

Harry Potter

**A Little Brotherly  
Advice**

*hgfan1111*

# A Little Brotherly Advice

**Fandom:** Harry Potter.

**Author:** hgfan1111.

**Genre:** General.

**Rating:** Teen.

**Status:** 4,400 words; One-Shot.

**Summary:** Who does a boy go to when he has questions of a personal nature? James needs some advice and he's pretty sure he knows the right person to talk to, if only he could get Al to stop following him around.

"Do you really have to come with me?" James grimaced at Al who seemed to be perpetually two paces behind him right now. This whole behavior had started just a few weeks ago, toward the end of term, and continued now that they were home. James couldn't turn around for fear of knocking his younger brother over.

Most of the time James sort of ignored Al while they were at school. He wasn't rude, really, just... distant from his brother. They both had their own lives, their own friends and interests, and they were in different houses,

which meant they didn't mingle a lot.

"I want to see Teddy too," Al protested. His voice cracked in the middle of the sentence and he cleared his throat, not even noticing the change.

James smirked, mostly to himself. Perhaps that's what all of this was about. Al was getting older, starting to change. He did seem entirely intrigued when James shaved in the morning and asked questions that no boy should have to answer, especially from a younger brother.

He sighed and ran his hand through his hair. His visit to Ted wasn't for social reasons, unfortunately. James had something he needed to talk about, and Ted seemed the perfect person to answer his questions. Growing up, Ted had been like an older brother to the Potter siblings: always around, in the background, and someone they could count on when they needed something.

Ted always gave good, practical advice. That's precisely what James needed right now, and he didn't need Al poking his nose into the situation, or mucking about, telling everyone what James was up to. If Mum and Dad ever found out...

"We'd better hurry, though, before Lily gets an idea where we're going," Al warned. "You know how she is..."

James rolled his eyes and nodded jerkily. Thankfully, Lily was busy upstairs doing... something. If she knew where they were going, she'd be all over them to take her too.

"Do you think it's weird?" Al asked. They hurriedly finished the chores assigned by their mother. James cast a few mild cleaning spells in the kitchen, looking over his shoulder the whole time. Al looked impressed, and his hand twitched toward his wand, but he didn't pull it. He was always much more hesitant to break the rules than James was.

"Having a sister is always weird," James dismissed.

Al was quiet for a minute, staring at the dish he was drying. "I meant... her crush on Teddy. He's practically our older brother and Lily goes all... mushy when he's around."

"She's just a little girl," James shrugged. "I suppose it's kind of natural. She looks up to him and such."

Remember when she was really little and kept telling us she was going to marry Teddy?"

Al snorted and nodded. "She even named her stuffed dog after him."

They worked for a few minutes in silence. James rolled his shoulders in annoyance at having to do this right now. Of course, when he had some free time, and knew that Ted would be home—had even been invited, sort of, to visit—his mother would come down with a list of chores as long as her arm.

"She's not so little anymore," Al mused with a glance toward the stairway.

James had to blink for a minute to let his mind catch up to what they were talking about. Lily. Oh.

"Well, er... I suppose. She's at Hogwarts and all."

"She's twelve," Al mused. "We're only—"

"I know how old I am," James growled his protest and cast one more spell at the rubbish, banishing it to the bin outside. "And I'm not getting any younger standing here. If you have to come—"

"I'm coming," Al said. His eyes were dark with determination, and James nodded, knowing he wasn't going to be able to shake Al anytime soon. Even if he did floo over to Ted's, Al would be half a step behind him. "It's not like I can't guess what you're going there to talk to him about."

James felt his ears burn and he hissed at his brother before looking over his shoulder. "Shut it, will you?"

You're going to get us both in trouble."

"You could just talk to Dad about it, you know?"

"Would you want to ask Dad about it?" James leaned his hip against the counter and crossed his arms.

Al's eyes widened and he swallowed. "Er... no. No, you're right. Ted's the best option."

"I knew you'd see it my way." James nodded. He stared at the few dishes Al had left to dry and put away.

With one more look over his shoulder, he cast a quick drying charm. Al's face lit and he smirked before hurriedly putting the plates away.

"I'll tell Mum we're going."

"Keep it down," James warned, "or Lily won't let us go without her." Al gave a nod as he bounded up the steps.

Now that Al brought it up, James did think it was a bit strange the regard Lily had for Ted. A couple of years ago, Lily couldn't be pried from his side. When Ted came through the floo, Lily was always there, likesomeone had stuck them together with a permanent sticking charm. Lately, though, she

pulled away and often got red-faced when Ted would show up for dinner. She even spilled her pumpkin juice all over his lap before running up the stairs crying last summer. Mum got a strange look on her face and excused herself to chase after Lily.

But it wouldn't matter soon anyway. Ted was engaged to Victoire. They'd be getting married, eventually, and then Lily would realize that her childhood dream of being with Teddy was just that, a childish dream.

Girls were... strange. They just were, and James couldn't quite figure them out.

Even Rowan was strange, and she made more sense to James than most other girls. She did odd things that, to James, had no purpose other than to mystify him. But then there were times she did things that completely entranced him and tied his whole insides into knots. It was those things he needed Ted's advice for.

The thought of asking Dad, even though Dad and Mum always told them they could ask, made James shudder.

James knew all about the mechanics of sex, but it was the subtleties he was more worried about. And the glassy, completely distracted look that Mitch Wilkins wore when he came back to the dorm after being out late with Darcie Kinney—James wanted that look for himself.

Al's thundering steps back down the stairs woke James from his thoughts.

"We're good to go. Mum told us to invite Ted for dinner tonight, if he's not already doing something."

James nodded distractedly and removed his cloak from the peg near the back door. "Come on then, let's get over there before he does find something to do."

\*\*\*

Ted's flat was a riot of color. James remembered the day his parents had helped Ted move from his grandmother's house into this place. The carpeting was the same long, orange strands that it had been back then, and the walls were still the same pale yellow color, although with all the Quidditch posters, Muggle rock band posters, drawings, and little bits of paper tacked everywhere, it was hard to see the color.

"I love this place," Al mumbled as he flopped down on a plaid sofa that was orange and red. "This is how I want my flat when I move out."

"You're never going to get laid then," James snorted. "Women don't like places like this."

"Ted manages just fine," Al protested, his dark eyebrow rising slowly. "And Vic hasn't even made him change any of this."

James shrugged and looked around. Teddy's art supplies were stacked in one corner. It looked as if he had another painting on the easel, but it was too vague to see just what it was right now.

The sitting room was a mess, really. There were several discarded butterbeer bottles lying about, dirty laundry strewn over several surfaces, and the whole place smelled a bit like the Gryffindor locker room—sweaty socks and old cheese. In a way, it was comforting, but James wasn't sure any girl would want to be here often.

"Be out in a mo, Stu!" Teddy called from down the hall. "There's butterbeer in the fridge, or Firewhisky in the cupboard."

James snorted and Al laughed. "Even for us?!"

Teddy's messy head, complete with dripping wet, turquoise hair, appeared around the corner. He looked surprised to see the Potter brothers, but his expression soon melted into a grin.

"No, not for you. Thought you were someone else."

"Obviously," Al drawled. "Wait till I tell Mum you offered us Firewhisky."

Teddy paled and then tossed a wet towel at Al. "You wouldn't."

"No, I wouldn't," Al admitted. He tossed the towel back to Teddy.

"Give me a minute to pull something on other than my pants and I'll be out."

"Who's Stu?" James chuckled. "Couldn't have been anyone important if you're running around wearing nothing."

Teddy laughed from his bedroom. "You remember Stuart. We went to school together. He was talking about coming over today. I was trying to hurry and shower in case he showed up."

James remembered Stuart. He'd been to several Potter family functions over the years, but James hadn't seen him for awhile.

"What're you two up to today?" Ted asked when he finally emerged from his bedroom, stuffing his head through the hole of a t-shirt. "Wait... where's Lily?"

Al laughed and James snorted. "Not here, don't worry."

The relief on Ted's face was evident. "Good. For a minute I wondered... I wouldn't have wanted to have her show up when I'm all..."

"Naked," Al snorted. "Yeah, that would be great. I think she'd probably pass out."

Ted looked torn for a minute, as if he couldn't quite decide what to do about Lily. That's okay; James rarely knew what to do about her either.

"We didn't tell her we were coming," James said.

"Good," Ted answered, and then grimaced. "Don't ever tell her I said that."

James was going to comment, perhaps even make fun of the way Ted was always trying not to upset

Lily, but Al took over the conversation.

"Not up to much." Al shrugged casually. "James wanted to come and talk to you."

James tried to kick his brother behind the cluttered coffee table, but Al moved. He was a fast bugger when he needed to be.

"Oh yeah?" Ted asked. He threw himself into a precarious looking chair across from them and then wiggled until he pulled a squashed ball of laundry from behind him. He stared at it for a minute before tossing it behind him, in the vague direction of the hallway.

"This place is a dump, you know," James eyed the messy room warily. It looked as if it had been months since Ted had bothered to even pick up, let alone make sure nothing was living in the darker corners of the room.

"It has a sort of charm, you have to admit," Ted laughed. Al added his agreeing laughter.

"You can't tell me Victoire comes here when it looks like this."

Ted's amusement disappeared and he shifted about, his cheeks turning pink. "Yeah, well..." He rubbed the back of his neck. "She and I are sort of on a break right now."

"You broke it off?!" James jerked forward in his seat and stared with wide eyes. Vic and Ted were... they just were, weren't they?

"It's nothing," Ted waved his hand distractedly. "We'll get it figured out."

For the first time today, James reconsidered talking to Ted. Maybe now wasn't the best time.

"What did you need to talk to me about, Squirt?" The trademark Teddy Lupin smile stretched his face again and James felt better, even though Ted used that horrid nickname from when James was a little kid. "Don't tell me you want to join the Aurors?"

"Not bloody likely," James laughed. "I can't imagine working with Dad that much."

"He's not all bad, you know," Ted protested. "I've worked under him long enough to know."

"He doesn't treat you like you're ten," James muttered darkly.

"Are you still on about that?" Al narrowed his eyes and sighed. "Dad caught him trying to sneak out last week and took his broom away."

James grimaced as he remembered the scene. It wasn't pretty. He was nearly of age, dammit, he should be able to come and go as he pleased. Even if it was almost midnight.

Ted chuckled. "So it's not about joining the Aurors."

"I have no idea what I want to do when I leave school," James admitted.

"You've got time," Ted shrugged. "What's all this about then?"

James felt his face heat and gave one last glance at his fourteen year-old brother. Nothing for it now, he decided, eventually Al might have similar questions.

"There's this girl..."

Ted's smile spread even wider. "A girl."

"Yeah." James shifted in his spot and played with the front of his shirt. "And I really like her."

"Her name is Rowan," Al added with a smirk. James wanted to hit him, but knew that it would descend from there.

"Quiet, Al," Ted admonished the younger boy and Al schooled his features. "So a girl you really like. James, I know you've been around girls before. And I happen to know your father sat you down and talked to you about—"

"I know about sex," James blurted out. His cheeks burned even hotter now and he stared down at his fingers,

picking the worn cuticle until it stung. "I just... when do you know it's the right time?"

A serious look came over Ted's features and he sat back in his chair before running a hand over his face. "You really should talk to—"

James sighed and flopped back into the old sofa. "He'll just tell me I'm too young to be worrying about it.

That I should be concentrating on school and not thinking with my..." He trailed off and made a vague gesture below his waist.

"Really?" Ted laughed. "How do you know unless you ask him?"

"I don't," James admitted with a shrug. "But... he's only ever been with Mum. I heard him talking with Uncle Ron about that once. And they weren't together until they were a lot older. I just..."

Ted nodded knowingly and his eyes darted over to Al, who was leaning forward, devouring every bit of information.

"You just don't think you can wait that long."

James nodded and shrugged at the same time. "Rowan is... she's amazing and when we're... kissing and stuff, I sometimes don't want to stop."

Surprisingly, Al didn't laugh like James expected him to do. Instead, he wore a thoughtful look on his face.

"You do know how to, er..." Ted made a gesture with his hand and James nearly rolled his eyes. Of course he knew how to wank; he'd been doing that for ages.

"Yeah."

“What about you?” Ted turned his attention to Al, whose eyes flew open wide behind his glasses.

“Well, er... yeah, I suppose. Not much to it, really.” He shrugged and his face turned bright red.

“You’d be surprised,” Ted sighed. “Do you know the spells to clean up and stuff? Don’t try Scourgify or you’ll end up running to the hospital wing every few days from the chaffing.”

James snorted. “One of the blokes in the dorm learned that the hard way.”

Ted nodded. “Same here. There are milder cleaning charms to deal with that.”

There was a heavy silence in the air that wasn’t nearly as uncomfortable as James thought it should be,

considering what they were discussing.

“I know how things work, you know,” he admitted. “Not too hard to figure out: tab A goes into slot B, and all.

But...”

“But just knowing that isn’t good enough,” Ted nodded slowly. He rubbed his face and stood with a grunt.

James blinked when he strode by and began rummaging in the small kitchen. He returned with three mismatched glasses and a bottle full of amber liquid.

“If your parents ever find out I did this...”

“I’m not telling anyone,” Al snapped right away. He leaned forward, eagerly accepting a glass and then frowned at the small splash Ted poured into it. James laughed until Ted gave him the same amount. Ted’s glass was much fuller, and he didn’t choke when he swallowed it. James cleared his throat and blinked away tears in his eyes. Al, however, began choking and sputtering until he finally wheezed out, “’s good.”

“One of the blokes snuck a small bottle from his old man last fall,” James shrugged in answer to Ted’s raised eyebrow in his direction. “We all had a bit then.”

“Okay,” Ted sighed. “More than just basics.” He summoned a sketch pad toward him and began drawing something that resembled a flower or some sort of sketch Nevil—er, Professor Longbottom might make them do in Herbology.

“What do you know about a witch’s anatomy?” Ted started in a shaking voice.

\* \* \*

Al looked a bit sick by the time Ted finished talking, and James had a feeling it wasn’t only from the small bit of Firewhisky they’d had.

And while it was more than a little daunting, James thought that everything Ted had said only made

him more excited to try it with Rowan. She'd been more than willing on the few occasions that their snogging had led to touching and stroking.

"Most importantly," Ted finished, "don't expect perfection. First times are supposed to be messy and awkward—no matter what age you do it."

James sighed and looked down at the pictures Ted had drawn. He was pretty sure he remembered everything—there were an awful lot of things to remember—but in the heat of the moment that might change. His advice about perfection, or lack of, was good.

"Still think you're interested?" Ted smirked.

James swallowed and shrugged a shoulder. "Maybe." He gave a tentative look at Al, who was eying the pictures as well. "Last year, I would have said no, but... It's not like Rowan and I have done much, just...

touching and stuff."

"Has she gotten you off?" Ted asked.

The question was rather unexpected and James' cheeks flushed as Al perked up. "Er... yeah, with... with her hand, you know, over my trousers."

"Take it slow," Ted advised. "You've got plenty of time."

James blew out a breath. Plenty of time. It seemed like that now when he was here with Ted and Al, but when he was back in Gryffindor Tower listening to his dorm mates he knew he'd feel differently.

"Did you... wait for Vic?" He wasn't quite sure why he asked. It really wasn't any of his business, but now that the question was out there...

"Er... sort of," Ted admitted. He poured another drink but didn't offer the boys any more. "Not like I planned to, or anything. I mean, we didn't start dating until her final year at Hogwarts."

"But you dated other girls," Al pointed out.

"Er, yeah," Ted nodded. "But I didn't... not all the way with any of them. I just wasn't ready yet."

"But you're ready now," Al stated. "I mean... you and Vic."

James hissed his brother's name, trying to get him to shut up.

Ted sighed and ruffled his hair. "I'm not going to talk about that. That's also when you'll know you're ready—

when it's only about the two of you, and not about bragging to your mates, or doing it just because everyone says they are."

James looked down at his hands. Maybe that was part of his reasoning. Maybe he wasn't quite ready

just yet.

"Do you mind me asking what's up with you and Vic?" James asked. He expected Ted to knock him back as well, but Ted just sighed and stared over into the corner of the room.

"Relationships are complicated." He shrugged one shoulder and rolled his eyes at himself. "I'm here and she's... off doing what she wants to do. We just need to find the right balance, you know."

"Not really," James admitted with a small chuckle.

"You're too young to worry about it right now," Ted proclaimed. The heavy look on his features disappeared and he smiled. "You just need to be worrying about school and... other things."

James smirked and ruffled his hair slowly. "Er... thanks, Ted. I appreciate..." He gestured toward the drawings and his eyes grew wide as one of them moved precisely how Ted had charmed it to do.

Al choked out something that sounded like a thank you, as well, and both boys stood awkwardly.

"No problem." Ted's grin grew and he roughly pulled each of them into a hug, slapping their backs soundly.

"Just remember what we talked about. Shite! You both know about protection don't you?"

James nodded jerkily, but Al shifted on his feet. "Er... not... not really."

And for the first time, James truly wondered if the Slytherin dorms were that much different from the Gryffindor ones. There was a worn manual that circulated—and probably had for years—in the boys' dorm of Gryffindor. It was held together by Spellotape and magic, but the information inside was timeless. James had always just assumed that it was the same in every dorm.

Ted huffed out a large breath and jerked his head up and down. "Stay right there." He disappeared down the hallway and James chanced a peak at his younger brother.

"I'm sorry, I just assumed... Well, Dad told me about..." He trailed off, shrugging one shoulder helplessly.

James made a mental note to try and find a few hours for him and Al to sneak away to the back of Dad's shed this holiday to talk. He'd been neglecting his brotherly duties, apparently.

"Yeah," Al breathed softly. "He sort of mentioned it in passing and all, but..."

"But the practical method was a bit dodgy," James finished with a smirk. "Don't worry about it, we'll work on it."

Al's face heated and he swallowed thickly, but the expression of relief on his face made a bubble of pride well up inside James. "It's not like I really need it, you know. I'm not really interested in anyone, or anything.

Besides, I'm only ever hanging around Emmy."

James caught the strange lilt to Al's voice and wondered if his brother actually felt something for his friend;

the two had been glued at the hip since first year. Or, perhaps, Al was finally seeing Emmy as a girl—

complete with developing breasts and curvy hips—rather than simply a stick of a Slytherin who had long hair and a wicked temper. James had certainly noticed his brother's friend, even if he didn't feel attracted to her in that way.

"Here." Ted returned with two small boxes and pressed them into each boy's hand.

"Chocolate frogs?" James quirked an eyebrow as he looked down at the familiar pattern on the box.

Ted simply snorted. "Don't get them confused," he warned and snatched Al's box, opening the end. A small foil square that fell out into his palm made James understand quickly.

"It, er... goes over everything," Ted said with ease. "You know... like a raincoat over a banana. Keeps your, er,

swimmers contained, as it were."

James laughed and tucked his box into his back pocket, reminding himself to find a good hiding spot for it to keep Lily out of it. She had a definite sweet tooth and had been known to raid his room looking for chocolate.

Al's face lit with understanding, even though it was quite pink. "Brilliant," he said as he held up the square.

"These ones are charmed to be unbreakable, but that doesn't mean you can be an idiot about things," Ted finished and placed the box back in Al's hand. "You're both smart enough to figure out the consequences to mucking something like that up, just try and remember that in the heat of the moment."

Silence settled between the boys, but James felt it was much more comfortable than when they'd first arrived.

"Mum said to invite you over for dinner." James remembered at the last minute and invited Ted. "I think even Lily wouldn't mind seeing you."

The old dig made Ted's cheeks heat but he laughed softly. "You know, I think I could take a little blushing and stammering tonight."

"Come on then," Al stammered as he gave the condom box one last look and tucked it away in his back pocket. "I'm hungry."

James laughed and moved toward the fire, tossing a handful of powder into the fire, watching as it flared bright green.

"Potter Glen!" he called out as he spun in the grate and his family room appeared before him.

He and Al ran up to their rooms, thundering shoulder to shoulder on the stairs. They parted in the hallway,

each going their separate ways into their own rooms with a bit of a look. For James, he felt that he and Al had shared something important today—a coming of age moment that had come out of the blue, but was very welcome. The two brothers might be very different at times, but underneath it all they were still brothers, still Potters.

As James was coming back out of his room—after hiding his “chocolate frogs” in the top of his closet—he ran into Lily in the hallway.

“Ted’s coming for dinner,” he said, watching her closely. Even though Lily tried to hide it, her face went red and she nearly tripped on the top stair.

She opened her mouth but then closed it and collected herself. “Oh. That’s good.” The reaction wasn’t what James had been aiming for when he’d mentioned Ted’s name and it took him by surprise. Normally, Lily would flush and run back to her room, after making a sound like a frightened kitten.

Lily walked down the stairs, looking as if nothing unusual might be waiting for her down in the kitchen.

In that moment, James marveled at how strong his sister was. They’d all grown up so much over the past few years. James was on the verge of becoming a man and Al was... well, he was waking up to those confusing,

amazing feelings that James remembered all too well. And Lily... she wasn’t the same little girl she’d been once.

In a way, it was sad to think how fast everything was changing, but James was also excited to see who each of them would become over the next few years.