

When You Say You Love Me

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Prologue

Chapter 1 of 2

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Prologue

"Mum," yelled Ginny from the kitchen of the Burrow, "I'm leaving for practice now! New team member tryouts are today, but I'll try to be back in time for dinner."

"Alright, Ginny dear." The simple reply came from her mother, who was somewhere upstairs cleaning, most likely.

Ginny walked out the kitchen door and into the sunny garden towards the family's designated Apparation point. She turned on the spot and deftly landed in front of the women's changing rooms on the Wimborne Wasps' Quidditch team practice field. As she checked her watch, she realized that practice was scheduled to begin in five minutes, giving her only a short amount of time to change into her practice robes.

She'd only been on the team for a little over one year now, and for some reason was just as nervous to be watching the tryouts as she was when she tried out. She knew that there was no need to be nervous, as she'd been informed only yesterday that her position as one of the team's Chasers was secure. She couldn't help but wonder if the security of her position would change if someone who tried out turned out to be much better at Chasing than she was.

"Ginny, stop worrying and get dressed," snapped the annoyed voice of twenty-five year old Alicia Tumbledge, the team captain.

"I know, sorry. I'm coming," she answered, shaking her head at the predictability of her facial expressions. "I'm way too easy to read," she said quietly to herself as she slipped her robes over her pony-tailed red hair and walked out onto the field.

As she grabbed her broom, the newest Cleansweep model, she took a quick glance around at the people awaiting a trial. She was amazed at the sheer number of contenders. She couldn't remember there being this many people trying out last year. Taking another quick glance around her before kicking off the ground, she scanned the crowd for familiar faces. To her surprise, she saw several former classmates, and others, both older and younger, who had attended Hogwarts, all of whom she hadn't seen in several years.

"Circle the pitch twice and meet back here, team, and then tryouts can begin!" Alicia yelled after performing the Sonorous charm.

The team did as instructed, meeting back in the center where they were assigned small groups of the applicants to work with for a period of time. She remembered this part of the process well, as she had been assigned to work with Brian Anderson, an insanely cute, American-born member of the team. He had unfortunately taken a Bludger to the head during the most recent game against Puddlemere United and was still unconscious in St. Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies.

Her group was composed of Michael Corner, a former Hogwarts classmate and boyfriend, and three others, two girls whom she didn't recognize at all, and a boy whom she knew was a year older than her, also from Hogwarts. After quick introductions and identification of the positions being tried for, Ginny set her group hard to work. After twenty minutes, Alicia called all the groups back to the center of the pitch.

"We're now going to see individual trials, beginning with Beaters, followed by Keepers, and then Seekers. Tryouts will be held alphabetically by last name, beginning with Jaffrey Abaereth." Alicia announced with an air of authority evident in her voice. Jaffrey visibly started at the sound of his name, as he had been very intently watching the Wasp's very attractive blond-haired, blue-eyed captain.

The rest of the tryouts went over very well with only one minor injury occurring involving a Beater's bat to the back of someone's head. Alicia had just announced that results would be posted two days later on each of changing room doors, reminding everyone that there were only three positions available, one Beater, Keeper, and Seeker. As she was calling for dismissal, a man walked part way onto the pitch, his face hidden in the shadows of the changing rooms behind him.

"I'd like to try out for the position of Seeker, if I'm not too late," he stated, shifting his body slightly, but not stepping out of the shadows.

Ginny knew that voice, and although she could not immediately put a name or face to the voice, she knew it held some deeper meaning to her.

"We were about to close up, but I suppose we have time for one more quick trial," Alicia responded, stressing the quick portion of her statement. She was not known as being a very patient person and was not about to make an exception for someone who wouldn't even show the team the courtesy of showing his face.

"That would be wonderful," he responded. "I will be as quick as I can." With that last comment, the unidentified man walked out of the shadows, clutching his broom, a Firebolt Extreme, the newest model on the market. Astonishment and surprise rippled through the faces of those standing on the field, and those in the stands as they realized who had stepped out of the shadows.

Ginny took one surprised look at the man standing a few feet in front of her, the man she loved, the man she hadn't seen in nearly three years, Harry Potter, and she gasped and crumpled to the ground, unconscious.

Confrontations and Revelations

Chapter 2 of 2

Ginny Weasley Wakes up. Will Harry still be there when she does? What's his story?

Chapter One: Confrontations and Revelations

Ginny Weasley opened her eyes and squinted into the bright light surrounding her. As her eyes focused, she realized that she was in a bed in St. Mungo's, surrounded by several teammates as well as her mother, father, Ron, Hermione, and Harry. Glancing out the window, she noticed that it was dark outside.

"How long have I been asleep?" she asked, directing the question to no one in particular.

"Nearly twelve hours, dear," her mother answered, concern and relief very evident on her smiling face. "Do you remember what happened?"

"I don't..." she began, before her eyes connected with Harry's. "Wait, I remember what happened. This is your fault!" she snapped at him, causing everyone in the room to recoil slightly.

Harry took one large step away from her bed, his eyes wide with surprise at her heated reaction. Hermione had not been nearly this upset... before or after he told her and the Weasleys where he had been the previous three years. Their whispered conversation, which had taken place in the corner of Ginny's room while she was unconscious, supplied him with hugs from Mrs. Weasley and Hermione, pats on the back from Ron and the twins, and a firm handshake from Mr. Weasley. While he had been welcomed back with open arms, it was evident that none of them were truly happy with the choices of the past few years. Regardless of the others' thoughts and feelings, however, he had not expected this sort of reaction from Ginny.

"How could you just show up like that and not expect me to go into shock? No one has seen or heard from you in almost three years. I thought you were dead!" By this time, she was sitting up in the bed, struggling futilely against her mother's continuous efforts to keep her immobile.

"Let me go, Mum, I'm fine!" she yelled, earning her disapproving glances from both her father and Hermione. As she stood up, however, it became apparent that she was not fine. She wobbled unsteadily on the spot, and if it had not been for Harry's wonderful reflexes, she would have fallen to the floor. He picked her up, cradling her against his chest. She fought pointlessly against his strong grip. When his hold on her did not diminish, she thrashed about even harder, her hand purposely connecting with the side of his face and at the same time demanding that he put her back down. As he gently laid her down on the bed, however, she caught sight of his sad, tear-filled eyes and the concerned look on his now-red face. She turned towards her teammates, friends, and family and quietly requested that she and Harry be left alone to talk in private.

"I, uh, no..." Harry stammered, highly uncomfortable at the prospect of being left in the same room, alone, with the unmistakably furious woman who was infamously known for her Bat-Bogey Hex.

"Harry, you two really need to talk. You owe her that much and you know it," Hermione said, frowning slightly at his skeptical behavior.

"She's right, mate. You need to do this; if not for you, then for her," Ron stated, earning him an unexpected peck on the cheek from Hermione.

Harry knew that they were both right: he did owe her an explanation. He'd been away since right after the Final Battle, and no one, not even Ron, had known where he'd been until that very evening.

"Okay," Harry said, silently willing himself to make it through the discussion.

Everyone in the room filed silently out the door, her teammates wishing her a speedy recovery, and Alicia wondering out loud if she would be at the next afternoon's practice. As they shut the door behind them, Ginny picked up her wand from the bedside table and quickly cast a Silencing Charm on the room to avoid being overheard.

With the room nearly empty, Ginny was now able to see the many gifts and objects scattered around her section of the room. Harry, following her gaze to the table of gifts at the end of her bed, told her that Fred and George had been there earlier that evening. They had attempted, once again, to bring her a toilet seat as a get-well-soon gift, which had been instantaneously confiscated by the Healer in charge. Ginny shook her head at the never-changing predictability and immaturity of her older twin brothers.

"Well, some things never will change, Fred and George being two of those things," Ginny said, a slight smile playing over her lips. "Other things, however, do change," she continued, turning back to Harry.

Harry's smile became an aggrieved look that hurt Ginny's heart for reasons she didn't understand. Her eyes filled with tears as he turned his face from her, unwilling to allow her to see him express emotion.

"Harry," she began, "please tell me where you've been. I need to know why you never came back." *Back to me*, she thought silently to herself.

"Gin, I can't..." he said, still facing the wall rather than looking at her.

"Harry, please," she pleaded, tears now spilling from her eyes and onto the clean white linen she was covered in. "I need you to tell me."

He turned to look at her, concern playing over his face as he saw her frail figure lean back against the white pillows, tears now flowing freely from beneath closed eyelids.

"Ginny," he started, causing her chocolate colored eyes to open and look, once again, at his emotionally worn features. "These last three years have not been easy for me. I don't want you to think that I've been off enjoying a holiday, because that's the farthest thing from reality."

"Where then, Harry? Where have you been? Why did you cut yourself off from your friends, your family, me? Did you forget about me?" Ginny's voice cracked as she fired questions at him, fear and worry expressed on her pale and tired face.

"Alright, Ginny, I'll explain everything, but only if you promise to lie down. You really need to relax," he said, his seriousness unmistakable in both his voice and on his face. "Can you do that for me, please?" he asked.

"Fine," she said, folding her arms defiantly across her chest as she leaned back against the pillows once more. "As long as you promise to tell me the truth about everything that has happened. I want answers to all of the questions I ask," she said, knowing, but not caring, that she sounded bossy and childish.

"Ginny, I would never lie to you, you should know that," he said, clearly disconcerted that she would not expect him to be truthful. He took a deep breath, mentally preparing himself for the minutes soon to come in which he would have to tell his story yet again, before saying, "Ask away, Ginny."

"Where have you been, Harry? Why haven't you stayed in touch with anyone? What have you been..." she fired, before being interrupted by a slightly amused Harry.

"Hold on a minute, Gin, one question at a time!" he said, a small smile emanating over his lips for the first time since they'd been alone. "In answer to the first question, I have been everywhere, or so it seems. I started off in Bulgaria, moved to France, Germany, Ireland, and now I'm back in England. I've been living as a Muggle, moving to a new location every month or two."

"Why so many different places, Harry?" Ginny solicited with pure amazement on her face.

"I thought that if I completely cut myself off from the Wizarding world, I wouldn't have to worry about the guilt and fear that I still felt, that I still feel even today. I broke my wand, Ginny, on purpose. I haven't used magic in nearly three years. I thought that if I didn't use magic, I wouldn't have to worry about the remaining Death Eaters finding me. No magic, no trail to be followed."

"You broke your wand, Harry? Why would you break your wand? Your wand saved your life on more than one occasion, and you just threw it away!"

"That wand was the one thing that still tied me to Voldemort, Ginny, don't you understand that? It was a constant reminder that he took my mum and dad, Sirius, Dumbledore, and Lupin away from me. I don't want anything to do with that part of my life anymore; it's just too painful. I did, however, keep the feather from inside, Fawkes' feather." Tears filled his eyes, and although he was still unwilling to allow them to spill over, he continued to gaze at her.

"You asked why I haven't stayed in touch with anyone," he began again. "I was afraid that people would see me as a murderer. The last twelve years of my life have been filled with rumors, lies, fear, and anger. I don't want any more attention, good or bad. I want a chance to live my own life, without the pressures of looking good for the Daily Prophet. I think I deserve that much, after everything I've been through, don't you?" he asked.

"Oh, Harry, I'm so sorry," Ginny said, tears flowing down her cheeks again. "How could you think that we'd view you as a murderer, when you saved not only my family, but the entire Wizarding world? We're your family, Harry, and we love you!" *I love you*, she thought to herself.

"Why did you come back? After all this time, why now?" she asked.

"Honestly, I don't know. I think I was just ready to come home. Living alone as a Muggle gets to be very lonely after a while," he replied, a true smile on his face for the first time.

She wiped the tears from her face and smiled back at Harry, who leaned down to give her a hug.

"I'm sorry I hit you, Harry," she said sincerely.

A knock sounded at the door, and her mother stuck her head inside. Relieved to see her daughter smiling again, she asked if it was alright for everyone to come back in. Sending one last glance Harry's way, Ginny nodded and beckoned her mum, dad, Ron, and Hermione back into the room. The elderly Healer who was in charge of Ginny followed Hermione into the room holding two small bottles: one filled with a light blue potion and the other with a pale purple potion.

"This is a Calming Draught, dearie," she said, holding out the blue potion. "It should help settle your nerves. This," she said pointing to the purple potion, "is a mild sleeping potion. You need to take the blue one before you leave and the purple as soon as you arrive home."

"My nerves are fine, really," said Ginny. "And I just woke up from a twelve hour nap; I really don't need any more sleep."

Ron snickered at this last comment, earning him an elbow poke in the ribs from Hermione who, despite her disapproval, also had a smile on her face. The Healer smiled and handed Ginny both potion bottles despite her continued protests.

"I'll send a few additional bottles of the Calming Draught along with your mother in case you have any other anxiety attacks," said the Healer, who then turned and headed back into the busy hallway, followed by Mrs. Weasley.

Sighing, she uncorked the blue potion and swallowed the contents in one gulp, grimacing as the terrible taste caught up with her. An almost instantaneous feeling of peace and calm hit her. Sighing again, she leaned back against the pillows to wait for her mum to return from signing the paperwork that would allow her to go home.

"Dad, Ron, Harry, can you leave so I can get dressed?" Ginny asked, not wanting to travel home in a hospital gown.

"Sure, Gin," her dad answered, ushering both boys out the door and following them into the hallway.

Hermione walked over to Ginny's bedside as the men left the room, with the intention of helping her get dressed. With only a slight amount of wobbling and some assistance from Hermione, Ginny was able to slip her jeans and tee-shirt back on, planning to carry her Quidditch robes rather than wear them home. Sitting down in the

bedside chair, Ginny told Hermione that she could let her dad and the boys come back in. Soon after, her mother returned, pleased to see that everyone was still smiling and ready to leave.

"The Healer thought it would be best if you didn't Apparate tonight, dear, so you and I will be taking the Floo home. Oh, Hermione, dear, you are welcome to stay with us tonight if you wish."

"Mrs. Weasley, I will take Ginny in the Floo," Harry insisted. "You all can go on ahead, and we'll be along shortly." He left no room for argument with his comment. Everyone except Mrs. Weasley left the room to head to the designated Apparation point.

"Are you sure, Harry? She is my daughter, after all," said Mrs. Weasley, smiling despite herself.

"Mum! We'll be fine. Go on home," Ginny said exasperatedly.

With one final glance at her daughter, Mrs. Weasley walked out the door to Apparate back to the Burrow. Harry couldn't help but laugh at the aggravated look on Ginny's face as her mother closed the door behind her.

"Are you ready, Ginny?" he asked her, picking up her remaining possessions.

"Yes. I'm very ready to get out of here," she answered.

As she tried to stand up, however, it became obvious that she was still unstable, aided and abetted by the Calming Draught she had just taken, which had the side effect of making its recipients lightheaded. Harry reached out and put his strong and worn hands on her shoulders, steadying her. He picked her up for the second time, effortlessly it seemed, and held her close to his warm body. They made their way towards the floor's Floo fireplace, which Harry had to duck his head to get in.

"The Burrow!" Ginny said, loud and clear, throwing Floo powder into the grate. As they started spinning, Ginny became aware that she had her head resting on Harry's shoulder, and that he had one hand on the side of her face, seemingly stroking her hair. They reached their destination, and Harry stepped out of the grate into the familiar living room of the Burrow, the closest place he'd ever had to a real home.

"Do you feel like staying down here, or would you like me to take you to your room?" Harry asked, his concern for her well-being still obvious on his face.

"To my room, I think. I am rather tired," she answered, exhaustion evident in her voice.

Harry carried her up the stairs and into her bedroom, where he laid her gently down on the bed. He pulled the Sleeping Potion out of his pocket and set it on her bedside table.

"Do you want me to send your mum up?" he asked, turning to leave.

"No! Please just stay with me until I fall asleep." Tears filled her eyes as she realized that he might not be there when she woke up again. "Never mind, I'm not going to sleep," she said meekly.

"Don't be silly, Ginny. You need to get some rest."

"I don't want to wake up and realize that you're gone, or worse, that this was all a dream," she said, tears now freely flowing down her face.

"I'm not going anywhere, Ginny. Not right now. After all, I never did get to have my Seeker trial," he promised with a smile on his face. "Do you really want me to stay with you until you go to sleep?" he asked.

"Would you, Harry?" she asked, willing his answer to be a sincere 'yes.'

"Sure, Gin. If that's what you want," he answered. He walked back towards her bed and sat on the floor with his back against her bed frame when she asked him to sit with her on the bed. He stood back up and helped her get underneath her sheets. Handing her the purple Sleeping Potion, which she willingly swallowed, he sat down on the edge of her bed. Kicking his shoes off, he slid over her comforter so that he was sitting directly next to her and put one arm around her shoulders. She leaned against his chest and let the Sleeping Potion begin to take effect.

"I'm glad you're back, Harry, I've missed you," she whispered as she drifted into a deep and dreamless sleep.

"It's good to be back, Ginny," he whispered back, planting a gentle kiss on her forehead.

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