout the British wizarding world, and Dumbledore was frequently spotted eyeing Harry suspiciously. He paid the man no never mind and concentrated on his studies, determined to do well, or as well as he could, and also to see how long before Hermione would pick a new subject to rant about. Not that he would hear it, as he was still mysteriously deaf at times.

The OWLs came and went, with Harry convinced he had failed Divination (and rightly so), and probably History, but otherwise he was pleased, believing he had done his best. And then came the train ride home.

“It was such a strange year,” Hermione said, her brow all puckered up. “Hardly anything happened.”

Harry looked at her funny and shrugged. “I sort of thought Voldemort ending up dead was vaguely important.”

“Oh, yes! Well of course! I just mean it was all fairly quiet. It’s wonderful that he’s gone.” She frowned and nibbled her lower lip briefly. “But what about all the Death Eaters?”

“Oh, Harry, do you think you’ll still be in much danger?” Ginny asked, latching onto his arm.

He shifted position so as to coincidentally dislodge her hand, then shrugged. “Dunno. But, that’s supposedly why the ministry employs aurors and hit wizards. Then again, we all know how wonderfully law enforcement and politics rub shoulders.”

“Oi! Well if we become aurors we could *revolutionize* the program,” Ron declared.

He politely refrained from breaking out into hysterical laughter, then frowned when Ginny grabbed his arm again. He shot a concerned look her way and said, “Are you all right? Are you dizzy or something? I know that sometimes it feels like my blood’s too thin and I have to reach out and steady myself. Should we leave and let you have a lie down?”

Ginny reclaimed her hand and blushed. “Sorry,” she muttered.

‘Scheming little tart,’ he thought. ‘Conspiring with your mother to win my favor. Got more bloody personalities than I can keep track of, and don’t think slipping me a love potion will work, either.’ He made a noncommittal sound and opened Pandora’s box by asking, “So how do you think you did on the exams?”

And that carried them through until they arrived in London. On the muggle side he spotted his uncle and pushed his cart over after saying goodbye to his ‘friends’. He was joined by Sirius, Remus, and Tonks, who proceeded to put the fear of torture and death into the man. Granted, he could have gone straight home with his godfather, but it made Dumbledore feel in control and less inclined to directly interfere with his life. And in any case, they could meet in the trunks for the time being.

So he returned to Privet Drive and barricaded himself in the smallest bedroom, not coming out for anything, no matter how much his relatives pounded on the door and demanded he play house-elf for them. His trunk had all the basic amenities, after all. He just had to be careful to be ‘visible’ whenever Moody was on duty.

He was whisked away on his birthday to headquarters, the house still looking like it had been abandoned decades prior, and continued to play stupid. His OWL results arrived, proving that he had failed Divination and History. That was grand, as he'd had enough of them both. Shockingly, Ron earned as many OWLs, though not one Outstanding.

Ginny continued to try to flirt with him (badly) and he continued to be selectively blind, not only to her actions, but to the looks he kept getting from Ron and Hermione. He had to wonder why they were even at headquarters, but supposed it had something to do with Dumbledore being convinced that Voldemort would return, due to his Horcruxes. Well, that and them all being in danger of being picked off by crazed Death Eaters.

To test the theory he was absently playing with the cleansed locket of Slytherin one day, and Dumbledore 'happened' to notice it. He was shuffled off to a dingy sitting room straight away.

"My boy," said Dumbledore, "may I see that?"

Harry shrugged and handed it over, commenting that, "I found it here at headquarters."

Dumbledore examined it very carefully, then looked up with a grave expression. "Harry, you have stumbled over a very important piece of history, except that I believe this may be a copy."

He affected to look interested, eyes firmly on the locket. "What is it, sir? I thought it was just a gaudy locket."

"No, no. Salazar Slytherin once owned a locket like this," Dumbledore said as he handed it back. "And it is my belief that Voldemort spent years gathering up various artifacts, those related to the founders, for something very evil."

Harry licked his lips and leaned forward. "But he's gone now. The ministry said so."

"Ah, but, Harry, how did he survive the night he tried to kill you? No, he enacted a very evil plan, a plan to ensure that his soul was bound to the mortal plane. That is why he wandered as a spirit for so long, and had to use a ritual to embody himself."

"But then what did he do?" he asked, mainly because he thought it would be expected of him.

"Have you ever heard of the term Horcrux? No? A Horcrux is an item which stores a fragment of a person's soul, Harry. It is an evil thing, an abomination. And I have spent years—ever since you destroyed that diary, in fact—searching for leads on where there might be others hidden. I am greatly concerned that Voldemort made more than one, and would therefore be able to embody himself once more."

Harry looked away, trying to appear mildly scared at the idea. "That's disgusting," he whispered, then sat up straight and tried to look brave, though he wouldn't quite meet the old man's eyes. "Can't anything be done?"

“Do not worry about it for right now, my boy. We’ll talk again later on this,” Dumbledore said patronizingly. He rose to his feet and started for the door. “For now try to enjoy your summer.”

He rolled his eyes once the headmaster was gone and tucked the locket into his pocket. During the clandestine gathering that night he reported on the meeting.

“He’s going to be a problem,” Remus growled.

“Well, sure,” Harry said. “And you notice he still said nothing about that stupid prophecy.”

“We’ve got to do something,” Tonks asserted. “But it’s not like we can murder the man in cold blood.”

“Oh, we will,” Sirius promised, a malicious gleam in his eyes. “We’ll figure something out. And it’s just too bad all the Death Eaters didn’t die when snake face did. Would’ve have gleefully danced on Snape’s grave.”

“Can we get rid of him yet?” Harry whined. “Surely there’s tons of students willing to send in complaints. Dumbledore can’t possibly save him, can he, if the board starts a serious inquiry?”

Remus smiled indulgently. “We could send out a mass mailing. Anonymously, of course. See how many students and alumni of Hogwarts would be willing to complain this summer.”

Sadly, when Harry returned for his sixth year, Snape was still employed as the Potions professor, which meant he was barred from the class. Somewhat of a shame as his friends had been teaching him properly. Still, they had assured him he could still take the NEWT if he wished, even without suffering Snape’s vitriol in class.

Two weeks into the term breakfast was interrupted by the arrival of twelve adults, which brought Dumbledore to his feet. The board had arrived, and if the cart they had with them was any indication, Snape was in serious danger of losing his job. Harry didn’t stop smiling for ages after he got to witness the sour man being escorted off school grounds a week later. One down, one to go.

The morning after Halloween the Daily Prophet reported that Lucius Malfoy had died. Something about an allergy to a new line of hair care products he had decided to try. Draco Malfoy looked torn between glee and worry at the news, prompting Harry to later use his little spell again. It turned out that Draco was overjoyed that his domineering brute of a father was dead, but he was worried that his position in the hierarchy of Slytherin was now compromised. He also—and this shocked Harry to pieces—was harboring quite a crush on Harry himself. Had been for years!

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His friends thought that choice bit of information was hilarious. And after that, Harry found himself hard pressed *not* to keep eyeing the blond curiously, and replaying confrontations in his mind to dissect them.

In the end, all their heated discussions and brainstorming sessions on how to deal with Dumbledore were for naught. As it turned out, it was a game went wrong that felled the man. Dumbledore had, for years, enjoyed the hobby of playing Twister with the Hogwarts house-elves, none of the other staff members being the sorts to participate. They were aware of that thanks to the daemon.

And, well, one fine night someone wibbled, wobbled, and all of them hit the floor like a house of cards blown over. Dumbledore snapped his neck when he landed wrong, resulting in some seriously traumatized house-elves.

It was all very tragic.

And Harry lived happily ever after in domestic bliss with Draco Malfoy in France, forsaking his 'friends', despite the record number of howlers they sent him for being out of his bloody mind.