

These Tragic Souls and a Sword Reborn in an Intergalactic Space Opera

Story Intro: "Welcome! I'm an evil god, though not that evil of a god!" is what they woke up to. Join our heroes and heroines, having just met their demise, displaced by an extradimensional event."

Story Starts

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Book 1 - The Empty Twin

Ch 1.6 Gaining Trust in the Thirteen

(Hermione Jane Granger)

[Part 6 of ?]

Location

Grakkan Empire

System: Leafil | Planet: Unnamed Pair of Theta

Date:

Grakkan Standard (GknS) | System | Local | Galactic Standard (GS)

'Revolution' / 'Prime Satellite' / 'Rotation' / 'Time'

GknS 34k6.rev-70% / 10.rev-40% / 255.rot-56% / 17:07:46

System: Leafil | Local: Unknown

GS 13k9.rev-47% / 8.rev-46% / 255.rot-83% / 31:31:03

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Hermione Jane Granger sighed—a long, quiet exhale that carried more exhaustion than she cared to admit—as she stepped into the living room alongside Rin.

The weight of the day pressed heavily upon her shoulders. First, the sudden emergency that had pulled them all together, then the increased burdens they'd only just discovered as the scope of their situation became clearer. Haruka had accompanied Rose outside, both handling the logistics of setting up far more great-hall-sized tents than any of them had initially anticipated.

Hermione's gaze swept across the assembled company. Everyone sat in a loose semicircle facing one direction, several whiteboards fanned out before them like a makeshift war council.

This gathering was considerably more casual. An abundance of platters was scattered across the table in what appeared to be a haphazard arrangement, though someone had clearly put thought into the variety. Roast meat in various preparations, served alongside vegetables—some stir-fried, others roasted to caramelised perfection—and several bowls of fresh salads as lighter options. Baskets of bread nestled between bowls of fluffy rice and dishes of pasta in different shapes and sauces, creating a spread that looked quite inviting.

Hermione gulped at the scrumptious smells her olfactory senses were sending to her brain, but her eyes were inevitably drawn to the sole male member of their group. Shirou sat looking profoundly tired, his shoulders bearing a weighty resignation that suggested this sort of situation wasn't entirely new to him. Illya perched quite contentedly upon his lap, radiating an air of smug satisfaction at having claimed her prize despite his apparent exhaustion.

Hermione felt a fierce blush bloom across her face, heat crawling up her neck and flooding her cheeks as the mortifying memory of this afternoon crashed back into her consciousness. The moment she'd woken, she'd found herself clutching desperately at Shirou's side, her face pressed against his shoulder, one leg thrown over his hip. The very first thing she'd done—before thought, before reason, before any semblance of her usual composure could reassert itself—was scream. Loudly. Directly into his ear.

'Trace on.' Shirou's voice cut through her spiralling embarrassment—low, matter-of-fact.

Hermione watched, momentarily distracted from her mortification, as intricate straight-vector patterns lit up along his forearms, glowing with ethereal

blue-white light. The magic—if that's what it was—worked with startling speed. Within seconds, a chair manifested into being, the air shimmering as matter coalesced from nothing. The construct then adjusted itself, the seat rising with smooth precision until it matched the proper height.

Without ceremony, Shirou lifted Illya—who immediately protested with indignant sputtering—and placed her firmly onto the newly conjured chair. She glared at him, crimson eyes flashing, but he remained utterly unmoved. The entire exchange had the feel of well-worn routine, as if this particular negotiation happened regularly between them.

Hermione's eyes met Gabrielle's across the room at precisely that moment. Both women raised an eyebrow in perfect, unspoken synchronisation.

'He just used two words for his spell,' Hermione thought, her mind immediately latching onto the anomaly, *'and those were in English, I think. Not whatever language we've all been speaking since we woke up.'*

The realisation clicked into place with sudden clarity. They were now—all of them—actually using a completely different spoken language for their everyday communication. Probably the being able to communicate thing Zelretch had talked about? Which, according to **General Knowledge**, was called Galactic Basic. Either way, they'd been conversing in an alien tongue for five hours without consciously noticing the shift.

The English words Shirou had muttered sounded distinctly foreign to her ear—alien in their cadence and pronunciation, even though she understood their meanings perfectly. It was disconcerting, that disconnect between hearing and comprehension.

She'd noticed throughout the day that they all still retained traces of their original accents. Subtle inflexions and rhythms like Rose's British fluidity and Gabrielle's soft French lilt. But those were accent overlays on top of something else entirely.

When Hermione concentrated properly, really listened to the actual phonetic construction of the words rather than just processing their meaning, she could hear it: this wasn't any language from their previous reality. The underlying structure was completely foreign.

It was peculiar that normal conversation was being translated seamlessly, whilst the words Shirou had used for his spell remained untouched by the effect.

Hermione hadn't tested whether their own spells behaved similarly. They rarely voiced incantations aloud anymore, having progressed to silent casting years ago. Would 'Lumos' remain in Latin, or would it translate into this new language? Something else to investigate.

But the spell itself was what truly caught her attention. He'd not only conjured a physical object—a chair, complete and stable—he'd then adjusted it after the fact, raising the seat with apparent ease. All with the same two-word incantation.

Hermione had discussed magical systems with Rin briefly that afternoon. From that conversation, she'd understood their magic to be quite limited compared to their wand-based magic—at least, that's what she'd assumed. Yet wandless conjuration followed by wandless transfiguration? That combination was beyond most fully trained wizards, typically requiring exceptional power reserves and control.

She filed the discrepancy away mentally, adding it to her growing list of anomalies to investigate. Whatever Shirou's magic was, it didn't follow the rules she knew. And it had looked utterly effortless.

"Ahem!" The sharp sound cut through the ambient conversation, followed immediately by a decisive clap as Rin moved to gather everyone's attention. She stood with purposeful authority, her posture straightening as all eyes

turned towards her. "Right, then. We actually need to have a proper working dinner this evening—there's far too much to discuss, and we can't afford to waste time dancing around it."

The casual atmosphere shifted subtly, the easy warmth cooling as tensions coiled beneath the surface. The weight of unspoken questions settled over the group like a blanket—heavy, unavoidable.

Rin turned deliberately towards Hermione, giving her a brief but unmistakable nod of acknowledgement—a silent passing of the torch. Hermione felt the familiar flutter of nerves mixed with determination as she prepared to take centre stage, her mind already cataloguing the points she needed to address.

But before she could even open her mouth, Shirou suddenly rose to his feet with fluid grace, his expression thoughtful. "Oh—before that, Gabrielle," he said evenly, glancing towards the Veela with calm practicality, "do you happen to have any high tables? So Hermione and Rin can actually eat comfortably as well?"

Rin's lips curved into a small, appreciative smile as she glanced back at him, warmth flickering briefly in her turquoise eyes.

Gabrielle's expression brightened immediately at the request, her natural radiance seeming to intensify with eagerness to help. Without hesitation, she drew her wand in one smooth, confident motion and gave it an elegant flick. Two high tables immediately responded to her summons, launching themselves across the room with impressive speed.

But then—quite abruptly—something went wrong.

The tables wobbled mid-flight, their trajectory destabilising as if struck by an invisible gust of wind. They tumbled awkwardly through the air before crashing onto the floor with a splintering crack, wooden pieces scattering across the polished surface in a chaotic sprawl.

Gabrielle's radiant expression faltered instantly, her brilliant eyes widening in surprise and confusion. A frown creased her normally serene features as she stared down at the wreckage, genuine bewilderment flickering across her face.

'This wasn't supposed to happen—Gabrielle's control was usually impeccable,' Hermione thought.

With another swift wave of Gabrielle's wand, more deliberate this time, the scattered wooden fragments shuddered. The scattered wooden fragments shuddered, then began stitching themselves back together with methodical precision, knitting into two whole tables once more.

But the moment of failure hung in the air, unspoken but acknowledged.

Both Hermione and Gabrielle exchanged a meaningful glance, their heads tipping quizzically in near-perfect synchronisation. Hermione could see her own confusion mirrored in Gabrielle's expression, the same question forming silently between them.

"Rose also complained earlier about her control not being stable," Hermione murmured aloud, her voice carrying a note of genuine concern now. She hesitated, her frown deepening as she tried to puzzle through the cause. Curiosity and scientific instinct kicked in immediately. Hermione drew her own wand with crisp efficiency, mentally selecting a simple target. With a focused flick, she summoned a pillow from one of the adjoining rooms.

The pillow responded instantly—but far too enthusiastically.

It shot through the doorway like a cannonball, zooming across the space with alarming velocity before slamming directly into the side of one of the newly repaired high tables. The impact was jarring; the table tipped violently to the

side before crashing onto the floor again, splintering into pieces for the second time.

Hermione's lips pressed into a thin line, frustration and analytical focus warring within her. This was absurd. She'd performed summoning charms thousands of times—this level of instability shouldn't be happening.

With another precise wave, she repaired the table yet again, watching the scattered wood fragments crawl back together with practised ease, the magic flowing smoothly through her wand despite the earlier chaos. Then, with a deliberate swish and flick, she levitated the errant pillow—the one that had caused all the destruction—guiding it carefully towards the surface of the twice-repaired table. She lowered it with painstaking gentleness, with all the control and precision she could muster, treating it as if it were made of spun glass.

But even that didn't work properly.

The pillow settled onto the table's surface—but not quite centred, not quite right. It sat slightly askew, the weight distribution just fractionally off-balance in a way that shouldn't matter but somehow did. And then, as if mocking her careful efforts, it tipped slowly, almost lazily sideways and tumbled off the edge, landing on the floor with an anticlimactic *plop* that somehow felt insulting.

Hermione stared at it, her analytical mind racing through possibilities even as irritation prickled sharply at the edges of her thoughts, threatening her usual composure. *'What is happening? What variable am I missing?'*

She tried again—this time conjuring a pillow directly onto the table's surface rather than summoning and levitating one. Eliminate steps, reduce complexity. The conjuration itself was flawless; the pillow materialised in perfect detail, its fabric texture identical to the summoned one, the stitching precise and even, the quality indistinguishable from a physically crafted object. She'd done well on that front, at least.

And yet, once again, it tipped off the table almost immediately—within seconds, really—as if the universe itself refused to let it stay put, as if gravity had personal grievances.

"Strukturanalyse." Rin's voice cut through the moment with clinical precision, her tone sharp and focused as she interjected beside Hermione.

Hermione glanced towards her, watching as Rin's clear turquoise eyes shimmered faintly, her pupils reflecting prismatic traces of magical energy.

"Interesting," Rin murmured thoughtfully, her gaze sweeping over both pillows—the summoned and the conjured—with methodical attention.

"Conceptually, this is a pillow. Conceptually, it is made of cotton and feathers, structured exactly as it should be. But at the same time..." She paused, her brow furrowing slightly. "...it's fundamentally composed of prana."

Rin crouched down gracefully beside the conjured pillow, her movements elegant despite the analytical intensity radiating from her. She reached forwards slowly, extending one slender finger, and poked the pillow's surface with deliberate curiosity.

The moment her finger made contact, the pillow began to deflate. Motes of light escaped from the point of impact, shimmering and dispersing into the air like tiny fireflies. Then, quite suddenly, the entire structure collapsed inward on itself, bursting into a cascade of brilliant light that faded almost immediately.

Rin straightened smoothly, brushing her hands against her skirt with brisk efficiency as she turned back towards Hermione, her expression thoughtful and intent, already moving to the next phase of analysis.

"It looks like your projection is technically perfect," Rin said evenly, her tone carrying the calm authority of someone dissecting a particularly complex theorem. "But you're having significant problems with the spatial coordinates

of your magic—specifically, the XYZ positioning." She tilted her head slightly, her eyes sharpening with focus as she studied Hermione's face. "What exactly do you use as a reference point when casting? How do you determine where the magic manifests in three-dimensional space?"

Hermione opened her mouth to respond, her mind already formulating an explanation, but Rin held up a hand suddenly, her expression shifting with abrupt curiosity.

"Actually—wait. Can you try a different mystery first?" Rin asked quickly, her tone eager now, almost excited, as if an idea had just sparked within her mind and she needed to test it immediately. "Something simpler, more direct. I want to see if the coordinate problem is consistent across different actualisations of mysteries."

Hermione blinked, momentarily thrown off-balance by the abrupt shift in direction, but nodded in agreement. She raised her wand again, vine wood steady in her grip, focusing her intent carefully on the simplest spell she knew.

"Light," she said aloud in Galactic Basic, her voice clear and firm, enunciating the translated word with precision.

Nothing happened. Not even a flicker.

"*Lumos*," she intoned clearly, switching to the original Latin incantation, solving her earlier question in the process—she did have to use the original spell words rather than their translated equivalents. The magic wouldn't respond to Galactic Basic at all. Though she did admit that she might have been able to do this wordlessly, and her saying 'Lumos' was just extra.

A bright, steady light immediately bloomed from the tip of her wand, illuminating the space around her with warm, golden radiance that pushed back the shadows. Hermione felt a flicker of satisfaction—finally, at least this spell had worked properly, exactly as it should.

But then Rin stepped closer, her expression shifting into something more analytical as she leaned in to examine the light source more closely. She held her chin thoughtfully between thumb and forefinger, her eyes narrowing with sharp focus, studying the illumination.

"Is it supposed to hover off-centre from the tip of your wand?" Rin asked quietly, her tone laced with genuine curiosity rather than criticism.

Hermione blinked, then looked down at her wand more carefully, really studying the light for the first time rather than simply accepting its presence. Her breath caught slightly as she realised Rin was absolutely right—the light wasn't positioned precisely at the wand's tip as she'd always unconsciously assumed. Instead, it hovered roughly a centimetre to the left and slightly below where she assumed it should have been, floating in space like a misaligned beacon.

She'd never actually observed the precise positioning of the light before—not in all her years of casting Lumos, not through countless nights of studying by wandlight. Technically, functionally, she'd always assumed it emanated directly from the wand's tip, given that spells generally manifested from that focal point. It was such a basic assumption, so foundational to her understanding, that she'd never questioned it. But now, seeing it clearly displaced, the offset visible and undeniable...

'How many other things have I never noticed?' she wondered.

"You were asking about XYZ coordinates and reference points," Hermione began slowly, her brow furrowing as she tried to organise her thoughts amidst the current sidetracked topic, pulling herself back to Rin's earlier question.

"We don't... really think of positioning in those terms. It's more about providing clear intent and visualisation—focusing on what we want to happen, rather than calculating exact spatial coordinates. The magic responds to our will, our mental image of the desired outcome."

"Hmm—" Rin adopted a pensive look, her gaze growing distant and unfocused as she processed that information, clearly running through logical progressions in her mind. "So that means something else must be processing your intent and visualisation for you. Some intermediary system translating your desires into spatial reality." She paused, her eyes sharpening suddenly as she met Hermione's gaze directly, pinning her with focused attention. "Is magic in your reality sentient? Or at least something close to sentient? Does it have agency?"

Hermione felt a sudden rush of admiration for how quickly Rin had reached that conclusion—how elegantly she'd connected the dots from such limited information, leaping across logical gaps with apparent ease. It was the kind of intellectual reasoning that Hermione herself prided herself on, the ability to synthesise disparate data points into coherent theory. Seeing it mirrored in someone else, someone from an entirely different reality with completely different magical frameworks, was oddly thrilling. Validating, even.

"That's one of the prevailing theories," Hermione admitted, her tone warming considerably with genuine interest, the kind of warmth reserved for discussing favourite academic subjects. "Though it's unlikely that magic is sentient in the way we'd traditionally define consciousness—it probably doesn't possess its own character, personality, or independent will. Personally, I subscribe to the theory that magic in general responds to external stimuli—intent, emotion, ritual structure—rather than acting independently with its own agenda. It's reactive rather than proactive."

"Oh," Rin murmured thoughtfully, her expression brightening with sudden understanding, pieces clearly falling into place in her mind. "So with the proper intent, proper guidance of prana, and proper visualisation, magic responds and manifests its determined conclusion automatically?" She paused, her gaze growing more intense, almost excited as the full implication struck her.

"Without needing to take into account that the world rotates at roughly one thousand six hundred and seventy kilometres per hour, revolves around the sun at approximately one hundred and seven thousand kilometres per hour, and simultaneously travels through space as the solar system itself revolves around the galaxy at about seven times that speed? All those constantly shifting spatial coordinates?"

Hermione's mind stuttered to a halt, the implication hitting her like a physical blow. *'Oh no.'*

Then two soft thuds echoed as Shirou placed two laden plates on the high table before them, each filled with a carefully curated selection from the dishes spread across the communal tables below—roasted meats, stir-fried vegetables, fluffy rice, a bit of everything arranged with surprising aesthetic consideration. He also set down the full complement of utensils with quiet efficiency—both a fork and knife, a spoon, and a pair of elegant chopsticks.

"Hermione, are you done briefing everyone on our current predicament?" Rose's voice suddenly cut through the theoretical haze like a knife through fog, sharp and pointed.

Hermione looked up sharply, blinking as if surfacing from deep water, pulled abruptly from the spiralling implications of spatial coordinates and reactive magical systems. She found both Rose and Haruka approaching their table, both women looking faintly tired but satisfied, their clothing slightly dishevelled in that particular way that spoke of physical labour recently completed. Clearly they'd just finished their task setting up the expanded tent encampments.

'Right. Reality. Food. Survival. Practical matters. Our current predicament is not a magical theory exercise—it's thousands of newly awakened beings who need feeding.'

"Everything's been set up and I've opened several of our food reserves so the newly awakened ones can prepare themselves dinner," Rose reported as she

surveyed the selection of food on their table with an appraising eye. "But with approximately six thousand house-elves, six herds of centaurs, twelve schools of merfolk and sirens, and fifteen hoards of goblins now awake, our current food reserves might not last a month and a half—two months at most if we stretched rationing to uncomfortable levels."

Haruka, meanwhile, pulled out a chair with quiet grace and settled herself beside Ryuu, offering the blonde elf a small, warm smile that Ryuu returned with equal gentleness.

Hermione registered Rose's frown deepening as Rose's sharp emerald gaze shifted from the food to Hermione herself—still standing awkwardly, wand still lit and raised—then to Rin, who stood equally frozen in place, her expression distant and inward-turned, clearly lost in contemplation.

The blush that had begun to fade from Hermione's cheeks surged back with renewed vigour, spreading like wildfire across her face. *'Oh no.'*

Rose sighed loudly, the sound heavy with affectionate exasperation and unmistakable recognition. "Let me guess," she said dryly, crossing her arms beneath her chest as she fixed Hermione with a knowing look, "you got completely sidetracked testing some magical theory you just thought of?"

Hermione's blush deepened even further, the crimson flush now spreading down past her jaw to reach her collarbone, radiating heat she was absolutely certain everyone could see. She wanted to protest but...

Beside her, Shirou raised one hand in a perfectly solemn thumbs-up gesture, his expression remaining utterly stoic despite the clear amusement glinting in his golden eyes. The silent confirmation was devastatingly effective.

Hermione risked a glance around the table and caught nearly everyone else offering hesitant nods of agreement—expressions ranging from sympathetic to

mildly entertained. Even Gabrielle simply grinned sheepishly and shrugged as though to say guilty as charged.

"You can add Rin to the list of those who get distract—OW!" Shirou added unhelpfully.

Sure enough, Rin's heel came down sharply onto Shirou's foot with a resounding stomp.

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END

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