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More Chapters Coming Soon!

I Won the War

By Luff the Hufflepuff

Prologue

August 30th, 1998

It was the brightest, most possibly beautiful day the whole year had supplied. The roses were full in bloom, the grounds were covered in late summer color, the sky was a startling blue with no cloud in sight. Currently, people all over the world enjoyed the great weather, soaking in the peace the day gave off, grateful everything was so still. Everything was safe, perfect, and fine. Nothing could have been better. Nothing could ruin the peacefulness that today brought.

But it was the darkest day he had ever endured.

Many people had gathered there and sat in neat, little rows. Almost everyone had their heads bowed, and quite a few were crying with black handkerchiefs clutched in their hands as they listened to some man he recognized babble on about death and the afterlife. But he wasn't going to cry. He wouldn't. Not now, not in front of everyone. He hadn't deserved to cry. He didn't even deserve to be here...But he was.

It had been a blur when Ron had died. He hadn't deserved it, he had always thought that he had been the side-kick to the famous Harry Potter, when the end came to the end, it had been Ron who was the hero and Harry was...Harry. He had been the little boy who caught a bug... That was all he had ever been, and all he would ever be. If it hadn't been for them, the evil they had brought down would be ruling with their regime of terror.

But they **had** succeeded. And they had brought down a considerable force of evil. But they had still paid a heavy price...All Harry had to do was look over at Hermione and her rapidly growing stomach to know they had paid the worst price of all. A son who would never know the hero that was his father. She still wore his ring, one on each hand. Harry's hands trembled as he grasped the small ring that hung next to his heart. Yes indeed they had paid the heavy price. And he knew it wasn't worth it.

It had been awful to see all those he loved and respected fall. The justice of those who killed them was severed, and all of those who were responsible were planted six feet under. It hurt to watch all those people die, but they had all been avenged. But this...this was indescribable. Incomparable. And no amount of deaths could change that, fix that, to make it even remotely okay.

He supposed the speaker stopped talking, for everyone had begun to stand. Little talking was transpired as they, one by one, rose from their seats and walked in a simple formation. He stood behind everyone, for many reasons, no one noticing him as they all walked slowly and mournfully towards the mound of dirt. Each of them had grabbed a handful of dirt and dropped it onto the grave, saying a quick prayer or good-bye before leaving. Some laid down flowers or other tokens of grief onto the grave and even one placed down a sweater that he recognized that once had been his own.

He waited until they all had left, waiting even past Mrs. Weasley collapsing to the ground in hysterics. He waited for what seemed hours for Mrs. Weasley's husband to collect her and comfort her. He couldn't reach out to her, it would be inappropriate. It was his fault that she had to burry yet another child. No noticed him though, their grief too great for the hero they had lost.

And then he was all alone.

He walked to the grave, the day feeling more like December than August. He shivered involuntarily at the thought and shut his eyes. This was getting harder the longer he waited.

With a bruised hand, he grabbed a fistful of earth, looking slightly misty-eyed at the stone tablet at the head of the grave. He dropped it on top of the pile others had started, revealing a gold band on his left hand, gleaming in the sunlight. It sill bore its original script she had placed on it last March and tracing the letters seemed to bring tears to his bright green eyes. She had looked so lovely that day, much more than he had noticed that day. Why hadn't he told her everything right there? Why had he been so stupid to wait for so long? They could have had months, years...but now, they would never have that chance. *He* would never have the chance to make it right. And that was the worst part of it all.

He sighed, looking away from the band, took a deep breath and said:

"I won the war, Gin. I won the war because you died. And it was my fault."

Please R&R!

I Won the War

By Luff the Hufflepuff

Authors Note: Well! Its been over a year. A *year*. In that course of time, I matured rapidly, dated many guys, started a new passion, and lived life to the fullest...and I completely abandoned my writing, my longest standing passion ever. I admit fully that I 100% forgot about everything I had written and moved on to some bigger fish to fry, or so I had thought. It's currently 10:00pm PST, and I've just gone over my writing on this site, and after reading my prologue, I realize I really had something going. I really really did. And it's a shame that I don't remember everything about the story that had drawn me to it, and I'm quite upset over it...though I did find some notes from a year ago, and I'm working with what I've got. I know now that I cannot let this story go, and I really owe that to Siriusly Amused, who inspired me to start writing again. Thank you.

This is dedicated to my betas:

KK, because I loved her so damn much. She's been there through everything, and as I write, knowing what I've got in store, that I'm very bloody lucky to have her in my life. Without her, I'd probably be some blubbering mess and homeless in East L.A. Thank you for being there for me. Thank you very so much, even though what I do in return pales in comparison of everything you've done for me.

_____, you've really done so much for me in the few short days you edited my 7 chapters in. You gave me great ideas for the series, and I've got a real plan down because of you. I love you lots, and I'm endlessly happy that you're doing this for me, despite the fact you're so busy with EVERYTHING else. And, experience really does help where I'm left drawing a blank. It'll come in handy later on.

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: I do not own Harry Potter, nor do I own anything else in this fic, even Nicole isn't really mine...shes based off of several characters I've read in fics and a bit off of my best friends, and I do not own them either. Though, I do deserve barrels of rotten tomatoes chucked at me for taking a year to realize about my fic. Sorry 'bout that!

Onto the story!!!!

* ~ *

Chapter One

Harry Potter, average kid

July 30th, 1997

It was a quiet, early morning as the sun rose over the hill tops of St. Ottery Catchpole, the dew drops glistening like millions of tiny diamonds, winking in the pale glow. Hours passed as the sun weakly rose over the tree tops, bringing the valleys into light as well, taking away whatever dregs of darkness that had still lingered in the early hours.

She had reason to believe that the early morning was the best time to think. Yes, very much reason. It was very peaceful and welcoming, and it had always been her time. Even after she had moved in with him, she had still risen several hours before he ever did, and just came out to the garden and...*thought*. And it was extremely calming doing so.

She tossed her long red hair over her shoulder, watching the sun rise. She had never seen such a beautiful thing, though several things (namely her son) had soon begun to rival in her mind. She bit back a laugh before turning away and heading inside.

They'll be up soon she mused to herself, reading the stove as she began to cook. She loved doing it the muggle way, as it gave her more time to be caught up in her thoughts, which she had been doing a lot more of lately.

17 years...it had almost been 17 years now, and she still felt herself smile. 17 years had brought her immense happiness and joy, despite the dark times they had been facing. Are facing.

It could be worse.

She knew that was true. If it had not been for one fact, she and her husband would have been reckless and stupid as soon as Voldemort had risen to full power after apparently killing the only one who could have ever stopped him. They would have gone tearing off the moment they had received the news, and trying to cause as much destruction as they could, knowing that they two would be killed in the process. And while she knew it was foolish to have even tried, she still wished she could have fought for her freedom more. But she was still grateful for living her life with her wonderful family, even though the living wasn't exactly the ideal.

At least they were all alive. Alive and together.

"Baby?"

She jumped as strong arms wrapped around her torso, the breath burning her skin slightly.

"Don't do that!" she admonished, but didn't really mean it. She knew he was being good natured. "You're up early," she noted.

He cracked a small smile.

"I am capable of waking up with the insa—I mean, the beautiful people," he said, ducking the newspaper she had tried to swat him with, instead catching her around the waist and kissing her lightly.

"I love you, even though you're a prat," she said, fighting the smile that desperately wanted to come out.

"And I love you, even though you're a crazy woman," he said, leaning in to kiss her again. "A very beautiful, crazy woman, might I add?"

She laughed this time, and wondering why his stupid charms still worked on her. But she let herself be drawn into the kiss, reveling in it. And to think, that if not for one small little fact, they might not have even been here, sharing this little morning exchange. After all, they could be dead if not for—

Don't think that! She admonished silently. It's bad enough with everything that's happened, but now you're imagining being dead?

"Hun?"

"Hmmm?"

"You...are you okay?" concern flitted across his handsome face. She realized she must have let her emotions show.

"I—yes, I'm fine...I'm just being silly. Don't worry about it," he still seemed not to be convinced. "Hey, maybe the early morning hours are getting to me, maybe I should sleep in more often, like the rest of you lazy do—

"Hey!" he said, taking the bait and acted offended. "Oh, and you know Sirius is the lazy dog,"

"I heard that,"

"Sirius?"

"Oh, now aren't we the smart one?"

"I—what are you doing here so early?" she asked, "and don't you realize you cant just pop in and out whenever you like?"

"Well, I wanted to see if James could come out to play, but obviously his mum wont let him," he said laughing, slipping past the red head and straight to his oldest friend, hoping she was in a good mood.

It seemed luck was on his side.

"Oh, ha ha, funny Padfoot." She said, following him back into the kitchen.

"And, might I add, I am not a lazy dog," he said through a mouthful of toast, "I 'appened to get out of bed at—" he checked his watch "Seven thirty,". He ended his speech with a small smug smile that had infuriated and compelled Lily to laugh.

"Which," Lily said, checking her own watch, "was nearly three minutes ago,"

He merely shrugged, and smiled again.

"Watch it Padfoot," James said, eyeing his wife, "Pregnancy hormones aren't the best to be testing with, especially early in the morning."

Sirius now looked at Lily as if she was a bomb, ready to explode at any given moment.

"Oh watch yourself, you spineless little—

"Am I interrupting something?"

"Moony!"

"Hey James, hullo Sirius, morning Lily," he nodded to each as he walked to the table.

"Is this 'pop in whenever we like to annoy Lily day'?" She asked in an irritated voice. It wasn't as if she didn't love seeing her friends, but it was beginning to take its toll on her peaceful solitary morning.

"Sorry Lily," chorused the men, looking slightly chastised and afraid.

"Oh don't worry, I'm not going to rip your heads off," but she received several stares from the men that seemed to disagree with her statement. She didn't know what to say to convince them otherwise, and shut her mouth as soon as her son started padding down the hallway, obviously just woken up.

"Morning mum!" said Harry, brightly as he could as he rubbed sleep from his eyes, struggling to stay awake. "Morning dad, Siri, Remy," he flung himself into a chair. It took him several moments to register that several things were out of place. "Siri? Remy? Why are you guys here?" he asked, looking more awake now.

"Apparently that's the question of the day," Sirius said in an undertone. He laughed lightly, "Eh, we just decided we wanted to come down and see what our favorite little Marauder was doing...and to see if he was willing to pal around with some old buffers,"

Harry's eyes lit up.

"Of course! It's been ages since we last...mum...?" he asked, turning to her, looking hopeful.

She sighed and had to give in to his method. He was truly James's son.

"Yes, you can. Just make sure he's back by seven. I know how you both like taking as much time as you can with him, but he has to get back in time for dinner, which you both are invited to," she said, turning around and heading upstairs.

"Where's little Emma?" Remus asked.

"She's at a sleepover and she's not so little anymore," Harry said, smiling slightly. He waited until his dad walked a good distance a way before leaning in and adding "And you'll never believe what she did to her hair—she's a blonde now," he said, smirking. Their parents were still not thrilled with her hair, but had accepted and were beginning to get used to the shock of blonde.

Remus and Sirius looked beside themselves with both laughter and shock.

"Really?" Sirius asked, his eyes wide.

Harry nodded.

"Wow, Emma...well, you've been making sure no ones been sidling too close to her, haven't you?" Sirius prodded.

"Of course! But she's just 13, boys are only beginning to notice her in that way, though I do suppose that me being Mr. Head Boy and all that is scaring some of them off...but I will have one helluva time once I graduate...at least Jason will keep me updated,"

"Is he excited for his first year?" Remus asked, intrigued.

"Indeed. All he's been talking about. Quite funny, actually. He keeps pelting me with questions, and wondering if he'll be in Gryffindor like the rest of us," Harry said, smiling.

"And you said...?" Remus continued, hoping Harry hadn't teased his younger brother too badly. James had changed over the years, but he was still not the best influence when it came to taunting.

"I said that he was right set for the Slytherins."

"Oh Harry, you didn't..."

"I told him I was joking,"

"But Harry—

"Well it's not like Slytherins are all bad...after all, they do have Kit Stadgen,"

"The blonde girl you used to date? Oh Harry that's not the way to talk about ex—"

"I think you should go get dressed, so we can get a head start on today," Sirius cut in, stopping whatever lecture Remus had been ready to start, and Harry shot him a grateful look, leaving breakfast quickly and heading up the stairs. Remus turned to Sirius, but before he got the chance, Sirius stopped him. "Look, brothers are bound to tease each other, and they're bound to not be so nice either, but they love each other very much and that's all that counts. And Harry would never torture his brother, and I know that Jason is very smart, and would know Harry's tactics by now. I wouldn't be surprised if Jason didn't even bat an eye,"

"But still, Sirius it's Jason's first year, we wouldn't want to—"

"Remus," Sirius cut in once more, "Harry is very well aware of how excited Jason is, and he's not going beyond what he should. And I'd rather this day just be a peaceful one, so don't make it all out to be about morality, okay? I need to talk to him about something else anyway,"

Remus was curious about this other subject, and was about to ask but Harry chose that moment to reappear and was ready to leave.

"Bye mum, bye dad," He called up the stairs.

"Be good sweetie! And don't get in to trouble,"

"Awwww, you're no fun anymore Lily!" Sirius called back, grinning wickedly.

"Oh can it Padfoot!" she yelled, and she didn't say anymore.

"I guess that's our leave," Sirius held out an arm to Harry, who grasped it and disappeared with Sirius, Remus following them very soon afterward.

Their location was sunny and welcoming as they hurried over to the diner to get some breakfast as they all had abandoned theirs back at the house. They ordered their usual monthly dish, and sat waiting for it to come, engaging in conversation.

"Jay's at his friend Eric's house." Harry explained, "That's why he's not here. And Emma won't be back until tonight."

"And you stayed at home?" asked Remus.

"Well, yeah," Harry answered, turning slightly pink.

"Any particular reason as to *why*, Harry?" Sirius asked innocently.

Harry blushed deeper, and tried to keep his voice even.

"No reason."

"So, would I be mistaken in guessing that you stayed home and did nothing for an entire day and night?"

"Nope, that sounds 'bout right."

Remus and Sirius exchanged looks. Sirius had gotten onto the topic sooner than he thought.

"So, it wasn't you who snuck into Ginny Weasley's room last night, and then her not returning for another hour or so?"

Harry's blush disappeared rapidly, and his face quickly drained of color.

"How-I mean, no it—we didn't do any—do her parents know?"

Sirius grinned amusedly.

"Nah, I was just guessing."

"You prat!" Harry said, his face flushing and returning to normal. "You had me thinking they were going to hunt me down and send me to Azkaban." He started muttering darkly under his breath.

"What was that Harry, I didn't quite catch it," Remus said, playing along. Sirius could have sworn he heard the phrase "bloody wanker,"

"Well, Harry...I've been meaning to talk to you about her."

Harry looked up, and went scarlet. "Oh...I've already gotten the...the...'talk'."

Sirius laughed.

"Oh I don't mean that Harry. I know perfectly well you know about that...but, what I wanted to talk to you about is related."

Harry nodded, hoping the conversation wouldn't get too embarrassing. At least he wasn't having it with his dad.

"You'll be seventeen tomorrow...and you'll be an adult," Sirius started awkwardly, not sure what to say, "And she'll still be sixteen...a minor,"

It took Harry several minutes to figure out what Sirius was getting at.

"I...erm...oh!" He blushed deeper. "I hadn't thought about that..."

"We just don't want you two getting into trouble."

They sat in silence for several moments as Harry thought about what Sirius had just brought up, contemplating something.

"Wait...does that mean that hypothetically, that we could...before my birthday?"

Remus wanted to end this part of the conversation before it went on and Harry could find any other loophole.

"Now Harry, that's not exactly what Sir—"

"Well, hypothetically speaking, that is a possibility, yes," Sirius said, his eyes twinkling.

"But this is just hypothetical talk...none of this will get back to her parents about this," Harry said with a desperate undertone.

"Oh no. No reason to worry them over a hypothetical situation."

"And it wont get to my parents either?"

"Of course not! A young man can talk to his Godfather and express some desires without him having to blab to others about it."

Harry sat back, nodding, letting his mind wander. The truth was he *had* been thinking about this, quite often in fact. But all the thoughts had led him to the conclusion of waiting until December, and they had felt final—no room for any other options. And the idea of it being forbidden had made it hard to resist and the want was very present. But now...he wasn't exactly sure how he felt about it now. The feeling of excitement had almost left, and he wasn't sure if he just wanted it for the danger.

"But," Sirius clear his throat. "This is something you really need to put thought into."

Harry couldn't meet his eyes, for Sirius had no idea how much Harry realized this.

It would be one long day.

Please R & R!

I Won the War

By Luff the Hufflepuff

Authors Note: Hey!! So, I'm writing this A/N and chapter before I posted the first one, so to whoever reviewed: Thank you in advance! I'll be more consistent from now on, I promise. Also, I want to explain something really really REALLY quickly so I don't get questions later on about it. The pairings stand as such *for the time being* Harry/Ginny, James/Lily, Ron/Nicole. Nothing else seems relevant right now, and I'll update if anything else does become so. Also, I know I wrote the Marauders a little weird, but I'll try loads harder in this chappie.

This chapter really starts the beginning. The first two were mainly two parts of one prologue, but seeing as they are a year apart, I split them up. From now on, you'll see me use the title of songs and quotes to title my chapters. YAY!

Huge thanks to my Betas, KK and _____!!! They make this story legible and what it is today. Thanks girls!! You really make this possible.

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: So, I do not own the following: Harry Potter...Muse...The Killers... But I do own icecream (which I'm currently eating despite the fact it's December.)

Onto the story!!!!

~*~

Chapter Two

Enterlude

*We Hope You Enjoy Your Stay
Looks Like Heaven Aint Far Away
We Hope You Enjoy Your Stay
Even If It's Just For a Day*
~The Killers, Sam's Town

July, 1997

Harry would have been lying if he said he didn't feel relieved when getting home, and getting away from both Sirius and Remus.

When the three of them appeared in the sitting room, Harry bolted from their side of the room to the other.

"Hey mum, I'm going over to Ginny's," Harry said, grabbing his broom next to the fireplace.

"Alright, invite her over to dinner later. And go through the floo, dear."

Harry acknowledged this with an audible grunt before he threw the powder into the fireplace and disappeared into the green flames.

"You know," Lily said as the flames died down "if I didn't know any better, I'd say he was trying to get away from you two."

Remus nodded while Sirius merely shrugged.

"You going to tell me why my son is avoiding two of his most favourite people in the world?" she asked, sitting up in the arm chair.

"We just had a talk with him, you know, one of the many '*you're going to be an adult*' speeches that hes going to get."

Lily eyed them suspiciously "You didn't give him any advice on *scoring*, now did you Padfoot?"

"No. I swear," Sirius said. "Maybe I should have," he muttered quietly.

James doubled over with laughter as Lily narrowed her eyes and frowned. Remus just rolled his eyes.

~*~

"Hello Harry dear, Ginny's upstairs. I'll go get her. Why don't you go out into the garden? Ron and Nicole are already out there." Said a voice from the kitchen.

"Thanks Mrs. Weasley," Harry said, shouldering his broom and headed out the back doors looking for Ron and Nicole.

The two he was searching for were quickly located up in the sky, flying around high above him. One of them waved down to him, he returned the gesture, and watched as the two gracefully landed.

"We are *so* going to win the championship this year," Ron said, "again!" he added, as an afterthought. "With you and Gin as Chaser, Me as Keeper, and num-nuts over here as seeker, there is. No. Possible. Way. To. Lose." Ron said, emphasizing every word. The girl with long blonde windswept hair laughed, and grasped his hand.

"Of course we will Ron," she said, unable to keep the laughter out of her voice.

"We will. You're so amazing. You're smart, you're beautiful, and you're *DAMN* good at Quidditch. I've got the perfect girlfriend."

"You're jealous Harry," Nicole said, smiling. "You know you wish you had me."

"Nope. *I've* got the perfect girlfriend and she's not blonde."

"I concur," said a voice behind Harry, making him jump a little.

"Don't sneak up on me Gin!" Harry said, looking at her with badly portrayed anger.

"I wouldn't define just walking up to my boyfriend as *sneaking* but if you do, then go ahead," she said, grasping hands with his. Ron cleared his throat loudly, and Ginny shook her head at him. Nicole laughed.

"Well if we want to win this year, we oughta practice now," Nicole said, mounting her broom. Ron quickly followed suit, kicking off from the ground and following his girlfriend up into the sky.

Harry and Ginny shared a look before rolling their eyes, as they too followed what Nicole had done and were soon up high above the ground.

"Alright, Gin, Nicole, head to the other side of the field. Potter, fly out past the trees, you're gonna be the other Keeper," Ron said, pointing in the general direction of where he had just mentioned.

"Who died and named you Quidditch Captain?" Harry said.

"McGonagall, apparently," Ron said.

"Woah! Congrats Ron!"

"Oh don't congratulate him," Ginny said, flying closer to them, "he's been prancing round the house all week because of it. Being a bit of a prat, if you asked me."

"Oh shove it Gin." Said Ron in a testy voice

Ginny opened her mouth to give an angry retort, but was cut off by Nicole.

"Can we just practice?" Nicole asked, hovering three or so feet above them. Ginny shut her mouth and frowned at her older brother.

"Sure, as soon as Potter can get his lazy arse where he belongs."

In response, Harry gave Ron a very rude hand gesture, to which an argument may have followed, but to their good fortune Ron laughed it off.

After 15 minutes of attempting to play goal keeper, they all decided that Harry was a horrible Keeper and that they couldn't practice with him.

"Oh don't get your knickers in a twist, Harry, you're good at doing other things," Ginny said, smiling brightly and patting his hand sympathetically.

"Yeah, redheads for one," Nicole said quietly.

"Haha, no. He better not be good at that. Nor should he know if he is or isn't." Ron said, eyeing Harry.

"Don't worry Ron. He doesn't know." Ginny said, pulling her hair up into a pony tail. Harry averted his eyes from Ron's, nervously thinking back to the conversation he had had with Sirius and Remy.

"Why don't Harry and I play seeker and you two be refs? He needs good competition and I'm as good as any here," Ginny said, acting as if the situation at bay was nothing more than normal. Which, as of late, it was becoming so.

"Sounds good to me," Nicole said, trying to avoid the situation as best as possible, eyeing her boyfriend nervously. "Ron? Does that sound good to you?"

Ron merely grunted as he turned his broom and flew upwards. Nicole smiled apologetically towards Harry before she too flew upwards.

"Harry, you know Ron is just being...you know, *Ron*," Ginny said, flying close.

Harry nodded. He knew exactly what she meant, but it didn't make him feel any less horrible than it did. She flashed a smile and patted his arm.

"Just ignore it. It's not like he's picking on *you*. If I were dating any other bloke, he'd get the same treatment. Maybe worse, since he's known you since you two were playing with your first toy wands."

"Any day now Ginny," called a voice from above. Ginny sighed a little, giving her head a small shake.

"At least you get to leave and go home whenever you've had enough. *I* have to live *with* him."

With that she turned her broom away from him and got into position.

Ron transfigured an apple into a crude snitch, it wasn't pretty but would get the job done. He released it, and waited to give them the mark.

"Get ready...set...go!" Ron yelled, setting off sparks high into the sky.

Ginny and Harry raced around the field, neck and neck for the tiny wooden ball, furiously trying to capture it. With other girls, Harry may have let up, and let them catch it. With Ginny, he knew he didn't have to and she'd be madder if he had.

It took a sharp dive and Harry followed suit, hearing Ginny pull back slightly with the drop. As Harry dropped 10 feet, he realized how stupid the dive was and that he had to be careful in order to pull out.

There was a scream up above, Harry tried to turn his broom but with a loud *thunk!* All he felt was blackness...

A/N: Sorry about the short chapter, but I thought this was a good enough ending place.

One thought: Harry and Ron aren't bestest friends. They're friends, but they're not as close as they are in Cannon. They've known each other for years, as Ginny said, since they were toddlers, but ever since Harry and Ginny started going out almost 2 1/2 years ago, Ron's become much more protective of Ginny and therefore been much ruder to Harry, which has had a bit of a damper on their friendship. Harry happens to be good friends with the Twins though, and has a good enough relationship with Charlie and Bill. At one point Harry and Ginny took a break from their relationship due to the strain Ron caused between them. In the two months they took a break, Harry and Ginny went through several dates, including Kit Stadgen and the Patil twins and Dean Thomas and Seamus Finnegan, for the respective parties. When Ginny went out with Seamus, he was caught asking for some more...*adult* things from Ginny by a couple of first years, which in turn got back to Ron quite quickly. He decided that Harry was the best fit for her and was the most respective. He apologized for everything he had caused and made efforts to be more comfortable with them. They got back together not long after that. Whoo...long thought, but I wanted to clear up some possible misconceptions.

Another thought: Ron and Nicole have been going out since their third year, and have been hunky-dory ever since. Rarely have they ever fought, and they really do care about each other enough to let the little things slide. While dating for so many years, they have grown. And rather than growing into different people and far apart, they have grown together and have harmonic personalities as such. Don't get me wrong though, Nicole and Ron have their disagreements often enough. They aren't perfect. And the idea to make her a blonde was put up by my friend Taylor, who thinks it's tiresome that Ron *ALWAYS* gets the brunette girl, and decided he needed a little more "fun" in his life. Hope you're happy with it Taylor.

Final thought: I'm going to try and update as fast as I possibly can, and I make no guarantees on chapter length. As you noticed, the last two chapters have had a huge inconsistency in chapter length, and it'll probably be this way. I run into writers block too fast if I don't end it on a good note and keep adding more, so if you do find very short chapters, I promise you it's most likely followed by a much longer chapter.

Please R& R. It's what makes my muse encourage me. ☺

I Won The War

By Luff The Hufflepuff

A/N: Hope this chapter works for anyone who didn't like the last one!

Another huge thanks to my Betas KK and _____. Without them, this wouldn't be even remotely possible.

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: As you should know, I don't own HP, nor do I make profit off of the stuff I do. And I don't own any of the following either: Hot guys...broomsticks...the song lyrics in this chapter...

* ~ *

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.

~*~

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.

~*~

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.**

* ~ *

Chapter Four

Wake

*I dreamed I was missing
You were so scared
After my dreaming
I woke with this fear
But no one would listen
Cause no one else cared*

~ **Linkin Park, Minutes to Midnight**

July, 1997

Harry wasn't even close to being tired when he headed up the stairs, and to bed. He was more awake than he had been in a long time. Ginny had dealt him an unforeseen blow...and how to react properly seemed to be out the window.

Harry heard Jason heading up the stairs, and Emma arguing with him as they went about a necklace that she was missing.

"Jay, it was a gift from...my friend...and I need it back! It's important!"

"I told you Emma, I didn't take it!"

"You're a bloody liar, Jason Alexander Potter! I know you took it. Give it back!"

"Emma, why in the world would—?"

"Shut up, you two," Harry called but immediately froze. They had just given him an idea...

~ * ~

It was almost 10, and everyone had finally retired to their rooms. Harry waited until the house was quiet before he snuck down stairs, unlocked the door, mounted his broom, and flew to the Burrow.

He landed, picked up a pebble, and chucked it at her window. He felt like he was in one of those Muggle movies, where the boy was trying to woo the girl. It may have been a little cliché, but what was he expected to do? Knock on the house door, and say "Hello, I'm here to have hot, passionate—

"Harry?" said a small voice from above.

"Ginny." he said. He stood, transfixed on the girl half hanging out the window, her bright red hair glowing in the moonlight. She looked...amazing was a word that couldn't even begin to cover it. She was obviously suited for bed. *I wouldn't mind if she went to bed in that every night for the rest of our lives* he thought, colouring slightly because of it.

"I didn't know if you were actually going to come tonight," she said looking slightly nervous.

"If you don't want to tonight, then I can wai—"

"No! Look, come up on the broomstick so we don't have to shout. I'd rather talk about this face to face. Come up, quick!"

Harry mounted his broomstick, and kicked off, rising up to the second floor. With her help, he climbed inside the open window.

He found it quite difficult, even in the dark, to focus on her face. The view, as Sirius would say, had improved greatly. The shorts and top left little to the imagination, and Harry found himself not minding much.

Ginny seemed to notice this and, for the first time in all of knowing her, she flushed with embarrassment.

"Ginny," Harry said, breaking the awkward tension, looking a little over her left shoulder with all the willpower he possessed, "I...I bought you a birthday present. I know it's really early, but really...I wanted to make it special, and I'm not sure if I could hold onto this for months and not tell you."

"Oh?" Ginny said lightly, and Harry didn't even have to look to know she was peering at him with her intense brown eyes, and he found them quite hard to stare into sometimes, like a brilliant light. "I thought you weren't going to buy me something."

"Right," He said, still staring intently at a Gryffindor banner, "but I really wanted to buy this...its something I've been thinking about lately, and well...I'm not pressuring you or anything, and you don't even have to answer now," he said nervously, fumbling with the hem of his t-shirt. Why did she always make things so difficult for him? He was bloody Harry James Potter, supposedly bravest kid in Gryffindor, and yet here he was, stammering over a present.

Not just a present, it could be your—

"Harry?" Ginny's voice pulled him from his thoughts, and he felt slightly sheepish. "You didn't have to buy me anything...but that was very kind of you," she said slowly, still slightly confused.

Harry chanced a look at her. She was very beautiful. She always was. And there she stood, looking confused and patient, waiting for him to explain. His mouth was dry, and he knew no words could fully explain it, even if he found the right words, they'd still never be enough. And he just hoped his actions showed what he meant.

He fished around in his pocket and pulled out a small box, his hand shaking slightly. He handed it to Ginny, unable to look at her, but couldn't look away. He watched her open the box, and to stare lovingly at a silver locket. Ginny pulled out the necklace, and examined it in the dark room. She tried prying it open, but it didn't budge.

She looked at him questioningly.

"Well...Ginny...I...before you put it on; I have to ask you something." She nodded for him to continue, and still held the small pendant in her hand, "I...we've been together a long time, and I know you're not ready, nor am I asking for it to be soon...but I really want to spend the rest of my life with you. And I love you. I've never felt a way about anyone before and I know I'll never feel the same about anyone else. And well...I just thought..."

"I love you too Harry, but I don't know what you're getting—

"Will you marry me?"

The look of shock on her face was priceless, and after several very long seconds, it was replaced with a look of wonder and love, and soon after, a tear drifted down her perfect milk white cheek.

"Oh Harry."

Her voice was soft and low and she still gripped the locket in her hand. She took a step towards him. Harry was unsure of what to say, and wanted to abate her fears.

"Ginny, I know we're young, and you're just 16, but I know this is how I feel. And I know we have all the time in the world together. And," he said, hoping the more he said the less likely she would yell at him, "the locket won't open until you're truly, 100% ready to be married...actually ready, not the thought of it, but really ready. And I will not ask you of anything until then, or until you're ready to tell me you want to. I'll wait until I'm 150 years old if I must, if it means being with you."

Ginny stared at him, as her single tear stopped on her cheek, but she did not move to wipe it away.

A loud shout came from down the stairs, but neither paid any attention as a minute later a triumphant yell made its way up to them.

She opened her mouth and breathed something, but Harry could not hear it. She seemed to have noticed this as well, and said it, for a second time; just above audible but Harry heard it.

"Yes."

"Yes?"

She nodded, looking at him, her gaze transfixed upon him. "I want to marry you, Harry James Potter. I've wanted to do that since I was nine years old...and...this is just...it's real." She said, not daring to fully believe it. She was ready for everyone to pop out of her closet screaming "SURPRISE!" but no one did.

They stood there for minutes, hours, possibly days, just watching each other. Neither knew what to say, when everything they wanted to say was just known. Harry distantly heard a cheer from downstairs, but it sounded from miles away.

"I'm so glad you came," she finally said, her voice slightly cracking from the lack of use.

It was all of a nudge that Harry needed. He strode over to where she stood, wrapped his arms around her and kissed her.

It was unlike any kiss they had ever had before. And Harry wanted more. He had never felt this intense for her. He had never wanted her this badly. He had never known for her to kiss him as she was, nor placing her hands where she currently was doing so. But he knew that'd he have his entire life to experience it all. They were going to get married. *Married*. His mind struggled to wrap around this exciting piece of life.

They both unconsciously moved towards the bed, Ginny falling backwards onto the made up bed, as Harry landed on top of her, giving him an even better position than before. His kisses began to move downward, from her lips down her neck, and to where her flesh began to curve upwards. Her hands played with the hem of his shirt, giving him even more of an incentive.

"Harry...no please, stop," She said, with much restraint. "I want to do this...I really, *really* do, but I'd much rather not do it in the same house where my parents and other family is currently in." At that moment, several loud groans and curse words were audible, and Harry knew she was right. He immediately stopped.

"I dunno if we could go back to my house without being caught," he moved off of her, letting her sit up, and smoothed out her hair and shirt.

"It's the same problem...you're parents, *and* sister are there, and probably Sirius and Moony as well...and I'd rather not get caught by them. It's almost as bad as getting caught by my parents," She said stiffly, sighing loudly.

"Well, maybe we shouldn't tonight..." he said slowly. "Sure, we'd have to wait until December, but Ginny if you're not ready and if the timing isn't—

"Harry, look at me," she said softly, taking his face in her gentle hands. His green eyes met her brown, and Harry had the overwhelming feeling of intensity again. "The only person I'd be ready for is you, and I'm ready. I've practically always been ready for you,"

He kissed her gently on her soft supple lips. She sighed a little, closing her eyes.

"There is another place we could go," she said as she hopped up, one hand around her necklace, "the pond clearing is deserted at night...and we don't want to get caught. It's a private moment between us. I'd rather keep it as such. And it's quite warm, so we wouldn't catch a cold," she said quietly from the closet, looking for something.

She reappeared with two blankets in her hands, looking both ecstatic and sober. She looked so much older than she truly was. And Harry knew that she was ready. Ready for him and he knew that now.

He steadied the broomstick, climbed on, and helped Ginny onto the front so he could hold onto her and make sure she didn't fall. He wrapped his arms around her stomach, her hair smelling of rain. As she was pressed up against him, he felt Ginny shiver that he knew had nothing to do with the gentle July breeze.

The pond was empty and still, despite the small wind that floated around every so often. The clearing in the middle of the forest glimmered in the full moonlight, illuminating everything. He helped her unfold the blankets and set one down on the ground, where both her and she sat, looking at the stars.

"I love you," Her voice was quiet and warm, and as Harry turned to look at her, she seemed to be emitting an ethereal glow that the moon and stars could have never possessed. She looked beautiful.

He leaned over and kissed her, slow and deep, gradually lifting her on top of her. Her hair glimmered on the ground, bright auburn locks spread across like waves. He kissed her, tangling his fingers in her hair, smelling the intoxicating scent that she alone had. And as he pulled off his shirt, and started working on hers, he knew that everything was perfect.

Just perfect.

~*~

Molly Weasley was not stupid.

She knew that look her daughter and Harry had exchanged before Molly took her home. She knew that they had felt so intensely for each other. And that the stomach ache Ginny had complained of before heading up the stairs earlier than normal wasn't real. Almost every parent would notice that. But what made Molly more observant than the norm was that she also knew that there was no other man who could be so perfect for her daughter.

If any of the Weasley men had the insight Molly Weasley had on her youngest daughter, they wouldn't have been so delightfully surprised when she turned the wireless to Quidditch, and served drinks all around for hours late into the night, keeping their minds off of Ginny and her stomach ache. Molly played her part well. She kept discretely looking towards the clock, which went unnoticed until about 2 am.

"Molly darling, why do you—*hic*—keep looking at the—*hic*—clock? Expectin someone?" asked her husband of 30 years. She gave him a pitying look, have had never seen him so smashed in his life time. If only he knew what she had allowed to be done...well...she wasn't so sure Harry would be having a happy birthday this year.

She shook her head and smiled "No, Arthur. Just reminiscing of the late nights we used to have."

"Ahhh yes," he said, his face almost wistful. "Those were the days. You were so beautiful. You've always been beautiful."

Molly flushed, her eyes shining with tears. She felt so awful lying to him, undermining him, when he had every right to know what she had done. Molly took a shuddering breath and wiped away a tear.

"Arthur I—

"It's okay Molly, no need to cry. The Cannon's always lose," said Arthur, feebly patting her on the arm. "Now, lets go to bed. Boys, that means you too."

The twins, currently tangoing to the sounds of cheers, just laughed and pulled George into a dip.

"Boys," said Arthur, almost authoritatively. The effect was ruined slightly by his slurred speech. The boys silently tangoed to the stairs, where they turned and with a *pop!* They disappeared from sight.

"Ron?" Molly approached her youngest son, who was sitting as he was hours ago in the corner near the window, staring off into space, his drink empty. She placed a hand on his shoulder, to which he immediately stood and shrugged her off.

"I'm fine," he said, and marched up the stairs without another word.

Arthur, despite his current state, threw her a look she recognized from frequent use. She nodded.

"Well then...can you go check on Ginny? I would...but seeing as I am not in the—*hic*—best of states—

"Yes Arthur, I will." She said it almost immediately. She averted her eyes from her husband as she too hurried up the stairs. She didn't understand why she stayed silent, why she hurried to Ginny's defence, why she had so resolutely changed her mind.

Molly listened at the door, straining for any sound. She felt a small bite of panic when she heard none, but convinced herself Ginny could be in no safer hands. There was a small *thump* from downstairs as Arthur began to climb the stairs. Molly turned, and with a faint *pop!* She found herself downstairs again, looking up to the clock. With relief, the hands of all 7 Weasley children were on "safe". She sighed, and apparated up the stairs, and climbed into bed.

Things would be better in the morning.

~*~

They both lied on the ground, looking up at the stars, not entirely sure what had happened was real. As the hours stretched on without a word, Ginny silently fell into a deep slumber, with Harry not far behind. He smiled, looking at her pale, freckled face, before he shut his eyes and the world went dark. He was truly at peace with the world...

"No, please, not Harry!"

"You're a wizard, a thumpin' good un' too!"

"Harry Potter...our new celebrity,"

"...Stand aside, silly girl,"

"You're a great wizard...books, cleverness, they're nothing compared to bravery."

"If you want him, you'll have to go through us first!"

"...Please, not Harry!"

"We've got something he doesn't—something worth fighting for,"

"...When the seventh month dies..."

"Just believe in yourself,"

"...It is curious that you shall be destined for that wand, while its brother gave you that scar."

"...Power, the dark lord knows not..."

"...Avada Kedavra!"

"Sirius..."

"Harry, Sirius isn't coming back..."

"He's not dead!"

"...You're the boy who lived..."

Harry's eyes shot open. White-hot pain branded across Harry's temple, feeling as if his head were splitting in two. He bit his lip to prevent himself from crying out. The searing intensified, and he tasted a coppery tang. Just as he began to see spots, the pain ebbed away, and was replaced with a dull throb. He touched his forehead, and found it sticky. He brought his fingers to his line of sight, and saw, with horror, blood.

His vision begun to swim, and changed from the pond to a large, high ceilinged room. The room had several men, all flanking around a chair, where a pair of feet was visible, but Harry couldn't see the man in the chair.

"Where is Alexander?"

The man in the chair's voice was cold and high, unforgiving. The men in the room flinched at the suddenness of the noise.

"He's not here, sir," said a man to the right, shuddering slightly.

"And why is this?" There was no curiosity in this voice. It was the cruel, toying tone that already knew the answer. The man in the chair moved, as if he were to stand.

"I'm sorry...we did all we—"

The man in the chair swiftly stood, and crossed the room to the quivering man, and drew his wand, yelling *"Crucio!"*

Harry shut his eyes, recoiling as if he had been struck with the torture curse, wanting the images to go away. But despite shutting his eyes, the vision was just as clear.

"Do not lie to Lord Voldemort. Lord Voldemort knows when you are lying."

Lord Voldemort's face was unlike Harry had imagined it: it wasn't a scaly, beast head with horns. It was almost handsome; it was almost *too* handsome, like a cliché, as if it had been carved from wood. It was all together hard, and unreal. It was the metaphorical mask.

"Let me ask you again, and this time do not lie to me. Where is Alexander?"

"M'Lord...they can not locate him. He disappeared three months ago, and hasn't reappeared since." Said a tall, thin, blonde haired man. He didn't speak with fear, but with a drawl, as if this piece of information was nothing more than the weather. *"And while they're all incompetent buffoons, I wouldn't be surprised if Alexander's done well and— Ahem, what do they say?—dropped off the map."*

The men in the room became anxious, almost excited, for something.

"That is true..." Voldemort said, pacing slightly. *"He is a good hunter...he'd know how to avoid being tracked. It'd take much skill to be even able to follow a cold trail."* The men, who had earlier cowered from Voldemort, now looked ecstatic and almost affectionate towards the tall man.

"Thank you my Lord! Thank you—"

"That does not mean I am not disappointed in your performances." The looks of glee on the men's faces were wiped clean, and replaced by sheer terror.

"And when Lord Voldemort is disappointed, there shall be punish—"

Despite having his back turned to all, Harry could tell something was bothering—almost frightening—Voldemort.

"Lucius, take the men down to the containment cellars. I shall deal with them later. And make sure you assemble your men."

The tall blonde man nodded, and left the room with a swish of his robes, the men disappearing.

~ *

With a start, Ginny woke in a cold sweat, shaking. Something was wrong. She touched Harry's arm lightly, trying to wake him. His skin was hot and, as she turned him, his face was covered in blood and he was pale.

"Harry...oh Merlin...Harry! Wake up Harry!" She said, shaking him. His body contracted in pain, and she held onto him, weeping lightly, yelling for him to wake up.

* ~

The man named Lucius returned with several more men, all dressed in robes and masks.

"You summoned for us?"

"I did. Someone had broken into the castle, and I suspect it was a spy."

"Why do you think it is a spy, my Lord? Isn't it possible that the wards—"

"The intruder was in here...I heard him, and I sense him." Voldemort's eyes, where normal people's eyes would have blazed with anger, were nothing more than a dull well. *"Track him down, and find him. When you do, bring him to me."*

"Yes my Lord, we will."

"And make sure you succeed. I would hate to lose some of my finest men,"

* ~

"Harry, please Merlin...Harry wake up! Please, baby, don't do this to me," she was holding him tightly, crying. Ginny didn't know what to do other than this. She had had no medical revival training, nor could she just leave him here to run and get help. "Come on Harry, please wake up."

His eyes shot open, and his pulse quickened.

"Oh Harry...thank Merlin...you're alright," she sobbed lightly into his shoulder.

"Ginny we have to go, now." He said, getting up, and grabbing his wand.

"What's going on?" she said, wrapping herself in one of the blankets, and beginning to pack another.

"There's no time for that. Grab your wand and follow me. We have to get back to your house or mine, right now."

She grabbed her wand, and mounted Harry's broom, and felt his arms encircle around her as they kicked off and flew outwards.

"If we can get there in 5 minutes, we'll have enough time to—"

Bang!

Harry felt it hit him as if he had been punched in the stomach. The shockwave from the explosion hit them with full force, knocking them out of the sky. They landed with a dull *thud!*

"There! He's there!" One of the men Harry recognized from his dream.

Jinxes begun to fly at them from every direction. Harry grabbed Ginny, running, and turning back, sending hexes flying towards the opposition. It was the strangest sensation, even more so than the dream. He was hurtling curses he had never done

before, nor even *knew*, and the people who were chasing him for something he wasn't entirely sure had even happened.

"Impedimenta!"

There was a loud yell, and a *thump*, and Harry knew he had hit his mark.

Ginny ducked curses, running as fast as she could, but the men weren't too far behind, and they were gaining.

"Do you trust me?" Harry asked, looking at Ginny intently.

"Yes," she said, ducking a jet of orange light.

"Hold onto me, and don't let go."

"Awww, look. They're giving their last hug."

Harry held her close, with the men quickly gaining on them. Ginny trembled, and shut her eyes, but knew she was in the best of hands.

He raised his wand, turned on the spot, and thought hard about a safe place.

A large *Bang!* And clouds of coloured smoke filled the field.

When the men were nearly feet away, Harry and Ginny had disappeared.

A/N: I'm excited for the holidays, two weeks away from the grindstone. But, by the time I post this, my holiday assessment will be off by a lot, we'll probably be closer to Saint Patrick's Day than Christmas. I do realize this, and I left it in because I'm wondering how many people will write me a review saying "it's not December time frame, it's _____!!!!" I really hope people will have read this note, and avoided the embarrassment. Please, restore my hope in the intelligence of Man-kind.

Thank you.p

I Won The War

By Luff The Hufflepuff

A/N: This AN is gonna be a long one. Just a warning in advance.

From this point on, these chapters are completely different from my original writing. Something happened to my chapters from this point and they were irretrievable. :(but I hope that it's a blessing in disguise and that these are much better than their first draft counterparts. The story is heading toward a darker version than I had originally planned. But in light of recent events, it feels more than appropriate.

Soooo yes, I know this is a hella long story so far, for what little has happened. At the pace I'm going at, this'll be a 50 chapter when I'm done. Then again, some fictions are amazingly good and long, like **After The End** by Arabella and Zsyena,

HP and The Mind Mage by James Milamber, and an old throw back to **Girl in the Tower** series by Spooky Mulder (personally, I'm a fan of the older stuff...). But on that same token, on the flip side, there are short stories like **Recnac Transfaerso** by Celebony, and **Shattered Illusions** that have just as large of a fan base. I think I'm a mix between the two, it'll be a higher chapter story, but my chappies wont be 20 pages long either. The reason for me bringing this up is the fact that when I told possible beta readers (before I settled on two good ones) was that this story wouldn't be any longer than 15 chapters. My estimate was wildly off, however, seeing as this is now chapter 5 and I'm only really getting into the story. Can I say oops? :P

I know most people say their big thank you's at the end, saying who got them there, ect. But there is someone who needs to be thanked now. Because without him, this part of the story wouldn't exist. You listened to me, you knew what was at stake, and you also didn't laugh where you weren't supposed to, and cracked up endlessly when it was the right times. I don't know if it was the actual writing or the fact we were having a great time, but it did make going through the hard shit a little easier to bare. And I don't know what's going to happen now, but I do know things do happen for a reason. You taught me that. That's the whole thing behind this story. I know I reacted badly, and screamed and renounced what you told me and I believed, and now things have quieted down, I know deep down you were always right. It's a tough pill to swallow, but you'll surely be missed. We all loved you.

I loved you.

Goodbye.

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: The recognizable characters in this story aren't mine, as you can guess. I claim no ownership of them. This is dedicated to the man who never got the chance to have the impact on the world that he should have. You really had everything to offer. You were so beautiful, and I'm saddened that people will never see your beauty as I did. I'm very lucky.

* ~ *

Chapter Five

Hide and Seek

*Where are we?
What the hell is going on?
This can't be happening.
~ Imogen Heap, **Speak for yourself.***

Hours Earlier

Sleep evaded Molly Weasley. She flitted in and out of nightmares filled with Ginny, pregnant and alone. By 6 am, she got out of bed, and descended the staircase. Molly paused outside of her daughter's room, but decided to keep moving. *Ginny was responsible* she kept telling herself. *Ginny'll be fine.* Nonetheless, when she passed the handsome grandfather clock, she couldn't help to look at where the hands all pointed. None had moved.

Reasonably satisfied with this, Molly begun to prepare breakfast.

As time passed, the Weasley men, one by one, fumbled down the stairs wiping the sleep from their eyes. Molly looked to the staircase, hoping for the trail of a flowery night dress.

"Where's Gin?" asked Fred, feebly poking his eggs while George's head rested on the table, a small puddle of drool surrounding his mouth. It had appeared her absence hadn't gone unnoticed.

"I'll go see if she's up yet." Molly said, heading up the stairs. She was surprised, and a little nervous, to see her daughter's bed empty. Molly sighed, turned on the spot and apparated to a house down the road. She made careful point to land just outside of the wards. Just as she reached out to knock, she hesitated. How was she going to ask? She couldn't exactly tell the full story. She took a breath and rapped the knocker several times.

Lily Potter, a sensible yet young woman, answered the door, looking tired and frazzled. Molly smiled apologetically.

"Molly?" Asked Lily, still rubbing sleep from her eyes, "I don't mean to sound so rude, but why are you here at 7:45 on a Saturday?"

Molly shrugged and sighed "Can you send—can you ask—" Molly shook her head, and took a breath. "Could you send Ginny home?"

"Ginny?" Lily said, perplexed despite her state of drowsiness. "Why on earth would she be here...Molly, you took her—"

"Lily, who's at the door?" called a male voice, heading towards the door. James messy locks surrounded his face as he placed an arm around Lily's largely expanding waist.

"Hello James," Molly said, unable to help but smile at both of them.

"Hello Molly, what brings you here?"

"She's asking after Ginny."

James's confusion matched of his wife's.

"But didn't you take her home last night, I could have sworn—"

"I did...I just...I think she might be here."

Comprehension dawned on James's face as he looked shocked, but fought the beam that tried to splay across his face.

"Why don't you come in and take a sit as I go and see if she's upstairs." He stepped aside, allowing Molly to squeeze through the doorway.

"James, what on Earth—?"

"Lily," James lowered his voice. "Trust me. I think she's right. Let me just go check on Harry really fast. I'll be right back."

Harry? Why would—

"You're a smart girl, think hard about it."

Lily clapped hands over her mouth as the priceless look of shock claimed her features.

"No!" She whispered.

"I think so. And Molly thinks so. I'll be right back." James kissed his wife as she headed into the sitting room with Molly, giving James time.

He headed straight for his son's room, but paused, and headed to the guest bedrooms.

"What the bloody hell are you getting us up at—?"

"Shh...Sirius...Harry—"

"What about him?" Remus asked, sounding tired. "What type of trick do you have up you abnormally long sleeves?"

"He...he's a man now."

The look Lily had given him could not compare to those of Sirius and Lupin.

"You mean...last night?"

"Harry's been awfully quiet since last night."

"Yeah...Molly's looking for Ginny, and she looked here...and she thinks so. And with the way they acted last night..." James shook his head, unable to understand why he missed the signs.

"Wow...Prongs jr."

"Yeah..." was all James could say, running a hand through his hair. Sirius began to laugh. "What?" James asked, unsure how he felt. Sure, he was happy his son was a man, but Ginny was so young and Harry as well.

"Looks like those tickets to the World Cup aren't going to be as good as a gift as we thought."

"Sirius," Lupin admonished, punching him lightly on the arm. "That is *absolutely* disgusting. We are not comparing Quidditch tickets to Harry losing his—

"*Really* good Quidditch tickets," Sirius cut in.

"Enough." James said, rubbing his temples. "I'm happy and all, but I'd rather go check up on them and make sure they're alive and well."

The two nodded and followed James to his eldest sons room, expecting a sign of their union: haphazard clothing, lacy articles, or even the small scent of sex upon the air. None were found, and the bed was empty and untouched. Everything was pristine. As if...

"They were never here..." it dawned on James as the words tumbled out of his mouth exactly what it meant and fear gripped his heart. *No...it can't be...this is just normal parenting concern. They're fine. They aren't where they belong, and I'm just being paranoid. Nothing's wro—*

BANG!

James face whitened as he raced down the stairs, jumping down the last six steps, flying past Lily, his wand already out, Sirius and Remus not far behind. He flung the door open and ran towards the source of the noise, out by the old pond he and Lily used to spend their summer days away, long into the night. He remembered the look he gave her and how she fell into temptation. He grimaced as he knew deep within his heart, his son was there now, with Ginny, just as he was many years ago.

Fear gnawed at him as he saw the fast approaching figures of his son and his girlfriend being closely perused by a group of six or so men in distinct dark robes. Even at his distance he knew them, and felt all the breath in his body leave.

"Those can't be..."

James began to run faster, only a hundred meters away.

"Harry! Ginny!" He yelled, but was unheard over the yells of hexes and curses. He felt his stomach drop as his son turned to his girlfriend and held her tight—he was surrendering. "NO!" James yelled and sprinted faster, and a second, larger bang, occurred, throwing James and his company off their feet.

He couldn't think—everything was scrambled. He was bleeding—*why...whats going on...*—and everything was muffled, as if someone had stuck cotton in his ears. James tried to get up and stumbled as spots flitted in and out of vision. His knees buckled and begun to collapse when a pair of hands steadied him and held him firm.

James looked across the field, where smoke still rose in tendrils to the sky, empty: void of all persons but himself and his friends.

"Harry?" he voiced, to no one in particular.

"James...they've gone."

He didn't need to ask what he meant—James *knew*. He hung his head and wept, his body shaking from his cries of anguish, staring at the spot his son had so recently stood in.

~ * ~

It took a moment for him to realize where he was. He assumed all had been a nightmare he had just woken from, and he was waking next to Ginny out by the pond, and that he should head home before anyone realized they weren't where they were supposed to be.

"Ginny?"

His voice felt broken...rough, almost foreign; as if it belonged to someone else, of a different life.

"Gin?" He begun to feel a stab of cold panic when she wasn't sitting beside him. Harry looked around desperately, trying to clear the fog in his mind to think clearly.

"How'd you know?"

Harry turned around to see Ginny sitting, her arms wrapped around her knees pulled up to her chest, her left cheek bruised and her arm bleeding—*oh god all that blood*. Her tone was calm—way too calm for someone to be bleeding that much.

"Ginny...what happened?"

"I could ask you the same thing."

It was the same cold, almost hard, tone. Harry didn't understand what was all happening and wished he could just think clearly.

"I really don't know Gin. I was sleeping, and I had the weirdest dream, and I woke up...and you're...you're hurt and I have no idea why."

"Did you get mixed up in something?" Her voice broke, and her fragility spilled over the surface. "Harry I wont be mad if you did, but...have you done something lately?" Her eyes were searching him desperately, hoping for an answer to what was going on. "Who are we dealing with here?"

Flashes of men in dark robes chasing them crashed over him. He shook his head to clear the images, wishing they'd go away.

"I don't know...I was dreaming about them and then...they were there."

She shook her head, her eyes wide with fear.

"No. You said...you *knew* they were coming...you can't just dream something and it becomes real!"

"I don't know how I did it...I just *did*, I guess. Ginny I'm in the dark as much as you here—

"But they wouldn't just come after you for no reason, Harry. There must have been something you did, maybe said something to the wrong crowd, I don't know."

She threw her hands up in the air, frustrated and upset. "Harry, I'm not saying you did anything wrong on purpose...but what if, what if we're caught up in a storm. What about our families? What about us? What are we going to do?"

Harry looked at her, wanting to give her the answers she deserved. He wished he had more of an answer than he did.

She looked at him, winded from her tirade and stress, her eyes searching him for answers he didn't have.

"What if they come back?"

Her voice was barely above a whisper. She struggled to stand, and swayed on the spot "We can't just stay here." The coppery flecks across her skin stood out more as her skin drained of most colour.

Harry stood quickly, despite the thick, confusing fog filling his brain, knowing all too well what would happen next. Time felt slowed as her eyes rolled into the back of her head and he caught her. Despite her generally light frame, he sunk to the ground with her dead weight. Her breathing was smooth and controlled, almost she had been in a deep, unawaking slumber. Her body was still besides the slow rising and falling of her chest, the deepest comfort Harry had. But this comfort was fleeting and he knew it. If she didn't wake up or got help soon...the rise and fall of her chest would cease all together.

His pulse quickened at the mere thought of it. The panic rat tried to gnaw at his fragile shell that kept him pieced together. *No*, he told himself, *I'll get help. She'll be fine. We'll be fine.* He repeated the words again and again until the rat was back in the black corners of his mind.

Now he could think.

Harry tucked one of his arms under her knees, and propped her head on his shoulder, and could feel the faint wind escaping her lips that brushed against his neck. He stood absolutely still, and after straining his ears for a sound that never came, he chose to head towards the lightest part of the forest, deciding it was the best place to start.

~*~

James walked into the Potter household, supported on each side by Sirius and Remus.

Lily looked up at the entering group, expectant and hopeful through the tear tracks that stained her face. The hope evaporated near instantaneously as shock and despair rolled over her.

"No..."

It barely qualified as a whisper, but the entire house was silent that it came out more as an explosion.

"And...Ginny?" Molly asked, ashamedly hopeful that her daughter had fared better than their son.

Remus shook his head, knowing he (let alone James) couldn't form the words.

"Oh...My..." the sadness and horror splashed across her face, the fear reaching her deepest insides.

The look was replaced of one of motherly concern as Lily tried to rush to her feet, but Molly gently kept her in place.

"Dear, please do stay sitting. Think of yourself...think of the baby." Lily looked to protest, but after glancing at her enormous stomach, rethought and kept still.

For a woman in near paralyzing agony, she kept her head enough to ensure the others were taken care of. Sirius knew the emotions would too soon escape her control, but for now she was in control of not only of them, but the situation at hand.

"Remus," Molly said, looking to the man least injured, "what happened?"

"D—Death Eaters...they ambushed them. They didn't stand a chance."

Molly's face (among Lily's) whitened several shades.

"Are they...are they..." she couldn't force herself to say the final words, afraid saying them would only solidify the fact.

Remus shook his head. "No...I don't think so. They...they—it kind of looked like they disappeared."

Both women's faces looked up, pink with hopefulness.

Lily stared at her husband, near collapsing. "James, did you teach him how to?"

James, to his credit, thought hard and shook his head.

"But," Molly started, "it's been well documented in situations that people in extreme occasions have disappeared perfectly or near perfectly, despite no training or

theory. Arthur tells me about its happenings quite often enough. Isn't it possible they simply had accidental magic and disappeared?"

"Well..." Sirius and Remus exchanged looks. Yes, it was possible. But the way the disappeared at the precise moment as the Death Eaters left them feeling uneasy about the former idea. "It is a possibility...but Molly, its much more probable that they're with the Death Eaters right now."

"Which means for the mean time, they're alive."

This they could not disagree with. For the moment, they were alive. But the situation made death seem almost a better option.

~*~

It wasn't until he had been walking for almost an hour, holding her tightly against his chest, that he allowed the burning tears to escape his eyes and silently cried. Tacitly begging for her to stay alive.

Alive long enough to be found.

A/N: I took a six month hiatus between the finishing of this chapter and the previous. Things such as life, and drama, and celebration all got in the way. And yet, thankfully, due to all of that, I am able to write with better conviction of these things because I'm not just writing what I *think* would be the case, but of what I know to be. Watching someone deteriorate or fear that you have lost someone is much more real to me than it ever was before. Some I have seen happen and some of which has happened to me.

Thank you ever so much to Taylor (again) for allowing me to use her description of watching me lose consciousness and the stabs of fear that I would never wake up again, and for pointedly correcting me that "you didn't *gracefully arch backwards*, sweetheart—you went down like a sack of potatoes" and bothered me about it until I had changed that fact. Yeah, I agree...it did sound a little too poetic.

And thank you to Shawn, who gave me inspiration for how to bring something together in a relative sense of practicality. After all, how more real can I get than life experiences? We all kid that deep down, I'm not all that good of a writer. Just a good story tweaker to fit my own purposes. He he.