

## Chapter 11: Confrontations

Ginny and Harry sat outside enjoying the morning. Ginny leaned back against Harry and read the paper while Harry just rested. They were pleased to be able to spend so much time together. Ginny snuggled closer to him and he held her tighter. He kissed her neck making her laugh quietly. She playfully swatted at him and he laughed. Harry kissed her neck and she tilted her head to the side. Harry grinned against her neck, not really caring if anyone saw them. Ginny turned her attention back to the paper, trying to ignore Harry. "Oh my goodness!" Ginny said suddenly sitting up.

"What is it?"

"Look at this!" Ginny said in disbelief.

Harry took the paper from her and read the article. His eyes grew wide at seeing what was written. "What! This is stupid! I am going to kill that Rita Skeeter!" Harry said in a fierce voice.

"That low life!" Hermione snapped as she found the two. "How dare she write something like this!" Viktor followed closely behind her.

"Zis is not right," Viktor said.

"No its not! For one they have never dated."

"And for another thing he is dating *me*! That woman is really pushing it!" Ginny said in a fierce voice.

"How did she know about you asking me to come visit?" Hermione asked Viktor who could only shrug.

"That woman has crossed the line!" Ginny snapped furiously.

"Harry! Ginny!" Ron called. He was red and annoyed. The two exchanged glances. "I have been meaning to talk to you and you two have been avoiding me."

"What are you talking about? We have been out here all morning," Ginny said annoyed.

"Why was she the one you saved at the match?" Ron snapped ignoring Ginny's comment.

Harry raised an eyebrow at him. "Because she is my girlfriend," Harry said slowly as he got to his feet. He slowly untangled himself from Ginny to face his red-faced friend.

"That's my sister!" He shouted as he hit Harry square in the jaw. Then his fist connected again with his shoulder. Harry stumbled back rubbing his jaw.

"RONALD!" Ginny and Hermione shouted. Harry waved them back.

"That was uncalled for," Ginny said as she moved to check on Harry.

"Zat is low," Viktor said.

"Shove off Krum," Ron snapped as he rounded on Harry. Ginny, however, didn't move from in front of him. "Move Ginny!"

"I will *not* move! Don't touch him!"

"Move it *Ginny!*" Ron raised his arm threateningly.

"NO!" She shouted.

"Don't you dare think of laying a hand on her!" Harry said in a low commanding voice. "Step away from her." Ron looked like he wasn't going to listen and pushed Ginny to the side. She lost her balance and fell, scrapping her arm against the tree. Ron rounded on Harry and swung his fist. It connected with Harry's hand and Harry's fist slammed into his best friend's jaw. He stumbled back into Viktor who moved and watched him fall.

Harry moved and bent down beside Ginny. Her whole arm sported cuts that were bleeding pretty badly. The side of her face also sported cuts. Her eyes were dark with pure fury as she gazed at her fallen brother. Ron held his jaw and got to his feet. This time, however, Viktor stepped in front of him.

"Move it Viktor."

"You 'ave no right to 'urt 'Arry. I suggest that you leave." Krum said in a low threatening voice. Ron looked as if he was about to slug him as well but Hermione stepped in front of him.

"Leave Ronald! How dare you injure Harry and your sister!"

"Why don't you learn to shut your mouth Hermione. Miss-know-it-all."

Hermione slapped him hard across the face. He was about to do something to Hermione when Fred and George grabbed his arms. They tossed him to the ground and stunned him. George turned to look at Hermione. "He didn't hurt you did he?" Hermione only shook her head.

"What the hell were you thinking Ron?" Fred snapped. "You'll be getting a howler from Mum for this!"

"How dare you strike down our sister and Harry! What the hell has gotten into you?" George demanded.

Ron couldn't say anything or move either. Harry helped Ginny to her feet. "We need to get Ginny to the hospital wing."

The others nodded and followed behind the two, leaving Ron stunned on the ground.

"Harry? Ginny? What in the world happened?" Madam Pomfrey asked.

"Ron slugged Harry in the jaw and shoved Ginny into a tree," Hermione stated simply. She gasped at this and ushered the two into the room.

Fred, George, and Hermione sat in the waiting room, while Viktor paced. "Ron's never done that before, I didn't think he could ever hurt Ginny," Hermione mumbled.

"Neither did we, I'm going to inform Mum," Fred said as he headed off.

"I 'ad better go back as well." Viktor said before heading down the hall. Hermione sighed heavily.

"I don't think I have ever seen Harry so angry before."

"It just goes to show how close those two have become. Ron crossed the line with Harry. He crossed the line with the whole family. I can't believe he did that to Ginny. Mum will be furious, not excluding what our brothers will do to him when they find out."

Hermione nodded her head. "Something just isn't right." George hugged her around the shoulders.

"Let's just hope it all works out for the best." Hermione nodded and let her head fall onto his shoulder. Before she knew it she was fast asleep on his shoulder. George gazed down at the bushy haired girl beside him and couldn't help but smile. Ron didn't know what he was passing up.

The door opened to reveal Harry and Ginny. The swelling was gone from his face and Ginny still had some fading red marks. She looked worn out and leaned heavily against Harry. "We should go," Harry mumbled.

"Yes we should," Ginny agreed but she was too tired to continue. Harry turned and offered to carry her. She climbed onto his back and held herself up. George grinned as he picked up Hermione. He was surprised she didn't wake up, she just curled closer to him.

The two boys made their way to the Gryffindor tower. It was fairly empty since most people were outside enjoying the day. "Well we can't set them down here," Harry mumbled.

"Looks like our rooms will have to do." George said with a shrug. Harry took Ginny to his room, George took Hermione to his. He covered her up and she smiled.

Ron sat glowering at the floor of the hospital wing. Professor McGonagall had to take the hexes off of him and sent him up to the hospital wing. When the door opened he

was shocked to see Pansy walk in. The whole left side of her face was swollen, she was clutching her right side. Madam Pomfrey was talking to her but it was clear she didn't really care. She sat on the bed next to him.

Madam Pomfrey left, babbling on about too many injured children. "What happened to you?" Ron asked after a moment.

"Since when do you care?" She snapped at him.

"Since you look like you just went through hell and back."

She eyed him for a long moment. "I got hit, well beat is more like it."

"What happened?" He asked. He didn't know why he was so concerned about her welfare but suddenly he was.

"I upset Draco," she whispered quietly. Ron got out of the bed and approached her. She moved back but was stopped by the back. Pansy quickly dropped her face so he couldn't see it. Slowly Ron tilted her head up so he could look. Her face had dozens of cuts across it and looked as if she had been hit pretty hard.

"That gives him no right to hurt you." Ron whispered as he examined her face. "Let me see your side."

"No," she said in a shaky voice. He had never seen her look so scared before. Ron moved her hand and lifted her shirt up to reveal a huge bruise across her side.

"Looks like you will have a few broken ribs, no doubt that was painful. Does he do this often?"

"He does it sometimes. Usually when I won't let him...er...you know," she said after a moment.

"I'm sorry, no one deserves that."

"What are you doing in here?"

"Harry broke my jaw and I was stunned by my brothers." Ron said sheepishly.

"What? You two are like best friends! What the hell happened?" Pansy said in a shocked voice.

"I sort of got pissed off at Hermione and him for ignoring me so much. Then I found out he was dating my sister and I was hurt that they didn't tell me. So I hit him in the jaw and Ginny got mad and tried to defend him. I shoved her out of the way and into a tree. She got banged up pretty bad. Krum stepped in to protect them, then Hermione to protect him. She slapped me. I don't know what came over me. I've never hit any of them before." Ron finished and dropped his head.

Pansy tilted his head up so he was forced to look at her. "You were upset, I am sure it is hard to live in the shadow of your two best friends. Everyone just expects me to do as I am told, that's why it makes Draco mad when I defy him."

"I feel I should apologize to them but the damage is done and I should let them cool off a bit."

"That would probably be smart. So how long are you stuck in here?"

"The rest of the night."

Just then Madam Pomfrey came in and handed both of them potions before leaving. "I hate potions," Pansy mumbled as she downed the liquid. Ron laughed and did the same.

"You know you should really tell someone about what he is doing to you."

"No one will believe me. Draco will just say one of his friends did it or something. Besides I am stuck in the same house as him."

"You know Pansy, you aren't as bad as I thought you were."

"Your not half bad yourself Ron." The two smiled at each other for a moment, neither noticing that Dumbledore watched from the doorway. This was the first step in uniting all the houses.

"I think I might have an idea on how to help you."

"Really? How?" Pansy asked hopefully.

"Well it's a bit sketchy and I sort of need some help with it but I think I can manage it. Just hold out for about a week and I can help."

"Thank you," she whispered quietly.

Harry sat in the common room staring off into space. Ginny was still fast asleep in his bed and the rest of the students had gone to dinner. The portrait swung open and he was surprised to see Ron walk in.

"Hey Harry."

"Ron," he said in an icy cold voice.

"Listen I could sit here and apologize and beg for your forgiveness but I can't. You two have pushed me too the side again and I lost it. I had absolutely no right to hit you or hurt my sister. Breaking my jaw was enough repayment. My brothers will definitely kill me for harming her and I know you are furious with me. I wish you two would have said something sooner instead of leaving me in the dark like you usually do. I don't think you will forgive me for a while and I really don't deserve it. But I need to borrow something of yours. It's important and its for a friend."

Harry was silent for a few moments. "What do you want to borrow?"

"The Marauders Map." Ron said promptly.

"Alright, it's sitting on top of my trunk." Ron thanked him and ran up the stairs. He didn't care that Ginny was fast asleep in Harry's bed. In the common room he came face-to-face with a very red Hermione.

George pulled her back, keeping her away from him. Ron looked at Harry who shrugged.

"I'm sorry alright? I didn't have any right to do what I did and I definitely don't deserve any of your forgiveness. I was being a selfish prat and I deserve to be hated. I would stay but Madam Pomfrey only let me leave for a little bit. Goodbye." Ron sprinted from the common room and headed for the hospital wing. He was surprised to find Madam Pomfrey asleep at her desk. When he opened the door he found Draco.

He had Pansy bound to the bed and under a silencing charm. He was laying on her, kissing her neck and exposed chest. Fury bubbled inside of Ron as he fired multiple curses at Draco. He shot off the bed and lay unconscious on the floor. With a quick wave of his wand Pansy was free.

She shot off the bed and ran into his arms. He protectively put his arm around her as she cried into his chest. "He j-just showed up. I didn't even have time to react."

"It's alright, don't worry." He whispered in her ear. She cried harder into his chest. He slowly ran his hands through her hair. *She is only fourteen for crying out loud!* Ron thought fiercely. *She shouldn't have to go through this.*

Ron slowly led her back to her bed but she wouldn't let him go. Ron finally settled on sitting in the bed with her curled up in his lap. Suddenly Madam Pomfrey and Professor Dumbledore burst into the room. They looked between Ron and Pansy to an unconscious Draco.

"What in the world happened?"

"I just came back when I found Draco...er...attacking Pansy. So I knocked him out." Ron said with a shrug.

"Well it seems Mr. Weasley was here to save the day," Dumbledore said as he levitated Draco and left the room.

"This is just wonderful, one of my patients attacked! Come here Pansy."

Pansy refused to move from where she was sitting.

Ginny slung her arm in Harry's. "Finally another Hogsmeade trip!" Ginny said with a grin. Harry laughed.

"Good thing to now I can get your birthday present."

"What is it?" Ginny asked more excited than ever now.

"That's my secret."

"Oh please Harry! Please I want to know!"

"Not until your birthday."

"Harry! Ginny!" Hermione called out as she hurried over to them.

"Hi Hermione," Harry said.

"How are you two today?"

"Just fine."

"Harry won't tell me what he is getting me for my birthday," Ginny complained.

"If you need any help Harry I will be glad to help."

"Thanks Hermione." He leaned over to whisper to her. "Meet me later outside Zonko's."

"Sure thing."

"Hey no secrets!" Ginny said pulling Harry towards her. "You two are being mean to me!"

"We are not!" Hermione said with a grin. "So what do you two have planned for the day? And does it involve eating somewhere?"

"Actually we really don't have any plans or none that I know of but I am hungry as well."

"Then we can go eat if we *have* to."

Hermione and Harry laughed. "Look there is Lavender! Hey Lavender!" Harry called out. Lavender turned to find who had called her name. Smiling she approached them. "Hey Harry, Hermione, and Ginny. What are all of you up to?"

"Just enjoying a nice day in Hogsmeade." Ginny said as she linked her hand with Harry's. Harry turned and raised an eyebrow at him.

"Hey Lavender can I ask you a favor?"

"Sure what is it?"

"Would you mind taking Ginny to the Three Broomsticks?" Before she could answer Harry grabbed Hermione's hand and the two headed off in a different direction.

"What was that all about?"

"I asked her earlier to be a distraction to Ginny while we went off hunting for her birthday presents."

"Alright that is fair enough. So where are we going?"

"To the pet store, I was going to get Ginny an owl."

"Oh she would *love* that! Since all they have is Errol and he isn't the brightest on there is. Besides it would be good for her to have something of her own instead of sharing with her brothers." Hermione said with a grin. "What else?"

"Well I have this for her as well." He said pulling a box out of his pocket. Hermione eagerly took it from him and opened it. Inside was a gold necklace with a locket on it. It had her initials carved in it.

"Oh this is just adorable! When did you get it?"

"A few days ago." Harry said opening the door to the pet store. Inside were hundreds of animals.

"Well she will absolutely love it," Hermione said as she went to look at owls. Harry laughed as he slipped the box into his pocket.

It was about ten minutes later when they decided on one. A white owl with brown spots all across it. "Kind of reminds me of Ginny's freckles."

"Yes it does."

Ginny stood gaping as the two practically ran into town. "What in the world was all that about?" Ginny whined.

"Harry said he needed some time to get you a proper birthday present. Now tell me how are things going with wonder boy?" Lavender asked as she pulled Ginny in the direction of the Three Broomsticks.

"Things are going quite well actually. I am glad to be with him and I think my brothers approve of him."

"That's always a good thing. So when is Harry's birthday?"

"I believe it is July 31st why do you ask?"

"Well I am just curious is all. Now tell me are you happy to be with him?"

"Of course I am. He's sweet and caring and he is a *very* good kisser."

Lavender laughed at this. "Well that is always a good thing. That is all you two have done right?"

"Lavender! How could you even suggest something like that? I'm not even fourteen! Goodness!"

"I was just checking." The two entered The Three Broomsticks and got a seat in the back of the place. They chatted for a few minutes before Harry and Hermione appeared. They spotted them and made their way over to them. On their way they were stopped by Rita Skeeter. "Oh how is the happy couple today?"

"We are *not* a couple," Hermione said in such a calm voice it made Rita take a step back.

"Right, well how is our youngest Champion fairing knowing that his girlfriend is with another man?"

"Well if she was my girlfriend I would care but my girlfriend is sitting over there," Harry pointed to a very annoyed Ginny. Ginny got to her feet, followed by Lavender, and approached her. "Hello Ginny," Harry said with a grin as he took her hand in his.

"Oh well this is all new. Are you his rebound girl then?"

Harry wrapped his arm around Ginny's waist before she decided to knock Rita's head off. "I suggest you hold your tongue. You would do well to learn who you are speaking to." Lavender said in a menacing voice.

Rita only raised an eyebrow at her. "Well then I see she is a bit touchy on the subject. Well I am off bye little children." But as she was leaving Ginny stuck her foot out tripping her. The whole place erupted into laughter. "Why you little-"

"Don't you dare think of hurting her," Harry snapped as he stepped in between the two.

"You will pay for your little mistake! You foolish insolent little child. "

"If you do anything to her in any way, shape, or form you will sorely regret that." Rita glared fiercely at Harry before leaving.

"She's going to write about you in the paper Ginny," Hermione said.

"Well I could really care less, how dare she insult me like that!" Ginny said in a huff as she took her seat. Harry laughed quietly as he sat down beside her. "What's so funny?"

"Nothing at all," he said as he ordered a drink.

"So where did you two run off to?" Lavender asked after a while.

"Just to get something done. I had to send a letter to my parents," Hermione said with a shrug.

"Right, they are lieing! They went to get my birthday present," Ginny told her with a smug grin.

"Now why would we do something like that? I mean what would be the point in it?" Harry asked with a smirk on his face. Ginny glared at him making Harry grin wide.

"Arry!" Fleur called making the others look up.

"Oh hey Fleur, hi Gabrielle."

"Ve vere vondering if you three would like to join us later? Zer is a party for ze champions."

"Oh that would be great, what do you think Ginny?"

"Sounds like fun to me, what about you Hermione?"

"Oh well I don't know..."

"Please, Krum vas wanting you to join 'im." Fleur said with a wicked smile.

"Alright I guess I will go."

"Your friend can come to if he wants. Come on Gabrielle," Fleur said as she led her sister away. "Its at nine tonight by ze lake."

"Oh can we go back now I have to pick something out!" Ginny said suddenly.

"So do I!" Lavender said happily.

"But I want to stay," Harry complained.

"Well you can stay with Harry, Ginny is right." The two got to their feet to leave. "Besides we will see you tonight any way." She said with a smile. Ginny kissed Harry before leaving.

Hermione and Harry spent the rest of the trip there talking about whatever popped into their head.

"HARRY!"

"What?"

"Are you coming or not?"

"Yes I am," Harry mumbled as he came down the stairs. He had been busy working on a gift for Ginny when she decided to call. Hermione and Lavender waited patiently for him to come. Ginny had on a light pink tanktop and a pair of jeans. Hermione was in much the same outfit only her shirt was a dark blue. Lavender sported a dark purple shirt and tight jeans. "Ready?"

They all nodded and headed outside to the lake. A huge fire blazed by the lake. They could hear music playing as they got closer. Harry could see Cho and Cedric already

dancing while Fleur danced with her sister. "Come on Harry!" Ginny said dragging him over to the fire.

Krum smiled and he asked to dance with Hermione. Lavender sat down to the side watching the others dance. "Come on," Gabrielle said as she pulled Lavender to her feet and pushed her to join Fleur and her as they danced.

Ginny had managed to bring her camera yet again. Everyone seemed to be enjoying the party. Harry laughed at Ginny when she managed to trip and fall. "That is not funny!" She said in an annoyed voice. Ginny practically tackled him when she got up.

"Hey no fair!"

"Oh I think it is," she said with a grin. She wrapped her arms around his neck and the two began to dance. Harry grinned as he spun her and pulling her back quickly. She laughed happily and was glad that he held her.

The party lasted well into the night. They were all surprised when Dumbledore set up two tents and returned to the castle. After a while they all sat around the fire. Ginny sat wrapped in Harry's arms. Gabrielle, Fleur, and Lavender had fallen asleep next to the fire. Viktor and Hermione talked a little way away from everyone. Cho sat like Ginny did.