

Chapter 10

The battle finally ended. Both sides were busy gathering and tending to their casualties. Many of those who had fought on the allied side were beginning to ascend back up the mountain. Family and friends of the courageous warriors started running to the edge of the upper mountain to meet the heroes. Some of the brave fighters were left with the terrible job of delivering those comrades that died in battle to their families. They had to endure the reactions of the family members.

The sound of cries of joy and pain equally filled the air. Harry looked around and witnessed the sights of grief and relief from the various families. Some groups of people were recognizable. Harry's heart sank when he saw some soldiers carrying the lifeless body of Mad-Eye Moody. Harry looked over to his right and, again, the shock of what he saw made his own body shudder. Fred and George Weasley had the grizzly job of carrying back the dead body of Seamus Finnigan to his mother. Seamus' mother grieved over his body. Her cries chilled Harry's blood.

How? How and why? he thought.

This was nothing like his daydreams. In his daydreams, Harry pictured himself easily defeating Voldemort then being lifted by his dorm mates onto their shoulders and paraded around a cheering crowd of Hogwarts students, faculty, and parents. But reality dictated that this would not be the case. All around him Harry saw death, bloodshed, grief, and senseless destruction. The cries and sights of lost loved ones, friends, and mentors flooded Harry's ears and eyes. All of these experiences over-circuited his senses. He could think of only one word to describe all of this: *HORRIBLE!*

Harry looked ahead and saw Mr. and Mrs. Weasley and the others running toward him. Angelina was leading the group.

Suddenly, Harry heard Mrs. Weasley scream. Her screams triggered the sensation of cold daggers piercing Harry's body. Mrs. Weasley saw Ginny, Charlie, and Ron emerge from the white light and fog. She could see that Charlie and Ron were carrying a body, but could not tell which of the other Weasley children they were carrying. As they continued to march forward, Mr. and Mrs. Weasley could see Harry and Hermione carrying the other end of the boy. Then Mrs. Weasley looked to her left and saw Bill, Fred, and George running toward the group. Now she knew which one of her children she had lost. The four continued to carry Percy to the camp. Mr. and Mrs. Weasley followed along with Bill, Fred, George, Ginny, Luna, Angelina and Fleur.

They finally arrived at the camp and carefully laid Percy's body down on the ground. Mrs. Weasley immediately dropped to the ground where Percy's head was. She

placed his head in her lap and began to caress his forehead. She sobbed. She kept repeating the same words over again: "My baby. My baby."

Mr. Weasley dropped to one knee where Percy's legs were. He rested his head on his arm, leaning on the knee that was upright. He gently ran his other hand back and forth along Percy's leg, as if trying to comfort his spirit, keeping it free from fear.

Charlie watched his parents as they grieved over their son. He wanted to comfort them. He could think of only one thing to say. "Dad, he died honorably."

"I know you mean well, Charlie, but that's not much comfort to me right now," replied an embittered Mr. Weasley, his spirit undoubtedly broken.

Luna walked over to Percy's body, knelt down next to Mrs. Weasley and placed her hand on Mrs. Weasley's shoulder. Ron held Hermione. He tried as hard as he could, but he could not hold back what he was feeling, and he began to cry. Hermione held him tightly. Harry and Ginny held onto one another. Ginny wept on Harry's shoulder. Harry felt the urge to cry too, and, before he could hold back, tears welled up from his eyes and fell on Ginny's shoulder.

Fleur held Bill around his waist. Bill had his arm around her. He kissed the top of her head lovingly. Angelina had her arms around both Fred and George. They, too, looked on, as Mr. and Mrs. Weasley continued to mourn their dead son. Charlie stood next to Mr. Weasley.

In the distance, Professor Albright, Sirius, Remus and Hagrid were walking over to the Weasley camp. When they arrived they saw the Weasleys' horror. Mrs. Weasley looked up at Professor Albright. Her eyes were glistening with tears. Hagrid looked down to hide the fact that he was becoming emotional over the sight. Sirius walked over to Harry and Ginny and held them both. Remus hung his head, as if in shame.

"How long has he been like this?" Professor Albright asked Molly.

Molly shook her head to communicate that she did not know.

"About a half hour or so," Charlie answered.

"Very well," Professor Albright muttered, walking over to the other side of Percy. She used her cane to guide herself down to the ground. Once she was sitting next to his body, she took his right hand in hers.

Hermione watched what the old professor was doing. She knew what Professor Albright was preparing to do. Hermione pulled away from a tear-streaked Ron.

“Ron, look,” said Hermione.

Ron turned to where everyone was standing. He tried to avoid looking at Percy.

“What’s happening?” Ron whimpered.

“Professor Albright is going to perform the Re-Vitalinque Charm,” Hermione replied.

“What’s that?” Ron asked.

“It’s a charm that only telekinetics can perform. They transfer some of their energy into a dead person’s body. If they perform it within one hour from when the victim died, the charm jolts the person back to life.”

“She’s going to bring Percy back to life?” Ron cracked, excitedly.

“Yeah, I guess she’s going to try, but I don’t know how she’s going to manage it without risking her own life. Re-Vitalinque is a very exhausting charm to perform, even for the healthiest telekinetic. The after effects can be quite debilitating. Most of the time it’s the telekinetic that dies,” Hermione explained.

“Wait. I thought all her powers were taken away,” Ron was quick to point out.

“Not this charm. It’s part of being a telekinetic. She was born with it, like her other powers.”

“But once you’ve been hit with the Avada Kedavra Curse, you’re dead. No one ever survives that curse...well...except for Harry,” Ron debated. “Even Professor Dumbledore said no spell can reawaken the dead.”

“It’s not just a spell, Ron. What a telekinetic does is transfer an enormous amount of their life force into the victim. It’s not just magic. It’s real physics. Doctors in the Muggle world do it all the time with special medical devices,” Hermione explained.

“So, if that’s true, then why did Professor Dumbledore tell us that, once a person gets hit with the Killing Curse, they die and there is no chance for them?” Ron asked in an argumentative tone.

“Because he didn’t want us to take life for granted. He didn’t want to give us the idea that either of us could afford to be the least bit careless. The reason why most people die from the Killing Curse is, because usually there is never a telekinetic around. Like I said before, they are extremely rare, and once they perform the Re-Vitalinque charm, they wind up sacrificing their own life. Once the Killing Curse is inflicted, it’s rare that it doesn’t kill *someone*,” Hermione explained.

Harry saw Professor Albright. He walked over to her and knelt down between her and Percy. "Professor, what are you going to do?" Harry asked.

Ginny walked over to the other side of Percy and knelt near him and her father. She took Percy's left hand in her right.

"Harry, I'm going to perform a spell that will bring Percy back," Professor Albright explained.

"Bring him back... but how? Professor, are you sure you're strong enough for this?" Harry asked, concern in his voice.

"Harry, it makes no difference if I'm strong enough to handle it. It's more important that we save Percy. Besides, my work here is done. I'm ready to go on and see my family," said Professor Albright.

Harry's eyes widened. He knew what she was preparing to do. "No, Professor, I can't let you do this," Harry protested.

"Harry, whether you think I should do this or not is immaterial. It must be done. I've lived my life, Harry. I've done what was expected of me. Now I'm ready to go," Professor Albright declared in her defense.

Harry realized it was no use. He looked over at Percy. Professor Albright began the Re-Vitalinque Incantation. She mumbled the words to herself. Harry watched her as she started to jerk. Her body convulsed as the energy transferred from her body to Percy's. Harry's heart skipped a beat with every jolt. The convulsing stopped. Professor Albright closed her eyes and collapsed on the ground. Hermione ran over to her.

"PROFESSOR!" Harry yelled, taking her right hand in his left.

Hermione lifted Professor Albright's upper body and checked her neck for a pulse. "She's alive, but she's very weak."

Professor Albright opened her eyes and looked at Harry.

"Harry, don't be sad. You knew I wouldn't be around forever. Besides, I won't really be gone. If you ever need me, you need not look far to find me," she said, trying to console a grieving Harry.

The excitement of defeating Voldemort and then the torture of dealing with Percy's death was more than Harry could take. Watching Professor Albright sacrifice her life, put him over the edge. He tried with all his might to hold back his grief. Watching another mentor die caused unyielding pain to swell up in his chest.

“Harry, I know about your victory. I know, right now, your father and grandfather and great-grandfather are looking down on you with proud eyes. Your mother’s and grandmother’s cheeks are streaked with tears of joy. I, too, will soon look down on you. I will be with them. I’m so proud of you, Harry. You were the one reason I had left to keep going, when everything else was gone. Now find the strength to smile that beautiful smile for me, one last time. Let me look into your eyes -- the eyes your mother gave you--the eyes my gentle daughter gave your mother.”

Harry looked confused for a moment. *The eyes my gentle daughter gave your mother?* he thought to himself. *How could that be?*

He looked around at everyone. They, too, held expressions of confusion on their faces, all except, Mr. and Mrs. Weasley, Sirius and Remus. Harry looked back at Professor Albright who was rapidly fading. Her eyes closed, and her body fell limp.

“Professor? PROFESSOR!” Harry yelled.

“It’s no use, Harry,” Ginny whispered, reaching her left hand out to Harry.

Harry looked up and took her hand. The moment was silent. Just the sound of Harry’s faint whimpering could be heard. Suddenly, Ginny felt Percy squeeze her right hand. She responded with a gasp.

“Mum!” Ginny yelped, her eyes beaming with hope.

Mrs. Weasley looked up at Ginny.

“Look, Mum!” Ginny squealed, gesturing to hers and Percy’s hands.

Molly’s mouth dropped open. She looked down at Percy. She continued to caress his head. “Percy? Percy, open your eyes,” Mrs. Weasley whimpered, with desperation in her voice.

The rest of the Weasleys looked on hopefully. Sirius, Remus, Luna, Angelina, and Fleur shared the feelings of hope and anticipation with the rest of the Weasley family. Percy’s hand squeezed Ginny’s hand again. Hermione gasped with joy then became overwhelmed with emotion. She covered her mouth with her hand and closed her eyes. A teardrop fell and landed on Professor Albright’s shoulder.

Then all heard the most wonderful sound.

“Mum,” Percy whispered, opening his eyes and looking up at Molly.

Molly looked down into Percy’s eyes and then leaned over to kiss his cheek. She could not speak. She, too, was overcome with joy.

Mr. Weasley was overwhelmed with emotion as well. He put his head back down on his arm and wept quietly. He squeezed Percy's leg with his other hand.

Mrs. Weasley looked up at Harry. "Bless her soul," she whispered.

"Harry, come here," said Ginny.

"I can't," Harry's voice cracked.

"Harry, close your eyes and let go," Ginny commanded, referring to him still clutching onto Professor Albright's hand.

Harry looked up at Ginny then he looked at hers and Percy's hands. Ginny looked at both her hands too. She held Harry's in her left and Percy's in her right, just like it was in her dream. She looked back up at Harry.

"Harry, let go," Ginny repeated.

"I will, if you will." Harry sniffed.

Ginny released Percy's hand. Harry slowly pulled his hand away from Professor Albright. They both stood up while still holding the other's hand. Releasing their hold only momentarily, they turned and walked away from Percy and the others. While standing a few feet away from everyone else, Ginny put her arms around Harry's neck. He wrapped his arms around her body.

Harry looked up and caught a glimpse of Sirius and Remus. The professor's last words came back into Harry's head. Harry broke away from Ginny and ran over to Sirius and Remus. They knew immediately what he was going to ask them, but were unprepared to deal with his fury.

"What did the professor mean when she said, 'the eyes my gentle daughter gave your mother'?" Harry asked them accusingly.

Ginny could do nothing but watch from the side. It frightened her to see this side of Harry.

"Harry," Sirius began, "Remus and I wanted to tell you, but Rose begged us not to."

"Begged you not to! So, what I heard was what I thought she implied? She's my great-grandmother! How could you keep something like that from me!" Harry raged.

"Harry, please, this is not the time. I will explain everything to you, but not now. Look around you!" Sirius replied urgently, trying to remind Harry where he was.

"I don't care! I was with my great-grandmother all this time and I didn't know! No one told me who she really was! I never got a chance to tell her I loved her! I never told her I loved her!" Harry's throat began to close tightly. His soul seethed with unyielding fury. He started to run back toward the edge of the mountain.

"Harry, where are you going?" Ginny yelled out, running after him.

"I'm gonna kill them! As many Death Eaters I can find!" Harry yelled back.

Hermione and Ron began to chase after Harry and Ginny. Fred and George joined them.

"NO! Come back!" Mrs. Weasley cried.

"Don't worry. We'll go after them and bring them back," Sirius said reassuringly.

Bill and Charlie stayed behind to help their parents tend to Percy, as Sirius and Remus ran up to Kingsley, Proudfoot, Savage, and Tonks.

"What's the matter?" Kingsley asked.

"Harry, Hermione, and some of the Weasley children ran off to fight whatever Death Eaters they can find," Sirius replied.

All six of them ran off into the forest to try to bring Harry, Hermione and the Weasley children back to camp. The pitch black of the night made it impossible to see much beyond a foot ahead.

Harry and the others stopped for a moment to gather together and catch their breath. Harry realized that the darkness would not only be a challenge to their mission, but a serious threat to their safety. Nonetheless, he was determined to avenge the deaths of Seamus Finnigan, Mad-Eye Moody and his great-grandmother. A new kind of anger rumbled in his chest and he felt invincible.

"Everyone, we're going to have to split up if we want to find them faster. I know Snape and Malfoy must be around here somewhere," Harry told the others.

It was agreed that they would split up into pairs to look for whatever Death Eaters remained. Harry and Ginny took the path to the right. Hermione and Ron took the one to the left, and Fred and George continued straight ahead.

As Harry and Ginny cautiously made their way through the cold, dark forest, they stumbled across what sounded like voices arguing. They carefully continued to move forward, ducking into the thick of the bushes and trees around them, in an effort to avoid being seen. As they approached closer to where the voices were coming from, they could see the unmistakable silhouettes of Severus Snape and Bellatrix

Lestrangle. Standing next to them was the shadowy, tall physique of Kurt Geistmacher. He was the enormous, blond Death Eater that was present on the night of Professor Dumbledore's murder. To Harry's and Ginny's surprise, they witnessed Bellatrix pull out her wand and attempt to kill Snape, but the brutal-faced, blond Death Eater deflected the attack and Snape killed Bellatrix. Ginny gasped involuntarily and her sound caught the attention of both Geistmacher and Snape.

"Well, well, well, look who we have here, Potter and his blood traitor girlfriend," Draco Malfoy snarled, as he came up from behind Harry and Ginny, with Goyle by his side.

Harry tried to reach for his wand, but Draco gave him a quick push forward. Harry stumbled on some twigs and Ginny let out a fearful gasp. Goyle grabbed her by the arms and escorted her to where Professor Snape and Geistmacher were standing.

"Let's go, Potter, and no funny stuff, unless you want your sweetheart here to be tortured to death," Draco warned. "Now, hands where I can see them!"

Not wanting to give Draco any reason to hurt Ginny, Harry put his hands up over his head.

Once Draco and Goyle brought Harry and Ginny back to Professor Snape and Geistmacher, they confiscated their wands. Draco pushed Harry forward, causing Harry to lose his footing on the twigs and tree roots, protruding from the floor of the forest. Harry fell face forward at the feet of Professor Snape.

Harry got up on all fours and looked up into the beady eyes of his old Potions Professor. Professor Snape looked down at Harry with a pleasing smirk on his face.

"So, Potter, once again, playing hero, I see. Look, everyone, Potter still hasn't learned how to curb that nasty temper of his! How many weeks of detention should I give him for his lack of self-control?" Professor Snape mocked. Draco, Goyle and Geistmacher laughed at Snape's joke.

Draco was taking great pleasure in seeing his nemesis on his knees. "What do you think we should do with this one, Professor?" Draco menacingly teased, referring to Ginny, whose arms were being held tightly behind her back by Goyle's painful grasp.

"Leave her alone!" Harry ordered in a ferocious tone of voice.

"Potter, I don't believe you are in any position to be giving orders," Professor Snape reprimanded.

Harry's heart was beating furiously. He feared the worst for Ginny, and he was finding it difficult to think clearly. He sat up on his knees, still looking defenselessly into the faces of Professor Snape and Geistmacher. He could think of only one thing to do.

“Look. Do whatever you want to me, but let her go,” Harry appealed. He tried to hold back any fear in his voice.

“How noble of you, Potter. Sacrificing yourself to save your beloved Ginny. How touching,” Professor Snape mocked. “So, what do you think everyone? Should we let Miss Weasley go?” he jokingly polled the group.

While all of this was going on, Ron and Hermione heard the voices and started to carefully work their way toward the sound. As they walked, Hermione tripped over what seemed to be a log. Upon closer investigation, they found, to their horror, that it was the body of Victor Crabbe. Hermione gasped and placed her hand over her mouth, closing her eyes tightly as if to shut out the horrific sight. Ron went over to her and helped her on her feet. He held her in his arms lovingly as she cried.

“Hermione, it’s okay. We need to find Harry and Ginny. I wish I knew where Fred and George ran off to.” Ron continued to hug Hermione until he sensed that she had regained her composure. “Are you okay now?” Ron asked, pulling away to look into Hermione’s eyes.

“Yes, I’m fine. Let’s go.”

Ron and Hermione continued along the path toward the voices. They ducked down into some bushes the moment they were close enough to see the faces of Draco, Professor Snape, Goyle, Ginny, Harry, and Geismacher dimly lit by a half- crescent moon.

“So, Harry, are you really prepared to die for a blood traitor?” Professor Snape questioned.

“Don’t call her that!” Harry yelled. His agitation was growing exponentially.

Geismacher kicked Harry in the stomach, and Harry keeled over in agony.

“There, Potter! That will teach you some manners. You should know better not to raise your voice to a professor, or didn’t Professor Bumble bee teach you that?” Professor Snape mocked.

Harry continued to roll on the ground from the intense pain that Geismacher’s foot left in his stomach. Harry gasped for air, but the pain would not allow him to take the deep breath he desperately needed.

“Leave him alone!” Ginny cried.

Draco grabbed Ginny by the hair and pulled at it to force her head back against Goyle's chest.

"Who said you could talk, Weasley?" Draco growled, looking down into Ginny's face.

Harry finally found his breath and yelled back to Draco, "Leave her alone! Don't touch her! This is between you and me. She has nothing to do with this. I killed Lord Voldemort. Remember? Kill me if that's how you want it, but let her go," Harry demanded.

"Well, if that's your wish," Professor Snape resigned. "Goyle, let the blood traitor go."

Goyle released his grip on Ginny and she instantly ran to Harry, who was still kneeling on the ground and holding his stomach.

"Harry, are you okay?" Ginny sobbed.

"Ginny, go! Get out of here as fast as you can!" Harry replied with urgency in his voice. "Please, go get help. I'll be fine," Harry whispered reassuringly.

Ginny quickly got up and began to run.

"NOW!" Professor Snape yelled to Geistmacher.

On Snape's command, Geistmacher raised his wand and sent the Cruciatus Curse flying in Ginny's direction. It hit the thin girl, leaving her to lash around on the ground and to cry from the intense pain.

"No! Don't! Leave her alone!" Harry cried, struggling to get to his feet.

Professor Snape stomped his foot on Harry's back and Harry fell face down on the ground. Geistmacher continued to shoot Cruciatus Curses at Ginny, while walking toward her. Ginny continued her uncontrollable thrashing as she cried and begged for Geistmacher to stop.

Ron and Hermione could no longer remain silent and revealed themselves by hurling curses at Geistmacher. Geistmacher managed to dodge the curses and, out of anger, sent a Throwing Curse at Ginny. Ginny's body lifted high into the air before crashing down on some jagged rocks. The force of the blow caused Ginny to suffer serious internal injuries. She lay on the ground barely conscious. Harry had all that he could take; his anger caused him to release a burst of telekinetic energy that lifted Goyle off the ground and sent him flying through the air. He landed on his head, breaking his neck. He died instantly. Professor Snape and Draco grabbed Harry by his arms to restrain him.

Seeing Ginny lying on the ground, Ron felt a terrible pain in his chest and shot a Blasting Curse at Geistmacher. The enormous Death Eater's body was lifted into the air. When he came back down, his head hit hard on the same jagged rocks where Ginny lay. Death soon came to the brutal-faced Death Eater. Professor Snape and Draco looked on in horror. At that moment, Fred and George crept up on the distracted Professor Snape and Draco, causing them to release the grip they had on Harry. Harry managed to find the strength to run over to Ginny. He picked her up and cradled her limp, beaten body in his arms. He wiped the blood that had spilled onto her lips and chin off of her mouth.

Not a moment later, Sirius, Remus, Kingsley, Tonks, Proudfoot and Savage, surrounded Professor Snape and Draco. The evil duo knew they were clearly outnumbered, but before they could put up a fight, Kingsley and Tonks used the Incarcerous Spell to bind both of them. Kingsley, Tonks, Proudfoot and Savage placed the two in handcuffs. They escorted them back to camp. Meanwhile, Fred, George, Ron and Hermione ran over to where Harry and Ginny were. Ginny was barely moving and blood continued to seep out of her nose and mouth, faster than Harry could wipe it away. Sirius and Remus ran over to where the Trio, Fred, and George were surrounding Ginny.

Harry began to panic. Ron could do nothing but stare. A sense of cruel surrealism disallowed him from accepting the horrific truth. Hermione tried to think of a charm that would stop the bleeding, but she failed to remember one. She remembered Professor Flitwick's lectures about charms that could stop death in its tracks, but for some reason she could not remember a specific one. This was not another case of her being caught in a Devil's Snare. The sight of her friend lying helpless on the ground and dying made it difficult for her to think. Harry spoke to Ginny, hoping that the sound of his voice would help her regain consciousness.

"Ginny! Ginny, please, look at me. It's me, Harry. Please, open your eyes. Look at me," he repeated as his emotions began to tailspin out of control. His voice began fading in and out. He felt as if something was closing off his air as he caressed Ginny's head.

Sirius and Remus froze, caught up in the horror of looking down into the eyes of an innocent child. They watched helplessly, as Harry continued to beg Ginny to respond to his pleas.

"Ginny, please don't leave me. I love you so much. Don't do this. Please don't leave me." His strength wavered, causing him to lean over her and put his forehead up against hers. Harry surrendered to the immense pain in his heart by allowing his tears to fall freely from his eyes.

Harry reached for Ginny's cool, clammy hand. He lifted it to his lips, kissed it, then lovingly caressed it.

“Ginny, squeeze my hand. Please, Ginny, if you can hear me, squeeze my hand,” pleaded a grieving Harry. He kissed her hand again. “Don’t leave me. Hang on for me, Ginny, please...” His strength gave out.

Ginny took her last breath in Harry’s withered arms. Harry succumbed to the heartache caused by the fact that his worst fear came to be. Harry’s last hope for happiness was dead. Hugging Ginny’s lifeless body tightly, Harry wept.

Hermione reached over to Harry and hugged him. Ron collapsed from grief as he grabbed hold of Hermione for support. Sirius and Remus did all they could to comfort the grieving trio. In an instant, the haunting words of Professor Albright ran through Harry’s mind: *He can take your soul mate and your soul, your livelihood and your dreams.* It would not be long before Harry realized the gravity of his great- grandmother’s words. Ginny would not be the only thing Harry would lose...