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# **Mind Games**

Harry sighed, shifting awkwardly, as he tried to get comfortable on his lumpy bed. His ears were assaulted by the whining of Dudley Dursley, his bratty cousin, who was trying to weasel more food out of Harry's Aunt.

There had been an embarrassing incident involving Dudley, the school stage, and shortly afterwards, industrial lifting gear. Dudley had been trying out for a part in a school play when his audition had been cut short by the un-reinforced floor collapsing under him. In the end they had been forced to call for the Fire Brigade to come and lift him out, using equipment normally reserved for car crashes.

This had brought Dudley to the attention of the Social Services department, who had given Vernon, his dad, a stark warning. If Dudley did not lose weight, and fast, he would be taken in to care.

Harry's Aunt Petunia had immediately gone into hysterics when she was informed, to his great, but silent, amusement.

Summer was half-way over and Harry was bored, bored and lonely. Despite the protests of both himself and Ron Weasley, his best friend, he had not been allowed to stay with Ron's family over the summer.

'Another thing to chalk up to Voldemort,' Harry thought savagely. Voldemort was the most feared wizard in existence. He had personally killed Harry's parents and tried to kill Harry himself, but the *Avada Kedavra*, the killing curse somehow backfired, leaving Harry alive but with a lightning shaped scar on his forehead. Voldemort had been weakened and had disappeared. Some people claimed he was gone for good.

Harry was unusual in the wizard world, as he refused to call Voldemort by any euphemism; the wizarding world preferred to refer to him as 'You know who', as if saying his name out loud might cause him to appear. The Dark Lord liked to use this sort of superstition to increase the fear people felt for him.

Despite official protestation to the contrary, it was beginning to be rumored that Voldemort and his Death Eaters were gathering in power. This had culminated for Harry this summer. While taking part in a Tri-Wizard tournament, he had grabbed the trophy with Cedric Diggory. The trophy turned out to be a Port-Key, a magical device for traveling to a fixed destination. The tournament had been a set-up for the Dark Lord to capture Harry, Cedric had been an unnecessary extra. Voldemort had been casually killed Cedric with less thought than that of a man standing on an ant.

Harry still had nightmares about that evening; he had dueled with Voldemort, till their wands had locked. A rare occurrence when two wands with identical cores were forced to fight each other. The spells that each had cast were played in reverse, ending with Harry seeing his parents just before their death.

Which left Harry, stretched out on his bed, reading a book that he didn't know he had. It had appeared on his bed one day, and the title had intrigued him. "Dreams and the Subconscious, a Personal Journey," by Dafne Dreater, a Portuguese witch. The author meant nothing to him, but the spells and ideas inside the book had helped him regain some control of his nightmares.

After mastering the basics, he had been enthralled by the advanced pages; his summer had flown by quickly as he had delved into the magic in front of him. Without knowing quite why, he had been concentrating on the spells that literally allowed him to enter someone's mind.

This spell could not be used as weapon though, as it needed complete and utter trust on behalf of the other person; it could not be forced upon them. Even so, he was almost obsessed as he committed the spells to memory, repeating the complicated phrases over and over again in his mind.

But, like every book, it had an ending, and after rereading it, again and again, he was finally bored with it.

He reached down, pulling a Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Bean from the hiding place under his bed. Eating a Bertie Bean was always a gamble, as you never knew what flavor you were going to get. Chewing carefully to start with, Harry smiled to himself as the taste of strawberry ice cream came through.

"Arry!" an annoyingly loud voice shrieked from downstairs. "Get your lazy bones down here and start cleaning that kitchen!"

Harry allowed himself the luxury of one last sigh, before standing and walking out of his room.

He entered the kitchen to twin glowers from two of the more unattractive people that the Muggle world had the misfortune to produce.

The corpulent Dudley, who, despite his strict diet of rabbit food, still bore a startling resemblance to a walrus - he had a terrific layer of subcutaneous fat which would have served him well in artic conditions.

Petunia, the person who's summon Harry was currently obeying, was extremely thin, and carried more neck than the average giraffe. When Harry had been growing up he had been endlessly fascinated by the way the neck would bend and sway as his aunt listened to the latest gossip from her equally vacuous friends.

"Well, what are you waiting for, you ungrateful brat?" Aunt Petunia screeched at him. "I can't make my Duddikins any more food in this mess, get to work."

Harry heroically swallowed his comment about Dudley needing more food like a desert needed more sun and got to work. Long practice allowed him to ignore the disdainful looks of his relatives as they watched him tidy their mess.

Harry's chore was interrupted by a tapping at the window. He looked up and smiled as he saw a small elf owl urgently battering its beak against the window.

- "Pigwidgeon!" he said with a smile, automatically opening the window.
- "Don't let that foul thing in here," his aunt screamed, a little too late. Pig, the owl's affectionate nickname, entered through the window and flapped wildly around the kitchen, not actually causing any damage himself, but scaring Dudley and Aunt Petunia.
- "Pig!" Harry exclaimed forcefully. As much as he enjoyed the look of panic on his Aunts face, and the look of exhaustion on Dudley's as he actually had to move his overweight form, he didn't want the endless scolding that this would cause once his uncle came home.
- Surprisingly, the excitable owl obeyed him and landed next to him, helpfully holding out a leg. Harry unrolled the letter and patted Pig on the head.
- "You better get out of here," he said with a smile, shooing him out the window. Pig hooted once, and then vanished into the distance.
- "WHAT HAVE WE TOLD YOU ABOUT OWL'S?" Aunt Petunia screamed, "Think of our reputation in the neighborhood." The fact that Harry could not care less for his adopted family's reputation was clearly evident on his face.
- Deciding to end this guickly, Harry glanced at the note then looked up with a cheerful smile. "It's from Sirius."
- At the mention of Harry's Godfathers name, both of his relatives froze. They were clearly petrified by the mere mention of the man accused of 13 murders. The fact that he was innocent was one of those snippets of information that Harry had carefully kept from his relatives.
- "I think I'll go upstairs and write back," Harry announced, before walking out, a small smile on his face. He ignored the mutterings about waiting till his Uncle Vernon arrived home.
- Safely ensconced in his room, Harry finally read the letter properly.
- "Harry,
- Wicked News mate, Dumbledore's finally agreed to let you spend the rest of the summer with us. Apparently he wanted to put a few more wards around the Burrow before allowing you to come.
- Someone'll be there to pick you up at 5, be ready!
- Ron"
- Harry rolled onto his back and smiled with pleasure, his earlier boredom forgotten as he made a mental run through of everything he would need to bring with him. The list was disturbingly short, so it didn't take long for him to pack. He checked his watch and was pleased to see it was only fifteen minutes before he would be leaving. He contemplated giving the Dursley's advanced warning of his imminent departure, but decided against it. It wasn't worth the hassle.
- He opened his own Owl's cage and released her into the air, "Go to the Burrow Hedwig, I'll meet you there." With a squawk of approval, the owl flew out the window and off into the distance.
- Harry sat on his trunk, his belongings packed kicking his heels when the doorbell rung. He jumped to his feet and grabbed the trunk; it was charmed to be light, no matter what the contents, so he could move it on his own.
- Harry paused on the stairs as he listened to the conversation, his green eyes sparkling with humor.
- Dudley had opened the door, only to be instantly struck dumb.
- "Hi, you must be Dudley," the gorgeous girl on his door step said with an enchanting smile.
- Sadly, Dudley lost his chance to make a decent first impression as his brain turned to mush.
- "Hmmsappy tair," he mumbled; his eyes wide. He tried to stand on tip toes; the front of the girls dress was just out of sight as she was a step below him. Sadly, Dudley's toes were not up to supporting the extra weight, and he stumbled backwards, falling on the floor.
- His smile wide, Harry pulled his case down the last of the stairs, accidentally dropping one end on his cousin's hand. Ignoring the wailing it produced, he leaned over and hugged the girl on the front door.
- "Hermione, it's so good to see you."
- Hermione smiled, hugging him back, "You too Harry. I'm staying at the Burrow as well, so it made sense for mom and me to pick you up on the way. No one would expect you to arrive by Muggle transport." Hermione indicated the smart blue car behind her, her mom waved at Harry.

Turning to his Aunt, who had instantly appeared to see what her beloved Dudley was complaining about, he said, "I'm off for the rest of the summer, see you next year."

Without waiting for a reply, Harry shut the door behind him and followed Hermione to the car.

They turned to each other as they heard a voice shout, "Dudley, she is unnatural, you will NOT find her attractive, just wait till your father hears about this."

Harry and Hermione laughed as they put Harry's trunk in the car, and then settled in the back seats together.

## The Burrow

To say that Ron Weasley was nervously awaiting his friend's arrival would be a huge understatement. Having spent the day tidying and generally keeping busy, he was now pacing the kitchen muttering to himself.

His twin elder brothers, Fred and George, were watching him with undisguised glee.

- "Don't worry, Ron," George said, a small smile on his face. "Hermione will be here soon, and you'll be able to tell her how much you missed her."
- "You think?" Ron asked, before realizing what he had said. His face went red; his ears bright pink. "I don't know what you're talking about," he growled at them. Typically, they ignored him; they were to busy laughing as hard as they could.
- The sound of a Muggle car pulling up interrupted their teasing. Ron vanished out the door so fast it was as if he apparated.
- "Harry, Hermione," Ron shouted, pulling to a stop next to the car door. Sadly, half of the duo was then ignored as the red headed Weasley pulled Hermione out of the car and hugged her.
- She resisted for a second and then hugged him back.
- "I'm sorry for the letters," Ron whispered into her hair, a quiet apology for their terse correspondence over the summer.
- Hermione smiled and then eased her way out of the hug, walking away with a swing to her hips. Ron watched, completely entranced as she said goodbye to her mother.
- Harry watched his two friends quietly, his mind suddenly pulling together a thousand hints. He thought about it for a second, and realized that if they didn't kill each other, they would probably be good together. In that instant, Harry gave them both his silent blessing; although he felt Ron would need it more.
- "So, not going to say anything to me?" he asked Ron in an amused tone, watching the way his friend's eyes had yet to leave Hermione.
- "Huh?" Ron asked, intelligently. "Oh, Jeez, Harry!" Ron suddenly caught up with himself, "It's great to see ya mate." The fact that Ron's hug to Harry was very different and of a much shorter nature to the one he had given Hermione was very much appreciated by Harry.
- "Come on," Ron said with his normal grin, "Mum's been waiting for you two to arrive all day, you've got a massive meal waiting for you, she knows how those stupid Muggle gits never feed you."
- Clasping a hand on Harry's shoulder he guided him towards the kitchen, before returning to have a private chat with Hermione.
- "Harry," Molly Weasley exclaimed with a huge smile, pulling the boy against her and enveloping him in a huge hug. "It's great to see you."
- Harry looked up at her and smiled a little nervously, he was always uncomfortable around such public displays of affection. His forehead creased into a slight frown as he detected a small undertone of sadness inside her. Unsure of its origin, he filed it away for future use.
- They were interrupted by Ron and Hermione entering together, it took only a glance to see that they had already started fighting.
- With Fred and George quietly giggling in the corner, shooting furtive glances at his friends, Harry suddenly felt a small pang of longing to his quiet room. He completely forgot about how bored he had been that morning.
- "Come, sit" Mrs. Weasley commanded, turning her wand to the kitchen, where several large pots were happily whistling to themselves as they boiled.
- Sitting obediently, Harry smiled quietly as she called out for the remaining family members to come to the table.
- "Where's Ginny?" Harry asked casually, surprised when she wasn't called. He didn't know the girl that well, it had been difficult for him to talk to her as she had always been to embarrassed to talk back to the boy wizard.
- "Erm, she's in her room, not feeling to well." Ron said suddenly, throwing a look at his mother.
- "Yes," Mrs. Weasley agreed. "Now all of you, dig in, don't let this food go cold."
- Having learnt the first time he had come here that it was very important to fill your plate first, before the Weasley clan could claim everything, Harry

obeyed.

'People watching' was a habit that Harry had grown up with. He had been permanently told not to talk by the Dursley's as he had grown up. This had left Harry slightly uncomfortable in large gatherings and meant he spent more of his time watching the interactions.

Ron was shooting glances at Hermione; he to looked like he hadn't had much sleep recently. That could be chalked up to the ongoing argument 'Mione and he had been having. It centered on Victor Krum, a professional Quidditch player from another school, who had made his appreciation of Hermione obvious, to Ron's eternal jealousy.

The twins were almost themselves, only a little more subdued, which was a miracle in itself. They were renowned pranksters and pretty much hero's at Hogwarts, the Wizarding School they all went to. Always full of life, exploding candy and minds that saw the world from a 47.6degree angle, the very fact that they spent some time talking quietly worried Harry.

The only other member of the Weasley clan present was Percy; his silence was to be expected. True to his name, he was extremely priggish and self important, he worked for the Ministry of Magic, trying to standardize the thickness of cauldron bottoms, a fact he was extremely proud of.

A large grandfather clock in the corner had hands pointing to each of the members of the family; Ginny's was showing her in her room, while Arthur, Ron's Dad started to move. It quickly changed from 'Work' to 'Traveling' to 'Home' as he arrived through the fireplace. Using floo powder provided the Wizarding world with cheap and efficient travel along a network of interconnected fireplaces.

"Harry, Hermione," he boomed happily as he saw the guests at the table. He kissed Mrs. Weasley on the cheek and sat down quickly, grabbing a plate.

"Hi Mr. Weasley," Harry and Hermione chorused together, and then grinned at each other.

"So," Mr. Weasley said excitedly, "How was your summer, how are the Muggles?" It was a widely known fact that Mr. Weasley was obsessed with the non-magical Muggles and how they lived.

Harry smiled at the older man, and replied, "They've got this new network of computers that are all connected to each other, it seems that all of Muggle knowledge is found on there."

"Yeah," Hermione agreed. "The internet is kinda cool; it's the equivalent of instant owl post and Hogwarts library, all available to anyone."

"Fascinating," Mr. Weasley said, "What's a computer? Does it run on elastictrickery?"

"Arthur," the long suffering tone of his wife interrupted, "The children have only just got here, give them a chance to settle down before you pump them for information."

"Right you are, Molly," Arthur said cheerfully, digging into his food.

Mr. Weasley's arrival seemed to break the tension in the room, and the rest of the day was spent in joking conversation as they told each other what they had been up to.

For a reason he was unsure of, Harry didn't mention his obsession with dreams.

# That Night

"So, you and Hermione?" Harry asked quietly, speaking to Ron who was on the other bed.

"What do you mean?" Ron asked, thankful that the darkness hid his blush.

The sound of Harry's quiet laughter filled the air. "What do you think I mean?" he said the amusement clear in his tone. "I saw the looks, I saw the hug."

"I don't know what you mean," Ron said stiffly, "I'm tired, go to sleep."

"Ok," Harry said, laughing to himself.

As was becoming norm, Harry was sharing Ron's room, while Hermione was sleeping downstairs on the couch. She would normally share with Ginny, but with the youngest Weasley's illness, she had agreed to spend the night downstairs.

Harry was just drifting into sleep when an earth shattering scream shook the night, the pain and anguish in the sound affected Harry on an instinctive level, he was up, out the door with his wand in hand before he consciously recognized the source.

He was grabbed from behind by Ron, "Harry, stop." His friend demanded, struggling to keep Harry from moving.

Harry shot a dark look at his friend, his mind still operating on the level between awake and sleep.

"Harry, it's ok," Mrs Weasley said, arriving in her nightgown. She turned to the stairs, seeing Hermione climbing them, "You to, Hermione, Ginny's been having the odd nightmare, its nothing to worry about, I'll look after her."

Harry fixed an intense look at his friend's mother; the fact that he wasn't wearing glasses only emphasized his bright green eyes as he intently searched her face.

- "Go back to bed Harry, It will be ok."
- Harry nodded and looked at Hermione; she was as confused as him, but agreeable to letting Mrs Weasley handle it.
- They went back to the room, climbing back in to their respective beds.
- "How long, Ron?" Harry asked guietly, his tone having lost its earlier jocularity.
- Ron sighed, "All summer, we don't know what's wrong. Dad even asked Dumbledore, but he said he couldn't help."
- Harry lay on his back, staring at the sloped ceiling. The only thing he knew that could cause that much agony was Voldemort, and if Ginny was having trouble because of what had happened a few years ago, he swore that he would do something about it tomorrow.
- As he slept, his mind recounted the story of how Tom Riddle had taken control of Ginny, powerful magic allowing a diary to slowly assume command of Ginny's brain, forcing her to do his bidding. Harry had saved her, as well as defeating Tom Riddle, who turned out to be Voldemort's youngest incarnation.

#### The next morning

- Harry slept in, till a voice broke through his slumber. "Harry! Breakfast's gonna be ready in five minutes."
- Blearily, he opened his eyes looked at the bright red hair that was the signature of all Weasley's. "I'll be there, Ron."
- An already dressed Ron nodded and left Harry alone to throw on some of Dudley's cast offs.
- A few minutes later Harry quietly entered the huge kitchen, the smell of bacon awakening a hunger in him. Everyone was sat around the table, talking very quietly, something almost unheard of in the Weasley household.
- Seeing the small form of Ginny at the table, Harry smiled a little, and then gasped.
- Ginny looked up and met his eyes, a brave little smile on her face. She appeared to have lost too much weight; her warm brown eye's seemed almost dead.
- Something inside Harry seemed to break as he looked at the girl who had had such an embarrassing crush over the last few years. Last night's decision came back to him with an almost physical impact.
- He moved opposite her.
- "Hey, Ginny," he started, a tender smile on his face.
- "Harry," she replied, her voice was the final straw, what was once lively and vibrant was now quiet and sad.
- "What's causing your nightmares?" he asked suddenly, his voice firm, to gasps around the table that he would be so insensitive.
- Ginny looked at him; he was unable to read her expression.
- "Harry," Mrs Weasley said warningly, only to be shocked as Harry sent her a glare that clearly told her to back off. She had never seen Harry look like that to anyone, and it almost scared her. The intensity in his gaze burned right through her.
- Harry turned his gaze slowly around the table; driven by something he didn't understand, passing the message to each of the family members.
- Ron and Hermione, who were sitting together, looked at each other in shock; they had been Harry's friends for years now and they too had never seen him like this.
- He turned backed to Ginny, his eyes softening. "Tell me," he begged softly.
- Ginny didn't move for a second, a second that seemed to last a lifetime as she looked into the warm caring eyes of the boy who lived.
- "It's him," she finally said quietly.
- "Voldemort," Harry hissed with a passion. Shocked looks were exchanged around the table. Despite their best efforts over summer, none of them had been able to get Ginny to tell them what was causing her nightmares, no matter how much they tried.
- The room was silent, after Harry's declaration. Arthur and Molly exchanged a deep look, surprised that Harry had been able to break through their daughters shell so easily. A lifetimes worth of love and marriage enabled them to talk silently, coming to an agreement to trust the young wizard.
- That agreed, they each looked at their children, passing on the message. While not a Weasley, Hermione understood and watched silently as well, unsure of what to make of this new behavior from her friend.

- "I can help," Harry said softly, releasing his anger at Voldemort and focusing back on Ginny.
- "No you can't," she replied, her voice still flat and lifeless. "No one can."
- "I can," Harry said firmly, his green eyes locked with her brown ones as he begged her to believe him.
- "He'll kill anyone who tries to help, I can't let that happen."
- A silent tear ran down Molly's cheek as she realized why her daughter had been so silent; she had been trying to protect them.
- The other members of the table were equally as shocked, first finding that Voldemort was still tormenting Ginny, and then realizing that he had been threatening them made her brothers re-evaluate their little sister for the first time.
- "Who am I, Ginny?" Harry asked her intently.
- A faint frown appeared on Ginny's face, "Harry Potter."
- "What's my other name, the one people call me." Normally Harry hated his nick name, it hindered him more than it helped him, but he was grateful for it this time.
- "The boy who lived," came Ginny's almost trance like reply.
- "Voldemort failed to kill me when I was a baby Ginny, he failed earlier this year as well, and he can't kill me."
- Another round of silent looks was exchanged at the table; this was the first time Harry had openly and almost casually admitted he had faced Voldemort again. Arthur and Molly smiled slightly at each other, realizing they had made the correct choice allowing Harry to continue.
- "You can help?" Ginny asked, for the first time a tiny flash of life could be heard in her voice.
- Hidden under the table, Ron's hand grabbed Hermione's, holding it tight, the tension in the room was unbearable. The others didn't have that outlet as they stared at the two youngest watching each other over the table.
- "I can help," the green eyed wizard said firmly, "if you trust me."
- "I don't understand," Ginny replied.
- Again being more forceful than usual, Harry's eyes bore deeply into hers. "Do you trust me, Ginny?"
- She hesitated for a second, the silence was deafening in the kitchen as they waited for her reply.
- "Don't lie to me, tell me the truth. Do you trust me?" he demanded.
- "Always," she said simply, unaware of what that simple statement of trust might reveal to her siblings and her parents. Her parents looked at each other with wide eyes and gulped, that declaration was not one that an average 14 year old made.
- Fred and George looked at each other, then at Harry as they realized the enormity of that simple statement.
- A slight smile appeared on Harry's face as he realized he would be able to help her.
- "Take my hand," he requested softly, placing his own in the middle of the table.
- Moving slowly, Ginny placed her hand in his and waited.
- "Minha mente a sua mente" he whispered softly, repeating the phrase over and over again. The light seemed to fade around him as his voice turned eerily quiet. His eyes locked on to hers as he felt himself start to fall.
- Harry blinked and looked around; he was in the Gryffindor common room, or a place that looked exactly like it.
- It was eerily quiet, the fire was out and the place was empty.
- "Ginny?" Harry called and then stopped; the sound of his voice echoing into infinity scared him.
- 'Ok, I'm in Ginny's mind, what now?' he asked himself silently. As no answer was forthcoming, he decided to try and find her. Leaving through the open secret door, Harry was struck with the thought that not even the ghosts were available.

# Outside

- They sat quietly for several minutes, watching the two teenagers as they remained, unnaturally still at the table.
- "What was Harry chanting?" Ron asked Hermione, suddenly feeling the need to break the silence.

- Hermione shook herself into motion and then looked around. "I don't know," she admitted. "I've never seen Harry act like this."

  Ron nodded his head in agreement, falling into silence.

  It was George who spoke next, voicing something that was severely bothering him.
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- "Did anyone else notice Harry didn't use his wand to cast the magic?"
- The shocked silence that followed was his only response.

## Inside

Having recognized his location, and with his knowledge that Voldemort was causing this, he didn't have to think that hard to realize where she would be.

It only took him ten minutes to travel silently through her mind, to the chamber of secrets, the place Voldemort had originally controlled her from.

# Outside

- "They've been like that for four hours now," a worried Molly explained to their newest visitor.
- After several hours of watching her daughter and Harry sit motionless she had begged Albert to inform the Hogwarts Head master of what had occurred.
- Dumbledore had showed surprise and instantly vanished, appearing a second later in the kitchen. Shortly afterwards the animagus form of Sirius Black, a gigantic black dog, had appeared bounding through the door. He turned back into his human form mid leap and landed on a chair. Fred and George exchanged a wide eyed look. "Cool."
- "Tell me what happened, from the start, Molly," Dumbledore demanded, the act of the gentle headmaster dropped as the most powerful wizard in the world took control of his persona.
- Molly, with the help of the others explained. "It was only afterwards that George pointed out that Harry cast the spell without his wand."
- "Wandless magic?" Dumbledore asked, his eyebrows rising slightly. "Ms. Granger, Young Mr. Weasley, would you please go and search Mr. Potters belongings? Look for a spell book that might help explain this."
- Without a word, Ron and Hermione dashed upstairs.
- "Ron, what's going on?" she asked, scared for the first time.
- "I don't know. I've never seen Harry act like this."
- "Me neither."
- They fell silent as they searched through Harry's trunk, soon finding the book of dream spells.
- They grabbed it and ran downstairs, handing it over to Dumbledore. He looked mildly surprised at the title and quickly skimmed through the book.
- "Can any of you remember what spell he cast?" the professor asked.
- "It was something like, 'Minha mente a sua mente'" Hermione said instantly, while Ron rolled his eyes at her.
- "Brain-box," he whispered affectionately.
- The professor nodded, finding the spell.
- He looked up the anxious faces surrounding him and started to explain. "Mr. Potter is currently inside Ms. Weasley's mind. It is an extremely powerful spell that can only be cast when there is complete trust between the two individuals."
- "So Harry has to trust Ginny as much as she trusts him?" Molly voiced the question on everyone's mind.
- "I've only heard about this spell being performed once before, it's extremely dangerous. If something goes wrong and either of them dies inside Ginny's mind their body will die as well." The question on trust was ignored.
- Pausing for Ron's groan, Dumbledore continued, "Harry knew what he was getting into, the spell is explained in great detail here, and from what I can tell, it was the only way to save Ginny.
- "It looks like Voldemort did not leave Ginny's mind as completely as we had hoped, it seems that he has been regaining power. I fear that without Mr. Potter's intervention she would be dead within days."

For a second, Dumbledore looked his age. He looked at each of the members of the family solemnly, before finally deciding to continue, "I think you should prepare yourselves for an incredibly deep emotional attachment between the two of them if they survive. Mr. Potter and Ms. Weasley may find that the latent feelings between each other will spring to life."

- "I knew Ginny had a crush on Harry," Hermione said softly, leaning against Ron for support, "but you're saying Harry had feelings for her as well?"
- Dumbledore nodded slowly, "I suspect they were there, but not acted on. The fact that she is Ron's sister would have been one issue, and perhaps her being a little younger another."
- "Did Harry know this?" Percy asked, breaking his silence for the first time.
- Dumbledore shook his head slowly, "Mr. Potter is an intelligent young man, highly motivated and gaining in magical power every day. Unfortunately, I suspect he is also a little naive."
- He held up the spell book, "Reading between the lines, it calls for a lot more than just trust between them. It calls for a deep level of love. It seems that acting rashly to save Ms Weasley may mean that the two youngsters end with a connection most people never see."
- "What about HIM," Fred asked, his desire to protect his little sister coming to the fore. "He's after Harry; he'll put Ginny in danger."
- It took Fred a few seconds of thought, and the confused look of his twin for him to catch up to what he had reflexively said. "Oh yeah, He's already after Ginny."
- Desperately needing to change the subject, Molly asked "Why is it taking so long?"
- "I suspect that time is moving differently for them, they may wake up in a second, or it maybe days, all we can do is sit and wait."
- Ron stared at his friend, who still sat motionless in the kitchen. "Come on Harry, I know you can save her," he whispered under his breath, "You've done it before.

#### Inside

- "Hi Ginny," Harry said softly, as he entered the large chamber. He was relieved to have found her, sat on the floor, as she stared at an altar.
- Ginny didn't respond, so Harry carefully walked over to her. He moved in a circular path, trying to ensure he didn't scare her.
- Finally, as the boy reached her, she moved her stare from the altar to him. "He's coming for me Harry, he wants me. I have to do what he tells me, people will die if I don't."
- Harry felt his heart grow cold as the young girl turned her head back towards the altar.
- "Ginny, I'm here to help you," the wizard said softly, unsure of what he was going to do now.
- Once again, Ginny turned to him. "It's too late," was all she said.
- "Mr. Potter," a voice hissed. Dark Red eyes pierced through the darkness behind the altar, "it's so good of you to come."
- Harry gulped, suddenly feeling very scared. "Why are you still here, Tom?" he asked, using Voldemort's original name.
- The figure walked into the light, a smile on his face. "Why should I leave?" the deeply mocking voice asked him. "Surely you don't think merely destroying my diary was going to stop me?"
- "Well, yes, I did," Harry admitted, seeing no reason to lie.
- "Do you have any idea how powerful I am?" the dark wizard asked rhetorically, a slight tinge of insanity in his voice. "I can not be stopped, not by you, not by anyone."
- "I stopped you before," Harry replied, his innate bravery showing through, "and I'll stop you again."
- "Oh, I don't think so, Mr. Potter," the voice taunted, "you appear to have forgotten something rather important. You're wand. But you're interfering Mr. Potter, Ms Weasley and I have an appointment at the altar, it's time for you to go."
- The incarnation of Voldemort stepped forwards and pointed his wand at Harry, the curse he used was a favorite, it was almost elegant in its simplicity. "Crucio," an immensely painful curse, used to weaken its victim before the killing curse was used.
- Harry collapsed to the floor almost immediately as the white hot pain turned his nerve endings to fire. He screamed, unable to stop himself, as he writhed on the pain in agony.

# Outside

It was 3am in the morning. The different family members had agreed to watch over the two teenagers in a rota.

Molly Weasley was sat at the table, unable to take her eyes of her only daughter and the young man she loved like her own. Their unnatural stillness, especially in her normally vibrant child, scared her more than anything else. She thought that nothing else could top the fear she was currently feeling; she was wrong.

It was Harry's free hand that started to move first, before an expression of pure pain appeared on his face. He started to shake violently as his eyes opened wider. Agony radiated from him, but nothing else, no sign of life or intelligence, just his body experiencing agonizing pain.

"Arthur, Albus!" Molly's shout rang through the house, a second later her husband arrived, apparating into place, having been sleeping with his wand. Professor Dumbledore arrived a split second later, not needing his wand.

A pounding on the stairs announced the arriving of the others. They were all too young to have passed their apparition tests, except for Percy who was not confident enough on such a short trip.

They younger Weasley's and Hermione came to an abrupt stop as they took in the scene before them. A low keening sound was emanating from Harry; the sound ripped through everyone present, raising the hairs on the back of their neck.

"Can't you do anything?" Molly begged, unsure of who she was talking to.

It was Dumbledore who whispered softly, "Crucio."

#### Inside

Tom laughed and laughed, deliberately extending Harry torment, enjoying the suffering like no other. His concentration totally on the pain he was causing.

With his attention so diverted, a spark appeared in Ginny's eyes, a small part of her spirit returned as she was freed from the evil wizard's all-consuming power.

Her memories were unaffected by the mind control she had been under; she understood what was happening and where this was happening.

Harry's scream was affecting her deeper than anything else ever had. The boy she had had a crush on for so long was in agony, and she couldn't stand it. Looking down, she realized she had her wand in her hand. She pointed it at the back of the dark lord and yelled, "Stupefy", throwing everything she could into the word. Her wand bucked as her mind enlarged the spell, crashing into the unsuspecting back of Tom Riddle. He was thrown across the room, hard, crashing into a stone wall and collapsing on the floor.

She got to her feet, running to Harry, "We've got to get out here," she said desperately. She tried to lift him, straining as Harry's larger body weighed a lot more than she did. "Come on, Harry, help me," she begged, "Please."

Harry woozily followed her instructions, his conscious mind still retreated from the pain, his unconscious took over. Deciding that Ginny was its best bet for survival, it took the rare step of sending message directly to Harry's muscles.

## Outside

The only sound that could be heard in the kitchen was the endless ticking of the clock. Everyone was silent, almost holding their breath as Harry's body stopped screaming. For a brief second, the same awful thought flickered through everyone's mind. Harry was dead. Wan smiles appeared as Harry's body took a deep breath, straightened itself and resumed looking into Ginny's eyes.

No one felt like going back to bed.

#### Inside

The curse word Harry used as his conscious mind returned was not one Ginny had heard before, the short epithet seemed to sum up the pain Harry was feeling extremely well. She made a mental note to ask him later what that word actually meant.

"Gin, slow down," Harry said, coming to a stop himself.

"Harry!" she gasped, panicked, "we've got to escape from Him, and we've got to keep going."

"This is your mind, we can't escape completely, but we can get out of here easily."

"What? How?" the brown eyed witch asked, a little confused.

"Think of the Burrow, imagine the garden outside, the bright sunlight, the gnomes in the garden digging and complaining." Harry's voice was almost hypnotic and Ginny found herself doing exactly what he said.

Bright sunshine appeared as Harry and Ginny stood in the middle of the garden.

"Good work," Harry praised.

Ginny flushed slightly, her heart leaping in her chest as she had more time to appreciate what was happening.

"Why are you here?" she asked softly, her wizard robes bellowed around her as she sat down in the long grass.

"I have to be," he replied, matching her tone. "I couldn't let you die."

"You're more important than I am, Harry, you need to get out of here, Tom can't be defeated, he's a part of me, he's a part of my mind. You can't die with me; you're needed in the outside world."

Harry's expression was part surprise, part admiration and a lot of stubbornness. "I'm not letting him kill anyone else I love," he declared grimly.

Before Ginny could digest Harry's words, the sky suddenly darkened and it started to rain heavily.

"He's here," Ginny whispered, stating the obvious.

"We've not got much time," Harry yelled. "He's to powerful here."

"What can we do?" Ginny screamed back, trying to make herself heard over the thunder and lightning that had joined the rain.

"Come to my mind, bring him with us."

"How?"

For a second, it was just the two of them, Harry's eyes twinkled merrily. "Do you trust me?"

"Of course," Ginny yelled in reply.

Harry grinned, and chanted, "Você é mente a minha mente ."

## Outside

Breakfast was a subdued affair, no one really wanting to eat. Molly was cooking in an attempt to keep herself busy. Fred and George were playing cards, forgoing the normal exploding snap for a Muggle set.

Hermione and Ron were doing homework; at least they were trying to do homework.

Dumbledore and Arthur Weasley and Sirius Black were talking quietly to each other; it was obvious that everyone was trying to keep busy.

The silence was broken as Harry spoke, "Você é mente a minha mente." His voice changed in pitch, regaining its hypnotic tone.

Instinctively every one turned to Dumbledore, afraid of what he might say.

The ancient wizard surprised them all by slowly smiling; his eyes regained a tiny twinkle in them. "Well, well," he murmured, almost to himself. "This is unexpected."

"What?" Ron demanded, almost rudely.

"It seems that young Mr. Potter does have some idea what he is doing. He's reversed his spell. He's pulled Ms. Weasley into his own mind, and I suspect that he has brought Voldemort with him."

"So Harry's on the attack?" Hermione asked, instantly grasping the situation.

"Indeed," was the professors considered response.

The tension in the room lightened, as grins passed on their face.

"Come on Harry." Ron said, "kick his ass."

It was a testament to the situation that no one chided Ron over his choice of words.

Inside (Harry)

- "A quiditch pitch?" Ginny asked, amused.
- Being out of her mind for the first time had given her a massive boost. With Tom now occupying Harry's mind, she felt free for the first time.
- Harry looked pensive for a second. "I'm going to send you back, Gin."
- "What?" she asked, shocked.
- He pointed to his own head, "Tom's here now, I think I can keep him here and send you back. You'll be safe."
- Although he had never thought about it, Harry knew that Ginny was a Weasley; her natural red hair was the obvious clue. He had seen Ron lose his temper before, but had never associated that with Ginny. He soon realized his mistake.
- Ginny placed her hands on her hips and glared at him, her eyes sparkling with anger as her entire body radiated displeasure. "Don't you dare, Potter," she almost growled.
- "But," Harry tried to interrupt.
- "Don't you 'But' me," Ginny screamed, "You are here because of me; I used that Diary, not you. Voldemort's been poisoning my mind for several years, I am NOT going to let that happen to you. I know you're the great Harry Potter, the hero, always thinking of his friends first, but I am not going to let you fight him on your own. We are in this together, we can beat him."
- Ginny's mental image of herself had changed, now she was free of Tom she looked like she had when Harry had last seen her at the end of the summer.
- Harry then, without thinking, said two words that would forever seal his fate. "You're beautiful."
- Ginny blushed, "Don't try and distract me, Potter."
- Harry grinned, blushing himself as he regained control over his tongue. "Are you sure?" he asked softly, aware than the rain was starting to fall in his own mind.
- Ginny's eyes calmed down, a slight smile appeared on her lips.
- "I don't need another brother Harry," she said softly, "I have plenty of them to look after me."
- "I'm not your brother, I never will be."
- "Then let me stay and help, let me stay in your mind."
- "You might not like what you see."
- "I don't care Harry, do you have any idea how long I've wanted you to notice me, to let me in?"
- Harry shook his head.
- "It was when I first saw you as you are. Not Harry Potter, Boy-who-lived, but you, Harry, the boy with Quiditch pyjamas."
- The wizard blushed. "Can we continue this later?" he asked, "I can feel Tom growing."
- Ginny nodded.
- "Minha mente é meu própria," Harry said loudly. The scene changed, the pitch vanished and was replaced by an enormous domed room. Tom was clearly visible in the distance, as the only other object around.
- "I wonder if this is what Professor Trelawney means when she tells us to clear our minds?" Harry said with a grin, referring to their Divination teacher.
- Despite their situation, Ginny laughed.
- The form of Tom Riddle started to grow as he moved towards them.
- "Ready?" Harry asked softly.
- "As I'll ever be," Ginny replied, clutching her wand. "You are aware that you haven't got your wand aren't you?" she asked, mentally preparing herself.
- Harry nodded, "why would I need it? This is my mind."
- He turned to the dark wizard and screamed "Expelliarmus," the disarming spell.
- Unfortunately, the spell had little effect and Tom came to a stop in front of them.
- "You brought me into your mind?" the red-eyed wizard asked, then laughed loudly. "I can't believe you'd be so stupid. When I control you, boy,

nothing will be able to stop me."

- "Stupefy," Ginny yelled, pointing her wand. The spell had worked before so she was hopeful it would happen again.
- The spell didn't interrupt Riddle's laughter, as he simply absorbed it. "You're not in your own mind any more, little witch, you're powerless again.
- "As for you, Potter, I think it's time we took a look at your own memories."
- Harry collapsed to the floor as the scene changed, a room in a house. A small child lay on his back, giggling up at two people. The women present had long red hair, and sparkling green eyes, the other looked like an older version of Harry. Ginny mentally filed away how older Harry would look, for later contemplation.
- Ginny realized she was looking at his parents. She watched in horror as their deaths were displayed before her eyes. The panic the two of them showed as Voldemort began his original attack, then the courage as they refused to leave each other. She felt the despair that Harry's mother felt as she watched her husband die, then the courage as she faced him herself. She felt incredible pride as Lily stood up to the Dark Lord, a blessing to her son the last thing on her lips. The playback stopped before it showed Voldemort trying to kill Harry.
- Without pause, the scene changed. The tri-wizard tournament, as Harry and Cedric argued. She watched as both of them grabbed the trophy, then vanished as the port-key activated.
- "It's your fault, Harry," Riddle said, his voice hissing. "If you'd just left him there, he'd still be alive."
- Harry nodded slowly, his eyes full of tears as he was forced to relive two of the most horrendous nights of his life. Private thoughts, hidden thoughts of self doubt and guilt, were displayed before her as Tom pulled up every secret from his memory.
- "Harry," she yelled, forcing him to look at her, "It's not your fault."
- "It's all my fault," he whispered, avoiding her eyes, "so many dead."
- "Look At Me!" Ginny yelled, forcing him to meet her eyes. "Trust me," she begged him.
- Harry searched her eyes, looking for something, something deep and inscrutable. Ginny opened herself like never before, unsure of what Harry was looking for, so she showed him everything.
- He nodded slowly.
- "It's not your fault Harry, it's his, all his."
- Harry felt the fog than had enveloped him start to lift, his memories that were still playing flickered then vanished, leaving them back in the huge emptiness of Harry's mind.
- "Impressive," Riddle said mockingly, "but I think its time we ended this."
- He waved his wand, casting a silent spell under his breath. The room seemed to shrink, fast. The grey walls raced towards Harry, passing through Tom and Ginny and collapsing around Harry, locking him in.
- A wave of claustrophobia stuck Harry as he was locked in his own mind. He could barely hear Tom and Ginny, they were talking incredibly slowly. At least, that's how it felt as his mind sped up. Reduced to its core, Harry's mind took the unusual step of shutting down all automatic reflexes as it tried to cope with this sudden imprisonment
- With the whole of his brain free to concentrate on his current predicament, Harry's mind probed the wall that was holding him in, searching for weaknesses.
- It knew that what it was seeing was an illusionary representation of the neural paths his brain used and that it was cut off from its normal pathways as well as access to his memories.
- Harry's brain was locked in the state that it had been captured; the only commands that it knew was 'Escape' and 'Protect the Red Head'.
- The state his brain was in was pure thought, without the limitations that memory and experience imposed. Unaware that what it was about to do was impossible, Harry's brain simply forged new neural pathways to the areas it needed. The fact that his forging unlocked different parts of the green eyed magician's brain was irrelevant.
- With the prison simply bypassed, Harry became himself again, and his brain restarted its automatic functions as quickly as possible.

# Outside

Harry's battle to escape happened so quickly, that no one noticed his heart skipped a beat.

Inside

Time returned to normal for Harry, as he reappeared next to Riddle and Ginny. Tom was pointing his wand at the young witch. His face was full of unholy glee as he started the curse that would end Ginny's life.

"Avada," the Dark Lord said, pausing to enjoy the look of terror on Ginny's face as she realized her fate. The terror faded as the brown eyed witch accepted her fate and prepared a curse of her own. It may not be effective, but she wasn't going to die a coward.

She didn't get the chance, still pumped from his freedom, Harry yelled "Sua mente a sua mente," at her.

Ginny vanished just as the dark lord finished his curse. The spell scorched the floor where the witch had been, seconds before.

"She's safe now," Harry said with a cheerful grin, "I guess it's just you and me."

## Outside

Suddenly finding herself back in her body, and free both from Harry's spell and the encompassing presence of Voldemort was a deep surprise for Ginny. Unmoving and un-reacting, she thought back through the last few seconds of the spell. Riddle starting the curse, Harry appearing, Harry casting a spell at her before Riddle could finish his own.

She realized that Harry had sent her back and kept Tom in his own mind.

The word Ginny used to announce her arrival back was borrowed directly from Harry. It had seemed extremely satisfying for him to shout it, so she shouted it herself.

"Ginny!" her mother snapped automatically, "Good witches do NOT use that word."

It took at least another second for the thought processes of everyone at the table to catch up. Before she could blink again, the girl was embraced in the arms of her mother and father, both of them laughing and crying at the same time.

The others were on their feet in a second, except for Dumbledore who was watching Harry intently, not seeing any signs of life returning to him.

Ginny enjoyed the attention for a brief moment, and then started to squirm. "Harry," was all she said.

The cheers and congratulations of the others stopped as they realized that Harry was still locked in his pose, sat at the table.

"Ginny?" Professor Dumbledore asked softly.

Ginny stretched in the chair, as her body suddenly started to protest its unnatural stillness. "How long?" she asked, yawning.

"Two and a half days," Hermione said instantly.

Ginny's face took on a shocked expression, "it only seemed like half an hour in there."

"Yes," the sonorous voice of Dumbledore interposed, "I thought that might be the case. What happened?"

Realizing that her headmaster was only interested in the last few seconds, and probably what caused her unladylike cursing, she replied briefly. "Tom had trapped Harry inside his own mind, and was about to use the killing curse on me, when Harry appeared and sent me back here."

Ginny found herself being hugged again by her mother, as she realized just how close her daughter had been to death.

All other questions had to wait, as Ginny concentrated on the young wizard, battling for his life, and everyone else's, inside his own mind.

Ginny grasped his hand in both of hers, wanting nothing more than to help him. As she looked, a slight sheen of sweat appeared on his face and his body started breathing heavily.

No one felt the need to state the obvious: the final battle had begun.

# Inside

"So, Potter, You think you can beat me?" the wizard asked, a little irritated that he had not been able to kill Ginny.

"I know I can beat you," Harry said firmly. "But not alone."

Harry pointed to his left side. "Mãe ." To his right, "Pai" and behind Tom, "Irmão ."

Three ghostlike figures started to appear, conjured from Harry's memories. Lily Potter appeared first, a vengeful smile on her face as she looked on at her murderer. James Potter appeared next, his expression matching his wife's. Cedric Diggory arrived last, a small smile showing his pleasure.

- "You're nothing but a spell, Tom; you've got no real power of your own. You're a memory, a remnant of old power."
- Harry pointed at the Dark Lord and whispered, "Finite Incantatum."
- Mirroring Harry, the other three cast the same spell, watching as the magical representation of the Dark Lord fell to the ground, twitching.
- They closed in, not giving Tom any chance of escape as they poured the spell on to him. He started to shake and shrink, as steam pored of his writhing body. Suddenly it was over, Riddle was gone, permanently. The spell vanquished, leaving Harry standing there with three people killed by Voldemort.
- James and Lily embraced and looked at Harry. Pride and love shone clearly on their faces as they bowed together, and then disappeared. Cedric looked at Harry for a second, before a bright smile appeared on his face. He too bowed to Harry. Harry returned the bow and smiled as Cedric vanished into the ether.
- As Harry walked away from the spot, the cold room faded. It was replaced once more with a Quiditch pitch.
- He took one last look around, then said "Finite Incantatum" one last time, directing the cancellation spell at himself.

# Outside

- Harry felt exhausted and in desperate need of a drink. The new neural pathways in his mind decided to help him.
- The first sign that the others had that the battle was over was when the fridge door opened on its own and a jug of butter beer danced its way out. A glass from the cabinet flew to meet it and the jug filled the glass before placing itself back in the fridge, which promptly closed itself.
- The glass then flew to Harry's hand, coming to a stop right next to his closed fist. Harry grabbed the drink and drained it in one go, whispering "Thanks" to who ever had got him the drink.
- Silence reigned in the room for an endless moment, as no one had cast the spell for him, and it was the first sign of movement for sometime.
- Harry titled his head. "Gone?" he asked Ginny quietly. The wide smile that he received was more than payment for what he had done. While she was still underweight, the difference in the long haired witch was obvious. Her eyes were alive and sparkling again.
- No one wanted to interrupt them, the fact that Harry was alive and obviously free was just beginning to sink in.
- "Tired?" he asked, noticing that she was fighting a yawn. Ginny nodded. A second later, they both vanished; a soft thump was heard from the living room a fraction of a second later.
- "Blimey," was Ron's comment, before scampering to his feet and dashing into the living room. The others followed, with the adults at a more respectable face.
- "I think," Dumbledore said slowly, "That we would be wise to follow their examples. Arthur, call me when they awake."
- Dumbledore floo'd back to his room at Hogwarts, falling into bed immediately.
- "You heard him," Mrs. Weasley said sternly, "bed, the lot of you. Questions can wait till morning."
- Obediently, the others left without a word, the past few days leaving them drained. Molly stood for a second, looking down at the two people she still thought off as children and conjured a blanket.
- Harry was fast asleep on his back; one arm wrapped around Ginny, who was half draped over him, her head on his chest. She too was asleep.
- She placed the blanket over them, tucking them in. She whispered a blessing under her breath, then she too left for bed.
- It was the first night that summer that everyone slept and no one was awakened by screams caused by a nightmare.

## Morning

- Harry woke slowly, twitching his nose as he felt something tickling it. Opening his eyes he was surprised to find he was sleeping in his glasses, something he never did. The next surprise was that the ceiling was neither the polystyrene tiles of his room at the Dursley's, nor the Chudley Cannons wallpaper of Ron's room.
- His final surprise was when he realized that Ginny was asleep on him. He noticed he felt at peace. It was a feeling he was not used to, so he remained very still and reveled in it. Automatically his hand started stroking her hair, burying itself in the thick tresses.
- The slight movement woke Ginny. A wonderful feeling of contentment was covering her from head to foot. She hadn't felt this refreshed after a sleep, well, ever. Like Harry, her mind slowly pointed out the key facts to her.

'Living room. Couch. Harry. Oh, clothing. Still, 75% isn't bad Gin,' she thought to herself with a wicked little grin. She contemplated blushing, in her half awake sense, but decided that it would be pointless, having just spent a night sleeping with him. However, that didn't mean she couldn't see if he was having similar thoughts.

She tilted her head. Warm brown eyes met sparkling green eyes. She grinned mischievously, "You know, next time we should try this without clothes." Her grin turned to a soft laugh as Harry turned bright red.

"So there's going to be a next time?" he asked, trying to regain some sort of control.

Any response was cancelled out by the rumbling of a stomach. Both of them blushed at the same time and apologized together.

Harry laughed under his breath. "Any idea how long we gone?" he asked. "I feel like it's been a week since we ate."

"It's Monday morning Harry, we went inside three days ago."

"Damn," said Harry quietly. "We should either move, or I'm going to start eating you," he said playfully. The double meaning in his words was brought to the forefront when Ginny said, "Doesn't sound so bad."

For the second time in 5 minutes, Harry blushed bright red. Ginny took pity on him and sat up slowly, stretching over him.

Harry's eyes fixed themselves firmly where every teenage boy in the worlds eyes would; her chest.

Noticing this, Ginny automatically swung her arms further over her head, and stretched backwards. The movement caused the thin material of her blouse to go tight over her chest.

Harry's eyes widened as a look of awe took control over his face.

'When did you get so brazen?' Ginny's brain asked her quietly.

'Shh,' she silently replied, 'I don't care, I'm enjoying this.'

'You are aware he's looking directly at your chest?'

'Of course, why the hell do you think my arms are above my head; for my circulation?'

'Don't you think you're a little young for this sort of thing?' her brain tried again.

'No' was the short reply.

'Why not?'

'Erm, lets see, I've been in love with him for years, even founded his fan club. Het him into my mind and he let me into his, he defeated Voldemort to protect me and I've never slept as well as I did last night. If he wants to look at my chest he damn well can.'

'Good points,' her brain admitted.

'Besides,' Ginny continued, on a role, 'I'm getting a hell of a feeling of warmth from his gaze and he's undoubtedly got a large, untapped, supply of socks I can steal from.'

Her brain thought for a microsecond. 'You know, if you undid one more button then lent forwards he'd have an even better view.'

That last thought however, was a little too much and she blushed and put her arms down. With courage Harry didn't know he possessed, he reached up and stroked her hair back.

"I meant what I said," he whispered quietly.

"What's that?" she asked, the words catching in her throat.

"You are beautiful."

Ginny could have sworn that her heart stopped beating. Everything she had been through suddenly seemed meaningless as she knew she would go through a thousand times worse to listen to Harry whisper those words to her.

Harry felt warmth shoot through him as he basked in the smile she sent his way.

He placed his hands carefully on her hips, "Come on, I'm starving."

The moment broken, Ginny's mind started to relay similar messages. It was worse for her because she had not been eating well since Tom regained power, and parts of her body were now screaming for sustenance.

She stood, unsteadily for a second till she felt his hand on her shoulder, holding her upright.

"Kitchen?" he asked. She nodded and lead the way.

- As Harry entered, cupboards starting opening, the stove turned itself on and food started to cook.
- "Been practicing, Gin?" Harry asked, impressed.
- "Err, this isn't me." Ginny replied slowly. "I think it's you."
- "Me?" Harry squeaked, then regained control over his vocal chords. "Me?" he asked again.
- "Yeah, you poured yourself a glass of butter beer just as you came out of the spell last night."
- "Oh," said Harry, not quite sure what else to say. "Well, lets leave it for now, we'll ask everyone else when they get up.
- A well known fact of the Weasley household was that all the rooms shared a single chimney. This meant that any smell in one room quickly permeated throughout the others. This was a nightmare when Fred and George were developing some of their tricks and sweets, but always welcome at breakfast time.
- Thick slices of English bacon attached themselves to a hot frying pan, sausages soon joined them. On the counter a knife started chopping up some onions and tomato's and peppers, adding themselves to another frying pan. A spatula started to stir the mix while Harry and Ginny looked on in surprise.
- "I didn't know you could cook," Ginny giggled.
- "Neither did I," was Harry's dry response. He was a little concerned at the amount he was cooking, he knew that they were hungry, but the food was cooking itself, removing itself from the pan and adding itself to a pile on one of the hotplates.
- Harry's answer came as Ron arrived down stairs sleepily, closely followed by Hermione. "Smell's good," he murmured sitting at the table. A plate danced itself from a pile and flew in front of the row of hotplates. As it passed, food added itself to the plate before finally ending up in front of Ron. He didn't need a second to grab a knife and fork and start eating.
- Hermione rolled her eyes at him, then started to eat herself as her plate arrived in front of her.
- Harry looked at Ginny, amused. "Sit," he said with a smile.
- Obediently, she sat. A new plate followed the same path of Ron's, only doubling the amount of food.
- "I can't eat all this!" Ginny protested, eyeing the mountain before her.
- "Try," was all Harry said. She picked up her knife and fork and started to eat. The food was as good as her mother cooked. "Maybe I can," she mumbled with her mouth full.
- Harry grinned.
- The twins arrived next, as asleep as Ron, acting on the impulse of empty stomachs and gorgeous smell.
- "Sit," Harry invited cheerfully.
- They did, and plates of food soon placed themselves in front of them. Like their brother, they didn't need any more of an invitation to dig in.
- "Why aren't you eating, mate?" Ron asked, between bites.
- "I think the food will stop cooking when I sit down," Harry explained with a slight smile.
- Harry's godfather was the next to appear, and seeing him, Harry launched himself forwards, enveloping the tall wizard in a hug. "When did you get here?" he demanded.
- "The same night you went into Ginny's mind, everyone was worried." Sirius decided that the smell was too good to waste, so he put his question to the back of his mind and sat down.
- "What's going on here?" Mrs. Weasley asked, surprised to come down and find a kitchen half full of people and food being cooked.
- "Err, breakfast?" Harry said with a grin.
- Anything Molly was about to say was interrupted by the arrival of her husband. "Wonderful smell," he said enthusiastically, "could smell it all the way upstairs. It's a perfect way to be woken up."
- He sat at the table and watched with barely disguised glee as his plate filled.
- "Oh, Professor Dumbledore is coming for Breakfast; I called him a few seconds ago."
- The Professor walked in from the living room a few seconds later.
- "Nothing like a good breakfast to start the day," he said happily. The only sign of surprise he gave, as his plate floated towards him was a tiny raising of an eyebrow.

- "Percy?" Harry asked, aware that the other Weasley hadn't appeared yet.
- "He had to go to work early this morning," Mrs. Weasley said.
- Harry looked relived and took a seat himself. His own plate soon filled itself to a level near the size of Ginny's and placed itself in front of him. He tucked in, unaware that behind him the pans were happily cleaning themselves and tidying up.
- Breakfast was a quiet affair, with no one really wanting to break the silence. Mrs. Weasley was more concerned with watching her daughter eat a seemingly never ending supply of food. A firm believer in food therapy, she enjoyed the site of her daughter eating more than she enjoyed the taste of her own food.
- Like all meals, this one finally came to a stop. As each plate was emptied, it carried itself to the sink, cleaned itself and put itself away.
- "You really have to teach me to do that, Harry." Molly said casually, looking in amazement as the kitchen was restored to a pristine condition.
- Harry blushed and mumbled, "If I knew how I was doing it, I'd be happy to tell you."
- "It might be wise," Dumbledore interrupted, "if we all move to the living room and sit comfortably. We have a lot to discuss."
- Everyone agreed and stood up, apart from Harry and Ginny, they simply vanished again.
- Ron looked at Hermione, "He has GOT to teach me to do that."
- In the living room, Harry was sat on a chair, with Ginny sat across his lap, leaning against him.
- "I did NOT mean to that!" Harry explained, then a degree of self preservation kicked in, "Not that I'm complaining."
- Ginny's scowl became a smile and she whispered, "Good save." Harry shivered slightly as her warm breath tickled his ear.
- "Well, let's start at the beginning, shall we?" Their professor stated as the others gathered round, finding their own seats.
- "Well," Harry started, "it began with a book."