

Light in the Darkness

by jmlane57

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It's always darkest before the dawn ...

Harry was feeling terrible. He and Ginny had begun discussing the possibility of her accompanying him, Ron and Hermione to search for and destroy the Horcruxes and Voldemort; the discussion had degenerated into an argument, the argument into a quarrel and the quarrel into a screaming match...a screaming match that had ended with Ginny bursting into tears and jumping up to head for the stairs and her room, Hermione at her heels. Even now he could still hear her crying, and every heartbroken sob was like a knife in his heart.

He hadn't meant to yell at her like that and would have given anything to have been able to take back every unthinkingly cruel thing he had said, but didn't think it would be possible. He felt sure that he had truly gone too far this time and that she neither could nor would ever forgive him...nor could he ever forgive himself for hurting her so. At the outset his main intention had been to try to convince her to stay behind, yet she was having none of that, and his voice got progressively louder and angrier as she became more and more stubborn and adamant about going, declaring that nothing he said was going to stop her from accompanying them.

"For Merlin's sake, Ginny, why can't you see that I'm simply trying to protect you?" he snapped. "*don't* want to have to go to your funeral as we did Dumbledore's!"

"And why can't *you* see that I don't want to be protected, but want to fight by your side?" she threw back, just as angry. "Nor do I want to have to go ~~to~~ *your* funeral, especially carrying the knowledge that I could have saved you if you'd but allowed me to accompany you

so I could do so!"

"Your fighting ability is not the issue here," he insisted. "It's feelings. *My* feelings...for *you*. If we stayed together, Voldemort could easily use them against me."

"He could use them just as easily right now, despite the fact that we've supposedly broken up. Your feelings for me aren't going to simply stop because of that, you know, so how long do you think you'd be able to hide them from him? You know as well as I do that he's a top Legilimens, and your psychic link with him would simply make it all the easier for him to detect them."

But everything the other said simply made their opponent...yes, they were opponents now...all the more upset, until finally Harry became a Human time bomb ... and Ginny caught the debris when he exploded. After he'd calmed down, his first instinct had been to go after her, but Ron's hand on his shoulder stopped him.

"It'll be all right, mate. 'Mione will take care of her."

"But I've got to try to explain, apologize ..."

"I don't think Gin is in any mood to listen to the voices of reason right now. The best thing you can do for the moment is stay away from her, let yourselves cool down. Meanwhile, let's you and

I have a talk."

"About what?"

"Anything you like," he returned ambiguously.

"You may regret saying that," Harry warned, then sighed. "All right, here goes. I didn't mean to yell at her like that, Ron. I feel terrible."

"I'm sure she knows that, mate. Don't beat yourself up over it. Won't change anything."

"It's bad enough I have to leave her behind; did I have to yell at her too?"

Ron laughed. "As you may or may not have noticed, pal, *she* got the last word! As long as I've known her, Ginny's always been able to give as good as she gets, and she's not lost her touch, even now."

"Be that as it may, I would prefer it if you and Hermione stayed behind too," Harry remarked.

"Well, it's not going to happen, so just put it out of your mind. It's commendable that you want to protect us, but it's bloody foolhardy to think that you can take on Voldemort and company alone. You've admitted yourself that you couldn't have done a lot of the things you've done without help; besides, you shouldn't try to make decisions like that for us...especially without *consulting* us. It's not as if you'd be twisting our arms or forcing us to go with you, after all. It's a choice we made of our own free will. *We* choose to go with you, fully aware of the dangers involved."

"But Ginny ... I can't allow her ..."

"Yes, Ginny, too," Ron threw back. "You've got to let her make her own decision on this. I assume you *do* want to come back from all this in one piece?"

"Of course I do! What kind of question is that?"

"Then you need us, mate. *All* of us, including Ginny. You can't save everybody. In any war, there are bound to be casualties on both sides. Usually the best we can do is minimize them. And it's a cinch that bloody Voldemort isn't going to show up alone; why should you? Most importantly, why make yourself an even easier target by showing up alone?"

"You have a point there," Harry reluctantly admitted.

"Damn bloody right I do. Now I think the next thing we should do is contact the Aurors' Department at the Ministry, the D.A. and the Order of the Phoenix, see who's available and willing to accompany us. We're going to need all the help we can get, especially once we actually catch up with Voldemort. If we plan to come back alive, the way to do it is *not* to go alone! The more help we have, the more likely that scenario is.

"And please don't start your ruddy diatribe about how dangerous it'll be. Aurors and members of the Order know the risks going in. Frankly I think that a good many of them will be glad for the opportunity to get out and have a little excitement, not to mention exercise, if nothing else."

"Your parents are in the Order, mate," Harry reminded him. "Not to mention several of the parents of the kids in the D.A. And like Neville's mum and dad, several are Aurors."

"As I said, they all know the risks. Now are we going to consult with them or not?"

"I suppose we'd better," Harry finally conceded. "You and 'Mione go do that while I apologize to Ginny." He listened carefully for a while, and her sobs seemed to have stopped, although he also heard Hermione's low and soothing voice, so she must have managed to calm her down. Both of the friends made their quiet way up to Ginny's room; the shadows they made prompted Hermione to lift her head.

Harry saw that Ginny was sitting on the bed, Hermione's arms around her and her face still wet, although she wasn't crying anymore, simply allowing her friend to hold her. Well, now it was his turn.

"'Mione, come here," he said quietly.

She quietly spoke to Ginny and joined him.

"I need to speak privately with Ginny. You and Ron contact the Aurors' Department at the Ministry, members of the D.A. and the Order of the Phoenix, consult with them and see who'd be willing to accompany us. We're going to need all the help we can get to defeat Voldemort."

Her eyes widened, and she wondered at Harry's abrupt about-face, certain that Ron had to have had something to do with it. But what had he said to convince him? She would have to ask at the first opportunity. For the time being, though, that could wait. They had more important things to do.

It was simultaneously the easiest and hardest thing Harry had ever done, approaching Ginny, not to mention the apology he owed her. But it was one he would gladly make. As Dumbledore had said, love would be his ultimate weapon when it came to defeating the forces of Darkness, and it was therefore logical to have all possible sources at his command ... and one of the best and most inexhaustible sources would be from Ginny herself.

Finally he reached the bed and carefully sat down beside her, then quietly spoke. "Gin?"

She looked up and gave him a watery smile.

"I'm so sorry, luv. I never meant to yell at you like that, and understand now why you got so upset. I was being a stubborn, insensitive prat. Can you forgive me?"

For a moment she seemed frozen, then threw herself into Harry's arms; he held her gently and stroked her hair, then rested his cheek on the top of her head. "Of course I forgive you, luv, and I understand why *you* got upset."

"I've also decided to allow you to accompany us," he finally said, still having serious reservations about the whole thing but deciding to keep them to himself. What mattered was that he and Ginny were together again and any risk they took together was preferable to being alone, especially at a time like this. "I also want us to get back together. I've ... realized I can't do this without you."

"Did I hear right? You decided to let me accompany you? Not to mention you want to ... get back together?" Ginny was happy but incredulous. What could have possibly

changed Harry's mind? Certainly nothing *she* had said; in fact, the more she'd said, the more immovable he had become. "What made you change your mind?"

"Let's just say that I was ... convinced by a wisdom greater than my own and leave it at that," he returned enigmatically. "What do you say? Will you still have me?"

"You need to ask? Come here, you." He lifted his head to look into her soft brown eyes, which now seemed to glow with radiant love and happiness. "Kiss me."

Harry didn't need any more encouragement.