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Chapter Three

Celebrations and Revelations

*A fire burns, water comes
You cool me down
When I'm cold inside
You are warm and bright
You know you're so good for me
~KT Tunstall, Eye to the Telescope*

"You okay?"

His eyes snapped open, the bright August sunshine blinding him. Groping around, he heard a soft laugh and felt himself being pulled up into a sitting position. He blinked several times until the face of Ginny Weasley came into focus.

Without answering, Harry stood up quickly but nearly fell back down again as his world began to swim.

"I'll take that as a 'no'." She said gently as she looked at him intently. "Are you okay? Be honest about this, Potter."

"How far did I fall?"

"Possibly fifteen feet, maybe even twenty-five." She paused and looked him over, "You're lucky you didn't break your neck."

She offered her hand out to him and he gladly accepted, feeling how small and smooth her flesh was against his own. As he stood, he felt his vision go again. This time Ginny grabbed and stabilized him, letting him hold onto her shoulder for support.

"You sure you're okay?" Ginny asked, concern flitting over her features. Harry looked down into her large brown eyes, and kissed her lightly on her partially parted lips.

"I am now," he said, after he broke the kiss. He leaned against her, running his arm around her waist and let it sit there.

"Could you not do that when we're present?" Ron asked, highly annoyed. Harry chose to ignore the fact he was holding Nicole in a very similar fashion.

"So, you're saying they can do this when they're alone?" Nicole asked.

"What? Hell no."

"Well, why should we get to in public when they don't? What makes us so special?"

"Well...you're not my sister," Ron said, not looking at Nicole.

"Is that one fact enough to make the difference of letting us do it and they can't?"

"Of course it is!"

"But Ron, if they don't get to do any thing in this nature, regardless of how innocent, why do you get to hindrance them and maybe even end their relationship?" Nicole said, looking intently at her boyfriend. "And, if they did this around us, in public, you'd be able to see what they were doing and you could know what was going on, instead of obsessing over things that they are definitely not doing."

"Fine. Just...whatever," Ron said before he headed into the house.

"I'm sorry about him. He's normally fine about you two...but I dunno...maybe last weekend made things worse. I'm really sorry. That's my fault." Nicole said, apologizing again for the behavior Ron was doing. "I don't understand why hes not comfortable with you two, even after so much time, especially since you're his friend and he knows you. Just...if you guys are going to do anything...just...try and be discreet about it? It's bad enough with him imagining it every time you two are alone, but imagining it and knowing it's a likely situation...well...that's worse. Please just be careful you two." And with that, she followed Ron into the house, undoubtedly soothing the storm that was building inside Ron before it got too large.

"What was that about?" Ginny asked, watching Nicole's retreating form. "What does she mean *last weekend*?"

"I...I really dunno Gin." Harry replied, unsure of how to sort it out. He didn't know for sure, but he had a good enough idea what *last weekend* reference was to. "Erm," he said, changing subject "my mum is inviting you for dinner tonight. Everyone's going to be there."

"Alright, sounds good." She smiled warmly at him "well looks like we're not going to get much more practice today. Any ideas of what to do?"

"You wanna just show up early and decorate?"

"Sure. Beats being here with Ron and him sulking about the house, giving us looks."

"Alright," Harry said, "want me to carry you?"

"Oh yes, hero Harry. Carry your fair damsel," Ginny laughed, as she got onto his back.

Harry piggy-back carried her to the house, to Mrs. Weasley's shock and amusement.

"Wow, you've got a full service young man there Ginny."

"Yeah, he's a good transportation means. Beats walking," she said as she slid down his back onto her feet, "mum I'm going to Harry's birthday dinner tonight,"

"Sounds good dear, make sure you're home before late."

"Ok mum. Well, I'm going to go get ready. Be back down in a jif," she gave him a quick peck before she headed up the stairs.

"Harry dear, why don't you sit down? It'll take a bit of time for her to get ready and I don't want your legs to get tired."

"Thanks Mrs. Weasley," Harry said, taking her up on her advice and sat on one of the couches.

"If you need me, I'm out by the chicken coop," with that, Mrs. Weasley left Harry to his thoughts.

"Can we have a word?" said a voice.

Harry looked up to find himself looking at the lanky form of Ron Weasley, who was looking at Harry seriously. Harry was unsure of when Ron had shown up, but nodded nonetheless.

"Erm...sure!" Harry said, slightly confused. He followed Ron to a broom closet and was overwhelmingly reminded of the time when they were seven and the twins locked them in there for an hour or so with spiders. He knew this excursion into the closet would fair no better. Harry braced himself for the rampage bound to come on about Ginny.

"Me and Nicole made a mistake."

Harry's mouth hung open for half of a second.

"What?"

"We...we were alone, and we've been together since we were 13, and we got a little drunk and well...we...made a mistake," Ron said, nervously pulling at his shirt.

"Wow..." was all Harry could muster, completely flabbergasted at the news.

"And, I just wanna make sure you and Ginny don't make the same mistake..." Ron took a breath and sighed "and I know Nicole's been playing interference for awhile...as long as your around me with her, please just be super innocent. When you guys are alone—I—I *do* want to know, but for my sake and your sake, I would rather not know. So, whatever you guys do end up doing...just...make sure I won't know. I like you mate, and I don't want to have to throw away a friendship over my sister. Don't put me in a situation where I have to. Okay?"

Harry nodded. He felt his throat close a little, feeling as though Ron had read his mind.

"Okay...Happy early birthday," Ron said, taking his leave from the closet.

Harry sat there, in the dark, reflecting on all his thoughts, from the conversations with Sirius and Remy, to the one he had just had with Ron, to the one he had had with Ginny earlier that summer.

It was late, the train trip taking longer than normal. Ron, Nicole, and Alex were off in their own compartment on the other end of the train, as Ginny and Harry were

required to ride in the prefects car. They were left alone, with everyone else making their rounds, making sure everything was quiet and according to plan.

Harry looked into her eyes, and felt a feeling come over him. He kissed Ginny, letting himself deepen the kiss, and when she didn't resist, he placed a hand on her thigh.

"Harry...stop," she said, removing his hand. "Look. I really really really want to. Don't get me wrong, I do...I'm just..." she looked down at her lap, unable to finish her sentence.

"Not ready?" He supplied. When she nodded, he continued "Gin, I won't pressure you." He slid away from her a little, giving her room.

Ginny slid back over to him, closing the space he had created "Harry, this doesn't mean I won't want to. I just...You're ready, I take it?"

Harry nodded, feeling silly to form words.

"Well...then I know, as soon as I'm ready, you'll be ready." She took a sigh, and smiled "I'll tell you when I am, and we can take it from there Harry. But I make no promises as to if it'll be days, weeks, months, or a year. Just, bear with me while I make up my mind?"

He placed an arm around her shoulders and pulled her into a hug.

"Ginny, I'm not going anywhere. I promise."

"Harry?"

Harry was ripped from his thoughts as he heard Ginny call his name again. He looked around the small closet once more before heading out into the hallway.

"Where were you off to?" Ginny asked, brushing a loose strand of hair out of her eyes.

"I was just in the—" Harry stopped midsentence, looking at Ginny as if he had seen her for the first time. She looked stunning. The linen dress she wore was modest, and didn't show much, but it did just as much for him as her scantily clad in lingerie.

"What?" she said, looking at him anxiously.

"Wow..." was all he was able to say

"If it's too much I'll go—"

"No!" he hadn't meant to shout "I...I like it." She nodded, smiling slightly. Harry felt entirely awkward with the whole situation, feeling as if everything was completely against him. "Shall we go then?"

"Sure, I'm leaving now!" she called, receiving a distant but distinct "okay" from someone upstairs.

They threw the powder into the flames, bursting into emerald green warmth. He let Ginny go before him, to give him a moment to sort his thoughts out. Just as he stepped into the flames, he heard a loud *thud!* As one of the doors upstairs was slammed, and then some immediate crying. Harry suspected it might've been Nicole, but wasn't going to go investigate something neither his business nor his place. Harry did make a mental note to owl Alex and let him know Ron needed him.

The travel was the same—feeling as though he was four again, fearing that the drain would suck him down during his night bath, but this time he wasn't comforted by his mother as all the water went down the drain and he didn't. This time (and everytime) he *was* the water. He didn't like floo much, and was eternally grateful the trip never lasted longer than a minute.

The familiar slowing sensation as he found his grate was welcoming and he took a step out of the flames, he felt a deafening roar of love and appreciation.

"HARRY!" yelled a voice off to the side, and by the time he had registered the voice and realized who it was, the wind had already been knocked out of him and he was on the ground with a pair of arms around his middle.

"Ella! Don't just go and—sorry Harry," said a woman hurriedly walking towards him, and begun to try to pry the little girl off of him.

"Nooooooo!!!! I miss Harry! I have to give him his birthday hug!" The little girl yelled.

"Ella please, that's not very nice to do to him. You could have hurt him—

As if she had received an electrical shock, the little brunette immediately let go "I didn't mean to! I'm really really really really sorry Harry!" her large blue eyes begun to well with tears.

"It's okay Ella. I'm fine. You just gave me a start," Harry said, as he got up. He picked up the little girl and hugged her. "Why are you crying Ellabean?"

"Because I hurt you," She said weakly into his shoulder.

"I'm really fine. You didn't hurt me, I'm Mr. Indestructible Man!" He said, mentally kicking himself for saying this out loud in front of both Sirius and Remus, who were sniggering over in a corner. He knew he'd pay dearly for a long time for this, but knew as well it was worth it.

The little girl pulled her head off of his shoulder "Really?"

"Yes really. I'm fine. Come on, this is a party!" He set the little girl down as she excitedly ran out into the back yard with her mother quickly trailing behind her.

"Mr. Indestructible Man?" it wasn't Sirius, or Remus, or even his father, it was Ginny. Though she was smiling behind her hand, Harry knew there was little taunting behind it.

"Oh shut it, you," he said, smiling back at her.

"Happy birthday mate," said Fred, punching Harry lightly on the arm.

"Happy seventeenth, man," said George, kissing the top of his little sister's head.

"Well, now that you're going to be legal..." Fred handed Harry a bag, with some clanking.

"...We can give this to you without the burden of being caught by peeking Aurors," George said, motioning over his shoulder to Lupin.

Harry made to open it but was stopped by the twins.

"No, I wouldn't open that quite yet...seeing as you're not 17 yet. We wouldn't want to be—," Fred said, pushing the bag towards Harry's chest, while looking nervously around, "*ahem*—be caught by persons of interests,"

"Or to be persons of interests, if you catch our drift."

Harry nodded.

"So, just enjoy it..."

"...and when you do,"

"Don't get caught," they said in unison.

"Thanks guys," Harry said, unsure how to react, and just nodded, setting the bag down onto the table and placed his arm around Ginny's waist.

"You two crazy kids have fun," George said, winking at the two of them, "just not too much fun. Wouldn't want to hurt you on your birthday."

"Where are you two going?" Ginny asked, looking intrigued as to why they were leaving so early.

"We've got...*ahem*...business to pertain to."

"Very important, urgent business, little sister. None of which includes you."

"Fredrick Liam Weasley, tell me what you're—"

"Now, now little sister, shan't ask us questions if you're not ready to answer ours in return."

Ginny shut her mouth at once and Harry felt his face flush a little.

"That's more like it," Fred said, smiling. "Well, we're off. Happy birthday, Potter."

Fred clapped Harry on the shoulder and ruffled his sister's hair lightly before they raised their wands and apparated out of the living room.

"How you're best friends with them, I do not understand," Ginny said, shaking her head.

"Well...it's one of life's greatest mysteries, isn't it?" he smiled at her, pulling her close enough to smell her light perfume.

"Are you two going to stand around and do nothing, or are you two going to come and help?" Lily said, her belly protruding slightly amongst the streamers and balloons.

"How can we help, Mrs. Potter?" Ginny said, untangling herself from Harry and heading towards the elder redhead.

"James is out in the garden, where he's *supposed* to be setting up tables and chairs, but the last I saw, he, Sirius, and Remus were all muttering something about fire whisky. Make sure they don't get pissed, and please remind them of what they're tasks are."

Harry and Ginny headed into the garden out back to find, sure enough, James, Sirius, and Remus all sitting around drinking goblets of not-so-innocent beverages.

"Aren't you supposed to be setting up tables?" Ginny said suddenly.

James jumped up, nodding, as Sirius fumbled with his glass, trying to hide it. Remus just laughed.

"Sorry, Lily, I got distracted and I—Ginny?" James asked, as he finally looked up. Sirius froze his motions, looking slightly perplexed. "What are you doing out here?"

"Lily sent us to help you three with the tables, which I see you've really gotten a handle on," Ginny said, placing her hands on her hips.

"That's scary. You've *got* to stop being around Lily so much, she's influencing you too much for—" he lowered his voiced "—the suffering of mankind. Don't be every woman, and give Harry a break, will ya?" Sirius asked, smiling.

"Harry's not the one I asked about their duties. And yes, Lily asked us to do so." Ginny tossed her hair over her shoulder, smirking slightly. "And, she said if we caught you three drinking, James is sleeping on the couch for the rest of the week."

All three men's faces drained of all colour.

"You wouldn't," said James.

"Watch me," Ginny retorted seriously. She looked at them for several seconds before breaking her serious façade and laughing. "Boy did I have you three going for a moment."

"You're right Padfoot, Lily *is* a bad influence. She used to be the only one who could really get me," Remus said, breathing a slight sigh of relief. "I'd watch my back if I were you, Har."

"Thanks for the tip," Harry said, rolling his eyes. Ginny playfully smacked him on the arm.

"Despite jokes or not, you three really should get these tables up. If you need us we'll...be out by the rosebushes." Ginny said, pulling Harry by the hand, giggling.

"Wait...weren't they supposed to help set things up?" Remus asked.

They all laughed, watching Harry and Ginny's retreating forms. They pulled out their wands and got to work.

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They had been at it for an hour. She had sat on his lap, facing him, and they kissed, deeper and deeper, almost to the point where it begun to hurt. They hadn't been interrupted nor stopped since they had begun, and Harry had no intentions of stopping any time soon.

"Harry..."

He didn't have the foggiest idea of how she had any air to breathe, let alone form words. He sensed she wanted to stop, but stopping was the furthest thing he wanted to do.

"Harry, can...I...I need to talk to you," she said, placing a hand on his chest. Harry sighed, breaking the kiss. Despite the abrupt halt, she stayed positioned on his lap, something his was grateful for.

"What's up?" Harry asked, hoping that this wouldn't take long and they could get back to what they were just doing.

"Well...er...I don't know how to start it," she said, slightly frustrated. "I had it all sorted in my head, and then now when I try to say it, it won't come out...and—"

"Well maybe you don't have it all sorted. If you don't know how to tell me yet, why don't you think about it and then when it feels right and you know what to say, tell me. I'll drop anything and everything for you, okay?" he kissed her forehead, and she laughed a little.

"Thanks Harry." She leaned in, and begun to kiss his neck, moving her lips towards his collar bone.

"Harry, Ginny, Aunt Lily says its time to have dinner."

Harry groaned and hung his head as Ginny sighed, steadying each other as they tried to stand, but failing as Harry fell ontop of Ginny.

"Why are you in the rose bushes?"

The two whipped their heads towards the sounds, noticing for the first time the large eyed girl, Ella, who's little head was barely peeking through the leaves.

"We were...erm—"

"It was just—"

"We...tripped."

"Ooookay," Ella said, looking confused. She pulled her head out of the bushes, and ran towards the house, leaving Harry and Ginny alone.

Harry looked down at Ginny, where she met his gaze and both broke out into uncontrollable laughter.

"Shall we get going?"

They slipped out of the bushes and brushed each other off, before they clasped hands and walked to the house, to enjoy the celebrations.

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It was nearly eight, and everyone was gathered out on the field, watching the sun set. People were eating the last of the treacle tarts, saying good bye to the ones who had to leave.

Ginny had been quiet all night, and Harry looked at her for a moment, wondering exactly what she had wanted to tell him before. Ginny caught him staring, and instead of pretending like she hadn't, Harry kept looking at her. She smiled, and leaned over and whispered in his ear:

"I'm ready."

Please R&R!

A/N: I hope this was more to your guys' liking. I tried to make it better and more interesting than the last chapter, which was about a third shorter than this one. And for the few people who have asked me already, my Beta _____ wrote an alternate, more graphic scene between Harry and Ginny. Throughout the series, I will have some more alternate scenes.

Also, I know Ginny's real birthday is in August and isn't too far away from Harry's, but seeing as that kinda defeats the whole story plot I've got, I moved hers to December 18th. If, however, I forget and screw up my own change for her birthday in later chapters, I do give house points to whoever points the mistake out to me.

I Won The War

By Luff The Hufflepuff

A/N: To those who don't know exactly what she was *ready* for, I suggest you ask an older friend. I originally had the first part of this chapter be the last part for the previous chapter. But this chapter felt slightly disconnected, and almost weird without it here, because it feels like it should all be grouped together. If you guys feel differently, let me know, and I'll alter it back to the way it was.

And, at the time of my writing this, I say happy X-Mas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, and New Years (and for the people who celebrate their day of birthday on the New Year,) Happy birthday to us all. :) .

Summary: We all know the story of The-Boy-Who-Lived; the pain, the suffering, the sacrifice. But what if you could avoid your fate? In the case for Harry Potter, his life is perfect: he's got a loving family, a beautiful girlfriend, and is Hogwarts Head Boy. But what happens when fate catches up with you? Harry's begins to catch up with him in a series of dreams of a life he's never had. But when the dreams start becoming reality, Harry realizes that he alone can change the outcome and save the ones he loves most.

Disclaimer: It's the same ol, same ol, here. I don't own HP. **I AM USING QUOTES FROM THE BOOK I DO NOT OWN THE QUOTES DIRECTLY FROM THE BOOK. I USE THIS TO EMPHASISE MY PLOT, AND I DO NOT CLAIM OWNERSHIP. I AM BORROWING, AND THEY ARE IN *ITALICS* SO YOU'LL KNOW EXACTLY WHERE I MEAN.**