

If She Fell

by Aoibheann

Ginny Weasley finds herself in an unexpected predicament: torn between two men.
What is she to do?

Like a Comet Pulled From Orbit

Chapter 1 of 2

Ginny Weasley finds herself in an unexpected predicament: torn between two men. What is she to do?

Chapter 1: Like a Comet Pulled From Orbit

Disclaimer: I own nothing but bits and pieces of the plot. JK Rowling owns all the good bits. Chapter titles come from the lyrics of Stephen Schwartz.

It was a cold February day, and the students were returning from their winter break. Mediwitch Interns Ginevra Weasley and Hermione Granger-Snape were prepared for the usual: students who over-indulged on the Hogwarts Express; those who were caught, aware or unaware, by a Weasley Wizarding Wheezes special; and those who returned with the usual sniffle or unusual stuffed-up nose. Ginny was in the process of removing a rather large book from the nose of an innocent second year when she heard a pathetic attempt at a cough. She looked up to see Harry Potter leaning against the door to the Hospital Wing, smiling at her. With a quick smile and a shake of her head, she motioned him to sit in the waiting room whilst she reversed the Tome Hex from Wilfred Windinger.

"Honestly, Mr. Windinger," she said, "siblings can be very difficult on those who study all the time. Next time, duck."

"Yes, Madam Weasley," responded the youngster, rubbing his nostril, which was still quite large.

"It will take a few hours for your nose to look normal again. And I imagine that the elder Mr. Windinger is suffering for his actions?"

"Yes, ma'am. Professor Snape caught him as he was getting off the train, laughing about it." The boy shuddered. "He's cleaning all the desks in the Potions classroom... with a tiny toothbrush. I'm scared of Professor Snape."

"I was, too," said Ginny with a sly smile. "I'm only a little less scared of him now. But he's a fine teacher, if you pay attention and listen rather than ask too many questions. I'm sure Madam Granger-Snape can attest to that."

Hermione snorted from the opposite end of the exam room, where she was ensconced with a third year with a nasty stomach ache.

Harry peeked back into the examination room, watching Ginny at work. He admired her porcelain complexion, the rich auburn hair, and the soulful brown eyes. He had shown up at Hogwarts for one reason: to ask Ginevra Weasley to dinner. He slinked back to the exam room before she could notice him, surprised to find Remus Lupin occupying a chair.

"Remus!" greeted Harry. "What brings you here?"

"Just needed a word with one of the medistaff," he said, nervously eyeing the door to the exam room. "And you?"

"Same thing," replied Harry, taking a chair next to Remus.

"Hermione looks well," stated Remus.

Yes, marriage to Severus seems to agree with her."

"No hard feelings, then?"

"Not anymore. Our marriage just wasn't right," admitted Harry, scuffing his foot against the floor. "Hermione was right, you know? Some things aren't meant to be, and some things are worth grabbing whilst you can."

"True," agreed Remus. "Life has an annoying tendency to be shorter than you expect it to be."

Harry nodded, looking up quickly as Hermione entered the room, greeting both Harry and Remus fondly. After a bit of small talk, she excused herself and left for the library. Remus looked at Harry, confusion evident in his hazel eyes.

"I thought you were here to see Hermione," he said.

"Nope," said Harry, smiling, "not Hermione. I'm here to see Ginny."

"So am I..." said the former werewolf, jumping up quickly as Ginny appeared in the doorway.

"Is everything all right, Remus? None of the creatures are ill, are they?" she asked, concern flitting across her face.

"No, no, they're all fine. Thank you for the remedy for the grindylows, though. Being the Care of Magical Creatures professor is a bigger job than I thought it would be. It's nice to have some assistance sometimes."

"My pleasure. So, what can I do for you?" she asked, looking at both Harry and Remus. "Either of you."

"I believe Harry was here first, and what I have to talk to you about might take a bit longer..." conceded Remus.

"Thanks, Remus," said Harry, smiling. "Gin, would you like to have dinner with me tomorrow night in London? Maybe take in a show?"

Ginny stared at Harry for a moment. "Dinner? As in a date dinner or as in 'two mates out for a lark' dinner?"

"Date dinner," replied Harry.

Ginny smiled at Harry, a smile that thrilled the professional Quidditch player to the core.

"Harry," she said, "I would love to."

"Brilliant," said Harry, gleaming. "Pick you up about six?"

"I'll be waiting," Ginny said with a smile.

"Sorry to ask and run," said Harry, "but I have an appearance to make tonight, and I can't miss it. It's for the London orphanage."

"I understand," said Ginny. "I'll see you tomorrow."

"Absolutely," said Harry. "Take care, Remus." He nodded at the older man as he took his leave.

"Now," said Ginny, turning her attention to Remus, "what can I do for you?"

Remus swallowed hard and avoided Ginny's eyes. "It's really not that important. I'm sorry I took up any of your time, Madam Weasley."

"Aren't you going to wait for Kyla? She gets on shift in ten minutes."

"No, I don't think that's such a good idea just now. Anyway, have a good time tomorrow if I don't see you in the Great Hall before then," he said, his voice taking on a strained quality as he turned and left the room.

"Remus?" called Ginny, receiving no response. She shrugged and went back to the infirmary to tidy up before the change in shifts.

Remus left the Hospital Wing, hearing Ginny calling after him. As much as he wanted to, he couldn't go back. How could he go back and tell her that Harry Bloody Potter had beaten him to the very thing Remus wanted: dinner with Madam Weasley? She would never believe him.

All those months ago, when he had first regained his memory after being held captive by Death Eaters and then left to fend for himself, Ginny Weasley had been there for him. She had celebrated with him on the night he discovered that Hermione and Severus had indeed found a cure for the werewolf condition. He was no longer a slave to the lunar cycle. But he had brushed her aside when he was unable to reconcile the beautiful twenty-six-year-old mediwitch intern with the slightly awkward sixteen-year-old girl she had been before he had been kidnapped. That was a mistake, he realized. A terrible mistake.

He had taken up with mediwitch assistant Kyla Bennett, but he had found his attention drawn again and again to Ginny Weasley. He saw the spark in her eyes, the intelligence. He had noticed that the redhead's fiery temper and personality had been tempered to something more... cool. There was a calm rationality in Ginevra Weasley that hadn't been there when she was a child. No. She was no longer a child. She was a woman. A woman Remus wanted to get to know better. But he had competition in Harry Potter. Remus didn't like competition. He was going to have to win Ginny Weasley. He was going to have to fight for her affection. The former werewolf decided that if he had to resort to dirty tricks to best Harry Potter for the attention of the mediwitch, he would do so.

With a sly grin, Remus headed for the one person he knew was adept at dirty tricks, only to find that same man coming up the same staircase he was descending. Remus blocked the staircase, a disarming grin on his face.

"Got a minute, Severus?"

The Potions master glared at Remus, then, apparently noticing his glare had no effect, sighed in resignation. "What do you want, Lupin?"

"Help."

"With what? And are we planning on standing on the staircase for the duration of this undoubtedly pointless and inane conversation?"

"I want Ginny Weasley."

"So? Simply ask her to dinner. You can't possibly bugger it up any more than you did the first time."

Remus shook his head. "Sure I could."

"Well, I'm not sure what you expect me to do about your relationship woes. Let me pass. I would like to see my wife, thank you very much," said Severus, scowling.

"She's not in the Hospital Wing," said Remus. "I saw her leave."

"Where is she?"

"I'm not telling unless you agree to help me."

"Bloody hell... fine. What do you need from me?"

"I need to win over Ginny."

Severus rolled his eyes. "Just talk to her."

"I have a rival."

"Just talk to her," repeated Severus.

It was Remus' turn to sigh. "Hermione's in the library."

"Thank you," replied Severus curtly as he walked past Remus.

Remus took two steps down, then turned around and called to Severus, "It's Harry Potter."

Severus stopped, turned, his black robes swishing majestically, and arched an eyebrow. "Tomorrow night, eight o'clock, the Hog's Head," he said as he turned back and headed up the staircase.

A/N Thank you to my beta, christinex.

Like a Stream That Meets a Boulder

Chapter 2 of 2

Ginny has dinner with Harry, but what thoughts are lurking below the surface?

disclaimer: I own nothing but bits and pieces of the plot. JK Rowling owns all the good bits.

Somehow, Ginny got through her day of mending students, several of whom were overcome by an errant potion during second year Hufflepuff/Ravenclaw potions class. Ginny shook her head, remembering when she was a second year and remembering all the tales of Neville Longbottom's lack of potions prowess. Ginny smiled, wondering what became of Neville. They had lost touch over the years. Neville was sweet and gentle and had been Ginny's first ever date. She often wondered about him. What would have happened had they decided to date instead of being "just friends"? Ginny sighed. She hated "just friends". That was what Remus wanted. Was that what she did to Neville? Had he felt like she punched him the stomach when she began seeing Michael Corner? Vowing to ask Harry for any news on Neville, Ginny made her final rounds, released the remainder of the victims of the exploding sleeping draught, and turned the reigns over to Hermione.

"Are you sure you don't mind, Hermione?" she asked as she ran through the day's log.

"What? That you're having dinner with Harry tonight?" replied Hermione.

"Yes, I mean, he is your ex-husband and all, and one of the rules of friendship is that exes are off-limits."

"I honestly don't mind. I am a little surprised, though. I would have thought that you would be holding out for Remus. I thought you were so compatible."

"Why would I hold out for someone who clearly doesn't want me?" asked Ginny, searching for the list of medicinal potions that were needed. "Besides," she continued, finding the list and handing it to Hermione, "he's with Kyla of the golden hair and big innocent blue eyes."

Hermione perused the list, mentally marking off which ones she would brew and which ones were better off in the capable hands of the Potions master. "Not anymore..." she said absently.

Ginny stopped dead in her tracks. "What?"

Hermione looked up. "He and Kyla aren't seeing one another anymore. Kyla told me he ended things with her the other night. Said he didn't see it amounting to anything serious and he didn't wish to lead her to believe otherwise."

"Oh," said Ginny, mentally turning things over in her head. "Pity. They were a striking couple."

"Gin..."

"Hermione, he doesn't want me. Even if he's not seeing Kyla, that's not going to change. I have a chance with Harry, I should just take it."

"But, Gin, if Remus is who you really want, it's not fair to Harry."

Ginny turned around, her brown eyes flashing. "And it's not fair to me to sit around waiting for Remus to suss out what he wants. I like Harry. I would like to see what could happen. I cannot be held captive by the whims of Remus Lupin any longer. I think I've pined long enough. It's time for Ginevra. It's time I think about ME for a change." She set her chin in a stubborn line, her voice turning to a mocking tone. "Ginny always thinks about others. Ginny is just like her mum. Ginny is such a damnable good girl. Well, I'm sick of it, Hermione. I'm sick of always worrying about what will make other people happy. When is it my turn?"

"You're right, Ginny," conceded Hermione. "I just don't want to see either one of you hurt."

"Are you concerned with me or with Harry?" asked Ginny, her voice containing an edge.

"I love you both," replied Hermione. "I don't want to see either one of you hurt. And when you add Remus to the equation..."

Ginny shook her head. "Remus is a null factor."

"And null factors can be dangerous in Arithmancy. The unknown quantity has a tendency to throw off the whole equation."

"I'll tread carefully, OK? I'll be careful with Harry."

"I know you will, Gin. I'm just turning into the mother hen here, and I have no business doing so. You're all adults. Go, have dinner, have fun, don't think about anything."

Ginny smiled at her friend. "Thanks, Hermione. I'll talk to you tomorrow?"

"Save me a scone at breakfast."

"As long as you don't eat all the lemon curd."

"I'll try to contain myself."

Ginny chuckled as she bade Hermione a good night and entered her quarters to get ready for her date with Harry.

Hermione sighed and began her brewing of Pepper Up potion, contemplating how much simpler her life became once she actually married Severus. She was engrossed in her work when a gentle knock startled her. Placing a quick stasis charm on the potion, she turned to find her dark husband standing in the doorway.

"Shall I ask how your day went, or is the infirmary's log enough of a clue?" she asked, smiling at Severus.

"Hufflepuffs," he sighed, sitting on the empty stool next to her. "I wish I could just assign someone else to the second years. Between dealing with their sheer ineptitude and the deputy headmaster grunt work Minerva keeps tossing my way, I barely have time to work with the truly talented students I have."

"I've noticed that Minerva seems to relish giving you all the jobs that she hated," said Hermione with a nod. "Why can't someone else be assigned to second years? I'm a qualified Potions mistress and Ginny's qualified to teach up to third year. We could change the curriculum to brewing primarily medicinal potions in second year. That way we could kill two birds with one cauldron, so to speak. I know you want to keep first years because that's where you make your early assumptions about who is a dunderhead and who is worth your loving contempt..."

"I'll ignore the contempt comment."

"Why?" asked Hermione slyly. "It's true."

"Do hush," replied Severus with a scowl. "I'll certainly discuss the possibility with Minerva, though."

"So," said Hermione, glancing at her husband and admiring his strong profile, "is this a social call, a pity party, or is there a far more nefarious reason for your venturing out of the dungeons at the end of the day?"

"I'll be going out tonight for a bit," he replied, attempting to gauge her reaction. "With Lupin."

"Socially?" asked Hermione, her voice registering a bit of incredulity. "I don't want to discover him tied up in the Shrieking Shack again."

"That WAS a social outing," argued Severus. "Well, at least it began that way. Too much Ogden's is never a good thing. In any event, Lupin and I are going to the Hog's Head for a bit. I shan't be back too late, I surmise."

"What time are you leaving?"

"We're to meet at eight o'clock. There appears to be something Lupin wants to discuss."

"Ah, I see," said Hermione. "Well, have a good time and remember: do not Apparate when intoxicated. I love you too much to see you splinched."

Severus cocked a half grin at his wife, kissed his wife, and departed.

* * *

Ginny looked in the mirror and sighed in exasperation. Nothing she put on was right. The blue dress was too sexy, the black dress, too prim. The pink dress was just shudderingly bad with her red hair and pale complexion. Ginny wasn't sure of the message she wanted to send to Harry. She hated to admit it, but Hermione was partially right. Given the choice at this moment between Harry and Remus, Ginny would likely choose Remus. 'But,' Ginny said to herself, 'I've never been out with Harry. A lot could change. Remus is a crush. Remus is unattainable. Harry is a good man and I'm comfortable with him. Time will tell.'

Ginny once again perused her closet, locating an emerald green dress with matching over-robos. The dress was ankle length and a-line, the cut accentuating her slim waist. The matte silk flowed over her like water. She had forgotten all about this dress, worn once for Charlie's wedding many years ago. With a quick flick of her wand, she changed the neckline from a scoop to a vee and added a few paler green accents to the bodice. She slipped on the dress and a pair of simple black pumps and looked at her reflection.

"Yes," she said out loud. "This will do nicely. Not too sexy, not too staid, and the color looks fine with my hair."

She deftly pulled back the front of her hair, leaving the back long and flowing, and applied a makeup charm to her lips and eyes, leaving the rest of her face bare. Ginny was as satisfied as she ever was with her appearance, which wasn't saying much. Looking at the magic clock, she saw she had just 3 minutes to spare and slipped into the over-robos. She grabbed her wand, shrunk her purse, and took one more look in the mirror before she headed down to meet Harry in the entrance hall. As she descended the stairs, she was aware of the looks and whispers of the students headed towards the Great Hall for dinner.

Stopping one sixth-year Gryffindor girl, Ginny asked, "Is there something wrong with my appearance?"

"No, Madame Weasley," replied the girl. "You just look absolutely beautiful. We're just not used to seeing you wearing something other than Healer's robes. Your hair, if I may comment, is so pretty."

Ginny blushed. "That is such a sweet thing to say. I'm relieved to know I don't look utterly ridiculous. I don't dress up very often."

"You should do it more," smiled the girl as she caught up her housemates. "Whatever you're doing tonight, enjoy!"

Ginny looked down onto the entrance hall to see Harry standing there, dressed in a black Muggle suit, a small nosegay of flowers in his hand. She drew a breath at the look

in his eyes. If she didn't know better, she would have thought he was infatuated. Descending the last few steps, Ginny smiled up at Harry.

"Hello, Harry," she said.

"You are beautiful, Gin," he replied, catching his breath. "I've made reservations at a small bistro in Muggle London; is that all right?"

"That sounds wonderful," she said, smiling more brilliantly.

Harry took her arm and escorted her out of the castle, passing Remus on his way in for dinner.

"Good evening, Remus," said Harry with a grin.

"Evening, Harry, Ginevra," said Remus, his eyes riveted on Harry's beautiful dinner companion. "Have a good time tonight."

Ginny shivered under Remus' intense gaze, and when he turned it from her and entered the castle, the witch felt something missing. Shaking her head, she turned to Harry.

"Are we Apparating?" she asked.

"Yes, when we reach the Apparition Point," he replied.

"Catch me when we get there. I always tend to stumble after Apparating."

"I'll always be there to catch you, Gin," said Harry.

Ginny smiled uncertainly. She wasn't sure if she would prefer to have Harry or Remus catch her if she fell.