

A Taste of His Own Medicine

by jmlane57

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Chapter One

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: Definitely AU, since I place the events of the 4th book in Harry's fifth year; Cedric Diggory is alive here, at least for a while, and things happen a little quicker for the H/G relationship here than in canon, not to mention HBP spoilers

DISCLAIMER: Everything belongs to JK Rowling and company except my imagination and this story.

Ginevra Molly Weasley, fourth-year Gryffindor, was having a very bad year. It could even be called a "terrible, horrible, very bad" year. It had started out on a low note to begin with, when her heartthrob and brother Ron's best friend, that gorgeous fifth-year and clueless prat, fifteen-year-old Harry James Potter, had not even said hello to her, even though she'd been standing right in front of him, almost face-to-face, and had said "Hello" plain as day when he'd first walked into the Great Hall on September 1, 1995. But it was as if she had never done it at all, hadn't even been there.

Instead, he had looked right through her, as if she hadn't existed...and what's worse, his eyes had looked for, then locked onto, someone else entirely ... specifically, the sixth-year Ravenclaw Seeker Cho Chang, age 16, a beautiful Eurasian girl. And what's worse, looking at her like he wanted to eat her alive! He wasn't even able to take his eyes off her for the entire duration of the breakfast period, for pity's sake! How he ever managed to finish his meal, she never knew. She had had no idea Harry had a thing for older women. Maybe not much older, but Cho was still older than he was, a year or so, like he was a year older than her.

Then on top of that, she had given the wrong answer in her second-hour Potions class that day, and Snape had given her a ten-inch punishment essay ... and to top it off, she had snapped at him for it in front of the whole class, and he had given her a week's detention in addition to the essay. This just wasn't her day ... maybe not her year!

And as the year wore on, it did not improve. She saw Harry again, passed him in the school halls many times, always smiling in his direction...but again, it was as if she wasn't even there because he never saw her. Always, his eyes searched the crowd for Cho...and she could tell when he'd found her, since his eyes lit up for a moment ... then of late, he had seemed to deflate like a punctured balloon almost immediately afterward. Ginny turned her head and saw why.

Cho was walking hand-in-hand with the handsome seventh-year Hufflepuff, Cedric Diggory, and they had eyes only for each other, unaware anyone was watching them. And just like he had done with her, they walked past him, not even seeing him. Now maybe he had some idea of how she felt when he'd done it to her! She even saw him grit his teeth and clench his fists, as if he wanted to hex Cedric into the middle of the next century. Nice to see him get a taste of his own medicine for a change ... it had almost made her punishment essay and week's detention worth it. Especially since the reason she had snapped at Snape was because she had been preoccupied and

upset over Harry's treatment of her.

There was even a point in time that she'd found herself directly behind Harry in the lunch line, but again, he hadn't noticed her; he was too occupied with his own unhappy thoughts. She could even have sworn she heard him mutter under his breath, "Why did she do that to me? Can't she tell how much I like her? Why couldn't she at least have said hello to me?"

Touché, young Mr. Potter, Ginny thought. *I might ask the same thing of you where I'm concerned!*

Around three one day in November 1995, when she was heading for her Divination class, she saw Harry yet again...not to mention Cho and Cedric ... but this time they weren't simply holding hands. Rather, they were leaning against a corner of Gryffindor Tower, almost literally wrapped around each other and snogging each other silly. This time, when Harry saw the couple, his eyes closed in pain for a moment; then he stiffened his back and marched on to his next class, which she knew was also Divination, definitely not one of his favourites.

Mainly because Sybill Trelawney, the Divination professor, had a positive talent for predicting dire fates for Harry at virtually every class ... none of which had come to pass, fortunately, but then Trelawney, however nice she was, was an old fraud...despite being the great-great-granddaughter of a noted Seer, she had scarcely a fraction of her great-great-grandmother's talent. What was worse, this was also one of the several classes she shared with Harry. He usually sat with Ron, though; she usually sat with Hermione a few rows back. As far as Ginny knew, Cho didn't take this class, at least not at this hour, so she was spared the sight of Harry making calf-eyes at her.

However, even as hard as she tried not to make calf-eyes at Harry herself, Trelawney had obviously noticed at some point, for she had taken her aside one day shortly afterward and asked her point-blank if she had a crush on him. "Yes, I do ... and fat lot of good it does me. He doesn't see anyone but Cho Chang."

"At the moment...but that will eventually change, dear. Some boys are simply slow on the uptake. Young Mr. Potter seems to be one of them. However, I predict that one day soon, Harry will definitely notice you ... and in a big way! In fact he will even kiss you in public to mark the beginning of your romance...not to mention propose marriage to you on your seventeenth birthday. The two of you will marry six months later to the day and have as many children as your parents."

Ginny had smiled sadly. It was a lovely thought; too bad she couldn't trust anything Trelawney said. Just the same, she knew that the woman was only trying to comfort her and appreciated the gesture, if nothing else. "That's great," she returned dully. "May I go now, Professor? I'm going to be late for my Charms class."

"Of course, dear."

As the Christmas holidays approached, Harry still had a thing for Cho, but mercifully Ginny hadn't seen so much of him making calf-eyes at her, mainly because she had made it a point to avoid him as much as she could ... and in spite of herself was pleased to learn that the object of his infatuation had turned him down for the Yule Ball, again in favour of Cedric. She herself had accepted an invitation to the Ball from Neville Longbottom, one of Harry's dorm-mates and friends. She had even heard, somewhat after the fact, that Ron had suggested to Harry that he ask her to the Ball. She had no idea what his reaction had been to that suggestion, though, and was frankly afraid to ask.

Harry had ended up having to ask the Patil twins for both himself and Ron. She felt sorry for the girls when she'd heard what happened later...although Harry had at least had the decency to give Parvati the token dance of the Triwizard champions, that was the only time he had danced with her. She couldn't help thinking that he was probably too hurt and angry over Cho's turning him down, too preoccupied with his own troubles to be an attentive escort, even though Ginny had been given to understand that she had apologised to him for doing so.

The Ball might even have been fun for her ... that is, if she hadn't seen Harry once again making calf-eyes at Cho as she'd entered on Cedric's arm in her fancy hair and silvery evening dress. Gods, what she would give to have Harry look at *her* that way even once! He had looked devastatingly handsome in his dress robes, which made her fourteen-year-old heart ache almost unbearably. Why did he have to look so good, have such a sweet smile, beautiful emerald eyes and sweet, velvety voice?

She stayed at the ball late with Neville; it was nearly midnight when he'd finally left her at the door of the fourth-year girls' dorm. She had even allowed him to kiss her goodnight. It had been pleasant, of course, but there was no spark, no fire, as there would have been with Harry. Of course, that was about as likely as Draco Malfoy turning nice...in fact, at this point in time, she sincerely believed that the latter was *more* likely.

Just the same, she couldn't help feeling sorry for Hermione after she had related what had happened at the Ball, how Ron had argued with her, both with Harry as a buffer and on his own. Even this long after the fact, she couldn't help noting that Hermione's eyes had filled with tears at the way Ron had treated her. Ginny knew how much he liked Hermione (and vice versa); it was his own fault if he hadn't had the courage to ask her to the Ball. He had no right to take out his frustration and jealousy on her, either, and Ginny intended to tell him so at the first opportunity. She hadn't believed it possible, but he seemed to be even more clueless than Harry was ... and that was saying something!

Ron had been too busy sulking over Hermione's having accepted a date with Viktor Krum of Durmstrang to pay any attention to his own date, Parvati's sister Padma, having convinced himself that no one had asked her to the Ball and stunned upon finding out that she had been telling the truth after all when she'd said "someone" had asked her and she'd said, "Yes." He wouldn't dance with Padma even once. That really didn't come as much of a surprise; Ron had never been the dancing type to begin with. Still, the least he could have done was been decent to her.

Then came the first Hogsmeade weekend of 1996, which to Ginny's dismay fell on Valentine's Day. She wanted more than anything for Harry to ask her to go, but he was still infatuated with Cho, so there was little likelihood of that. Just the same, she knew she had to get away from the castle or go mad; there were just too many memories of Harry everywhere she went for her to feel she could remain sane there.

Which was mainly why she had accepted when Michael Corner, a fifth-year Ravenclaw, had asked her to go there with him, even though she had heard that Harry and Cho were somewhere in Hogsmeade. She could only pray that she and Michael would not run across them, for she didn't think she would be able to hide either her (seemingly) unrequited love or her pain at seeing Harry with Cho.

Thankfully they did not, although she had been pleased when she had heard that the date had ended up a total disaster, Cho having stormed out because Harry had told her he was supposed to meet Hermione for some reason. Cho had been mourning Cedric's recent death, so virtually everything upset her these days; so it wasn't entirely Harry's fault. He had had little experience with girls, so he wouldn't have known how to properly handle the situation anyway.

Just the same, it hadn't helped matters that Cho had heard of the rumours regarding Harry and Hermione having a romantic relationship. Not true, of course, but in Cho's current emotional condition, it didn't take much to set her off. That couldn't have been much fun for Ron to endure, either, come to think of it, considering his feelings for Hermione.

Her relationship with Michael did help her to endure, of course, for which she would always be grateful to him. All the same, Harry was never far from her mind, and virtually every time Michael kissed her, she couldn't help picturing Harry. Gods, how much longer could she stand this second-class treatment from him?

The last straw came, though, when she'd heard Harry confide to his friends that in spite of the way Cho had treated him, she was still the kind of girl he was looking to marry one day. He had even rhapsodised about how much he'd enjoyed the kiss he'd shared with her the previous Christmas.

That did it; she'd had it with him once and for all! If Harry was so stubbornly blind so as to be incapable of seeing how much she, Ginny, loved him, then he deserved to lose her. It wasn't long after the Quidditch final after Gryffindor had beat Ravenclaw in April 1996 that she broke up with Michael, however, deciding to take up with half-blood black Dean Thomas shortly after that. They seemed to get along better than she and Michael had; at least they didn't argue nearly as much...for the first half of their relationship, at any rate. Just the same, she had found it very hard to forgive him for pulling her close and snogging her near the tapestry in the hall near the shortcut to Gryffindor Tower one day in May 1996 ... then to her horror, the next thing she knew, Harry and Ron had walked in on them...and Ron instantaneously went ballistic.

Ginny had no idea of this at the time, and would have been pleased to know it...although she no longer expected it...but upon seeing her snogging Dean so publicly, it was as though a large and scaly monster had erupted to life in Harry's stomach and clawed at his insides, the hot blood of jealousy flooding his brain so that all rational thought

was extinguished. All he felt was a savage urge to jinx Dean into a jelly, not to mention kick him off the Quidditch team. At this point he was truly "the green-eyed monster" as he wrestled with this sudden inexplicable madness, barely hearing Ron as he lit into Ginny upon her breaking apart from Dean.

"What the bloody hell is going on here? The last thing I need is to find my sister snogging in public!"

Dean tried to get her to go with him to the common room, but she'd said to go on ahead, that she wanted to have a word with her "dear brother" once and for all. He had done so, grateful to have...however narrowly...escaped the Weasley wrath.

"This corridor was deserted until you butted in!" Ginny threw back. "Let's get this straight once and for all, Ronald Bilius Weasley! It's none of your bloody business who I go out with or what I do with them!"

"Oh yes, it is! I won't have people saying my sister's a..."

"A what?" Ginny shouted, pulling out her wand and pointing it threateningly at him. "*Awwhat*, exactly?"

Harry had tried to intervene. "He doesn't mean anything, Ginny ..." At the same time, the monster inside him was roaring its approval of Ron's tirade.

"Oh, yes, he does!" she flared. "Just because he's never snogged anyone in his life, just because he's always so pathetically happy whenever Fleur kisses him on the cheek doesn't give him the right to tell me who to see and who not to see. If he had brains enough to go out and get a bit of snogging done himself, he wouldn't mind so much that other people do it!"

"Shut up, Ginny!" Ron yelled back, pulling out his own wand, prompting Harry to place himself between them with his arms outstretched even as he continued, "You don't know what you're talking about! Just because I don't do it in public ..."

Ginny laughed derisively. "Been kissing Pigwidgeon, have you? Or have you got a picture of Fleur stashed under your pillow? Wait till I tell Bill!"

"Why, you ..." The next thing Harry felt was a rush of heat under his left arm as a streak of orange light shot toward Ginny, barely missing her. That was when he pushed his angry friend up against the nearest wall, pinning his wand arm with one hand.

"Ron, don't be stupid!"

"Harry's snogged Cho Chang and Hermione's snogged Viktor Krum! It's only you who acts like it's something disgusting *brother dear*, and that's because you've got about as much experience in the subject as a twelve-year-old!" With that, she stormed away even as Harry let go of Ron; the expression on his face was murderous.

"Come on, let's get out of here before Filch catches us," Harry muttered, almost literally dragging Ron toward the nearby stairs and the dormitory. Even as he did so, however, into his mind came an unbidden mental picture of the same corridor they had just left with himself kissing Ginny instead, even as the monster inside him purred at the thought, something else she would have been very happy to know had she been able to look into his mind at this point.

"Do you think Hermione really did snog Krum?" Ron asked, making Harry wrench his thoughts away from another mental picture of the corridor where his friend had not intruded, in which he and Ginny were quite alone ...

He wanted to say yes, but couldn't; in the end it wasn't necessary because Ron seemed to read it on Harry's face. Neither of them mentioned Hermione or Ginny again, going to bed that evening with each of them absorbed in his own thoughts. For once Harry couldn't sleep, fighting to keep his thoughts off Ginny and trying to convince himself that he still felt only brotherly feelings for her.

It was only natural that he'd feel protective of her, want to take Dean apart for kissing her as he had ... no, that feeling was something he'd definitely have to control. Just the same, he would have to seek Ginny out as soon as he could and try to reason with her. Of course, knowing her temper, if he wasn't careful, she was as likely to throw a Bat-Bogey Hex at him as look at him, especially considering how he'd treated her over the last year. Only now had it dawned on him how much he must have hurt her, so he would have to at least try to make it up to her, whatever he had to do.

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He woke early and decided to see if he could catch Ginny before their first class together, which this year was Charms. "Ginny, wait up!" he called as he saw her approach the door.

"What is it, Harry?" she asked dully. "I want to get some studying done before class. Didn't have a chance to do any last night."

"Last night ..." he murmured under his breath. "I'm sorry about last night. Ron had no right to talk to you like that."

Ginny couldn't help thinking, *That's not all you should be sorry for, Mister!* Out loud, she merely said, "Damn bloody right he didn't. Just the same, I didn't exactly see you jumping to my defence."

"I was too busy trying to control Ron. As far as I know, he's cooled off by now and should be apologising to you soon. I'm also curious as to why you've been avoiding me for the last several weeks."

"I'm surprised you've even noticed! As for Ron apologising, at this point I frankly don't care whether he does or doesn't," she threw back. "Which reminds me, why are you seeking me out now, of all times? Don't tell me you've actually managed to get your head out of the clouds instead of being so wrapped up in daydreams of Cho Chang that you've all but forgotten I existed for the past year! Why should I believe you suddenly give a damn about me after all this time? And why should it matter to you whether or not I avoid you or even speak to you?"

Harry winced in spite of himself, knowing she was right...but even as much as he wanted to tell her the feelings he was beginning to have for her, he couldn't, not in her present mood, because she wouldn't believe him ... and who could blame her? He had really hardly been civil to her for much of the last year, much less friendly. That happened when one became infatuated with someone, of course, but didn't make it any less reprehensible...and whatever Harry's other faults, he was not a cruel person. (At least not knowingly.) But he couldn't make it up to her if she wouldn't give him a chance ...

"Don't you think I know what you've done with her, what you've said about her, the way you've looked at her? Have you any idea what went through my mind when I heard about it or saw it? Not to mention the pain that went through me like a knife and the hours I've cried over it? Then you wonder why I'm so upset and have been avoiding you! The way I feel right now, you're lucky I don't throw the Bat-Bogey Hex at you! As far as that goes, I still might do it if you don't get the bloody hell away from me...and right now!" Then she called after him this parting shot: "By the way, do me a favour ... stay away from me! That shouldn't be too hard; after all, you've done it so easily and so beautifully for the past year!"

Those were the last words Ginny spoke to him that day...and for days afterward.

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The most Harry dared do over the next several days was look in Ginny's direction ... and even then, not for very long. If she happened to catch him, she gave him a dark look and brandished her wand in a threatening manner. Her actions spoke louder than any words; she would hex him into the middle of next week if he tried to approach her, much less speak to her.

Harry was not aware of Trelawney's prediction regarding them, but if somebody happened to catch him giving Ginny calf-eyes, it probably wouldn't be long before he was...and once he was, would probably have the same attitude Ginny had. Just the same, he couldn't totally disregard Trelawney, mainly because she had been the one to

make the prediction that he was the Chosen One, the one meant to kill the Dark Lord.

Finally he did the only thing he could do: approach Hermione and ask her for advice. After having explained what Ginny had said to him the last time she had deigned to speak to him, Hermione smiled matter-of-factly and said, "How do you expect her to act, Harry? I've been close by the majority of the times she's mentioned and seen the look on her face after she's tried to get your attention and you've ignored her. I'd probably feel the same way she does in her position ... in fact, I do," she remarked, still hurt over what Ron had said and done at the Yule Ball. Even now they were rarely in proximity without going at each other like two strange cats, and it was beginning to drive Harry up the proverbial tree. "So if you expect me to help you with Ginny, you've got to help me with Ron."

"I'll do what I can, 'Mione, but can't guarantee anything. You know how stubborn Ron is...Ginny, too ... but something has to be done. You know as well as I do that Cho and I have been history for some time...but I've not been able to tell Ginny that, because she's not let me near her for days. If I even try, she gives me the evil eye and brandishes her wand at me. I want to make things up to her, but how can I if she won't let me?"

"Maybe if I offer to mediate between you and Ginny," his companion mused. "This is a very complicated situation, so let me talk to her first and see what kind of luck I have. If I can get her to agree to meet with us, you might have a chance to explain yourself to her. After that, though, you're on your own...and don't be surprised if she's wary of you for some time to come."

"And I'll see if I can't speak to Ron and get him off your back. I know how much he likes you, but frankly he feels out of your league; I mean, you're smart, you're beautiful ... and he's always been in the shadow of his older siblings, not to mention me. All that's got to be very tough to deal with. I'm sure he also feels that he's not good enough for you...that you deserve better than him."

"Maybe so, but that doesn't change how I feel about him," Hermione replied quietly, a mixture of love and sadness in her eyes at the thought of Ron. "I don't know what it's going to take to convince him that even if he's not what he thinks he should be, I still want him."

And I still want Ginny, Harry added in his mind, unable to keep from thinking of all the tantalisingly romantic yet erotic dreams he'd been having involving the two of them ... dreams that made him devoutly glad that neither Ron nor the other blokes in his dormitory could perform Legilimency.

"I remember Sirius once saying that the men in my family seemed to have a penchant for red-headed women. He told me that he'd once seen a picture of my dad's mother when she was young and she had red hair much like my mum's and brown eyes like Ginny's. Don't tell this to her yet, but I seem to be following in their footsteps, because of my attraction to Ginny."

"It would seem," Hermione mused. "Well, I have a class with her next period, so I'll try to talk to her on your behalf. Don't get your hopes up too high, though, until and unless I tell you otherwise."

"Any help you can give will be appreciated," Harry replied with a grateful smile. "And I'll see what I can do with Ron." The five-minute warning bell rang, so they separated and hurried toward their respective classes...Hermione toward the class she shared with Ginny (and not Harry), Arithmancy, and Harry toward Herbology.

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As Hermione had expected, it was not easy to get Ginny to agree to meet with Harry. "He keeps me at a distance for the better part of a year, expects me not to mind while he ignores me, makes calf-eyes at and chases after Cho Chang ... and now I'm expected to simply forget all that and welcome him with open arms?"

"Gin, I've talked to him. He and Cho are history; have been for at least the last two weeks or so. He would have told you this if you'd given him a chance. He knows how much he's hurt you and wants an opportunity to make it up to you. If it'll make you feel better, I can be with you two. Whatever Harry's other faults, you should know he's not a cruel person."

"Sure seemed that way at the time," Ginny recalled. "I can't tell you how much I hurt when I saw him looking at Cho all those times like he wanted to devour her when I couldn't get him to even look at me, much less say hello...not to mention the time he said she was the kind of girl he wanted to marry."

"I was there when he said that, as I recall," Hermione replied. "I think he's probably revised his attitude by now."

"What makes you so sure?" Ginny asked skeptically, still caring deeply for Harry but understandably reluctant to risk her heart again.

"Just ... something he told me about his family background. He made me promise not to tell you what it was...yet...but I'm inclined to agree with him. Which reminds me, are you and Dean still together?"

"We've argued and agreed not to see so much of each other ... at least for the time being," Ginny revealed.

"Then would you be willing to go with me and see Harry?" Hermione asked. "Maybe go to Hogsmeade together for the next weekend or something? If I remember correctly, it's coming up within the next week or so."

"I ... suppose so," Ginny conceded. "Just the same, I hope you've not made any guarantees to him where I'm concerned."

"No, I haven't. We'll just...play it by ear for the time being, see how things go. We'd better get back to class now," Hermione advised when the warning bell rang. After that there was no further non-academic conversation between them ... at least not until they'd left class.

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It was just as difficult for Harry to talk to Ron about Hermione, but he'd promised her, so he had to at least give it a shot. "I know I was out of line talking to her the way I did at the Ball, Harry, and I'm ... sorry to have hurt her, but how can I expect her to forgive me at this late date? You know how much I like her and how much I want to ... date her, but she's so...far out of my league it isn't funny. I mean, she's smart, she's beautiful ... and I'm totally ordinary. How can I possibly expect her to give me more than the time of day?"

"You've got to try, mate. I've talked to her and she's willing to give you a chance. But you've got to give her one in return. If it'll make you feel better, I can be with you when you talk to her again. How about our all going to Hogsmeade this next weekend? Would that be all right with you?"

"I ... guess so," Ron reluctantly agreed. "Do you know if ... Ginny will be there?"

"No. I'd have to ask 'Mione about that, see what she says. It's time you and Ginny made up too, come to think of it."

Ron was understandably apprehensive about the upcoming trip as they headed for the Great Hall and their lunch period, but Harry did everything he could to encourage him. Now all he had to do was talk to Hermione again and see if she'd had any luck in talking Ginny around.

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Harry offered to get both himself and Ron some food, which gave him a chance to speak alone with Hermione, whom he saw had just joined the lunch line. "Where's Ginny?" he whispered to her as he stepped up to join her.

"She's already eating," Hermione informed her. "Don't worry, Harry, I talked to her and she's willing to hear you out ... as long as I'm with her. I was thinking, we could all go to Hogsmeade next weekend, talk things out there. Did you have a chance to talk to Ron?"

"He's willing to hear you out too ... as long as I'm with you." Harry marveled at how similar their thought patterns were, at least as far as helping friends was concerned. The

old Muggle saying, "Great minds think alike," definitely seemed to have truth to it...at least in this case. "So it'll be the four of us going, then?"

"Looks that way," Hermione agreed, noting that Harry was getting double portions of everything. "You're getting stuff for Ron too, I take it."

"I offered, in order that I be able to talk with you alone," he informed her. "I'd better be getting back to him now, though. He's still apprehensive about facing you, so I suggest you go sit with Ginny, at least for now. I also suggested that he and Ginny see if they can't patch things up at Hogsmeade too while we're there."

"Hope everything works out," Hermione opined. "See you later, Harry."

"Later," he replied as they separated to go to their respective tables...and friends.

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The week went by far more quickly than any of them could have imagined possible. The girls tried to make sure they looked as nice as possible for the Hogsmeade weekend...if not dresses, a nice top and slacks set. They also decided to leave their hair down and simply use nice hairbands, perhaps with silk flowers attached to them ... and *definitely* perfume.

The girls would have been surprised at how fussy their escorts were acting too, also wanting to make sure they looked as presentable as possible. Harry finally decided on a jumper the colour of his eyes and a light-coloured shirt to go beneath it so he could take it off if it got too hot, along with black jeans and his favorite clunky black shoes. Ron didn't have a nice pair of casual trousers, so had to make the best of it by wearing a pair of school uniform trousers along with his favourite jumper and white shirt and a pair of clunky black shoes similar to Harry's.

They also made sure that their hair was as presentable as possible. Ron was at least able to comb his; the best Harry could do was make sure his was clean and dry because he had never been able to make it behave as it should. "Where are we supposed to meet the girls?" Ron asked as they headed for the Hogsmeade transport and got on.

"I suggested the Three Broomsticks," Harry told him, still able to vividly picture the disastrous date between him and Cho at Madam Puddifoot's this past Valentine's Day, and therefore not inclined to want to go back there any time soon. "It has booths big enough to seat all of us."

Despite their best efforts, both young men couldn't help feeling nervous. This date could mean the difference between their having romances with the objects of their affection and being no more than friends, so they intended to make sure to do their best not to screw up in any way. They would have been pleased to know that the girls were feeling similarly to them, cautiously hoping that their escorts' intentions were honourable and that they wouldn't be hurt again.

As Harry and Ron neared the aforementioned pub, they caught sight of the girls waiting near the entrance, both in feminine tops and snug-fitting slacks with matching sandals. They were also pleased to note that their hair was down, long and loose, as they liked it, held in place only by headbands with tiny silk flowers on them. Harry's heart especially began to pound as he noted just *how* snug Ginny's slacks were, showing how much she'd filled out in the time she'd been at school ... in more ways than one.

Her lacy little top was quite provocative too, clinging to her every curve, and her lovely red-gold hair gleamed with gold highlights where the sun hit it. When they got closer, he also couldn't help noting a new type of perfume she was wearing, a combination of roses and her favourite honeysuckle. Ginny had noticed the guys coming, but wasn't sure if 'Mione had yet. Either way, she wasn't going to let it stop her from enjoying the sight of Harry dressed in his (and her) favourite green jumper and well-fitting jeans. Dear gods, he was gorgeous. It was almost more than her heart could take!

Upon reaching each other, they exchanged shy, tentative smiles and went inside the pub, where Madam Rosmerta herself, the owner, came to take their orders. For the time being, they decided to sit according to gender, the guys sitting across from the girls. If things worked out, they could switch places then. While waiting for their orders, brother and sister gave each other wary looks, which were not lost on their friends.

Finally, after an elbow in the ribs from Harry, Ron made the first move toward reconciliation. "I'm sorry for butting into your life, Gin. You have the right to live as you see fit. Can you forgive me?"

"If you can forgive me," she returned with a reassuring smile. "What I said was uncalled for. You just upset me when you made it sound as though I couldn't handle myself, and my mouth ran away with me."

"As did mine. Truce?" His hand tentatively reached toward hers; Ginny's hand met it and they squeezed hands with renewed affection.

"Truce." All present smiled in relief, glad that at least that much had been resolved ... but they still had two more relationships to go. However, everyone decided to wait until after their orders came to begin. Fortunately not too long afterward, their orders came...a new addition to the menu from America, a large Philly cheese steak sandwich with chips and butterbeer for the guys and bacon cheeseburgers for the girls, also with chips ... but their drinks were American soft drinks they'd always wanted to try, but had never had the chance to...cherry Coke and Mountain Dew...also recently added to the Three Broomsticks menu.

It was about halfway through the food that either of the guys got up the nerve to speak to the girls again. The one with Ron and Hermione was more urgent, so Harry told himself he could wait for Ginny a little longer ... but not *too* much longer. It seemed as though he had already waited an eternity as it was!

"'Mione, I'm sorry to have said what I did at the Yule Ball. I was just ... so jealous, seeing you with Krum, knowing that he ... deserved you far more than I did."

"Maybe so, but it hurt me when you made it sound like I didn't know how to take care of myself around a bloke. Remember, I'm a witch," she returned with a reassuring smile. "And believe it or not, I refused several offers before finally accepting Viktor's, hoping you would ask me...but when you didn't ..." Her voice trailed off. "What else could I have done?"

"What else, indeed?" Ron replied sheepishly, blushing when Hermione's hand covered his, and he was sure she could feel his heart pounding at her touch. "I assure you, I ... wanted to ask you, more than anything, but I was just so scared to approach you. You're so beautiful, so smart ... totally out of my league. Just the same, it never stopped me from caring for you. I guess I never thought it possible that you could also ... care for me."

"Well, I do," Hermione assured him. "I have for a long time ... and I hope that this means we can start seeing each other." That was when their eyes met and locked, as did their aforementioned hands.

"Definitely," Ron confirmed.

This was when the other couple at the table dared to look at each other. Harry gave a tentative smile in Ginny's direction. "Hermione explained how you felt," he finally said hesitantly. "I had no idea I'd hurt you so much, Gin. I hope you know it was ... not intentional. I was just too preoccupied with Cho. But that's over now. Cho's seeing Michael Corner now, and 'Mione said you'd split up with Dean ... so I'd like to start seeing you, if you'll still have me."

He then set down his sandwich, wiped one hand off and tentatively extended it to Ginny. She gave a soft smile and copied the gesture. "I never stopped caring for you, Harry. You'd just ... hurt me so much that I couldn't handle being around you for a while. Yes, I'd like very much for us to start seeing each other." They squeezed hands and their eyes met, both blushing despite their best efforts.

For some strange reason, none of them managed to get back to their half-eaten meals ... but at the same time, none cared...and when they left the restaurant, Hermione and Ron were already holding hands. By the time they headed back up the street to the transport, however, Ginny and Harry were doing the same ... and continued to do so all the way back to the castle. Once they arrived back and headed for the Gryffindor common room, both genders of age-appropriate Hogwarts students gave glares in the direction of the lucky pairs, but none of them noticed, being too wrapped up in the joy of their new relationships.

Even hours later, all were reluctant to part from one another once the guys had walked their girls back to the door leading to the girls' dorm. Out of the corner of her eye Ginny noticed that Ron and Hermione were actually kissing, but even as much as she would have liked to have taken the initiative, she decided not to, if only to see if Harry would be able to initiate a kiss on his own. Just the same, she had been in Heaven when they had cuddled earlier in one of the cushy chairs in the common room, uncaring of the many eyes upon them, just as Ron and Hermione seemed oblivious to them. "Well, I guess it's time for us to say good night, Gin."

"I guess so," she agreed.

"I had a wonderful time today. When can I see you again?" He was still holding her hand, but looking intently at her; Ginny blushed when she realized he seemed to be devouring her lips with his eyes.

"Whenever you like," she blurted before she could stop herself. "Seriously, how about after the next Quidditch practise? Remember the Quidditch Cup is coming up next week, and we need to be on our toes if we expect to win."

"I was kind of hoping to see you before that. Remember, we've got a lot of time to make up for." Harry's tone sounded somewhat disappointed, yet hopeful.

"How about mealtimes, then? We can sit and eat together as we did today," Ginny suggested.

"Fair enough," Harry smiled...then raised her hand to his lips and kissed it. It was something of a disappointment, since she'd wanted him to actually kiss her, although even what he had already done was far more than he'd ever done before. He had been about to release her hand when their eyes met again. Ginny noticed that they were now alone, so he could have kissed her had he chosen to do so, but he simply smiled and touched her cheek with one hand. "I would like very much to kiss you, Gin, I assure you ... I just don't consider this an appropriate place. I'm sorry if that disappoints you, but I want our first real kiss to be special ..." His voice trailed off.

"And it would not be special here?"

"Not as special as I'd like. Please try to understand and ... bear with me." His eyes looked deeply into hers and Ginny knew she could not refuse him, especially when he looked at her like that.

"What matters to me is that we're together now. Besides ... your kisses are worth waiting for."

She was stunned when he pulled her close and held her tightly. "Oh, Gin ... I don't deserve you. I've put you through so much hurt, so much pain."

"As I said, what matters is that we're together now. And if you don't deserve me, then no one does," she crooned back, hopefully in a reassuring as well as tender manner, wishing only that Harry would continue to hold her close forever...but he finally released her and leaned in to give her a kiss on the cheek.

"Take that as a ... down payment. You'd better get back to your dorm now...although I give you permission to let the other girls think I actually did kiss you~~Really~~ kiss you, I mean."

"See you tomorrow morning then, Harry." She took a step toward the door and opened it, but he seemed reluctant to release her hand.

"Tomorrow morning," he echoed, then squeezed her hand one last time and was gone.

Ginny really didn't recall actually walking upstairs. In fact, it seemed more like floating, as if she was actually walking on air. Of course, she couldn't have seemed more radiant than Hermione did; with a part of her, Ginny envied her friend. At least Ron had actually kissed her ... but at the same time, Ginny knew that she had meant what she'd said...Harry's kisses were definitely worth waiting for. She could wait a little while as long as it meant that she would have them not only for this moment in time, but a lifetime. It seemed that Trelawney's prediction was actually coming true...or at least part of it ... and if part of it could come true, who's to say that *all* of it couldn't come true?

The next part of the prediction happened a week later to the day. Harry had unfortunately gotten detention from Snape every Saturday for the rest of the term because of his use of the Half-Blood Prince's "Sectumsempra" curse on Malfoy, which caused him to bleed profusely...this occurring unfortunately just before the Quidditch Cup game. (Snape had been the one to find them and had saved Malfoy from bleeding to death.)

Ginny would play Seeker in his place, whereas Dean would play Chaser in her place. He felt so down he couldn't even bring himself to watch the game from Snape's window, even for the chance to see Ginny in action. He could only hope that they would win despite the sobering fact that their Captain had gotten himself in serious trouble at the worst possible time.

It was just a little past one o'clock when he'd finished and gone back to the Gryffindor common room. Once the portrait hole opened, a roar of celebration greeted him, and there were screams at the sight of him as several hands pulled him into the room. The next person he saw was Ron, grinning widely and brandishing the silver Quidditch Cup in Harry's direction.

"We won, Harry! We won! Four hundred fifty to one hundred forty!"

Then, to his surprise and delight, he saw Ginny running toward him with a hard, blazing look on her face and a smile as wide as Ron's as she prepared to throw her arms around him; Harry instinctively opened his own arms. She reached him a moment later; once she was near enough, he pulled her close, found her lips seemingly by instinct and kissed her ... all without thinking, planning it or being at all concerned about the fact that fifty people were watching.

The moment their lips touched, Harry knew that it was an extraordinarily special moment, something he had waited for, hungered for his entire life, not simply for the last week since he and Ginny had been alone together. Dear gods, how could anyone's lips feel so warm, taste so sweet? He just couldn't get enough of them. How could he ever have waited so long to do this? But now that he had done it, he never wanted to stop...and frankly didn't remember breathing the entire time.

He had no idea how much time passed. It could have been a few moments, half an hour, or even several sunlit days ... before he reluctantly released her, then looked down at her, unable to help noting how sweetly swollen her lips were and the mixture of love and surprise in her soft brown eyes, now misty with tears of happiness. She looked so lovely, so appealing, that all he wanted to do was kiss her all over again.

But something told him that it would be best for them to do it in a more private spot this time now that he had finally actually kissed her ... which was what prompted him to find her hand and pull her with him toward the still-open portrait hole, believing a long walk around the grounds was in order...and if they had time (or the inclination) they *just might* discuss the match, even though it was frankly the last thing on his mind.

But they only got as far as the largest tree near the Black Lake before he was unable to resist the urge to kiss her again ... and again ... and yet again. By the time he'd pulled her down to the ground with him and they lay in the grass, still kissing, his arms had tightened around her and he felt her arms tighten around him, not to mention heard a soft, sweet sigh escape her lips, and in spite of his resolve not to, he heard himself emit a moan of pleasure against her lips. Only then did he reluctantly tear his lips away from hers and find the creaminess of her throat, feeling her heart racing as he kissed her there and his hands began to wander deliciously...not to mention hers!

"Oh gods, Ginny ..."

"Oh, Harry ... I love you, I love you ..."

It was a long time before they were able to come up for air, but when they finally did, Harry leaned against the tree, knees bent, and Ginny positioned herself so that her head was on his left shoulder and his arms were around her from behind.

"Well, you have to admit I was right," she finally said.

"About what?"

"Your kisses being worth waiting for. And now that we've started doing it, I never want to stop."

"Not much danger of that," he crooned, tightening his arms around her and nuzzling her throat again, making his companion shiver deliciously.

"Not much"? May I ask what that means?"

"Well ... I think it should be addressed. After all I am 'the Chosen One.' "

"The 'Chosen One'?"

"To kill Voldemort," he explained. "One of these days I'll have to do it...and when I do, we might not be able to be together for a while."

"How long is 'a while'?"

"Couldn't say exactly," he returned ambiguously. "Anywhere from a few weeks to a few years. Depends on how long it takes to find and destroy the Horcruxes, then Voldemort himself."

"Horcruxes?"

"Strongly magical objects containing a piece of his soul."

"How many would you have to destroy?"

"Last I heard, four."

"I imagine that wouldn't be easy to do," Ginny observed.

"Most likely not, especially if they're guarded by a lot of spells, charms or whatever."

"Whatever?"

"Dementors or Death Eaters, if not both."

"In that case, it sounds like you'd need help."

"Definitely, at least when it comes to destroying the Horcruxes. Otherwise it would be up to me to destroy him."

"Why does it have to be you?"

Harry hesitated, wanting her to know and yet not wanting her to know, but now he'd have to give her the details of the prophecy concerning himself and Voldemort he had learned during the battle in the Department of Mysteries where Sirius had been killed.

"If I tell you, you must keep it to yourself ... and keep in mind that the only reason I'm telling you is so that you'll be more likely to understand if I have to leave you behind." With that, he explained the prophecy and what he might have to do in order to fulfill it...not to mention the ultimate weapon he was supposed to have which would vanquish the Dark Lord once and for all.

"Then if we combine the strength of our love, we could beat him," she declared.

"I wish it were that simple. Doubling our love would certainly help, but in and of itself wouldn't be enough."

"Then we'd have to ask Ron and Hermione to do the same. That should make ours even stronger."

"Which reminds me. Don't say anything about this discussion. I haven't even told this to Ron and Hermione yet."

"So you've already decided to take them and not me?" Her voice rose two octaves.

"Not because you can't fight, Gin...to keep you safe. The closer I am to a given person, the more likely Voldemort is to put a price on their heads. And now that you're my girlfriend ..." His voice trailed off.

"In that case, isn't it just as likely that he could come after me at home as out in the field? How safe would I be then? Wouldn't it be better if I were where you could keep an eye on me?"

"And give him an even easier target?" Harry countered. "It'll be bad enough that Ron and Hermione will be risking their lives without adding you to the list."

"But he's the world's strongest Dark wizard. You're going to need all the help you can get, and besides, I'm willing to take any risk if it means being able to defend your back."

"You may be, but I'm not," he threw back.

"Is there something wrong with wanting to help you?" she countered.

"Is there something wrong with wanting to protect you?" he retorted.

"Of course not...but don't you think it's just *a little* premature to discuss this? After all, Voldemort seems to be laying low, at least for the moment."

"During which time he's probably gathering all the help he can, so it's smart for me to do the same, if only to start out with at least a fairly equal fighting balance."

"Then why can't I at least help look up defensive spells, charms and such you lot could use? After all, I'm your girlfriend, so I should be able to help you at least that much."

Harry was still reluctant, but couldn't see the harm in allowing Ginny to do that much, at least ... but *only after* he had discussed it at length with Ron and Hermione and let them know that he had told her about it.

"In the meantime, let's get back to what we were doing," Ginny suggested provocatively. "It's a lot more fun, for one thing."

"But don't you want to talk about the Quidditch Cup match?"

"Time enough for that later, luv," she purred, turning in his arms and lifting her face to his before stroking his lips. "No more talk now. Kiss me."

Harry didn't need any more encouragement.

* * * * *

But it was only a few more weeks before events conspired to drive the lovers apart, if only for a time...and once they were separated, it was many long, agonisingly lonely months before they were reunited. Months in which Ginny had no idea what was going on with Harry, Ron and Hermione, much less whether their quest for the Horcruxes had been successful or whether they had managed to survive the final confrontation with Voldemort and company.

She supposed she should have been thankful that she had at least been allowed to help them search for spells, charms and such that were likely to be helpful, but that didn't make it any easier to know that they were gone, off Merlin knows where risking their lives ... and what was worse, without her there to help, whatever the risk to herself! They had left the Burrow even before the sun had rose, before she had awakened; the only tangible thing she had left was a heartfelt yet apologetic, love-and-regret-filled letter from Harry. A letter she read every night in order to keep him close to her emotionally, however far away he may have been physically.

When they finally did come back, battered both physically and emotionally, not to mention scruffy and unkempt, almost a year later, Harry had been fearful of how Ginny would react, what she would say to his having left her behind so abruptly, albeit with the best of intentions ... but in the end they were unable to stay away from each other, eventually renewing their love in a manner that prompted him to fulfill the next section of Trelawney's other prophecy, proposing marriage to her.

However, Molly and Arthur refused to allow them to marry until Ginny had graduated from Hogwarts, which amounted to another six months. It was during this time that Ginny remembered to tell Harry what Trelawney had once told her about them, and he reacted predictably...at least at first. They were relaxing on her bed, in her room, with the door half-open.

"Well, that's at least two predictions she's gotten right...but only two out of Merlin knows how many hundred, if not thousand, over the years," he remarked with a laugh before squeezing her and kissing her deeply. "Gods, how I missed that," he said upon finally reluctantly releasing her lips, keeping his arms around her even after ending the kiss.

"Well, with any luck, we'll never have to be separated so long again. After all, there's no longer any reason, especially since you've taken care of the Horcruxes and Voldemort."

"Unless they send me off somewhere as an Auror," Harry reminded her.

"But you're not an Auror yet," she pointed out.

"No, I still have to do makeup work and finish my Hogwarts studies ... then take hours of tests at the Ministry. Probably won't be official until after we're married."

"I probably won't be officially a Healer until then, either," she remarked. "But it'll happen before you get your Auror's licence, so I should be able to support us on my Healer's salary until then."

"Technically you don't have to work at all, you know. Remember the money my mum and dad left me."

"But I want to. I need something worthwhile to do so I don't go stir-crazy. Besides, it's best to keep that extra money for emergencies, like illness, injury or even pregnancy."

"You're probably right," he conceded, stretching but wincing as he did so. "Ooh, I should know better than to do that, after having gotten such an ... injury there."

"What kind of injury?" Ginny demanded, suddenly alarmed.

"A *Sectumsempra* curse Voldemort hurled at me, just like the one I gave Malfoy once, as I hurled the *Avada Kedavra* at him. A diagonal slash across my abdominal area. I was told because of the severity of the curse, I would retain a nasty scar even after the wound healed."

"As if one wasn't enough," Ginny opined dryly. "Well, at least they're in places where you can hide them. Just the same, I don't like the idea of such a beautiful body being marred by yet another scar."

"Hey, what matters is that I survived it," he reminded her.

"Just the same, you might not have gotten it at all if I'd been there."

"Don't start that again, okay? It's all over and behind us now. We have much better things to think about, such as planning our wedding ... not to mention your graduation."

Ginny sighed in affectionate exasperation but didn't argue further. "You won't hear any more about it from me. Now let's get back to bigger and better things." With that, she pressed Harry back onto the bed, lying half on top of him, and snogged him within an inch of his life.

After a long, passionate session, he reluctantly pulled her away and said, "Hey, remember that the door's open. If you do that again, we'll have to put a Locking Charm on the door so we don't get caught."

"Then do it," she returned with a provocative smile.

"I thought you wanted to wait until we got married," he reminded her.

"I've changed my mind. I've waited nearly a year to have you again like this and don't intend to wait a moment more, much less six months. Don't worry, I'll put a Contraceptive Charm on myself...but I want you. Right here and right now!"

By this time Harry had learned nonverbal spells, so he sent one in the direction of the door, although he still had to use his wand. Ginny had also mastered a few nonverbal spells, one of which was the Contraceptive Charm. Once she was adequately protected, there was no reason for them to wait any longer to come together ... and they didn't. It was at this point that Harry and Ginny left the last remnants of their childhood behind them forever.

* * * * *

It was only because they were so careful and meticulous about using a combination of the above spells that Ginny managed to reach both her graduation and their wedding day without having become pregnant. It was not only a need, it was a requirement, especially since the lovers were so actively pursuing a physical relationship...and after having spent almost a year apart, they had a lot of time to make up for.

Of course, once they were finally married, which was set for a week after her graduation, they would drop the Contraceptive Charm and work earnestly to see that she got pregnant. It would likely take a few months to manage it after having used the Charm so regularly, so they had to be patient, but once they were safely married, it was only a matter of time.

* * * * *

After a joyous graduation celebration at which virtually every member of the Weasley family was present, including Hermione, who was now engaged to Ron (their wedding was scheduled for six months after the one with Harry and Ginny), the engaged couple had a romantic dance (after a few weeks of dancing lessons for Harry generously provided by Hermione and supervised by both of their partners) to Ginny's favourite instrumental melody, the "Magic Waltz," in the magically expanded living room of the Burrow.

Of course, they weren't the only ones dancing, but they might as well have been for all the notice they took of the others around them. Once the graduation was out of the way, they were able to concentrate on the upcoming wedding...and there was still so much to be done that if it hadn't been for the fact of having magic on their side, they'd never have made it. (Ginny's final grades would arrive by owl post from Hogwarts in a few weeks, and if they were what everyone, including Ginny, expected, she would graduate with honours, with either "Outstanding" or "Exceeds Expectations" grades for every class.)

But they did ... and in true Weasley fashion, the wedding was held in the Burrow, again with virtually the entire family, including family member-to-be Hermione, present. Roughly ten minutes before the wedding was to begin, the head of the Ministry's Department of Marriage and Children Apparated in to marry Harry and Ginny in his best robes of royal blue covered with stars.

By then everyone was in place; all that was necessary was for Ginny to walk down the aisle on Arthur's arm, then join Harry at the altar. After that, it would only take roughly another ten minutes for them to be married. The men, including Harry himself, wore tuxedo-like robes similar to what he had worn at the Christmas Ball. Ron was his friend's best man and Hermione the maid of honour. A reception for friends would be held after the newlyweds returned from their honeymoon.

It was almost deathly quiet for a time after they had been pronounced husband and wife, then the room positively erupted in boisterous cheers, applause and the newlyweds found themselves virtually smothered in hugs, kisses and congratulations. Not long after that, Ginny threw her bouquet from halfway up the stairs to the unmarried ladies among the guests, the "significant others" of the other Weasley brothers, excluding Bill, who had long since been an "old married man", having married Fleur Delacour some months before, while Harry and company had been away fighting the Second Wizarding War. (In fact, she was already pregnant.) It landed in the arms of one of Fred and George's girlfriends and she gave her man a sly look, already plotting for their wedding to be the next one celebrated...after the one for Ron and Hermione, that is.

After another barrage of hugs, kisses and congratulations, the newlyweds, having changed into going-away clothes, flew off on Harry's Firebolt, on their way to a destination that not even Ginny knew...and that he had told her they wouldn't need any luggage for ... and only one change of clothes, which had already been shrunk down to fit in the pockets of their current clothing, not to mention only his wand in case they needed something, either to eat or anything else.

They landed in a beautiful wooded area, trees and flowers growing in equal abundance, near a large pond into which a waterfall was falling and a small beach between the water's edge and the end of the grass...small, but large enough to lie on if one chose to do so. The couple just stood looking around for a while, marveling at the natural beauty surrounding them, scarcely able to believe that a place this beautiful still existed, untouched by so-called "civilisation."

Harry then released her hand and lifted her chin up to face him before bending down to find her lips with his and drawing her close. The kiss was tentative at first, then deepened and his hands found their way to her backside, gently pressing her body close to his own and moving sensuously against her; she smiled against his lips upon feeling the strength of his arousal. After a time he reluctantly broke the kiss in order to find the wildly pounding pulse in her throat, then his hands reluctantly moved from her backside and found their way to open her blouse, kissing every inch of bare skin he uncovered. Ginny moaned softly and held his head close, stroking his thick, silky but always-unruly hair.

"Gods, Gin, you're delicious ..." A moment later, he finished unbuttoning her blouse and slid it off her shoulders; it fell to the ground, along with her bra a moment later. She gasped in astonished pleasure when his lips found one breast, even as one large but warm and gentle hand cradled the other. After a time he switched places, then squatted down, kissing his way down her body until he reached the waistband of her jeans.

It took only a moment for him to open her jeans and pull them down, leaving only a brief pair of lacy knickers behind...and even then, they stayed only a moment. She stepped out of both and he resumed his kissing of her bare skin. Even as much as she wanted him to continue loving her this way, she wanted to undress him even more. "Hey, Mister, I can't let you have all the fun. Get up here so I can undress *you*."

Without a word of protest, Harry stood up and waited as Ginny's fingers began unbuttoning his shirt, gasping softly with every touch of her lips on his bare chest. Once she finished doing that and reached the waistband of his jeans, she slipped it off his shoulders and it joined her clothing on the grass-covered ground. The gasping got louder when she opened his jeans and lowered them ... increasing geometrically when she removed the last remnant of clothing from his body, a pair of pale green boxer shorts, and his naked magnificence was fully revealed to her hungry eyes...and even hungrier lips and hands.

"Gods, Harry, you're beautiful ..." But just as she was ready to continue her ministrations, he pulled her to her feet and whispered that there was something else he wanted very much to do first. He scooped her up into his arms and carried her a short distance away to a shady, flower-dotted patch of grass, then lowered her to it; her legs seemed to open of their own accord to accommodate him, and her arms locked around his neck as he positioned himself between her legs, supporting most of his weight on forearms and knees. After that, something very tender, but at the same time extremely passionate, transpired...and this was only the beginning.

Over the ensuing days, they made love in various places ... in the pond, again in the flower-dotted grass in the shade of the trees, on the beach ... and the first time that happened, they didn't even make it completely out of the water before sinking to the ground and passionately possessing each other once again. In fact, for the majority of the week-long honeymoon, they spent it unashamedly naked, like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before the serpent invaded.

All they felt was love and desire, the music of nature their soundtrack. Of course, they had to eat and drink periodically, availing themselves of the food Harry conjured up with his wand. Of course, there were also times they didn't eat the food; rather, it was used *on* their bodies rather than put inside them.

Ginny would never forget the way Harry had spread her legs and carefully poured some butterbeer over her there, then lowered his head and brought her to a mind-boggling climax in that very sensitive spot. Of course, turnabout was fair play, so she decided to do the same to him. (And that was just *one* thing they tried ...)

Once they came back to earth and had rested sufficiently, they lay together in the flower-dotted grass under the trees, still unashamedly naked, but this time all they were interested in (at least for the moment) was talking. "I have an idea, luv," Ginny remarked, her head cradled on her husband's bare chest, loving the warmth of his skin and hearing his heart beat under her ear; his arms were locked around her waist and fingers laced as they rested there and hers locked around him.

"What idea?"

"I was thinking, why don't we visit a nudist colony sometime? I remember hearing about one in an isolated area of Scotland just for wizarding people."

There was a long silence; then Harry declared, "No. No way. Forget it!"

"But why?"

"It's one thing to go naked on one's honeymoon; it's quite another to be surrounded by naked people, some of whom don't have good bodies ... to put it mildly! Besides, I don't want anyone but me to see you naked or for anyone besides you to see *me* naked. Tell you what...how about going naked one day a week once we get our own place, not go anywhere that day if we can avoid it, then put a screen or something around it so we can go outside without giving our neighbours a free show?"

After some thought, Ginny smiled and agreed. "Sounds fine to me. But what if Mum, Dad or one or more of my brothers...Ron, for instance...shows up, especially if he's with Hermione?"

"We'd dress, of course ... but only for as long as they were around."

"Wouldn't it be something if we got caught doing it?" she laughed.

Harry could just imagine Ron's reaction if he and/or Hermione caught him and Ginny doing that ... not to mention Fred and George, Molly or Arthur! For the moment, though, he occupied himself with figuring ways for them to go naked *without* being caught doing it. Of course, at some point he seriously considered asking their friends to join him and Ginny on their weekly "Naked Day"...but had every intention of giving them fair warning first.

At another point during the course of their honeymoon, Ginny asked how Harry could have known how to get to the beautifully wooded and scented area he had brought her to.

"I don't know the name of this place, just the coordinates. Found them in some of my mum and dad's wedding stuff. It's so beautiful and romantic here that I can't help thinking that this is at least one of the places they must have gone on their honeymoon. For that matter, Mum may even have gotten pregnant with me here. Which reminds me, you *did* stop using the Contraceptive Charm, didn't you?"

"The day before we got married. Why?"

"Just making sure," her husband returned enigmatically. "Which reminds me of something else I want to show you. Come on." He moved to get up, pulling her up by one hand and heading to the nearest grove of trees. Harry hadn't said why he was doing this, but Ginny figured there must be a reason; there usually was.

After a time they came to a flowering tree dappled with equal parts shade and sun; by an odd coincidence, one of the parts that was in the sun depicted a heart with initials carved in it and a date beneath them: "JP & LE June 26, 1979."

"Oh, my gods ..." Ginny remarked softly. "Your parents?"

"Right. I found this when I made a dry run here a few days ago. Dad obviously carved this with his wand...and I was thinking to put a heart with *our* initials and the date we were here in it as well. That is, if you don't object."

"How could I object? But as far as I know, you don't have your wand with you."

"Should only take a moment to retrieve it. Wait here." Ginny nodded in acknowledgment and Harry ducked back to their makeshift camp where their clothes were and got his wand out of his jeans pocket, then returned to her. She watched, fascinated, as Harry said, "*Lumos*," lighting up the tip of his wand, then touching it to the bark of the tree, carefully carving out a heart roughly the same size as the one James Potter had carved nineteen years before, then adding his and Ginny's initials "HP & GW" and finally, the current date: "August 23, 1998."

"There," Harry smiled. "Preserved for posterity. Wouldn't it be something to have at least one of our children come here *for their* honeymoon and do as we and their paternal grandparents did?"

"It certainly would," she agreed. "Which reminds me ... would it be all right for me to tell Mum and Dad, not to mention Ron and Hermione, about this much of our honeymoon at least?"

"It shouldn't hurt," came the response. "As long as they don't ask about the rest of it."

He then moved to slide his arm around her waist and she cradled her head on his shoulder. "Did you want to finish up the honeymoon in Hogsmeade? We could change clothes there."

"I suppose so," she returned, somewhat reluctantly. "But I've enjoyed our being able to be alone together...and what's more *being naked* alone together. I also enjoy seeing you with several days' stubble and your hair all windblown. You look so sexy ..." Ginny's voice trailed off, extricating herself from his arm and turning to face him, caressing his cheek.

"Well, we don't have to leave right this minute," Harry crooned, feeling himself becoming aroused at her mere touch. "Just thought I'd suggest it."

"How about going to Hogsmeade tomorrow morning? It's still fairly early in the day and I prefer to have as much time here as possible."

"Your wish is my command, sweet lady." With that, he scooped her up in his arms again and walked back to their camp for yet another tenderly passionate interlude to close out their time in the beautifully green, wooded and scented natural scene surrounding them.

* * * * *

Upon awakening, the couple dressed and mounted the Firebolt; within half an hour they had arrived at Hogsmeade and booked a room at the Leaky Cauldron for the next couple of days. Again, they spent the majority of the time in the room that first day, making love whenever the urge struck them...and one may be assured that the urge struck often. It wasn't until the final day that they finally managed to leave the room, changing into the new set of clothing, having had food sent up (at least on the first day) so that they would have the energy to continue their favourite pastime.

Upon leaving the room, though, they walked down the street, arms around each other, investigating the shops, such as Honeydukes and Dervish and Banges, which sold and repaired magical equipment, as their whims dictated. But Honeydukes was the only place they bought anything...Harry a large slab of his favorite flavour chocolate, mocha, for one, and Ginny's favourite flavour of fudge ... a combination of peanut butter and milk chocolate.

Just the same, he decided...if only just for the heck of it...to lean against one of the trees along the street and snog her silly for a while. At first Ginny gave him a funny look, then smiled and agreed. She could just imagine what passersby must have thought, probably that she and Harry weren't even married, but frankly didn't care one way or the other. What mattered was that they belonged to each other and could not only snog but make love for as long (and as often) as they liked.

It was considerably later in the day by the time they came back to earth. "Oh, but that was fun," she commented with a sly smile. "I swear, my love, you just seem to get better at kissing with every passing day."

"Well, I've had a lot of practise lately, you know," her husband returned with an answering smile.

"And you'll be getting plenty more before I'm through with you," Ginny playfully threatened, which only made Harry's smile widen.

"I can hardly wait!"

* * * * *

After returning to the room, they had dinner sent up and barely finished eating before heading back to bed (the first night, they'd actually done it in the shower). The next thing they knew, it was morning and time to head home ... and back to reality. For the past week, it had seemed like they were literally living a dream populated by just the two of them, but now had to get back to the necessary business of everyday living.

Harry had to knuckle down and finish the necessary courses so he could become an Auror, then take the tests for his licence, and Ginny had to finish hers so she could obtain her Healer's degree and support them on her salary while he finished school.

They were naturally welcomed back with open arms at the Burrow, and no eyebrows were raised at Harry and Ginny sharing Fred and George's old room until they managed to get a place of their own. A month or so later, she started feeling sick and told her mother; Molly checked and discovered that Ginny was at least four weeks pregnant. The conception date would have had to have been somewhere during the week of their honeymoon when they had made love several times, not just during the week, but in one day.

Once that was done, Ginny knew it was her duty to tell her husband what she had discovered. Upon returning to their room, she discovered him studying industriously, but he looked up at her entrance nonetheless and from the look on her face judged that she had something important to tell him.

"Something wrong?" he asked, concerned.

"No ..." her voice trailed off ominously. "Or at least I don't *think* it is."

"You've been feeling sick lately. Did you have your mum check you out?"

"I did. Harry, remember what you said about your mum possibly becoming pregnant with you at the place we spent five days of our honeymoon?"

"Yeah. Are you saying ...?"

She nodded and smiled. "The magic worked again."

"What magic?"

"The magic that spot we stayed obviously gives off. It affected your parents and has now affected us. I'm four weeks pregnant."

Harry was sure that it was just as likely simply a result of the single-mindedness of honeymooners rather than magic, but didn't argue with his wife, for it was every bit as likely that she was right. The glow in her soft brown eyes mesmerised him, and he couldn't resist setting his study materials aside and beckoning to her.

"Come here, you," he crooned, patting the space beside him. A moment later she was in his arms and they shared a tender, lingering kiss. Upon separating, she cradled her head on his shoulder, her arms now locked around him. "That's wonderful news."

"You don't mind my getting pregnant so soon, do you?"

"Of course not. I fully expected it. After all, we made love quite a bit during our honeymoon and had no contraception at any time."

"I can imagine how Mum is going to feel, being a grandmother again. Remember, this will be her and Dad's second grandchild; Bill and Fleur have a son."

"Would it make any difference to you which gender our child was?"

"Not as long as it's our child," Ginny declared. "We're going to have a baby. I can scarcely fathom it, especially considering that not too long ago you were all het up over Cho Chang."

"Now I'm all 'het up' over *you* ... and that's how it will stay," he assured her, maneuvering her so that he could put his hands on her still-flat belly...but it wouldn't remain flat for long ... and if she was as prolific as her mother, it wouldn't surprise Harry one bit if the rest of Trelawney's *other* prophecy came true, that he and Ginny had as many children as Arthur and Molly, maybe even at least one set of twins...if not more. They'd have to just wait and see. For the time being, all they could do was simply live their lives as best they could ... not to mention get their own place as soon as they could, and as large a place as possible, in order to accommodate their family...a family which had only *begun* to grow.