

## EPISODE 7 PLOT GETS REAL

HARRISON: Is this still working? I hope this is still working. I've never done Facebook Live before because I don't usually have a whole lot to be livestreaming -- I mean, I guess you could all watch me livestream my homework, but what fun would that be -- but today--*today* I have a *special reason* to be Facebook Live-ing. Today, I am going to locate the Sidlesmith Valentine that Dorothea the librarian hid. And then I'm going to bring the Valentine to the Sock Hop tonight! It is going to be perfect. Like a perfect storybook fairy tale. The Sidlesmith way.

So, I've been doing a bunch of research, and I'm pretty sure that I've figured out where Dorothea hid the Valentine. You see, if you read the definitive Sidlesmith history *Collected Love Letters*, you'll learn that in the early days of Sidlesmith it was common for lovers to leave each other notes hidden behind the carved Cupid at the top of the Fireplace of Love in the Romance Reading Room. That's got to be where Dorothea hid the Valentine, right? So my plan is to get behind the carved Cupid. Of course, the ceiling heights here are fifteen feet, but that's why I lugged this ladder all the way across campus. If you're just tuning in, I have set the ladder up by the Fireplace of Love and it's... not quite tall enough, so... regrouping a bit. Thinking of what to do next.

VOICE FROM FAR AWAY: Shh! This is a library!

HARRISON: It's the day of the Sock Hop! What are you even doing studying? Go find yourself something gorgeous to wear and gear up for enjoying yourself!

VOICE FROM FAR AWAY: Screw you, my girlfriend left me for a wide receiver.

HARRISON: Oh, well, that's — oh. Look, this is why I can't fail. I'm doing this for you. You'll get your girlfriend back. Everyone will get everyone back. [SOUND OF LADDER BEING DRAGGED, fumbling] Okay, haha, no one can actually see me but I've propped part of the ladder on the stone next *to* the fireplace and if I can just get it to be stable I can probably — er — maybe.

DREW: [coming closer from a distance] Oh, my God, stop, stop, that is not safe at all, you're going to break your neck, what are you doing?

HARRISON: Drew. What are you doing here? In your... suit. Is that what you're wearing for the dance?

DREW: [now close enough to hear like normal] I'm not answering until you come down from that death trap. What the hell. You can't balance a ladder on a *rock*.

HARRISON: [sounds of descending from a ladder, shakily!!!!] I'm... looking for the Valentine.

DREW: Yeah. I know. Here, let me — [sounds of Drew helping Harrison off the ladder, Harrison probably landing in his arms] — oh. Hey.

HARRISON: Hey.

DREW: You okay?

HARRISON: Yeah. [A little breathless] I'm great. You look amazing.

DREW: It's just a suit.

HARRISON: It's a nice suit. On a nice person.

DREW: Well.

VOICE FROM FAR AWAY: Get a room already!

HARRISON: What are *you* doing here?

DREW: Your video is all over my feed, what did you think I was going to do, let you damage school property and get permanently banned from the library without me?

HARRISON: You rushed to my aid! Wearing black tie... With a bunch of radio equipment.

DREW: Look, I was just already dressed for the dance. Aren't we supposed to dress up for the dance?

HARRISON: You dressed up early, though.

DREW: It's not early. The dance is starting in an hour. Why do you think I have all this radio equipment? We have to get there early to set up for the broadcast.

HARRISON: Really? It's that late? Huh. I guess time flies.

DREW: Apparently. I was worried you were going to kill yourself on this thing and then I'd have to broadcast from the sock hop all alone, and *that* wasn't going to happen.

HARRISON [starry-eyed]: Oh.

DREW: And then Hal told me we might as well start the broadcast early. So. Here we are, Fluffers, you're listening to WFLUF The FLUFF and — [he drops his voice to a stage whisper] — we have to be quiet, it's a library. You can turn that off now.

HARRISON: Shan't. My Facebook Live fans want us to keep filming.

DREW: You have fans? That's... okay, wow. That's a lot of live viewers.

HARRISON: We have a popular show.

DREW: No, no, you just probably know seven million people on Facebook. We definitely don't have that many people listening to our show.

HARRISON: These aren't my friends. They're our listeners. We're a hit. You still haven't learned to take a compliment. And now everyone can see that patented Drew blush I've told them about! And your suit. See? This is fun!

DREW: Um. Right.

HARRISON: So how do we get up to the top of the fireplace?

DREW: We don't.

HARRISON: You said you were going to help me.

DREW: I don't think the Valentine is behind the cherub.

HARRISON: That's where Sidlesmith lovers used to hide their —

DREW: Okay, first of all, how is this school's main history just a collection of love letters? It's not helpful.

HARRISON: It's Sidlesmith.

DREW: Second, when do you think Dorothea had time to get the Valentine behind the cherub? It's not easily accessible and she didn't have a lot of options.

HARRISON: ...Good point.

DREW: Third, I've been doing some research on our pal Dorothea. See, freshman year I did a work study in the library, and it turns out my login to the database still works, which means I have access to, uh, basically everyone's library account.

HARRISON [gasps]: Drew! You hacked the library?

DREW: It's not hacking, I just used perfectly legitimate credentials that were, uh, never deactivated.

HARRISON: I'm pretty sure that's hacking.

DREW: The *point* is—

HARRISON: I didn't know you could hack. That's... something [he means "sexy"].

DREW: I can't hack. It's not hacking. Can we get back to the point?

HARRISON: Oh my gosh, can you see what everyone's reading? Can you see who's checked out *The Alchemist* recently? Cal mentioned that he'd been reading it in one of his columns and—

DREW: Are you seriously thinking about *Cal* right now? Harrison, I think I know where Dorothea hid whatever she found in that box.

HARRISON: And it's not behind the cherub?

DREW: It's not behind the cherub.

HARRISON: How do you know that?

DREW: I'm trying to tell you. When I logged into the library database I saw that she checked out a bunch of legal books that she returned the day before she came on our show.

HARRISON: I... Legal books? Why would we care about legal books?

DREW: If you were going to hide something you didn't want discovered, wouldn't you put it between the pages of some legal books? I mean, when do *those* ever get checked out? All the law students do their work online these days.

HARRISON: So you think the Valentine is in one of the legal books?

DREW: I think **that** is way more likely than that she somehow scrambled up to an

impossible-to-reach cherub without anyone seeing.

HARRISON: They used to do it in the old days.

DREW: They had a ladder anchored to this wall to reach it.

HARRISON: ...Wait, they did?

DREW: Yes.

HARRISON: How do you know that?

DREW: I looked at archival photos. You can actually see where the bolts were attached here--and here.

HARRISON: Huh. That never came up in any of the love letters.

DREW: [drily] I'm astonished.

HARRISON: Okay, so let's take everyone to the legal section of the library.

SAME VOICE FROM A DISTANCE: **Thank God!**

HARRISON: Sorry about your girlfriend and the wide receiver! Hope you find your trope soon!

DREW: Let's go.

[SOUNDS OF...IDK, MOVEMENT]

HARRISON: Do you know where the legal section of the library is?

DREW: I looked at a map.

HARRISON: Drew, you're good at this!

DREW: Because I looked at a map?

HARRISON: And you hacked into the library database.

DREW: No, I didn't.

HARRISON: You even looked at archival photos.

DREW: That was just... investigative... stuff.

HARRISON: See the blush, viewers? Isn't the blush great? Doesn't Drew look very dashing? Like our very own Sidlesmith version of a war correspondent. In a suit.

DREW: That's — Nothing about that is accurate.

HARRISON: So Cal said that Quests, even dubious Quests, are important for the heart and soul; that you need something to quest after to feel alive; that we should all feel comfortable tilting at windmills every so often because it reminds us to think about things grander than the *ordinary* mundane concerns of life. That was almost an exact quote.

DREW: ...How many times did you read that column?

HARRISON: I feel like he was trying to give me support in my quest for the Valentine. Like, trying to make me feel better about doing this. That I shouldn't be discouraged that some people might think this quest is *pointless*.

DREW: Okay.



HARRISON: Do you think Cal listens to our show? I feel like Cal might listen to our show.

DREW: Can we stop talking about Cal now?

HARRISON: Jealous?

DREW: [laughs bitterly] No. I am *not* jealous of Cal. This way.

[moment of silence]

HARRISON: Thank you for coming.

DREW: [surprised] What? Here? Of course.

HARRISON: I'd rather have you here than Cal.

DREW: Oh, really?

HARRISON: I'm sure you're a better investigator. I doubt Cal would have hacked into the library.

DREW: I didn't... Never mind.

HARRISON: Have you ever thought about that?

DREW: Thought about what?

HARRISON: If you had to choose some kind of detective partner, who would it be?

DREW: I have never thought about that.

HARRISON: I think about that a lot. For instance: If you had to be in a musical group with a bunch of people, who would they be?

DREW: Strangers, because aren't most musical groups manufactured by Simon Cowell from people who have never met before?

HARRISON: Not *all* of them.

DREW: I don't think I would do well in a boy band.

HARRISON: You're more of the solo artist strumming his guitar.

DREW: I don't play the guitar.

HARRISON: Piano?

DREW: I don't play any musical instruments.

HARRISON: But what would you play if you could?

DREW: The bassoon.

HARRISON: Really?

DREW: You'd be good in a boy band.

HARRISON: [delighted] Do you think so?

DREW: Or a girl band.

HARRISON: [even more delighted] *Thank* you!

DREW: Here we are.

HARRISON: Is this the law book section?

DREW: Yes.

HARRISON: They all look exactly the same, don't they? Very...forbidding.

DREW: They're not forbidding. They're just...densely packed with knowledge.

HARRISON: Like someone else I know.

DREW: Okay.

HARRISON: I meant you.

DREW: I know, but that was a ridiculous thing to say.

HARRISON: See, everyone, what I mean about how Drew still hasn't learned how to take a  
compliment?

DREW: That wasn't a compliment. You called the books forbidding. It's not a compliment to be  
forbidding.

HARRISON: He says forbiddingly, his chiseled, handsome features creasing as he arches one  
sardonic eyebrow, forbidding yet... strangely endearing.

DREW: . . . . Can we just... look at law books?

HARRISON: [whispering to the viewers] Note the blush.

DREW: *So.* Each of the books Dorothea checked out were books about contracts.

HARRISON: Contracts? Why would Sidlesmith care about contracts?

DREW: I don't know, but she picked a great location.

HARRISON: Yeah, seriously. I don't think even the rats ever come this far back here.

DREW: [coughing] Look for section 340 dot 652, letter M. First author's name is Milroy, second one is Morstan.

HARRISON: Right. [Also coughing] Geez, it is seriously dusty back here. [Pause] Drew.

DREW: Hmm?

HARRISON: ...You don't think Sidlesmith ever.

DREW [Absently]: Ever what.

HARRISON: Back here.

DREW: Hmm? Wait, seriously? *Here?* You're fantasizing about *Sidlesmith?*

HARRISON: I'm just saying, it's really remote!

DREW: Well if they did, they were the last two people who did, since probably no one's been back here until Dorothea.

HARRISON: I don't think Dorothea's been back here either.

DREW: What do you mean?

HARRISON: Look, here are the M's. But this coat of dust is totally undisturbed. Nobody's touched these books.

DREW: Then how could she have checked them out?

HARRISON: Maybe she had the barcodes for them already?

DREW: Maybe. Or maybe she swapped the barcodes. Look, see, these barcodes are on the spines, she could have easily swapped them around with some other book, then checked out that book as a way of making sure her tracks were covered.

HARRISON: But that means, what? It could be any book in the library?

DREW: Maybe. But I don't think so. Look around for some kind of, I don't know, break in the dust trail?

HARRISON: Viewers and listeners, let the record show that Drew looks flustered.

DREW: I don't see how that's relevant.

HARRISON: Trust me, it's relevant.

DREW: Hmph. [He's mildly charmed] Hey, what's — oh, nevermind, it's a dust bunny.

HARRISON: What about this section up here? These books have definitely been handled recently, look, you can see fingerprints. Right over the barcode, even.

DREW: Really? *Contract Law for American Magicians and Sorcerers, 1745–1861*. Harrison, you're brilliant.

HARRISON: Brilliant, you say?

DREW: Utterly genius.

HARRISON: Well. Hey. It's right next to... *Contracts for Lovers*.

[Sounds of books being pulled off shelves]

HARRISON: How will we know when we've found whatever it is?

DREW: I'm pretty sure we'll know.

HARRISON: Drew, that's so... romantic of you.

DREW: It's not romantic.

HARRISON: It is. You'll know it when you see it, like falling in love. It's a very apt way to find a Valentine.

DREW: Hey. If we don't find the Valentine, you know it'll still be okay, right?

HARRISON: Nonsense. We're going to find the Valentine. In fact. I'm pretty sure it's right—

DREW: What? What'd you find?

HARRISON: Check your book? I have... half of some sort of map.

DREW: *Seriously?*

HARRISON: It's right here. It looks like some sort of library blueprint. Yeah, see, there's a line running through the stacks on this floor —

DREW: —Convenient, thanks, Dorothea—

HARRISON: — but then the page is torn.

[Flipping page sounds]

DREW: Wow. Here it is. You'd think this would be... I don't know, harder?

HARRISON: Drew, are you serious? You hacked your way into the system, then figured out the switched barcodes, and now you're sitting here with two halves of a map you only found thanks to *dust patterns*. You're amazing. Honestly. I could never have done any of this on my own.

DREW: Well. Same. Same here.

HARRISON: [LONG PAUSE WHILE THEY GLOW AT EACH OTHER] Well. Let's put these babies together.

DREW: Is that really pointing to the scariest part of this building?

HARRISON: The super-creepy crawl space in the very back of the stacks? Yes. Yes it is.

DREW: Welp. It's a good thing I'm wearing my nicest suit.

HARRISON: I'm sorry. Here, you've got dust — just there.

DREW: Oh.

HARRISON: You didn't have to do this, you know. Come down here and rummage through old moldy books and fight dust bunnies and get your nice suit all rumpled.

DREW: [Sigh] Yeah, I did. Come on.

[WALKING SOUNDS LOL]

DREW: Okay, this place is creepy.

HARRISON: More proof Dorothea hid it where no one would ever come.

DREW: The map's pointing to that weird alcove-thing over there. I think there's a crevice, see that?  
Hang on.

HARRISON: Listeners, Drew is on his knees manfully braving the rubble. Viewers, you can see that, so, please enjoy.

DREW: I look like a fool.

HARRISON: You definitely don't look like a fool.

DREW: I'm digging through generations of spiders because a map in a book told me to.



HARRISON: [wisely] You should never ignore a map in a book.

DREW: Spoken like someone who grew up on fantasy novels.

HARRISON: [smiling] Are there a lot of spiders?

DREW: Probably just the amount you would expect in the forgotten crawl-space of a century-old building.

HARRISON: You are very brave, Drew.

DREW: Not really.

HARRISON: You are very Anderson-Cooper-in-a-foreign-war right now.

DREW: [trying not to sound as pleased as he is by this comparison] Oh. Well. I mean. Not really. But... thank you.

HARRISON: Probably you'll be asked to be on the Board of Trustees after this.

DREW: That doesn't even sound like something I'd want to do.

HARRISON: Could be a meet-cute for you.

DREW: I don't think my meet-cute is happening on the Board of Trustees.

HARRISON: No? [playful] Tell me, Drew, how do you imagine your meet-cute?

DREW: Tinder.

HARRISON: [laughs] You're in a rumpled suit with dust on your face in the abandoned crawl-space of the Sidlesmith library, with thousands of people listening and watching along.

DREW: Thousands?

HARRISON: Shh, let me have this.

DREW: What's your point?

HARRISON: My point is: You're in a perfect place for a meet-cute.

DREW: I... Who am I meeting down here besides the spiders?

HARRISON: [god, just so impossibly fondly] Who indeed?

DREW: I... I think I've found something.

HARRISON: OMG! The Valentine?

DREW: No, it's a— it's a Bluebook.

HARRISON: Oh.

DREW: Jake got a B-plus on his copyright final.

HARRISON: Anything else?

DREW: Wait. Here's—

HARRISON: Ooh! That's an envelope.

DREW: It's — it looks like some kind of parchment.

HARRISON: What's it say? [DREW reads it, processes it] .... Drew?

DREW [softly, handing it over slowly] Here.

HARRISON: [pause while Harrison absorbs what's on the paper] This is...

DREW: Yeah. Harrison, I—

HARRISON: I... this is.... What *is* this?

DREW: Listeners — and viewers — if Harrison will bring his phone over here I think we can show  
you —

HARRISON: No!

DREW: What?

HARRISON: We can't tell them.

DREW: We have to. They have to know.

HARRISON: No.

DREW: What? We promised we'd tell them what we found —

HARRISON: No, *you* promised you'd, I don't know, go all undercover in your sexy undercover  
journalism mode. And you got what you wanted.

DREW: Wait, this has nothing to do with me.

HARRISON: Yes it does. If you hadn't gone all hard-nosed reporter on Dorothea she could have just had her say and no one would have cared—

DREW: She got dragged out of our studio by men in black suits, I think people would have noticed. And anyway, she *lost her job*, we owed it to her to try to verify what she was saying—

HARRISON: You just wanted your Anderson Cooper moment in the spotlight!

DREW: That's *not* fair and you know it.

HARRISON: Look, if no one knows then the genie stays in the bottle, everything stays the same—

DREW: The genie was never *in* the bottle, Harrison, that's the whole point, *there is no genie*—

HARRISON: *Yes, there is*, and I'm sorry you're too cynical and stubborn to see that—

DREW: *Hey*—

HARRISON: —but people come to Sidlesmith for the romance and the magic and the possibility of true love and *that's what they get* when they're here, and that's special, that's not something you can just play god with.

DREW: It's not *playing god* to tell people the truth. It's our *responsibility*—

HARRISON: Oh, please, you're gloating, you *never* believed in the Sidlesmith magic, I don't know what you're even *doing* here—

DREW: Well, *maybe I didn't*, maybe I never have, maybe you're right! Is that so hard to believe when all it does is make people bury themselves in some kind of trumped-up fantasy that's not real instead of dealing with their own realities? What, is that too cynical for you? Harrison? You think I don't notice how quick you are to avoid dealing with any kind of social situation that makes you uncomfortable? How much you try to deflect whenever anyone asks you anything personal about yourself? How you're so lonely you're eager to watch *Edwardian operetta* on a Friday night?

HARRISON: That was something I wanted to do *with you*, not because I was lonely—

DREW: But you *are*, you *are* lonely, Harrison. And whatever you came to Sidlesmith for, you're not going to find it writing stories in your head about the baristas at Kishi's, or trying to matchmake everyone else on campus while you hide from yourself.

HARRISON: I'm not *hiding* from anything! And I was doing just fine before you came along with your, your edgy hipster pessimism or whatever—

DREW: Not hiding? Not making up fake names and hiding in fairy tales and nursery rhymes to distract us from whatever the boring truth is about your life and yourself? Not obsessing over a fictional persona around campus who may or may not be who you think he is because it's easier than facing up to something imperfect and real?

HARRISON: You leave Cal out of this—

DREW: I *can't* leave Cal out of this because you can't go five minutes without dragging him into a conversation and I'm working hard enough to get you to see past all the tropes and see *me*,

Harrison. I'm *right here* and, and, sorry, I'm not going to give you your meet-cute or your happy tropey guy-gets-guy moment, but if that's really all that you're looking for, then maybe it just proves that I'm right about everything, because that's *not* magic, Harrison, that's not even a decent hat trick, that's just smoke and mirrors. And if that's all that Sidlesmith magic is, then it definitely means there was never any magic at Sidlesmith for me.

HARRISON [shakily]: You—you know why I can't stop bringing up Cal? It's because he gets what I want in a way you can't and never will.

DREW: Oh, really.

HARRISON: Yes, *really*. He looks at people and he sees *hope* and *potential* and all the ways people can make each other happy, and maybe--maybe if you're lonely, okay, if you're lonely that's what you want, you want to be able to see that in people, the hope and the faith that people really can love each other, that it isn't always going to be like this. But instead all *you* see, Drew, is all the ways people are bound to inevitably fail or irritate each other or disappoint each other and nothing will ever get better.

DREW: That—that's not true.

HARRISON: And I don't think that's *better*. You walk around all holier-than-thou over the fact that *you* don't get pulled in by believing in magic, that you don't fall for the joke that maybe happiness is a possibility. Clever Drew, won't ever get suckerpunched by *joy*. Your way isn't *better*. You think you're so smart with your *Merry Widow* psychoanalysis of me, but what I know is that I'm the one who's willing to take a leap and find happiness wherever I can, and

you aren't. Because if you did, if you found a happy relationship, then you might have to admit that maybe there's something more to life than just cynical detachment and judging all those poor fools who want to fall in love and give it a try. It doesn't make you *braver*, Drew. It just makes you even lonelier than me, and that is pretty fucking difficult to accomplish, and the difference between you and me is that you don't want to *not* be lonely, because you've already written off the whole possibility that you could be happy — and that means you'll never get a chance not to be, and I think *that's* sad. Sadder than wanting to believe in magic.

DREW: I don't — I don't think I'm — I wanted to — I —

HARRISON: In yesterday's Cal column, did you read it? Of course you didn't. He wrote that the greatest thing about the annual sock hop isn't the rose ceremony, when everyone confesses to their crushes. It's the part that comes afterwards, when all that waiting and build-up and anticipation and crushing turns into the first dance, because it's never as good or as smooth or as romantic as you think it's going to be—when you're up close and personal it's always awkward and there are always flaws and you're always nervous and clumsy and a mess, but that's what makes it great, that's what makes it better than the fantasy could ever be, because you're two flawed messy people finding each other in a flawed, messed-up world, and *that's what real romance is*, the moment when the fantasy wakes up to the reality and you keep reaching for each other anyway, wanting each other anyway, believing that you can be messy wrecks in love together and it will all be okay. That's what he sees, that's what lies behind the romance, and he *believes in people* and he makes me believe, too, and— and all you ever do is fill me with doubt.

DREW [gut-punched]: *Harrison.*

HARRISON: I'm sorry. But it's true.

DREW: I just—I just want to be real. With you and everyone. It's why I have to tell them what's on this paper. And I *know* deep-down you want that, too.

HARRISON: No. *No.*

DREW: *Please—*

HARRISON: No. *I'm serious*, if you do this, I'll— [pause]

DREW: — What?

HARRISON: — I'll quit. I'll quit the show.

DREW: Are you *serious*?

HARRISON: I've never been more serious about anything, Drew. I mean it. Please. If you— if you care anything about me at all, please. Please don't do this.

DREW: .... I ... ..

HARRISON: You know what? Forget it. I'm done. I'm done anyway. I can't do this anymore, go ahead, blow the lid off Pandora's box. It's what you've been wanting. I'm done.

DREW: Wait — where are you going?



HARRISON: Where do you think I'm going? To the dance.

DREW: We're supposed to broadcast at the dance!

HARRISON: *You* can broadcast at the dance. Maybe I'll get there and — [he's choked; this isn't what he wants at all]— and Cal will be waiting for me with a red rose.

DREW: ... Fine. *Fine*. Go to the dance, have a great fucking time.

HARRISON: I WILL. ENJOY RUINING THE MYSTERY OF SIDLESMITH FOR EVERYONE AROUND YOU.

DREW: I... Harrison — wait. *Harrison!* [His voice grows more distant as Harrison, still running the Facebook Live, leaves the scene; brisk walking sounds]

HARRISON: Screw you, Drew. Just. Just —I — Oh, is this still—oh, hey, viewers. [Sniffle] I forgot you were all still here. Look, I guess if you really want to know what was on the parchment you can switch over to Drew's broadcast. He'll be happy to tell you in great detail. I'll just — [sigh] — I'll see you all at the dance.