Harry Potter

Educating Harry Potter

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Contents

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Summary: There are some questions a boy just needs answers to. With no father to give him “the talk” who would Harry turn to? A series of one-shots posing theories on how Harry was educated on the subject. All stories are unrelated to each other.

Part 1: The Things a Father Has to Do

“Are you sure?”

“Yes, dear, I’m sure.”

Arthur winced as Molly walked past him, giving his shoulder a little pat of encouragement as she passed into the kitchen, behind the closed door, where she was no doubt laughing at him right now. His eyes wandered to his daughter, laughing with Fred and George over in the corner of the living room. They were thumbing through a worn catalogue that was years’ old.

It was a tradition for the children to look through the mail order catalogues each year before the holidays and mark some little item they’d like to see under the Christmas tree. Their little turned down corners on the pages didn’t always mean that particular item would be waiting for them, but it was fun for them to dream now and again.

He sighed and glanced over at the clock, wondering if he could simply fall asleep in his chair, rather than go and perform the task appointed to him. A small part of him wanted nothing to do with it, even though he’d dealt with it time and time again. It was his duty, after all. The fact that Molly had already completed her part of the agreement was something that Arthur didn’t want to even think about. His eyes strayed once more to his daughter and he shuddered. Probably better not to know.

“Dad, come and join us?” Ginny called, seeing him as he stood at the base of the stairs, staring up at the floors above him.

He gave her a longing look but slowly shook his head. “Not tonight, Ginny, but thank you. Are Ron and Harry, ahem… upstairs?” He tried to hide the nervousness in his voice and it seemed to work with Ginny, who shrugged and went back to studying the catalogue. But the Twins either read his mind or simply knew the look he wore well enough, because they exchanged a rather evil glance and looked torn between darting up before him to get prime seats for the show or distracting their little sister away from the scene.

Arthur stared at them, warning them away, and Fred gave a quick nod, looking somewhat disappointed.

“Come on, Gin,” George sighed. “Let’s make towers from the gifts under the tree, like we used to when we were younger.”

“Mine will be the tallest,” Fred latched onto the idea, diving to the floor.

“Only because you can cheat and use magic!” Ginny squawked, throwing herself in front of her brothers.

Arthur chuckled and forced his feet up the stairs, one at a time. Why they’d put Ron on the top most floor, he’d never know. It seemed a long way up there now, but perhaps that’s because he was busy rehearsing what he was going to say to his youngest son, and Harry, who was almost like another son.

He felt horrible that this was falling on his shoulders in Harry's case. This was a job that belonged to James Potter, or even Sirius Black, but neither of the men was around anymore. Remus was off with the werewolf covens, so he was out of the question—not that the quiet man would know the right things to say any more than Arthur did.

"Four times and it doesn't get any easier," he sighed. He reached the top floor and staring at the door that was marked as Ron's by the sign on it. The bright orange interior seemed to spill out of the place where the door hadn't latched completely and he could hear the two boys talking quietly.

"It's good but… I guess I just didn't know what to expect, really."

Harry responded to Ron's comment but Arthur couldn't quite make out what he was saying.

"I don't know," Ron answered. "I just know that I like the feel of it."

Arthur's face turned red, especially in light of what he was planning on talking to the boys about tonight. It was probable that they weren't talking about the same things, but possible at the same time. Perhaps Arthur had waited too late to impart the information. Ron had at least had the basic talk before going off to Hogwarts, but Arthur was fairly sure the Dursleys wouldn't have talked to Harry about it if their life depended on it. The poor boy was left to his own devices in most everything it seemed.

He cleared his throat and knocked on the door, hoping that he could make it through this. The last of these he'd ever have to deliver, he hoped.

"Good evening boys," he said as he inched into the room. Harry was seated cross-legged on his camp bed and looked up with a curious face and Ron was pacing back and forth in what little clean floor space there was.

"Er, does Mum need us for something?" Ron asked.

Arthur tried hard not to notice that the tips of his ears were red—a sure sign he was hoping his father hadn't over heard what they were talking about.

"No, she er, asked me to come up and talk to you. To the both of you, actually," Arthur said, shifting in place. "Have a seat, Ron."

Ron slowly sank onto the open space at the foot of Harry's bed and stared with wide eyes. His look of panic almost made Arthur smile, but it was Harry's suspicious, yet interested look that turned the amusement into a dull ache inside him.

It shouldn't be him doing this for the boy.

"Ron, I know we've spoken briefly about this when you were younger."

"Dad—"

"But you'll humor me as I review it," Arthur continued, giving his son a stern look and letting his head tilt slightly toward Harry. Ron's eyes went wide and he momentarily measured the distance

between himself and the door before his shoulders slumped in resignation.

"Sure, Dad."

"Er, Mr. Weasley?" Harry peered at him, growing more and more restless as the minutes ticked away.

"Nothing to worry about, Harry," Arthur shook his head. "It just occurred to Molly and I that you might not have all of the… proper information that a young man your age might possibly need."

"Spells and stuff," Ron shrugged. "For… you know."

Harry's forehead crinkled in thought for a moment before his eyebrows shot into his hairline.

"Oh, er… well, I…"

"No need to worry, Harry," Arthur said, swallowing past his dry throat. "Nothing to be ashamed of."

Ron shifted and glanced at his friend before staring at his hands. "I think, er, I might use a bit more information too, Dad."

Arthur nodded, taking a relieved breath and thanking Merlin above that Ron wasn't as thick as a plank *every* day.

"Mr. Weasley," Harry stammered. "You really don't have to… I mean, I can… find a book or something."

"Nonsense," Arthur shook his head. "I'm more than happy to explain things to you both. Your mother and I would prefer that you know our views on the subject anyway."

Harry shifted again, edging away from both Ron and Arthur curiously. "We are talking about… er…"

"Sex, Harry," Arthur forced out, focusing on a small speck of white on the plasterboard walls where the orange paint had chipped away. "We're talking about sex."

Ron cleared his throat and Harry nodded jerkily, staring off into the room with glazed over eyes.

"You see, when you find a witch that's worthy, and you fall in love with her…"

* * *

Harry wasn't sure he could breathe after Mr. Weasley shut the door, leaving him alone with Ron in the low light of the highest room at the Burrow.

"You alright, mate?" Ron asked from where he was lying on his bed, staring up at the ceiling.

Harry took a moment to catch his breath and will the images of Ginny doing *those* sorts of things to him away from his mind. "Er… yeah, I suppose so."

"A lot to think about, isn't it?"

“Er, yeah,” Harry nodded. He chanced a glance over at Ron, praying he wouldn’t ask why Harry’s face was so red, or why he was shielding his lower half with last year’s Weasley jumper.

“You, er, ever think about it?” Ron asked, his voice small. “You know, with a girl?”

“I think that’s rather the goal, you know,” Harry shrugged one shoulder and laid back against his bed, keeping the jumper strategically placed.

“Well, yeah, but…” Ron trailed off. “You’d tell me if, you know, you ever did, right?”

Harry squirmed for a moment, unsure what to say. Would he tell Ron if he ever had sex? Even if the only girl he could imagine in that capacity right now was Ron’s sister.

“Of course you would,” Ron chuckled awkwardly. “You told me about Cho last Christmas.”

“That’s not… We never…” Harry spluttered, eyes going wide. “Just kissing.”

“Oh, I know,” Ron nodded.

“Would you, er, tell me?” Harry asked, curious now at just how far Lavender and Ron had gone. It wasn’t like he wanted the picture in his head or anything, but it felt right to ask, in a way.

“Probably,” Ron shrugged.

“Even if it was with Hermione?” Harry grinned, ducking to the side when Ron heaved a pillow at him.

“That’s just… not right, Harry.”

“Whatever,” Harry snorted, shoving the pillow behind his head.

“So, you’re okay with Dad talking to us about it?” Ron asked after a long period of silence.

Harry thought about it and shrugged. “Not much to be done about it now, is there?”

“Yeah, but, it just sort of seems like it should be a bloke’s dad, you know,” Ron said, glancing at Harry quickly before looking away.

“I suppose so,” Harry shrugged, not having really thought about it before. “I guess I never considered how I’d figure it out. It seemed like one of those things that you’d just… know.”

Ron made a face and shook his head. “I’m not sure about that. In the middle of things your brain just sort of… stops working, you know.”

“No, I don’t know,” Harry sighed. “But, I’m fine with it, Ron. Part of me wishes Sirius had been the one, you know, but then I think about how that might have gone and…” His eyes went wide imagining Sirius explaining the things that Mr. Weasley had just finished talking about and he had to shake his head as a fresh new wave of images featuring Ginny arrived in his head, gift wrapped for the holidays. Happy Christmas, Harry!

Ron chuckled. “Can you imagine anyone else giving us the talk?”

“Er… maybe Bill or Charlie,” Harry shrugged. “Then again, I don’t really know them well either.”

“Imagine Gred and Forge,” Ron smirked.

“Rather not, thanks,” Harry laughed.

“Come on,” Ron said, sitting up in one fluid motion from his bed. “Let’s go down and see if we can nick some biscuits from the kitchen. Mum had a whole lot of them she was hiding. We can find them. Maybe even ask Ginny to help us. She was always good at finding things that were hidden well.”

He was gone in the next breath and Harry stared at the open door and out onto the landing, wondering if he could look at Ginny again without forgetting how to breathe.

Part 2: It's Always The Quiet Ones

Harry tried not to notice how many times in one week Ron came into the dorms well after curfew and looked dazed. On one hand, he was glad that his friend was having fun with his girlfriend, but then again… it was Lavender. She was alright, Harry supposed, but he had no idea what Ron saw in her besides…

Well, there was *that*.

Lavender was definitely a girl.

Harry shifted uncomfortably, thinking about the other girls that were in Gryffindor Tower. He'd been trying very hard to play it cool in front of Ginny, even though he felt at times like he was making a complete and utter fool of himself in front of her. And the fact that she was still with Dean… He didn't like to think about it.

At least he didn't have to occupy his mind tonight with uncomfortable ideas of where Dean and Ginny were. Ginny had looked put out with her boyfriend just an hour ago in the common room and had muttered something about going to bed early, leaving Dean alone, standing in the middle of the room.

Harry had been thrilled—he danced on the inside—but he tried hard not to show it.

Dean, Seamus and Neville were all in the dorm with him tonight. Ron was out with Lavender, again. With the Marauder's Map spread out on his bed, Harry had seen their dots close together in one of the corridors, but he tried to avoid them in favor of watching the halls for Malfoy's dot.

Neville was reading a book, making notes on a parchment that was propped on his knee while his Mimbulus Mimbletonia made little sighing noises and quivered slightly.

Dean and Seamus were lying on Dean's bed, a chess board settled between them, but it didn't look as if they were really interested in playing. Harry tried not to listen to what Dean was grumbling about, although it was hard to ignore.

He concentrated on the Potions book balanced precariously on his thigh while glancing at the corridors that spidered out from the Slytherin common room. Sooner or later, Malfoy had to exit or enter, and maybe Harry could catch a glimpse of him and trace where he'd come from, if he couldn't catch him going somewhere.

"… I don't know what I did. She's just being… difficult."

Harry scowled at Dean's words that drifted across the room to him and stared at the words in his book until his eyes began to water. A part of him wanted to jump up and defend Ginny against whatever it was that she felt Dean had done, even if he didn't know what it was. She was… it was *Ginny*.

He shook his head, forcing out the frustration in favor of reading once more. Ron's entrance into the dorm brought a wave of relief to the room that was feeling more than a bit stuffy.

“Oi, you don’t look… well…” Harry narrowed his eyes at his best mate. Ron was scowling and his hair stood on end, as if he’d been pulling at it.

“You two have a fight or something?” Harry asked, feeling as if he should be supportive, even if he didn’t want details.

“No,” Ron grumbled. He sank onto the end of Harry’s bed and stared at his hands. “We didn’t fight.”

The three other boys were now listening, not even pretending to be interested elsewhere. Harry glanced up wondering if he should tell the others to bugger off.

“We… we were snogging,” Ron admitted with a shrug, “and…”

Harry blinked, trying to push the picture out of his head. He cleared his throat awkwardly when Ron didn’t continue. From how Ron looked, he wasn’t sure if he wanted Ron to continue, actually.

“And?” Seamus ventured. The chess game was completely abandoned as all eyes were now on Ron.

“And,” Ron sighed, “I got… worked up.” The admission sounded as if it had cost him a lot to say, and he grimaced at the end of it.

Harry let out a shaky breath, unsure how to deal with this. If it had just been the two of them, Harry would have known exactly what to say. But, somehow, he didn’t think Ron would appreciate him mentioning Ron doing *that* with everyone listening.

“Er… Ron, you do know about…” Neville trailed off, looking rather pale. “You know, releasing tension?” He sounded like he was in pain and looked away quickly.

Ron looked confused for a moment and it reminded Harry of how he looked just after waking up in the morning—dazed and confused.

“Polishing your wand,” Dean shrugged, a smirk on his face.

“Waxing your willy,” Seamus added, snorting.

Ron nearly choked, but a smile broke out as he realized what they were talking about. “Oh, er… yeah, yeah. I know, but…”

However, it seemed as if Dean and Seamus were just getting started.

“Bashing the bishop.”

“Flogging yer log.”

“Charming the one-eyed python,” Neville said in a low voice. He flushed and blinked at Harry. “Er, sorry, Harry, I didn’t mean… the Basilisk, or anything…”

Harry chuckled and rubbed his face, amazed that they were actually talking about… “That’s okay, Nev. Er… how about romancing yourself.”

Ron snorted. “Charlie always called it loving his dragon.”

All the boys were laughing now and the atmosphere went from awkward to normal for a boys’ dorm room.

“Releasing the hostages,” Neville chuckled. “That’s one of my favorites.”

They continued with the colorful names until there didn’t seem to be any more left to laugh over. That’s when the uncomfortable silence returned.

“I know about it,” Ron reiterated. “But, it’s hard once you’re there, you know, to remember not to er…” He flushed again and grimaced.

Harry looked away, sure he didn’t want to hear this right now. Not that he had any knowledge. All of his experience was of the shameless self promotion sort they’d already talked about. He’d gotten excited when he was kissing Cho last year, but it had all been rather innocent—at least until later that night in the privacy of his own bed.

The idea of having a live, warm and willing witch in his arms made the whole idea morph and transform in his mind. He could feel his face grow warm and he shifted in his spot on the bed as the mental scene played out. Not for the first time, or the hundredth, he was immediately grateful Ron couldn’t read his mind.

“Anyway,” Ron shrugged.

“And you don’t want to…” Seamus prompted, looking slightly confused. “I thought that was the whole goal, mate.”

“Well, it is, I guess,” Ron shifted. “It’s just that… I’m not sure if…”

Harry blinked his eyes, forcing away the image of Ginny kissing him until he was—

“Have any of you, er…” Neville asked, shrugging one shoulder. His cheeks were pink and he looked quite young, Harry thought.

“No,” Harry answered automatically, grimacing when Ron smirked at him. Little did Ron know that the only partner Harry wanted in any of those activities was Ron’s little sister. “Not like I have time, anyway, you know,” Harry clarified. “Or a girlfriend.”

“And I don’t even want to hear what you think about it,” Ron growled, glaring at Dean. Harry barely bit back his own comment in support of Dean keeping his thoughts to himself.

“Don’t even look at me,” Dean protested. “I can’t get Ginny to even talk to me, let alone… er…”

“Let’s keep it that way,” Ron grumbled. Not that Harry minded Ron putting Dean in his place, but his mate did seem overly… touchy about it right now. Perhaps it was all that pent up frustration simply leaking out in hostility.

“Er, I… almost, with this girl back home,” Seamus admitted. “But I don’t know. Well, I think it was almost.” His face turned bright red and he ducked his head.

Silence settled back in and Harry glanced over at the Marauder's Map, knowing that he'd probably missed Malfoy's exit from the Slytherin common room. He'd been too distracted this evening. Instead of continuing to watch, he cleared the map quietly and folded it away.

Neville suddenly jumped off his bed, ignoring the Herbology notes that he sent fluttering toward the floor. He rooted around in his trunk while Ron and Harry exchanged a confused look.

When Neville came back up holding a book in his hand and staring rather hesitantly at it, they almost burst out laughing. The look on his face reminded Harry of when they'd all been assigned Hagrid's *Monster Book of Monsters* and discovered that the book attacked its owner.

"Have any of you gotten… 'the talk' from your parents, or… someone?"

His hesitant question made all of their jaws drop. Harry shifted in his spot. Of course, he *knew* about sex. Or, well, the basic mechanics of it. He supposed it was one of those things that just came natural when you were in the moment, so to speak. No one had had to explain to him just how to rub himself until… well. Besides, who would have been around to talk to him about it? Uncle Vernon would have rather shot him instead of talking about it. In fact, Harry might have put his own wand to his head to avoid *that*.

"Me Da took me aside a few years ago," Seamus shrugged.

"Same here," Dean put in, looking anywhere but in Ron's direction.

"Er… yeah, my Dad," Ron nodded jerkily. He wore a curious expression on his face and Harry wondered, with a smirk, just how Arthur had managed that talk and what innocent Muggle items had been drawn into the discussion.

Everyone turned to look at Harry who was rather lost for words. "I know, I mean… I know about it and all. But… Sirius was gone before…"

They all winced and Neville cleared his throat, coming over to stand next to Harry's bed. He rubbed his hand along the spine of the book for a moment before handing it over. Harry noticed that it shook slightly.

"Well, here, you may want to look through this. I, er, don't really need it right now anyway."

"What are you, Hermione now?" Ron snorted, staring dubiously down at the book in Harry's hands.

"Between A Witch And Wizard: A Healthy Guide To Relationships," Harry read aloud. His voice cracked in the middle and he nearly rolled his eyes at himself. *Was he thirteen?*

He flipped open the pages toward the center and very nearly choked on what he saw. There were… moving illustrations! This was a sex book! And as horrified as he was, Harry couldn't tear his eyes away, nor could he ignore the thrill that trickled through him. It wasn't wizard porn, by any means, but there was more information here than his brain would be able to handle, that's for sure.

"Cor, Nev," Ron breathed, leaning over Harry's shoulder. "Where the hell did you get this?"

“Gran wanted me to have a… well-rounded education,” Neville said, his face now looking more purple than red.

“How much of that book did you memorize, Nev?” Harry asked, leaning closer to the moving diagram on the page. He wasn’t sure whether to look horrified, or show his true interested in what was happening between the little line diagrams and what they were getting up to.

“Er… Well… quite a bit.”

“Wow,” Seamus muttered, reaching out to almost trace the couple as they moved together.

Harry quickly moved the page, feeling Dean’s presence join the group. He certainly didn’t want those sorts of ideas flowing through Dean’s mind. Not when he was with Ginny.

But the illustration on the page he chose was far worse, in his opinion. This one showed a witch lying on her back, her legs splayed open while the wizard leaned down and used his mouth…

“Holy Merlin,” Harry breathed, staring wide eyed at the picture. Was it just him, or was the room getting unreasonably warm?

He turned the page again and was greeted with a sight that made his eyes bulge and his heart become in serious jeopardy of climbing out his throat. This time the wizard was reclining on a chair, while the witch knelt between his legs.

It was every young man’s fantasy come to life on the pages of a book. They all watched as the witch worked her mouth over the wizard in complete silence.

“I gotta… er… do something,” Ron jumped up and disappeared into the bathroom. Dean and Seamus shuffled back to their chess board, but were much quieter now.

Harry slammed the book shut and blinked up at Neville who was caught between being completely humiliated and horribly excited at the same time.

“There’s a section on, you know, protection and all. I figured… that’s probably the best place to start.” He tilted his head to the side slightly.

Suddenly, Harry was horribly touched by the gesture Neville was giving. It occurred to him that while Neville had his grandmother, he and Harry were a lot the same.

“Thanks, Nev,” Harry said quietly. “I’ll, er… I’ll take good care of it and get it back to you soon.”

“No rush.” Neville shrugged. “I just figured you could use it. And it’s not like you can talk to Ron or anything about it, right?” The knowing look in his eyes made Harry flush deeper than he had all night. Surely Neville didn’t know Legillimency…

“Er… yeah, yeah,” Harry cleared his throat and tucked the book under his pillow. One thing was for sure, Harry wasn’t going to be getting any sleep tonight.

Part 3: That, Potter, Was Rather The Point

Harry yawned widely as he came down the stairs. It was Saturday and he was in no hurry to get to anywhere, actually. There were no Quidditch games coming up, so no practice today. He'd even finished his homework for the weekend—much to Hermione's delight. The day was completely free, and Harry couldn't wait to find a way to waste it.

The common room was full when he entered and he peered around, trying to figure out what was making everyone congregate around the announcement board. They'd already posted the notice about Apparition lessons, so unless there was a change in the schedule… And the Hogsmeade weekend notice had been up forever, too.

"What's all this about?" Harry nudged Ron who was standing near the back of the pack, trying to peer over everyone's heads to see. A bright flash of red was weaving its way toward the two boys. Harry felt his heart flutter when Ginny materialized out of the crowd. Her face was grumpy and she elbowed Romilda Vane who was making her passage through the crowd even harder.

"No clue," Ron sighed.

"It's just a notice for Wizard's Education Classes," Ginny grumbled. "Nothing important." She threw a glare at Romilda, but then seemed to shake off her annoyance.

Hermione appeared out of the crowd, following Ginny, and huffed at the commotion. "Of course it's important, Ginny."

"Wizard's Education?" Ron asked with a grimace on his face. "How much more education do we need?"

Harry didn't answer, but he'd been thinking the same thing. They already had a full load of classes, what more did they need to learn?

Hermione's face flushed as she and Ginny shared a look that Harry couldn't interpret. "I think you'll enjoy this class, Ron." Ginny made a strangled sort of sound that was half-laugh, half-snort.

"What about a Witches Education Class?" Ron demanded.

"It does seem a bit strange that they'd single out Wizards only," Harry conceded. He noticed that most of the witches were migrating away from the announcement in bunches, tittering and giggling oddly. Honestly, would he never understand girls? Their behavior made absolutely no sense to him.

"Witches get that class, too, Ron," Hermione informed them both primly. "We just get it earlier than you do."

"That's not fair," Ron retorted moodily. He and Hermione wandered away toward the portrait hole, still discussing the new class.

Harry and Ginny stood next to each other for a minute, both watching the chaos around them.

“Er… breakfast?” Harry offered. “I’ve just gotten up.”

“Sure.” Ginny agreed readily and fell in next to him.

“So… do you really get the same class?”

Ginny’s face flushed and Harry’s mind whirled as he tried to imagine what on earth the class could be about.

“Er, yeah. Although I doubt it’s the same information.”

Harry pondered that and his mind tried to wrap around the idea that there could be spells that might be different between witches and wizards. “Well, who teaches it? Did the notice say?”

Ginny smiled mildly. “I think the staff rotates the responsibility, actually. It’s nothing to worry about, Harry. It’s only one class, a few hours long.”

Harry scowled down at the floor as they walked. He still had no idea the type of information that might be imparted at such a class, but supposed it didn’t matter. As long as everyone got the same class…

“So, no Quidditch next Saturday, I suppose.” Ginny sounded resigned about it and Harry guessed that’s when their new class was scheduled.

“I suppose,” Harry agreed. “I’d rather be up in the air than stuck in some classroom learning spells and stuff.”

Ginny got a strange look on her face—her cheeks flushed and she peered at him out of the corner of her eye before nodding jerkily. “It’s only one week.” She went on to talk about the strengths and weakness of the Ravenclaw team and Harry threw himself into the discussion.

* * *

Harry completely forgot about the class until the middle of the week when Ron slid beside him in the hallway, a rather distressed look on his face.

“What’s wrong? Did something happen?”

“Er…” Ron shifted guiltily and Harry’s mind went into panic mode, mentally trying to reconstruct whatever horrific thing had occurred. Perhaps there had been an attack on Hogsmeade, or the Burrow… or maybe Remus had come back from his assignment with the werewolves and—

“I just… I just figured out what that class this Saturday is going to be.” His ears were bright red and Harry goggled at him. The comment was so out of place that Harry stopped in the middle of the hallway, forcing the flow of traffic to bunch behind him. He ignored the swearing and threats in favor of staring at his best mate.

“Well?”

“It’s…” Ron shifted and looked around him before whispering something that Harry didn’t hear.

"What?"

Ron's face looked like he was in pain before he grabbed Harry's arm and dragged him into an alcove that was partially hidden by a suit of armor.

"It's about… sex." Ron whispered harshly and glanced around once more. Harry's eyes went wide, more in reaction to Ron's demeanor than the actual class subject.

"Sex?"

Ron shushed him loudly and Harry almost laughed. "Just… just think, mate, how horrid it's going to be?"

Harry thought about it but wasn't sure how to respond. It wasn't like he knew anything about it, really, other than one day he'd like to try it out, of course. He hadn't spent much time thinking about it. Well… not *really* anyway, and dreams didn't count. Did they?

"Imagine Flitwick giving us *the talk*!" Ron's ears went a deeper shade of crimson. "And not only that, but it's every bloke in sixth year. *Everyone* Harry."

The weight of that statement hit Harry. Learning about sex might not be so bad—after all, someone had to impart the knowledge, didn't they?—but having to hear squeaky little Professor Flitwick lecture them on the proper way to hold their wand while they…

Harry gulped. And Malfoy was going to be in the same room, along with all the other Slytherins.

"Worst of all, Ginny and Hermione know. They *know*, you know, and they're determined to take the piss at every opportunity. Hermione even told me to make sure I took notes. And Ginny… she just gets that *look* on her face and I know she's never going to let me forget a thing about it. We'll be ninety and she'll bring it up. She's like that, you know."

Ron looked mortified and Harry swallowed thickly. The girls *had* been giving Harry strange looks this whole week. And there was an awful lot of giggling going around.

"Maybe… maybe it'll be Madam Pomfrey," Harry offered weakly. He tugged at the collar of his robes. "She's… She can be discreet."

Ron's face paled and his eyes went wide as he stared over Harry's head. "What if it's McGonagall? Can you imagine, Harry?"

The image of the stern professor standing at the front of the class with her no-nonsense approach to everything made Harry's throat grow dry.

'Now, everyone take out your wands and we'll practice the cleaning spell on our private—'

Harry's mind was, gratefully, distracted from that image by Ron making a strangled noise. He had no doubt his best mate had just envisioned something similar.

"We've survived worse, yeah?" Harry asked hoarsly.

Ron shrugged one shoulder and tilted his head to the side, giving a doubtful look. “I’m going to kill the twins for not telling me about this.”

Harry clapped Ron on the shoulder and they joined the flow of students once more. “These are the same brothers who told you that to be sorted you had to wrestle a troll.”

Ron was quiet for a moment. “Point,” he finally conceded. “At least it’s not them, you know. I’d never be able to trust anything they told me about it.”

“Very true,” Harry said. His mind fuzzed at the idea of talking to the twins about sex. Never mind that he’d be a hundred different shades of red imagining the subject in relation to their sister. The twins were good at sniffing things out. They’d have him drawn and quartered in ten minutes.

“Think we should tell the blokes?” Ron asked. “Some of them might not know yet.”

Harry contemplated that and a wicked little idea took root. He certainly didn’t want Dean thinking about sex while he was still dating Ginny. Granted, Hermione had told him that Ginny and Dean’s relationship was on the rocks, but Harry couldn’t help feeling like he wanted to rip Dean’s arms off every time he thought about them together.

“Maybe Neville,” he grunted.

Ron peered at him for a moment before a smile spread across his face. “The other two can lump it.”

While Harry was still nervous about the upcoming class, having Ron next to him—turning just as red as Harry surely would—would help. Together they’d survived the traps set up for the Philosopher’s Stone, the Chamber, a werewolf on the loose, the Tri-Wizard Tournament, and the Department of Mysteries. Surely a simple sex education class wouldn’t be harder than all of that.

* * *

“I’m going to…” Ron trailed off, muttering threats under his breath that Harry knew his friend would never carry out. He may want to, but he wouldn’t. And Harry didn’t really blame him. Hermione and Ginny were being horrid, teasing Ron and Harry at every available opportunity about their class today.

And it wasn’t like he and Ron could fight back in any way. The girls had already had their talk and Harry didn’t like to think about the things they’d discussed. It was too strange to think about and it made him feel weird inside, like his stomach was contorting into knots.

“Come on; let’s not make things worse by being late.” Harry prodded Ron forward and they joined the queue of wizards leading into a normally vacant classroom. “Whatever happens, we’ll just… we’ll be fine.” He finished lamely and shared a nervous look with Neville, whose skin seemed to be turning slightly green.

The last three days the three friends had been speculating on who might be teaching the course. The suggestions had started out horrifying but had morphed into a source of amusement as they contemplated Trelawney, or even Firenze teaching them about using their *wands* properly and

making ill-fated prophecies about their love lives.

The classroom was full of sixth year wizards looking just as nervous as Harry felt when they finally took their seats. Malfoy wasn't displaying his usual haughty nature. In fact, he looked like he'd rather climb out the window than stay in his seat between Crabbe and Goyle.

Some of the boys were snickering immaturely, making jokes about what might be covered in the class. They all started when the classroom door slammed open and their instructor swooped in.

"There will be no silly *wand waving* in this class!"

Harry's stomach fell to his knees and then continued south as Snape glared at the assembly of young men and sneered.

"Oh no," Ron moaned. "No, no, no, nononono…"

Neville made a strangled squeak and clutched Harry's arm in a vice-like grip.

"Ron," Harry whispered, "I'll give you a thousand galleons if you have a Fainting Fancy. Or a Nosebleed Nougat. I'll even take a Puking Pastille; I'm not picky."

Snape's gaze bore into Harry and he averted his eyes, refusing to let the overgrown bat into his thoughts. It was bad enough that he was going to have to endure this without the professor sifting through his memories.

"Since it seems that none of you are brilliant enough to pick up a book on the subject," Snape drawled, "it has fallen to me to instruct you in the ways of… interpersonal relationships."

He said it as if it was the most disgusting thing he'd ever had to contemplate and Harry sank low in his chair. This was going to be the longest few hours of his life.

Less than an hour later—not one wizard in the room had dared to raise their hand with a quarry or comment about the information Snape had passed along—Harry and his friends rushed from the classroom.

"That was…" Ron's eyes were wide, fixed the way they'd been the whole time. "It was…" He floundered for the right words to express himself and Harry couldn't remember a time when Ron had ever been speechless.

"Yeah," Neville agreed quietly. His face was still a pasty white and Harry wasn't sure there was any blood left in his body, let alone enough to make his cheeks turn pink.

"I think he accomplished his goal," Harry finally said. "I can't even imagine having sex right now."

"That, Potter, was rather the point."

Snape appeared behind them and all three boys jumped as he glared at them with coal-black eyes.

"At least you've proven that you are capable of learning *something.*"

They watched as he swept away, his cloak flying out behind him like the black wings of the bat he was. Harry fought the urge to shiver, both in disgust and reaction to the dramatic exit.

“We’re never speaking of this again,” Harry muttered after letting out a long breath. “Ever.”

“Yeah.”

“Agreed.”

Part 4: Thank Merlin For Manky Pillows And Occlumency

Being awoken by a pillow to the face wasn't Harry's idea of a good morning, but it happened often enough that he couldn't be too angry at Ron. It seemed like sort of a tradition now, actually.

"Oi, get your arse out of bed, Harry!"

Harry blinked up at the cracked orange ceiling, trying to remember where on earth he was, and what he was doing here.

Christmas. The Burrow.

A pleasant feeling filled his belly and he half-heartedly tossed Ron's pillow back toward him.

"'m up," he grumbled and rolled onto his side. The last bits of his delicious dream slipped away and he sighed in resignation. He yawned widely and stretched against the allure of drifting back into sleep.

Ron wouldn't have it, though.

"Come on, Harry, Mum has some things for us to do, and then we're going with Fred and George."

Harry rolled and looked over his shoulder at Ron, who was pulling on his trousers and refusing to look at Harry.

"Er… since when?"

"They cornered me last night," Ron admitted reluctantly. Harry noticed the tips of his ears were bright red. "Told me they were taking me Christmas shopping."

Harry's shoulders fell back to the bed and his forehead wrinkled in thought. "Why do I have to come? I sent Hedwig for all of my gifts last week."

Ron's ears, if possible, turned even redder and the color bled onto his cheeks. "I know," he snapped and glared at the closed door. "We're not really going shopping, all right? They… they somehow found out about me and… Lavender," he hissed her name and gave a small little shudder, "and they want to… *talk*."

A bubble of glee rose up inside Harry, but he smothered it back down lest his friend beat him for laughing. "Don't look at me," he protested. "I didn't tell them about her." His mate was going to get a sex talk, and Harry couldn't help but laugh at the thought. And from *Fred and George*. Just the idea sent waves of hilarity crashing through Harry.

Ron sighed and ruffled his bed-messed hair. "I know. I'm betting it was Ginny who told."

Harry forced himself to sit up, imagining Ginny delightedly spilling that little secret to her older

brothers and the light it must have brought to their twin faces. He wanted to laugh all over again.

"And I'm not doing this alone, mate."

Ron's rather evil pronouncement brought Harry back to the present and he gaped at his friend. "I'm not… I don't need to talk to anyone." He scrambled for any excuse to get out of it. Surely, Mrs. Weasley needed help here at the Burrow. He'd degnome the frozen garden, if he had to. Hell, he'd even give the gnomes each a proper bath and grooming to get out of facing Fred and George and what they no doubt had planned for Ron.

"I already told them you were coming with," Ron said smugly. He pulled a jumper over his head and slid his feet into trainers. "And don't try using Mum as an excuse, I heard George clearing our outing with her last night."

Harry's shoulders sank in defeat and he felt his face turn red. There was no way to get out of it then, and Harry was going to suffer. Oh, how he was going to suffer. More than anyone else, the twins had ways of ferreting out information that he never wanted anyone to know. He wasn't sure if they were simply good spies, or had some other means of sussing out information that Harry never discovered, but the twins knew *everything*. Normally, this didn't bother Harry too much, because they usually left him alone, but if they knew what had been going through his mind lately…

He shuddered at the thought of having a vision like he'd just awoken from in his mind when Fred and George explained the dynamics of sex. It was both a terrifying and delicious thought that left him torn. Mostly, he was filled with dread.

What would her older brothers do if they knew Harry was thinking about Ginny in *that* way?

The answers to that question were so varied that Harry's head spun. Between being cursed into a painful death with obscure spells, ripped apart by dragons, having the twins use him as a testing target for their products, and Ron pummeling the salacious thoughts out of Harry's head—he couldn't decide which would be worse.

And the twins would find out. He knew they would.

"Not so funny now, is it?" Ron asked before he ducked out of the doorway.

Harry swore quietly and forced himself to get dressed, all the while cursing his friend and threatening to spill every secret he knew about Won-won and Lav-Lav. If it meant keeping Fred and George in the dark about Harry's fantasies, Harry would gladly sacrifice Ron's secret. With pure joy.

* * *

Harry was able to mostly tuck the impending inevitable unpleasantness away in his mind for most of the morning. Ginny was in rare form, teasing Ron mercilessly about everything and nothing, and making Harry snort tea out his nose.

Ron took the mockery much better than usual, but Harry noticed he paled more and more as the day wore on. By lunch he was so out of sorts he only managed to eat two sandwiches, rather than his normal three or four. Ginny left them both alone, which Harry was torn over. He did think it was

probably best that she was distracted on some project her mother had given her, rather than right in front of him where he could think about the soft way her mouth curved up at the corners, or how delicate, but strong, her hands were…

Yeah. He was a dead man. The twins could smell fear and guilt, and Harry wasn't a good liar. He'd never been good at it.

Fred arrived through the floo late in the afternoon, wearing a grin that made Harry's stomach come alive like a thousand Snitches were flying freely inside him.

"Ready, boys?"

Ron gave a panicked look around the room, searching for some means of escape before his shoulders sank in resignation and he stood on shaky legs. "Yeah, let's go Harry."

Harry swallowed and stood. His legs felt rather weak, but he was sure it was for far different reasons than his best mate's. While Ron was sure to get the complete piss taken out of him for Lavender, Harry had *real* secrets to hide.

"We're going to the flat above the store, so…" Fred began to explain how to get through the floo, but Harry's attention was stolen away by Ginny. She was suddenly right in front of him, close enough that he felt as if he were drowning in the flowery scent wafting from her.

"Have fun, Harry."

Her eyes were bright and Harry stared into them, unsure what to make of the amused crinkles in the corners. Did she know what he was about to endure? Could she possibly guess what thoughts he was going to have to tamp down just to survive the afternoon?

Ginny's hand came and rested on his chest. "Don't let them intimidate you. Their bark is far worse then their bite. And they can smell fear, Harry."

He swallowed thickly and gave a jerky nod. Somewhere, he vaguely heard Fred calling for him, but he couldn't be bothered with it right now. Ginny was still touching him.

"I'll, er… I'll try and remember that," he promised. His voice sounded high and tight and Harry cursed himself silently. Ginny gave a quick wink and stepped away. Harry was on the verge of following after her—Fred, George and their *talk* completely forgotten—when a strong hand came around his upper arm.

"No getting out of it, Harrykins," Fred said with a laugh. "You need to get your Christmas shopping done just as much as Ron does."

Harry pulled his arm away and gave one last covert look toward Ginny, who was laughing at something her father had said, before he threw floo powder into the grate.

* * *

The flipcharts, stacks of books, and diagrams set up all over the small living room of Fred and

George's flat were not what Harry expected at all. He gaped at the display and even rubbed his eyes before turning to look at an equally flabbergasted Ron.

"Er…"

"I thought we were hearing this from Fred and George," Ron grumbled quietly, "not Percy."

Harry snorted and let out a shaky breath. If he was going to survive this little encounter with his bits intact, he needed to start practicing Occlumancy right now. He might have been shite at it when faced with Snape and Voldemort, but he had a feeling he could hold Fred and George at bay.

"Er, well…"

"No need to stand," George said. He was wearing his old Hogwarts black robes and was perched behind a pedestal, looking more like Percy than Harry could ever remember before. "We have plenty of seating available."

Harry and Ron exchanged a look before they both slouched onto the garish orange and red plaid sofa. The poor piece of furniture gave a pitiful moan at their weight, but didn't collapse.

Fred joined his twin, wearing the same severe robes and looking more like Hermione than Harry was comfortable with.

"Now then," George started after clearing his throat. "It has come to our attention that both of you young men are nearly of age."

Ron snorted but didn't say anything.

"And we've heard—from a little birdie who shall remain nameless—"

Harry and Ron looked at each other. "Ginny," they both said together.

Fred tapped the side of his nose and continued. "That Ron here has found himself, recently, in the arms of the lovely Lavender Brown."

Ron's ears flamed and Harry elbowed him. "Er…"

"It's a family tradition to have the older brother pass along his wisdom—"

"More like a duty, my dear Forge," Fred interrupted his twin.

"Agreed. Duty, indeed. We, your older brothers, are honor bound to provide you with the information you need to uphold the family reputation."

"And uphold your pecker," Fred put in helpfully.

Harry felt his face heat and refused to look at either the twins or Ron. But looking at the diagrams displayed in front of him weren't any help, either. They were rife with information that he'd never considered before—there were little diagrams showing actual *positions!* Thank Merlin they weren't moving. Harry didn't think his mind would be able to stay far from Ginny if there was movement

involved. He closed his eyes and tried to clear his mind. A sudden brilliant ability at Occlumency was his only hope at survival.

Ron cleared his throat. "Is all of this really necessary?" He gestured vaguely to the various reference materials surrounding them. "I mean, not that I'm not… grateful for the, er… information, but this seems more like Percy's style."

"That's where you're lucky, my youngest brother," Fred quipped.

George picked up immediately and Harry was afraid he was going to get a crick in his neck from watching them go back and forth. "You see how lucky you are? This whole tradition thing started when Dad sat Bill down. And Bill passed his wisdom on to Charlie, who passed it on to Percy. You blokes don't know how hard it was to keep a straight face when Percy sat the two of us down."

Harry couldn't help it; he snorted at the mental picture of Percy lecturing Fred and George about sex. Ron found it amusing as well.

"And all of this…" Harry nudged the three-legged coffee table with his foot and it teetered precariously, making the manuals and papers threaten to slide everywhere.

"Was Percy's gracious gift to us for when we sat Ronniekins here down."

"You're just the bonus gift, my friend Harry," George chuckled.

"Thanks," Harry answered dryly. "I know about sex."

They all gaped at him and Harry felt his face heat. "Sirius, er… he sat me down before fifth year."

"You never told me that!" Ron said.

"It's not like I wanted to share that moment of mortal embarrassment with anyone," Harry protested. He scowled when he remembered how mortified he'd been to have Sirius stammering and stuttering over what to tell him. In the end, Harry managed to make some semblance of information out of the talk, even though he knew there was far more to it than Sirius had hinted.

"Ah, you may know the basics that any father or godfather may impart," Fred protested, "but we're here to impart wisdom far beyond our years."

"We've spent years gathering it, you know," George said with a salacious wink. With a flick of his wand, the reference materials scattered into piles lining the walls. Behind them, a television was revealed.

"This, my lads, is the best option in sex education there is."

"It's a telly," Harry said vaguely. He sat up and stared at the battered television and then at the twins, who looked utterly delighted with themselves.

"Of course it is, my good man," Fred scoffed. "And Dad even helped us enchant it—"

"But don't tell Mum," George added.

“How is that,” Ron motioned toward the television, “going to tell us about… you know.”

Fred leaned closer to Ron and stage-whispered. “Sex, is the word you’re looking for.”

Ron rolled his eyes and appeared frustrated with the whole process. “I know what it is!” he snapped. “I just don’t understand—”

“Watch,” George scolded with a smile, “and be amazed.”

“Aroused,” Fred quickly corrected.

“Or that,” George conceded. He mashed his finger down onto the remote and the telly lit up.

Harry’s stomach did a funny sort of flip, and dread mixed with curiosity filled him. He had a feeling…

When the slinky music began, his guess was confirmed.

“Holy Merlin!” Ron sat up and goggled at the screen where a buxom young lady was hard at work on a young man.

“Porn!” the twins chorused in glee. They summoned bowls of popcorn and began to munch, their attention never wavering from the images.

At first, Harry’s face burned with guilt and embarrassment, but as the film continued—it really couldn’t be considered a story as there was absolutely no plot to follow—he found it harder and harder to focus on the characters on the screen. Blood flow was becoming a problem as his mind wandered, replacing Ginny’s face with the woman on the screen. It was a very far stretch, but Harry’s mind was up to the challenge.

The room was silent except for the moans and groans from the telly and the occasional crunch of popcorn.

“Now that’s not something any book can teach you,” Fred pointed out as an acrobatic sexual act began on the screen. They all had to tilt their heads slightly to watch.

Through it all, Harry kept sneaking peaks at the redheads in the room, praying they were all far too occupied to suss out who Harry was envisioning in his head. His groin ached with arousal and he quickly pressed one of the twins’ manky throw pillows over his lap, noticing that Ron had done the same.

One thing was for sure, Sirius had never imparted *this* sort of knowledge. His lecture was more along the lines of ‘tab A goes into slot B’, and making Harry practice the contraceptive charm over and over again. And while Harry had definitely had nighttime fantasies—alright, and a few daytime ones, also—he’d never really considered all that could be done with a willing witch.

When the screen faded to black, Fred gave a satisfied sigh. “There’s a back bedroom and the bathroom if needed,” he quipped with a knowing grin.

Any stimulation that Harry felt drained completely when he contemplated doing *that* here, while

everyone waited in the living room, knowing what he was up to.

"Er, thanks," he mumbled. "I think I'm, er… all right."

"Me too," Ron answered swiftly.

George quickly resumed his role as lecturer and the charts and paperwork flew back into place. "Now then, are there any questions from the class?"

A hundred different things entered Harry's head—like, how did he make Ginny sound like the woman in the film without fumbling around like a child, and could he really hold that one position without getting a cramp in his thigh, and, most importantly, how did he make Ginny ditch Dean so that they could discover the joys of this type of activity together?

He and Ron exchanged a glance and Harry knew they were both thinking the same thing—no way in hell either of them was going to ask a question right now.

"I think… I think we're all right," Ron said after he cleared his throat. "Harry?"

"No!" Harry burst out. "Nothing at all."

Fred and George both gave knowing smirks but didn't pursue the matter. "Fine, then we'll just get you back to the Burrow. I'm sure Mum would love to hear all about your little, ahem, shopping trip."

"Merlin," Ron groaned. "She's not going to… She doesn't, I mean…"

"Don't worry, Ronnie," George chuckled. "She has no idea why we brought you out today. Now *Ginny* on the other hand, I'd watch out for. That girl is far too observant for her own good."

Harry's mind went blank when that fact hammered home. She'd known… No wonder she'd been so amused when they'd been flooing out. She'd known exactly what he and Ron had been walking in to.

A shiver of delight and worry shot through him. Did she know how Harry felt about her? Somehow, he didn't think so. His secret was still safe, even from her all-knowing twin brothers. Either he'd dodged that particular spell, or he was now brilliant at Occlumency.

He and Ron were just about to floo back to the Burrow when Ron stopped, his face frozen in terror.

"Wait a minute. You said that Bill taught all of this to Charlie?"

"More or less." Fred shrugged casually. "I doubt he had our sense of style about it, but—"

"And… and Charlie taught it to Percy?" Ron's red face was growing paler by the minute and Harry tried to follow his train of thought. "And Percy—"

"By jove," George proclaimed, "I think he's finally got the gist of things, old chap!" He clapped Fred on the shoulder and they both laughed.

“Does that mean that I… that I…” Ron swallowed and a horrifying thought filtered into Harry’s head. Was Ron responsible now for taking *Ginny* aside and…

Harry swallowed as the thought continued.

“I have to *talk* to Ginny!”

The twins erupted in laughter, leaning on each other as spasms of hilarity shook them. “You? Teach Ginny?”

Ron gave a sort of half-chuckle, half-whimper and Harry reached out to place his hand on his mate’s shoulder, steadying them both.

“Mum did that ages ago, Ronnie,” George finally choked out.

“But thanks for the laugh,” Fred quipped. “I’ll be giggling about that at inappropriate moments forever now.”

Ron glared at his older brothers. “Gits,” he hissed before tossing floo powder into the grate and watching the flames burst bright green.

Harry stood awkwardly with the twins as Ron flooed away.

“Hope we answered a few of your questions, Harry,” George said with a huge grin.

“And added to your store of knowledge.”

Harry could only nod in response. Already his mind was queuing up ideas for tonight’s fantasy. The line for the shower tomorrow morning might be brutal, but Harry thought it just might be worth it.

“We didn’t figure Sirius would impart more than the requisite necessary bits,” Fred said.

“That’s what older brothers are for.” George grinned and slapped Harry on the shoulder. “Off you go, then. Say hello to the family for us. And watch out for Ginny; she’s likely to be full of mischief concerning Ron. She seemed quite pleased to spill his secrets, and only too eager to see you included as well, mate.”

Harry’s eyes widened in horror at the thought. He’d just assumed that it was Ron dragging him into all of this, but perhaps it had been Ginny’s undertaking all along. She’d gotten the twins onto the idea and he had been a helpless victim.

But he couldn’t really be mad at her, especially given the thoughts of the last few hours that had been playing in his mind. Plus, he’d be sure to stoke the fires of Ron’s torture by letting Ginny know that Ron had almost been the one to give her ‘the talk’.

“I’ll, er… I’ll be sure to thank her one of these days,” he stammered out and flooed away. He would *definitely* have to pay her back, Harry decided. Although, perhaps if he ever figured out a way to get her to ditch Dean, she might just enjoy the payback far too much and Harry could get answers to his question about the thigh cramping position…

Part 5: Siriusly, Remus?

Remus waited until Sirius had managed almost one full glass of Firewhiskey before he pounced. Perhaps it was underhanded to attack when his best mate was well on the way to being completely pissed, but Remus knew they were running out of time. It was the middle of August already, after all.

"Sirius, we need to have a talk."

Grey eyes met his over the edge of the glass and Remus steeled himself for the argument that was sure to come.

"Going to lecture me again, Mother Remus, about my drinking? Going to tell me how irresponsible it is to have the Firewhiskey around when the kiddies are in the house?" He grinned that wicked, haunted grin and finished off the liquid. "If so, you can save it. Molly's already given me the full treatment. And I make sure to lock it up to keep it away from her brood. And Harry," he added as an afterthought.

Remus cleared his throat. "I wasn't planning on lecturing, but if you feel you need it—"

"I'm quite all right, I promise you," Sirius said with a shake of his head. His shaggy hair—recently trimmed by Molly—was still too long to be stylish and gave him an unkempt feel that made him look far too old. The black shadows under his eyes didn't help, either.

"I think you need to have a talk with Harry—"

Sirius sat up straight in his chair and leaned onto the table, his dark eyes bright now. It never failed to amaze Remus that Sirius could go from buzzed to fully alert in a moment's notice. "What's wrong? Did something happen?"

He braced his hands on the chair as if to rise, but stilled when Remus held his hand out. "He's fine. He's upstairs with Ron and Hermione. I'm sure Hermione is trying to get them to do their summer homework."

Sirius relaxed slightly but peered at Remus. "Then why…"

"He's fifteen, Sirius," Remus said heavily. He waited for his friend to pick up on the hint, rather than have Remus spell it out for him.

"I was there when he was born," Sirius countered with a raised eyebrow. "I know very well how old he is."

Remus sat back in his seat and contemplated pouring himself a small glass of the amber liquid in Sirius' bottle. He didn't want to be the one to remind Sirius of his godfatherly duties. It just didn't sit well with Remus to lecture about parenting. He wasn't a parent, or a godparent, for Merlin's sake. He was a teacher! Teachers didn't guide their students in the matters of… of…

He blew out a deep breath and spread his scared hands on the table. "Do you remember being

fifteen?"

Sirius narrowed his eyes and then let the corner of his mouth quirk up slightly. "Vaguely."

"We were… Merlin, we were on top of the world back then."

"Fifteen," Sirius said wistfully. He reached for the bottle to pour another glass, but Remus was faster. He snatched it away and held it, hovering over the table.

"Harry is *fifteen*, Sirius. He's right in the middle of puberty and, no doubt, has some questions that he needs answers to."

Sirius froze and his mouth gaped open before he snapped it shut. "No…"

"Yes," Remus affirmed and put the cap onto the bottle of alcohol. "You're his godfather, Sirius, he'll want to hear it from you."

"Surely…" Sirius still stared with wide eyes. "Someone has to have…"

"Who?" Remus countered calmly. "You can't expect the Weasleys to have done it, and you know Vernon Dursley wouldn't—"

Sirius pushed his chair back from the table with a great scraping sound and paced in the narrow kitchen. Despite Molly's best efforts the entire house still had a drab, dead feel to it. Remus had grown used to it over the past months, but it was very depressing to for Sirius be hidden away in here.

"Are you sure the Weasleys haven't…?" Sirius looked panicked, as if he'd never contemplated this particular duty before and had been hit with the reality of being the responsible adult in Harry's life.

"Arthur came to me," Remus admitted. "He was… concerned. I agreed that it was your place to impart the wisdom."

Sirius snorted. "Wisdom. Right." He ran his hands over his face roughly and pulled his long hair back from his face. "I can't even… I have no idea where I'd even begin."

"I imagine the beginning would be the best place…" Remus' amusement grew as Sirius glared at him. He sighed and tried not to have too much fun at Sirius' expense. "If you can remember fifteen at all, you know you've already missed most of the core subjects. But I've seen Ron's eyes wandering to Hermione—oh, don't act surprised, I'm not the only one who sees it. And Harry couldn't seem to tear his eyes away from Ginny the other day and that shirt she had on that showed a bit of her belly. The boy needs guidance, Sirius. At that age, girls are a wonderfully enticing mystery that needs exploring."

Sirius grunted and flopped into his chair. "You'd be better for it."

"Not on your life," Remus barked out. He laughed and then sobered. "You're the person he looks up to most, Sirius. He trusts you. He knows you won't mess him around and give him false information

like some others would." When Sirius gave a dubious look, Remus smiled. "Imagine getting 'the talk' from Fred and George."

Sirius snorted. "At least he'd be entertained. I haven't… Merlin, Moony, I haven't *thought* about a woman in years! Dementors rather suck your sex drive away, you know. I honestly wouldn't know where to start."

"Harry's not stupid."

They both turned as Nymphadora Tonks sashayed into the kitchen. Remus felt his face heat and refused to look at the attractive young woman. She'd been trying to catch his eye for weeks now and Remus couldn't imagine what she wanted. Sirius said she'd always been on the wild side. Perhaps she thought flirting with a dark creature was some thrill.

"He knows more than he lets on."

"And you know this how?" Sirius challenged with a smile.

"All fifteen year old boys are pretty much the same," Tonks explained. She pulled out a chair at the end of the table and spun it around, straddling it backwards. The short shirt she wore rode up and showed off a pierced bellybutton. Remus tore his eyes away from the glittering jewel and swore softly.

"They're ruled by hormones that drive their brains—and not the brains in their heads." She chuckled and used Remus' unused glass to pour herself a splash of Firewhiskey. "You just have to ease him into it. If you do it right, you won't have to lead the conversation at all."

"If you're so informative," Sirius snapped, "you should do it."

Tonks smiled and her eyebrow rose as if she were actually contemplating doing just that. "Won't work, love," she finally sighed. "We're too close in age, plus there's the whole gender thing in our way. I'd love to instruct the boy, but it would likely get out of hand and leave him more embarrassed than if someone more… manly did it." She gave a small wink to Remus and he couldn't help but snort.

Sirius gaped at her. "You'd actually…"

"Probably not," Tonks shrugged eventually. "He *is* cute—that mop of hair and those green eyes—but he's a bit on the skinny side for me. I like my men with a bit of something to them."

Remus refused to look at her; sure she was staring at him. It wouldn't do to lead her on; after all there was no future in starting something with the lovely young Auror.

"And you really think I should…" Sirius trailed off, glancing at the stairs that led up to where Harry was.

"I think," Remus said thoughtfully, "that if you don't do it, no one will. Imagine his embarrassment at starting something with a girl and having no clue what he's doing." Sirius seemed almost convinced by that. He tilted his head in contemplation and Remus went for the kill. "Think of

James, and how he'd want someone to make sure his son had the information he needed."

Sirius swore loudly and Remus couldn't help but smile. Tonks gave a satisfied little laugh and gulped the rest of her drink.

"You didn't have to pull James into it, you know," Sirius said finally. "I would have done it."

"Good," Remus said firmly.

Sirius sighed and rubbed his face once more. "It seems like only yesterday that James' father was taking the two of us aside—we were thirteen." He gave a concerned look. "Er… by fifteen I'd already…"

"Exactly," Remus nodded.

"You don't think Harry's… er…"

"No, I don't," Remus soothed Sirius. "I think Harry's got enough on his mind right now with all of this." He gestured to the kitchen, but Sirius knew what he meant. "But we can't overlook the fact that he's a growing teenage boy, and a resourceful one at that. He'll get the information somehow, Sirius. Wouldn't you rather he gets it from you?"

"I'd rather he gets it from you," Sirius corrected, "but I know you're not going to give in on that regard."

"I'm not his godfather," Remus repeated once more.

"I already feel like a failure, Moony, no need to drag me around the floor once more," Sirius grumbled.

"Compromise," Tonks interrupted the mild argument. "I'd say you both do it. His godfather and the professor he adores. Between the two of you, I'm sure you can manage to cobble something together."

Remus glared at the cheeky Auror, but she only smirked back at him.

Sirius latched onto the idea and his whole face brightened. "Yes! Brilliant!"

"Now listen here," Remus started, but he wasn't allowed to finish.

"You're the one Arthur came to," Sirius pointed out.

"And we all know you're more focused than Sirius," Tonks added un-helpfully. Sirius only nodded his agreement to her statement.

"I know even less than you!" Remus roared. He gulped back his outburst, wincing at the thought of Molly walking in on *this* particular conversation. Or worse, Harry coming to investigate the uproar. "I learned what I know from you and James!" he hissed.

Sirius chuckled and poured himself more to drink. "I remember the look on your face when Jamsie

and I told you that to get into Susie Clemen's skirt all you had to do was—"

"Ahem!"

Tonks giggled horribly at Remus' discomfort and he glared at her. Sirius seemed particularly amused at the byplay between the two and Remus silently cursed him with every filthy word the Marauders had ever used or invented.

"It's done," Sirius settled everything. "We'll take Harry aside tomorrow and make sure he knows which end is up."

Tonks clinked her glass with Sirius' and they seemed inordinately pleased with themselves.

Remus took a drink straight from the bottle and wondered how his brilliant plan to get Sirius to deal with Harry's education had fallen apart.

* * *

"You wanted to see me?"

Harry ducked his head into the drawing room and peered curiously at Sirius and Remus. Tonks, who Harry didn't expect to be in there, gave a strange smile.

"Er… rather," Remus agreed. He looked nervous, like when Harry had first approached him in third year about fighting the Dementors.

"Come in, Harry," Sirius said. He was slouched in a chair and Harry was glad to see there wasn't a bottle of Firewhiskey next to him. Hermione had been grumbling about Sirius' drinking more and more. From what Harry had seen of this house and knew of Sirius' past, Harry didn't really blame him for wanting to drown reality out.

"I'll just…" Tonks motioned toward the door. "Good luck." She clapped Harry on the shoulder and walked out, closing the door behind her. A squelching sound followed and Harry's mind raced, trying to decide what this whole thing was about. Neither Ron nor Hermione seemed to have any clue why Harry had been summoned alone to the room. Even Ginny and the twins, who normally knew almost everything that went on in Grimmauld Place hadn't had any clue.

"What's this about?" Harry queried. "Has something happened?"

Remus motioned to the sofa across from Sirius and Harry sank down onto the cushion.

"Everything is fine, Harry," Sirius soothed. "We just wanted—"

Remus cleared his throat and his eyebrows rose.

"We thought you might have…" Sirius trailed off and shifted uncomfortably in his chair.

"You're fifteen now, Harry."

Harry still had no idea what he was doing in here. "Er… yeah. Fifteen."

“And… girls,” Sirius blurted and then winced. He and Remus held some sort of silent conversation including small head shakes and sighs.

“Girls?” Harry asked. Now he was completely confused.

“Yeah,” Sirius agreed. “You might, one day soon, start thinking about girls.”

“Like… Hermione?” Harry asked. He couldn’t quite figure out what Sirius was getting at.

“Well, er…”

“Or other girls,” Remus suggested quietly. “The point Sirius is trying to make—and failing rather spectacularly at—is that you’re growing older, Harry, and your body has already gone through changes.”

Suddenly, it dawned on Harry what they were talking about. His eyes went wide and he flushed before staring at his knees. “Er, oh.”

“We just don’t want you to be without… information when you need it,” Sirius said. Remus gave an approving little nod and Sirius grumbled.

“… need a drink after this… *he’ll* probably need a drink…”

“I, er…” Harry wondered if he should say something. Were they waiting for him to admit that he liked girls? Surely they didn’t want him to talk about his, well, *thoughts* about girls. His dreams, especially lately, had been riddled with a parade of lovely womanly parts—the delicate curve of Hermione’s neck when she’d pulled her hair up the other day, the pale smooth skin when Ginny came down the other day wearing cut off jeans, the sparkle of something in Tonks’ bellybutton the other day, the dark, exotic eyes of Cho Chang as she watched him, and random other thoughts of what might be hidden under Hogwarts robes. It seemed no girl was immune to Harry’s wayward fantasies.

Granted, these dreams were much better than having Voldemort in his head, but only just. It was a different sort of torture.

“It’s perfectly normal,” Sirius clarified. His voice was tight, as if he were on the verge of panic. “To think about girls, or dream of them.”

Harry’s eyes went wider as he thought that maybe Sirius might have some Seer blood in him. Had he just read Harry’s thoughts?

“Don’t forget that we were once fifteen, Harry,” Remus explained softly.

“And curiosity is a natural thing too,” Sirius continued painfully. Each word was pulled from his throat, but at least the words were flowing now.

Harry shifted uncomfortably, but had to admit he was interested in what Sirius had to say. One day he hoped to need the knowledge that his godfather was offering, but he had no idea when that might be.

“And it’s normal to get… excited and… respond when you’re faced with something like that.”

“Er…”

“The thing is,” Sirius said with a sigh, “that it’s up to you to know when you’re ready to pursue something more serious. There’s nothing wrong with a good snog now and again…” He chuckled fondly and Harry forced a weak sort of sound from his throat. “This one time, James and I took these two girls to—”

“Padfoot,” Remus cautioned with a shake of his head.

Harry leaned forward almost ready to ask Sirius to continue. He wanted to know what his father had done. It most likely involved a girl other than his mother—as Sirius hadn’t mentioned her specifically—but Harry felt a yearning to know how his father had dealt with all of this. Had he always known Lily was the one for him? Did he have stray thoughts while he walked through the Hogwarts hallways and glimpsed a feminine curve?

Sirius grimaced and swore quietly. “Er… not to say that your father was some sort of… cad, or anything. James was always very discreet when it came to birds.”

Remus gave a cough and tilted his head toward Harry. “Move on, Padfoot.”

“And he didn’t sleep around, or anything,” Sirius continued as if he hadn’t heard Remus at all. “In fact, I think Lily was his only, er… Anyway, that’s something you want to remember—discretion. Girls don’t like to hear about the things you’ve done with other girls. They like to think they’re the only one—”

“Sirius! Try and stick with the plan,” Remus warned once more.

“The plan?” Sirius startled and then nodded firmly. “Yes, the plan. Er… where were we?”

Harry gave a helpless shrug. “Discretion?”

“Yes,” Sirius said. “Respect, also.”

“Let’s throw in *protection* while we’re at it,” Remus said. He glared at Sirius once more and Harry felt a hysterical bubble of laughter build inside him at the whole situation.

“Protection, yes!” Sirius jumped to his feet and brandished his wand. “Let’s work on the contraceptive spell. Nothing worse than getting caught with your trousers around your knees, a willing witch, and no clue what spell you need to do to keep from being surrounded by little witches and wizards.”

“Sirius,” Remus gave a whimper and Harry sighed. The discussion, while somewhat amusing, was slowly disintegrating. Although, Harry had to admit, this *talk* with Sirius wasn’t something he would ever forget.

* * *

It was hours later when Harry walked slowly into the bedroom he shared with Ron. He was slightly

tipsy—Sirius finally prevailed on Remus to allow Harry a small drink while they discussed *technique*. Harry couldn't help the smile that spread on his face.

"You all right?"

Harry started when Ron sat up from his bed and set his worn copy of *Which Broomstick* to the side.

"Er… yeah," Harry said. The whole thing had started out wonky, but ended on a high note. Harry couldn't wait to find himself in some of the situations Sirius had talked about.

Remus claimed it was simply bragging, but Harry wasn't complaining. Apparently, Sirius had been quite the playboy in his time. Harry could believe it.

"What was that all about?" Ron asked. "And why couldn't Hermione and I come in too?"

Harry forced his eyes to the side and hoped his face didn't flame horribly. "Er… you would have been all right, I guess, but… but not Hermione."

Ron's eyebrows slammed together before rising slowly. "They gave you the talk, didn't they?"

Harry snorted. "Sirius did. Remus just tried to keep him on task, more or less."

"And?"

Harry sat down on his bed and smiled at the images playing in his mind. "And… it was strange, but brilliant."

Ron looked jealous and crossed his arms over his chest. "It figures you'd get it from Sirius. Dad gave me mine. Talked for two hours about plugs and sockets. I still have no idea what he meant."

Harry felt a twinge of sympathy for his friend. "I'm sure if you asked, Sirius would…" He trailed off at the horrified look on Ron's face.

"Er… thanks, I think I'll be fine."

"Sirius is… a wealth of information," Harry said finally. "I could probably… eventually, you know, tell you about it."

Ron looked torn and slightly wary, but gave a little shrug. "Eventually."

"So…" They sat in awkward silence. "What did you do while I was gone?"

Ron played with the pages of his magazine. "Nothing," he said. "Hermione and Ginny were in here for awhile. Fred and George came in for a bit and we talked—mostly trying to decide what Sirius wanted with you. Fred and George figured it was something to do with the Order. I think Hermione and Ginny might have known, though—they were awfully quiet and left when Tonks showed up."

Harry felt his face flame horribly and pulled his knees up to rest his elbows on. "Hermione and… and Ginny?"

“There was a bit of giggling going on when they left.” Ron scowled at the door, as if the scene was playing out in front of him now. “I didn’t know what it meant then, but…”

“Tonks knew where I was,” Harry admitted. “She was probably laughing at me with the girls about it.” He wasn’t sure how he felt about that, but let his annoyance die away. He simply couldn’t seem to stay mad when his head felt all floaty and stuffed with so much information.

“Maybe.” Ron shrugged casually. “I suppose… there’s one consolation to the whole thing.”

“Yeah?” Harry lifted his face and peered at his friend. “What’s that?”

“You probably know more than Fred and George about sex,” he pointed out. “Dad talked to them about it too.” Harry couldn’t help but laugh at that. “And making us practice the, er… charm over and over again. It’ll be a wonder if any of us ever procreate.” Ron shook his head and snorted. “Plugs and sockets?”

Harry laughed at the image of Mr. Weasley pulling out his collection of Muggle plugs to teach his children about sex. Perhaps he should share a few things with Ron, just so there was hope for another generation of Weasleys. Eventually.

“Sirius told me about this one time…”

Part 6: Awkward, Thy Name Is Ronald

“Harry, erm…”

Harry looked up from the Auror manual he was studying after marking his place with his finger. “Yeah?”

Ron stood in the doorway to Harry’s bedroom, shifting his weight side to side and not really looking at Harry. He gave a sort of half shrug and turned to leave, but then spun around once more before running his hand through his hair.

“Er… Harry, I…”

Harry sighed and flipped his book over onto the desk to keep it open. “What’s up?” he demanded. “Has something happened?” A jolt of fear ran through him. Surely, nothing had happened, had it? Everything had been quiet for so many months that a dark shadow inside Harry whispered it was too good to be true.

“No, no, nothing… everything is fine,” Ron assured him.

Harry peered at his best mate and tried to decide what was wrong, other than the fact that Ron’s left eyebrow was bright blue. Working in George’s shop was hazardous to various bodily parts, but Harry had seen much worse on Ron since he’d started helping out at the Diagon Alley store.

“Then why are you in here?” Harry demanded huffily. He hated to be annoyed with his friend, but Harry had to get through five chapters tonight and he wasn’t having much luck with the difficult, dry wording. “I mean, not that I’m not happy to see you, and all, Ron, but I’ve got—”

Ron lurched forward and sat heavily on the end of Harry’s bed before shooting a furtive look toward the hallway. “I… I was talking with George today and…” He swallowed thickly and looked at the door again.

Harry stood and moved to the door before sticking his head out and looking up and down the hall. No one was out there—the whole Burrow was quiet, in fact. Mrs. Weasley had been planning to spend the afternoon at Andromeda’s and Mr. Weasley was still at work. Now that Ginny was back at Hogwarts, Harry spent a lot of his free time in the quiet house.

“And?”

Ron gave a pained look and squeezed his hands tightly together in his lap. “And, er… So we were talking…”

“You’ve already said that part,” Harry said. He leaned against the wall and crossed his arms over his chest. He honestly had no idea what Ron was on about, but was tempted to pull his wand and check for signs of a Confundus Charm, or worse.

Ron nodded. “Oh, er, yeah. I suppose I did.” He choked out a dry little laugh that faded quickly.

Silence stretched between them and Harry finally huffed in annoyance.

"Have you been hexed? Did Ginny send another Tongue Twister curse by post again?" Harry almost laughed at the memory of the hex his girlfriend had affixed to a parchment and mailed to her brother. (Harry suspected Hermione was somewhere behind the devious plot as well—the spell work required *was* highly advanced.) Ron had sent a letter to Ginny voicing his opinion when a photograph of Harry and Ginny snogging in Hogsmeade had been published on the cover of *Witch Weekly*.

"No." Ron glared at the floor and shuddered. Harry knew that Ginny's brilliant idea had inspired George to create a whole line of products aimed at revenge, and he had a feeling Ron's role in the whole process had been more of a test subject than partner. "No. It's not that. We were talking about… about our girlfriends, you know, and, well… one thing led to another."

Harry blinked and tried to process just what any of this had to do with him.

"And George asked if… you know." He shrugged a shoulder and peered up at Harry, who was more lost now than ever.

"No, Ron, I don't know. In fact, I have no idea what you're talking about. Did George slip you a Babbling Beverage? You're making no sense whatsoever right now. If this is just some way to take the piss because I'm dating Ginny, or to get me to—"

Ron jumped up and pointed at Harry. "Yes! No, well, not really. Not taking the piss or anything. I know we've had our fun in the past, threatening things and such… And, well, George already apologized for putting shrinking powder in your boxers. And Charlie might have sent that drawing of you being torn apart by dragons, but it was all in good fun, mate."

Harry scowled and grumbled. He had been less than amused at the myriad of things Ginny's brothers had put him through simply for their own amusement. He knew that they didn't disapprove of him as a match for Ginny, but they claimed he needed to survive the Weasley Initiation to join the family.

Everything had been kept rather quiet before Ginny left—none of her brothers wanted to inspire her particular brand of wrath—but once she'd gone back to Hogwarts, open season on Harry had begun. So far, he'd suffered in silence, but if they tried much more Harry wasn't above hiding behind the skirts of his girlfriend.

He may have defeated Voldemort and joined the Auror Corps, but he knew Ginny's ire was something *he* wasn't brave enough to be in front of. He didn't envy any of her brothers if she sussed out what they'd been doing to Harry.

"But we…" Ron swallowed and flopped back to sit on the edge of the bed. His knee bounced up and down nervously. "We—George and me—were talking today…"

Harry cleared his throat and contemplated hexing his friend, simply to force Ron to get on with it.

"And he asked if I knew… Merlin, Harry, this is hard. You understand I don't want to be in this position. It's not like I want to think about you and Ginny…" He screwed his face up and gave a

disgusted shiver. “But when Bill came and we started talking to him… he said we had to know if you’d… It was only fair. And we all want to make sure Ginny is, you know, treated properly. I argued for you, mate.” Ron gave an earnest, pleading look. “I know you—have known you for *years* and I told them you wouldn’t mess her around. And that you’d—”

“For Merlin’s sake, Ron! Just spit it out!” Harry roared. His palms were sweating and his mind was racing ahead of Ron, trying to decide what his friend could possibly be stammering on about.

“SEX!” Ron exploded. His own jaw dropped and he blinked helplessly before his face turned a bright sort of puce color. “I mean, not sex, but… well, yes.”

The outburst threw Harry for a moment and he stared owlishly at his friend. “What?”

“I promise I don’t want to know, mate.” Ron held his hands up in innocence and stood before pacing the floorboards in the small room that had once been Fred and George’s but now belonged to Harry. “I suggested we just get a book, you know, but George said that you wouldn’t read it just on principle—that it was too much like Hermione. And Bill said that we,” he swallowed thickly, “it was our responsibility to make sure you… you know.”

To make sure he… *you know*?

“The talk,” Ron finally whispered. He jolted back as if Harry had shocked him and peered at the doorway.

The *talk*? Ron seriously thought that Harry needed to talk about sex? And Ginny’s brothers had to make sure he… *you know*?

Harry stared at Ron incredulously. “Isn’t it a bit too late for that, Ron?”

Ron’s face turned even redder, if possible, and he growled as he took a long step toward Harry. “What the hell do you mean ‘too late’? Have you and Ginny…?”

“What?” Harry choked out. “Ron, you… I… no! I just meant… Sirius already… Before fifth year!”

Ron’s ire drained away slowly as realization began to set in. He looked embarrassed and darted out the door, leaving Harry gaping after him.

“What the hell?” Harry roared. Before he could follow his best friend, Ron appeared in the doorway again.

“It’s not like we wanted details, or anything, mate,” he hissed. “We just wanted to make sure you were… you know, educated, and didn’t have any questions or anything. None of us want to think about you and Ginny…” His eyes became glassy and his skin looked slightly green.

Harry sighed and dropped into the chair at his desk. He rubbed his eyes under his glasses. “Ron, let me make something perfectly clear to you. I love Ginny.” Ron gave a jerky sort of nod and leaned on the doorway. “And I plan on being with her for a very, very long time. If things… progress—and I fully expect that they will some day—I don’t plan on sharing any details with you. Ever.”

Ron nodded gratefully.

"You go back to your brothers and tell them that it's all taken care of. Sirius really did take me aside before fifth year, and if I did have any questions, rest assured you would be the last person on earth I would come to."

The two friends stared at each other and Harry fought down an unbelievable wave of laughter that swelled inside him.

"We drew straws," Ron finally admitted with a grimace. "I think George might have hexed me so I got the short one."

Harry snorted. "Wouldn't put it past him."

"Bill either," Ron said. "We just…"

A strange feeling filled Harry. Yes, he was still embarrassed by having to discuss his sex life with his girlfriend's brother, but Ron—and George and Bill—had been genuine in their concerns that Harry have all the answers he needed. In a twisted sort of way, it was touching.

"Would you have actually sat me down and talked about it?" Harry asked.

Ron swore under his breath and tilted his head in thought. "I *tried*, but we both know I'm rubbish at things like that. If Hermione had been here, I would have paid her a thousand galleons to do it."

Harry laughed. "Can you imagine? That would be just as bad!" Visions of McGonagall-like lectures filled Harry's head and he thanked Merlin that his brainy friend was safely ensconced at Hogwarts.

"Don't, er…" Ron grimaced. "Don't tell Ginny about this one either, yeah?"

"I'll add it to your debt pile," Harry promised him.

Ron looked somewhat mollified. "Er… thanks."

"You'll all owe me," Harry clarified, "and one of these days I'll collect on those debts."

Any relief on Ron's face disappeared and he turned away, muttering about boyfriends and sisters.

Part 7: The Art Of Seduction

"Wotcher, Harry!"

Harry looked up from perusing the books in the cramped library at Grimmauld Place and smiled at his new friend.

"Hi, Tonks. Not on duty today?"

The Auror wore a strange sort of look and Harry swallowed thickly before turning to stare at the books. His mind whirled as he tried to figure out what she may want.

"Nope," Tonks said. She flopped into an old, worn leather sofa and swung one leg up over the side. Harry couldn't help but look at the limb, wrapped in tattered, holey stockings. He had never considered Tonks a tall woman, but her leg seemed to go on forever today before it ended in a black combat boot.

"And I'm utterly bored."

Harry shook himself and cleared his throat. "Er, Hermione's around… somewhere. I think she and Ginny were doing, er… something." He chanced another glance and saw her watching him. The look in her eyes made him swallow and duck down the next aisle of books as his body reacted to what he was seeing.

"No, no, no," he hissed quietly. "It's *Tonks*." His heart pounded in his chest and a part of him argued against the more rational side.

Yes, but it's Tonks!

Okay, so Harry could admit that the Auror was attractive, but he didn't think of her in *that* way. Did he?

He pressed his head against a row of dusty books and willed his mind to focus elsewhere. The fact that he could hear her sighs and the way her leg brushed the leather when she swung it didn't help.

"I think I'll just stay here, if that's all right with you," she called out.

Harry took a shuddering breath. "That's…" He trailed off when his voice cracked and cursed himself silently. "That's fine," he said once more, without the falter.

"So, Harry, tell me a little about yourself."

He startled and dug his fingernails into the first book on the shelf before ripping it from its dusty home. *Salazar Slytherin: Father of the Greatest House in Hogwarts* Harry blinked at the title and almost shoved it away from him, but holding it gave him something other than Tonks to focus on. Would she notice if he simply turned and ran?

He had absolutely no idea what she wanted or what he was supposed to do. Was she taking the

mickey somehow? Surely Fred and George would pop out at any minute and proclaim it all one colossal joke. And then Harry would hex them—restriction on underage magic be damned!

"Oh, er… not much to tell, really…" Harry said. 'Hunted by an evil dark lord, live with my disgusting Muggle relatives, trapped in Grimmauld Place for the entire summer. Nothing special.'

"I'm sure that's not the case."

Harry jumped when Tonks appeared next to him. She leaned on the bookshelf and Harry stared at the vast expanse of cleavage he hadn't noticed before; he'd been so focused on her legs.

"I'm sure you're just… full of interesting things." Tonks finished with a laugh that made the hair all over Harry's body stand on end. His skin crawled with electricity and he clapped the book closed, putting the heavy tome between them.

"After all, you're fifteen now." She reached out and pressed a fingertip to Harry's forearm.

"Er… yeah." Harry nodded jerkily and took a step backwards. Tonks advanced until Harry was pressed up against the wall, with no escape. "Fif-fifteen."

"I remember fifteen," Tonks said wistfully. "Such a time of… curiosity and… exploration."

Harry considered bolting, ducking around Tonks and fleeing to his room where he could lock the door. But then that other voice in his mind started in again.

Obviously, she doesn't mind. She sought you out, you prat, don't muck this up!

"Er… fifteen," Harry clarified once more. "Right between… fourteen and erm, er…"

"Sixteen," Tonks supplied with a knowing little grin. She moved closer until her breasts just brushed his arm. The book he was holding became heavier and nearly slipped from his arms as he stared at what was being placed right before him.

"You like me, don't you, Harry?"

"Sure," Harry agreed. His voice broke again and he winced. Tonks seemed amused because she smiled and slid her teeth along her bottom lip. "You're… great!"

"I like you too, Harry," she whispered.

Harry licked his lip and didn't protest when she took the book from his arms and tossed it to the side with a loud thump. She was pressed against him now and Harry knew there was no way he could hide his interest in her, not when she was this close. Sweat beaded on his upper lip and he began reciting potions ingredients, forcing himself to remember lessons with Snape—particularly nasty lessons—just to stay in control.

"But maybe you don't like me enough," Tonks said quietly. Her hand brushed his side, over his shirt, and Harry fought the urge to laugh in nervousness. He had no idea what he was supposed to do. His eyes darted toward the far side of the room, searching for something… Perhaps it was rescue—because Tonks looked like she could eat him alive—or maybe it was checking to make sure no one

would interrupt.

"Maybe you'd like someone like this instead." Tonks' appearance shifted until she was an exact image of Hermione.

Harry shuddered at her closeness and blinked. "Er… I…" He squirmed uncomfortably and looked away, unsure why he felt so strange about the thought of Hermione standing in front of him, pursuing him in this way. It made his stomach turn, actually.

"Nope, that's not it," Tonks-Hermione whispered. She moved closer still and changed. Now Harry was looking down at a perfect replica of Ginny. "How about this, Harry? Do you have a thing for redheads?"

Harry made a choking sound in the back of his throat and he couldn't help but notice how Tonks had managed to get the one particular group of freckles near Ginny's lip just right. They bunched and almost disappeared when Ginny smiled—just like Tonks was doing now.

"Interesting," Tonks-Ginny said. She rubbed against him and Harry hissed in pleasure and pain. If she continued, he wasn't going to be able to hold out any longer and this whole thing was going to end embarrassingly.

"Or maybe this." She shifted and Harry was looking into dark oriental eyes. "Fred and George told me about Cho, Harry," she whispered.

Harry's whole insides twisted—Tonks wasn't just like Cho, but enough that it made Harry's tongue feel all thick in his throat.

"I er…" He rubbed the back of his neck and wished he could breathe in the small space that was interminably hot.

"You do know about sex, don't you Harry?"

Tonks shifted back to herself and Harry couldn't help but be grateful. Then again, Tonks was enough of an enigma without adding in all the changing appearances and the havoc they were wreaking on Harry's teenage body and mind.

"Er… enough," he managed. Her finger traced patterns on his arm and Harry shivered.

"Well, it starts with kissing," Tonks began, as if she hadn't heard him at all. "And kissing can be… marvelous. There's the innocent I-like-you kissing, and the more involved I-fancy-you kissing. And then there's snogging. Do you know the difference, Harry?"

He tried—*really* tried—to nod his head in the affirmative, but it came out more like a side to side shake.

Tonks laughed in a way that made Harry's body groan in anticipation and trepidation.

That's an invitation if I've ever heard one!

"Maybe I'll be the one to teach you the difference," Tonks said. "But you look like you could use a

bit more… education."

Harry jerked his head to the side when her finger traced his jaw and then drifted down his chest. He was close to losing control—his groin throbbed painfully and he had to shift just to get some relief. Only, with Tonks pressed right against him, the relief only led to wanting more.

"And then there's sex," Tonks said. "Sex is fun, Harry, as long as you know what you're doing, who you're doing it to, and how to protect yourself." She nudged his waist as she said it and Harry whimpered. He turned back to find she was closer than ever.

"Any questions?" Her breath was hot against his face and Harry had to swallow when her lips brushed his.

"Didn't think so."

Just as Harry was about to give in and really kiss her, Tonks moved away. He was left with a wave of lust and coldness, mixing to toss his body over a proverbial cliff.

"You're a good kid, Harry."

Harry blinked and watched as Tonks redid the buttons on her shirt and smirked at him.

"That was…"

"Evil, I know," she sighed and gave a small shrug. "I couldn't resist."

"I…" Harry looked down at himself and groaned at the state of the bulge in his trousers. "Merlin, Tonks…"

"Like I said, I'm evil. Remus, Sirius and I were talking the other day and we figured no one had talked to you about attraction and love and sex before."

Harry was torn between darting from the room and melting into the dark shadows of the bookcases to die of mortification.

"I drew the short straw. Granted, I'm sure any talk you received from either of them would be so much more mild—and infinitely more boring—than mine."

"Er… yeah," he agreed. With the abrupt change in the situation, Harry's body was finally calming down. It would return immediately to the worked-up state if anything changed, but at least he was breathing again.

"Come on, kiddo. Let Auntie Tonks give you a crash course in how everything below the belt works."

Harry swallowed. "You… you're not my aunt."

Tonks laughed. "One day you'll forgive me for what I just did, but I had to know, you know?"

"Not really," Harry admitted. "It was rather…"

“Evil,” she filled in the blank in his mind. “I know. But the things I have to share with you—only in the talking sense, mind you—will more than make up for it.”

She patted the seat next to her and Harry eyed it warily. “Come on, I won’t bite. At least not right now.” Her laugh made him glower. Wasn’t it bad enough that she’d toyed with him? Now she was acting all sisterly and doling out information.

“Er…”

“Sit, Harry,” she commanded firmly. “What I have to share you definitely need. Will you at least listen? If I promise not to tell anyone what just happened in here?”

Harry slowly sat and eyed her warily. “Not even Sirius?”

“Not even him,” Tonks said as she held her hand up in some sort sign of promise.

“And no more of that changing thing,” he breathed. “Especially Hermione. That was just…”

“Wrong,” she agreed. “Yeah, I got that.” She gave a pointed look to his belt and Harry felt his face heat.

“All right. Obviously, you like girls.”

Harry snorted but didn’t say anything.

Tonks grinned. “I’m going to tell you what to do when you’ve found one you want to… explore with.”

Harry couldn’t help but be interested. He hadn’t forgiven her for the nasty trick before, but if she was willing to give him information, Harry was willing to listen. One day he’d pay her back.

“But, Harry, I just want you to remember that I was your first.”

He choked and gaped at her wide grin.

“Kiss, Harry,” she explained. “Don’t let your imagination get away from you. I’m far too old to be mucking around with you.”

“Then what was that before?” Harry grumbled.

“That was seduction, Harry,” Tonks said patiently. “An art form that I’ve perfected.”

He snorted and nodded at the same time.

“It’s one of the many skills I’m open to imparting if you’re receptive.”

“Er… I might be,” Harry said quietly.

Tonks laughed softly and cleared her throat. “Let’s get started then.”

Nearly Two Years Later…

Harry's heart hummed happily as he and Ginny hurried out of the castle and across the grounds. He honestly couldn't remember making the decision to kiss her, but the moment his lips had touched hers, he knew it was perfect. It didn't feel awkward or forced at all.

"Merlin, Harry," Ginny said once they were in the shade of the sprawling beech tree next to the lake. "Nothing like putting on a show."

His cheeks heated but he couldn't regret kissing her. "You weren't complaining," he teased.

Ginny moved in close and Harry felt the hair on his body stand on end. "Not complaining at all," she argued. "Just… observing." Her lips pressed against his and Harry felt himself relax into her. This was more thrilling and so much more real that the images he'd played out in his dreams over the past few months.

Her lips were slightly chapped—probably from being out in the sun and wind all day playing Quidditch. Her fingernails were cropped close, but the edges were sharp where she griped his arms. And she smelled like summer at the Burrow.

"You're far too good at that," Ginny sighed when she pulled back. Her eyes were glazed and Harry couldn't help but smile.

"I don't think it's me," he protested. He glided his thumb across her pink bottom lip, fascinated with how wonderful it felt.

"I do wonder, though," Ginny said with a smirk. "As far as I know, you've only kissed Cho. She was your first, wasn't she?"

Harry was about to nod when a flash of a memory erupted in his mind. Tonks pressing her lips against his in the dusty library of Grimmauld Place. "Er… actually…"

Ginny pulled back and Harry could feel his face heat. He wasn't sure if he should tell her. It was one of those horrifically embarrassing moments of his life, and yet… it was a fond memory, as well.

"I, er…"

"Who?" Ginny prompted. Her eyebrows narrowed dangerously and Harry shifted.

"Er… it was nothing, really. She just… she cornered me and…"

A strange sort of smile came onto Ginny's face. "Did Romilda Vane catch you last year, Harry?"

He goggled at her. "What?" He blinked at her, trying to decide when Romilda had entered the conversation. "No… It was Tonks."

Ginny's eyes widened and the amusement slipped from her face. "Tonks?"

"Er… yeah." Harry shifted uncomfortably and cursed himself for not keeping his mouth shut. Why

couldn't he have gracefully taken Ginny's compliment that he knew how to kiss and let her conclude what she wanted? Why did he have to open his mouth and prove that he was a git?

"It was nothing," he dismissed quickly. "I mean, it was *something* but… nothing. At the same time."

"All right," Ginny said slowly. Her face showed confusion, though.

Harry sighed and decided to tell Ginny everything—well, almost everything—even if it meant humiliating himself. "She was winding me up, taking the piss. It was before fifth year, while we were all stuck in Grimmauld Place," he explained. "And one day she just… pounced. She… Merlin!" He rubbed his hand through his hair and huffed.

"She… she gave me the sex talk, Ginny," he grumbled through clenched teeth.

Ginny's confusion quickly turned into pure glee. "And this involved kissing you?"

"Yes. No, er… rather." He shrugged and wondered, once again, why he felt the need to confess everything to Ginny. "She sort of… tormented me first. By… *flirting.*"

"Flirting?" Ginny challenged. She slid her hand into his and Harry tried hard not to resent the fact that she was pulling this secret from him so effortlessly.

"She… tried to seduce me," he whispered. "But not… not really, you know. She was just mucking with my head. And… and she kissed me. Said she wanted to be my first kiss. That's it."

Ginny grinned and he could see her biting her lip, holding a laugh inside.

"Go ahead," he scoffed. "Laugh."

"I'm sorry," Ginny said, even as the sound escaped. "I don't mean to—"

"It is sort of funny," Harry conceded dejectedly.

"I knew you liked older women, Harry," Ginny said.

"Shut it," Harry scolded even as he dipped his head and kissed her. "I like *you,*" he confessed in a whisper once his head was reeling from the feel of her in his arms.

"That's a good thing," Ginny said. "Because I sort of like you, as well."

Part 8: The Mating Habits Of The Wild Snorkack

“Walk me home, Harry?”

Harry paused in taking a drink of his butterbeer and considered the blonde girl standing in front of him. He swallowed the mouthful of liquid and blinked up at her wide blue eyes.

“Er…”

Ron choked back a laugh and Harry wondered what the joke was. Why was Luna asking for him to walk her home, all the way across the village? Couldn’t she simply Apparate?

“I suppose I could,” Harry finally said. “Why don’t we all go?”

Luna smiled serenly. “That won’t be necessary, Harry. You’ll do just fine. I’m sure you’re capable enough.”

Harry glared at Ron and George’s open laughter. His friends were no help—the wankers—so he appealed to a higher authority.

Ginny was sitting with Hermione on the sofa, her legs curled up under her, drinking slowly from her own butterbeer.

“Want to take a walk?” he asked.

She appraised him and then looked at Luna before a slow smile spread over her face. “I think I’m a bit too tired to walk all that way. After all, I did just get home from Hogwarts this afternoon, Harry.”

Something felt off, but Harry couldn’t put his finger on it. It almost felt like everyone was setting him up to be alone with Luna, but what could be the purpose in that?

Hermione’s grin and the little giggly whisper she shared with Ginny confirmed it. Harry was in deep trouble. Now, if only he could figure out what was lurking outside in the dark.

He trusted Luna—that wasn’t the problem—but he had the idea that George might have set some sort of trap up and was using innocent Luna as the bait.

“Er… I could Apparate you if you’re not feeling up to—”

“Walking is just fine, thank you,” Luna said in a carefree, casual sort of voice.

“Sure,” Harry said. He took another long drink of his bottle, glared at Ron and George, gave one last pleading look to Ginny—who ignored him in favor of laughing behind her hand—checked to make sure his wand was in place, and followed Luna out the door.

They walked in silence until they reached the main lane through the village. Luna seemed content to study the stars above her. How she missed tripping over every stone and branch in the way, Harry had no idea, but she managed it.

"Er… was there a reason you wanted me to walk you home?" Harry finally asked. "I could have just Apparated you."

"I know," she said. Her smile was a little odd, as if she were measuring him but couldn't quite get the calculations she expected. "I wanted to talk to you."

Harry nodded and waited for her to continue. When she didn't, he cleared his throat. "Er… now's as good a time as any, I suppose."

She startled and peered at him. The darkness made her protuberant eyes stand out even more, like some sort of nocturnal creature that lures you in and then pounces with viciousness. Harry swallowed back his confusion and nervousness.

"I was just wondering why you and Ginny have not mated yet."

Harry stumbled on a nonexistent rock in his path and gaped at her. "Er…" His head swam with excuses as well as proper responses.

"I know when I find the man I'm truly in love with, nothing will hold me back," she said honestly, as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

Despite the cool evening breeze, Harry felt sweat bead on the back of his neck. "Er… I don't… Isn't that rather private, Luna?"

"Of course it is, Harry," Luna said. "That's the idea. Two people who are in love, having sex to celebrate that love."

"Oh," Harry answered. "Well… we've just been… Hang on, how do you know we haven't?" Harry stopped walking in the middle of the lane and glared at his friend. Luna had always been rather forward, but this was simply taking things too far.

She giggled—a sound that was so strange coming from Luna, of all people, that it threw Harry once more. "Of course I would know, Harry. I see things that people don't always mean to show."

He cleared his throat and wished that he had some suave way of changing the subject. She was right, sadly. He and Ginny had just been reunited after spending the last nine months apart. Of course, there were brief visits at Christmas and Easter, and the occasional Hogsmeade visit, but that left very little time for their physical relationship to progress to the point where they could… *mate.*

"You can see things… like some sort of Seer?"

"Not at all," Luna corrected. She slipped her hand into Harry's and he stiffly held hers, very aware of the sweat on his palm. His mind whirled as he tried to imagine why she would want to talk about him having sex with her best friend, let alone hold his hand while doing so.

“I don’t believe in true Seers,” Luna explained. “I believe we can all see what’s around us if we simply open our eyes.”

Harry nodded, even though he had no idea what she really meant. “And how does that… er…”

“I can sense your frustration,” Luna said. “And Ginny’s. She’s dreamed of being yours for ages, Harry. And you’ve loved her for a very long time.”

He contemplated that and had to agree. He suspected that he’d been in love with Ginny far longer than he even realized—or at least in love with the idea of Ginny.

“And everyone sees the person they truly love just before they die,” Luna concluded.

Harry gaped at her. He’d only told Ginny about seeing her face just before Voldemort’s curse hit him. And he didn’t think Ginny would have told Luna—not without talking to him, at least. Ginny knew what a sacred, solitary experience it had been.

Luna sighed wistfully and let go of Harry’s hand. She wound her arm into his instead. “I certainly haven’t seen Dean, or even Neville, before I died. I tried with both you and Ronald, as well.” She trailed off and stared at the sky once more. “Oh, look, the clouds just over there! Don’t they remind you of a succubus poodle?”

Harry peered at the clouds and tried to keep up with her mind. It was a lost cause, he supposed. The clouds looked more like an overly lumpy bowl of mashed potatoes to him. He shook the thought away and refocused.

“Exactly how many times have you died, Luna?” he asked jokingly.

“Eight,” she said. “At least, the times I can remember.”

Her firm answer stole his breath away and Harry gaped at her with his mouth open. How the hell…

“I know I definitely want to find my partner out there somewhere,” she said wistfully. “And we’ll mate like wild snorkacks when we do, of course.”

“Of course.” He thought about pursuing the line of questions but brushed the desire aside. After all, there was only so much sharing that should occur between friends and they’d already danced well over that line for Harry tonight.

“You do know *how* to mate, Harry, don’t you?”

This time Luna’s question made Harry choke on his tongue. “I… er… yeah,” he stammered out. “I mean, I have the basic idea and all.” He pulled his arm from hers, disgruntled that they were discussing his sex life and he still had no idea why or how to deter Luna from her horrifically blunt questions. “It’s fairly… simple, I expect.”

“Not as much as you’d like to believe,” Luna corrected.

Harry tugged at the collar of his t-shirt and wondered if they were close enough to the Lovegood house that he could simply Apparate away without seeming like a cad. He could see the top of it

just over the rise, after all.

“Ginny knows you love her.”

Harry interrupted, holding out his hands in a pleading gesture. “Could we not… just don’t mention her name, please. It’s weird enough to be talking to you about this but… I don’t think I can continue if you don’t change the subject. Or at least don’t make it so… personal.” The beads of sweat that had started on his neck were now migrating down his spine.

“Harry.” Luna sighed in a way that made Harry think she was channeling Hermione, just a little. “It doesn’t get much more personal than sharing your body and soul with another human being.”

“I know,” Harry bit out. “But… I just really don’t want to talk about it right now.”

Luna stared at him thoughtfully. “But you do want to mate, don’t you?”

Harry ruffled his hair and stared at the rook-shaped building on the horizon, wondering if he had enough power in him to magically summon it closer. “Of course, I want to… to have sex with Ginny.” He whispered the phrase and peered at the windows of the house that was closest. “It’s just… between the two of us, you know.”

“Of course,” Luna said. “Having it be between the three of you would just be strange.”

The absurdity of the subject, as well as his would-be instructor struck Harry in that moment and he couldn’t help but chuckle.

“Did George put you up to this? Or Ron?” he asked.

Luna’s eyebrows came together in confusion as she contemplated that. “No. Do you think they need to know about it?”

Harry snorted and gave a firm nod. “Yes. Very much so. They need even more information than I do. Ron especially. He’s completely clueless when it comes to the subject.” A small feeling of guilt rose up in Harry but he forced it away. If their situations were reversed, no doubt Ron would seize any opportunity he had to turn it around on Harry. Why should Harry waste an opportunity when it landed in his lap?

“I’ll consider talking to him then,” Luna said with a resolved nod. “Perhaps he can walk me home next time.”

“I think he’d enjoy that.” Harry grinned and offered Luna his arm. “And George, as well.”

“It was my understanding that George was well versed in the subject,” Luna said with a smile. “Although, since he’s had so many partners over the past year, perhaps he isn’t doing it correctly?”

“It’s a good idea to follow up on,” Harry said. Fireworks of glee erupted inside him. “Now, what’s this about trying to see my face when you died?”

Luna looked—for the first time in Harry’s memory—embarrassed. “Well… I thought perhaps our fates were entwined, at one time. But then I looked closer at our astral plane charts and discovered that

I'm far too sensible to be with someone like you. No offence."

"None taken," Harry answered with a chuckle.

"I think Ginny is a far better match for you, anyhow. Black and red go so well together."

All into it now, Harry laughed. "What a logical conclusion. Why hadn't I thought of it myself?"

"I told you," Luna said plainly, "I see things that not everyone can see. Their eyes simply aren't open to the possibilities surrounding them."

"Now I see what you mean," Harry answered. He still wasn't quite sure of what she was saying, so he settled for simply enjoyed her company anyway. Luna had a way of putting things that made him think—but it was different than the way that Hermione made him think, or even Ginny. Luna's mind was a whirling, colossal storm that considered a billion impossible things before lunchtime, he had no doubt.

And it made her all the more special of a friend.

Once they reached the garden gate before the rook-shaped Lovegood home, Harry stared up at it. He remembered very clearly the painting on Luna's ceiling last year, the depiction of her friends where she could stare up at them from her bed. He opened his mouth to ask if she'd repainted the mural when she and her father had rebuilt their home, but it seemed such a personal question. Ironic that he would draw the line at asking that, considering what they'd been talking about the whole walk home.

"Er…"

Luna turned and looked up at the stars above them. "They're all very bright tonight, aren't they?"

Harry peered up at them and gave a faint shrug. "I suppose so. Hadn't thought about it, really."

"It's a lover's sky," Luna said. She gave a firm nod and turned her wide eyes on Harry. "Good luck with your mating, Harry Potter."

Harry bit his lip and nodded awkwardly. "Er… good luck to you, you know, in finding your, er…"

"Partner," Luna filled in the blank in his mind. "I have a feeling it will take longer than I expected. But just think of the adventures I'll have while I wait!" Her face stretched into a wide grin and she went up on her toes to kiss Harry's cheek.

"I hope you don't worry too much about what might have been once between us," she said.

Harry stammered for a reply. "Er… no, I think I'll be fine. I'm rather… resigned to my fate."

"Good." Luna looked pleased with his answer. "And don't be afraid to owl me if you have any questions about sex. Daddy made sure I understood lots of things about it. I'm sure he wouldn't even be adverse to educating you himself if you're more comfortable with—"

Harry let out an undignified snort and held up his hands to ward off the idea. "Thanks, but I think

I'm… I'll manage."

"Would you like a cup of plimpie soup for the walk back?" Luna asked. "It *is* a rather long walk."

"I'm just going to Apparate, I think," Harry said. "You've er… given me a lot to think about, Luna. Thanks."

She nodded distractedly and tugged at some weeds that were growing near the fence line. "Be sure to keep your mind on making it to your destination, Harry. Ginny might be cross with me if you ended up without your penis simply because you were distracted."

Harry barked out an embarrassed laugh and then swallowed it back. "She might be cross," he agreed. "But don't worry, I have enough focus tonight."

"Good. And next time I'll be sure to ask Ron to walk me home. I would have thought Hermione would have taken care of that particular aspect of his education, but perhaps she simply hasn't gotten around to it yet."

Wincing at the idea of Hermione teaching Ron anything to do with sex, Harry simply agreed with her. "Er, yeah, be sure to thoroughly educate him. George, as well."

Luna didn't answer, but began wandering off toward her house, muttering all the way.

Harry watched until she was inside and then long enough to see the light at the top of the tower turn on, before he Apparated away. He did make sure, however, to check to see if *all* of him had made it through the trip.

"Is that a new habit of yours, Harry?"

He startled when Ginny melted out of the shadows of the porch at the Burrow.

She sauntered toward him slowly, her gaze raking over him. "Checking to make sure your bits are still intact?"

He grinned and pulled her into his embrace. "You've been away," he pointed out, "you have no idea how many habits I've gathered."

She laughed and wrapped her arms around him. "It's good to be back."

He melted into her hug and thought back over the odd conversation with Luna. Of course, he wanted to have sex with Ginny. During their too-brief visits this year the growing need to be with her had built the more they kissed and touched, but there simply wasn't time. And now they had all the time in the world.

"Did Luna seem a bit, er… strange to you tonight?"

"Harry, strange and Luna are words that mean the same thing," Ginny pointed out.

"True."

“But she was rather… intense on the ride home today,” Ginny said. She looked up at him with that blazing look he loved, although he did think it meant something very different this time. “She demanded to know why I hadn’t slept with you yet.”

Harry forced a breath out that puffed his cheeks wide. “She’s rather… forward.”

“You have no idea,” Ginny said with a laugh. “She went on and on about your, er, *attributes* and how many witches would be lucky to be in my position. And then she told me that I’d better make up my mind soon. It was like getting lectured by Romilda Vane and Hermione all at once.”

Harry laughed. “Did she tell you she thought her and I might—”

Ginny interrupted him with a chuckle. “I told her I was getting worried about her interest in you, but she assured me that while you have a very nice bum to look at, she’s not interested.”

“Er…”

“And I agreed,” Ginny said with a smirk. Her hands moved from his back down to the pockets on his jeans, sliding inside. Harry’s whole body flushed when she squeezed his bottom, and he glanced up at the dark Burrow, wondering if he could get away with doing the same to her. “You do have a very nice bum.”

“I er… I do?”

“Yes, Harry,” Ginny said, “you do. And one day soon we’ll get to explore what else you have that is… nice.”

Harry leaned down and kissed her just as his hands moved into the pockets on her jeans. “Luna was right,” he murmured, “red and black do go well together.”

* * *

Several nights later, Harry was leaning against Ginny’s chest, his head lolling contently on her shoulder, when Luna stood up from her spot in the grass. On her head sat an ornate crown woven from grass and wildflowers.

“Walk me home, Ronald?”

Ron nearly snorted his butterbeer, and shot a panicked look at Harry, who pretended not to notice.

“Er… well…” Ron appeared despearate, searching for some excuse to get out of walking Luna across Ottery St. Catchpole. “I could Apparate you.”

“Oh, go on, Ron,” Harry said, “walk her home. It’s just Luna, she won’t bite.”

Behind him, Ginny’s chest hitched in silent laughter. “Probably not,” she whispered into his ear.

Luna began wandering away and then turned, looking expectantly at Ron, holding out her hand for him to take. His shoulders sagged in defeat, but he defiantly shoved his hands in his pockets, rather than accept her invitation to walk hand in hand.

“The whole while you were gone last time Ron and George were guessing Luna’s motivation for making you walk her home.” Ginny’s explanation in his ear made Harry grin. “Finally, they decided that she had a crush on you and was going to try and seduce you away from me.”

Harry laughed out loud. “I was wondering myself, to tell the truth.”

Ginny ruffled his hair and tightened her grip on his chest before placing a soft kiss on his neck. “I’ll bet Ron’s terrified that Luna’s set her sights on him now.”

“Serves him right, then,” Harry said. He sighed contentedly and allowed himself to melt back into Ginny fully.

Spurred on by Luna’s odd conversations, Harry and Ginny had been stealing more and more time to themselves lately. And while they hadn’t yet *mated*, Harry was more than thrilled with the progress that they had made. He was content to let nature take its course, and so was Ginny.

They were young and in love, and had all the time in the world.

Ron’s loud voice came back into hearing range and Harry cracked one eye open.

“… just not right!”

Luna’s followed. “You know, I thought you’d be more tolerant. Harry wasn’t nearly this embarrassed when I spoke to him about having sex with Ginny. In fact, he was very receptive.”

“Uh oh,” Ginny whispered, but the amusement in her voice was evident.

Harry grinned. “Quite receptive,” he clarified. “Every now and again, Luna hits the nail on the head, you know?”

Part 9: Even The Best Of Intentions Sometimes Lands You In The Firewhisky

"Hermione?"

Harry peered in through the door, wondering where she was. She'd summoned him here on a perfectly good summer afternoon—she'd better have a good excuse, because he wasn't going to be happy if he missed the start of the pick-up Quidditch game Ginny had been organizing all week.

Hermione's new flat was nice—spacious and efficiently decorated in pale tans and browns. While there were still several boxes sitting near one wall to be unloaded, Hermione had been busy making herself at home. Of course, the bookshelves were completely in order and, no doubt, perfectly organized.

Harry called out again when Hermione didn't answer. Maybe he had misread the time on her note?

"In the back, Harry!"

Any annoyance at his friend slipped away when he entered the back bedroom to find Hermione trying to move some heavy boxes. He dove toward her and lifted the top one off the stack as it wobbled.

"Why aren't you using magic?" he asked.

Hermione looked dumbfounded for a moment but then shook it away. "I forgot," she said. "Sometimes it just seems so… foreign still."

Harry smiled. He had to admit that he still did some things the Muggle way, as well. Ron always teased him about making tea without magic, but it had become habit all those years ago to start the tea when he first woke up.

"So… you needed help moving more boxes?" Harry asked. He scratched his head as he stared at the tidy stacks of cardboard, all labeled on the side with the contents.

"No," Hermione burst out. "Well, I wouldn't mind the help, but now that I'm thinking straight I can just magic them where I need them."

"Oh." Harry nodded and shoved his hands into his pockets, still waiting for Hermione to tell him why he was here. "Then…"

"I actually wanted to talk to you." Her face flushed and Harry wondered what all of this was about. Hermione rarely seemed this distracted. "It's about Ginny."

Harry's eyebrows rose. "What about Ginny? Did something happen? Is there—"

"Everything is fine, Harry," Hermione said soothingly. "Quite fine, actually. Ginny and I were talking the other day and I… Oh, Harry, let's sit down, please." She led him out into the living room

and sat on the sofa, patting the cushion next to her expectantly.

He gave it a wary look and sat, putting plenty of space between them. "So… Why do I get the feeling I should be worried?"

"Not at all," Hermione said. "It's just that Ginny and I were talking about your relationship the other day and I realized… I'm sorry, Harry, that I didn't think of this before. I mean, you're practically my brother and who else could you turn to about these sorts of things?"

Harry's eyes widened as Hermione went on. He absently wondered if she had somehow learned a spell that allowed her to breathe through her ears, since it seemed like she hadn't taken a breath since she began speaking.

"… And it's not like you can turn to Ron, or Merlin forbid, Mr. Weasley about these sorts of things. Normally, I'd suggest picking up a book at the library, but I know you, Harry, and you've never voluntarily read a book in your life—"

Harry scoffed. "That's not true! I read *Quidditch Through the Ages* and… and… loads of other things that interest me."

Hermione broke off and considered that for a moment before taking a steady breath. "I suppose that's true, but I was talking more about books that actually *instruct* you on practical things."

Harry scowled and slouched lower on the sofa. He was actually offended that she was bringing up his reading habits right now. Was this why she had summoned him over today, to berate him about continuing his education, even though he'd been out of Hogwarts for nearly two years now? And where did Ginny fit into this whole thing? She was just as guilty about not reading as he was.

"But that wasn't my point at all," Hermione said patiently. She collected herself and sat up primly. "It was during my conversation with Ginny that I realized how alone you are in this world, Harry. And I got to thinking about how I would feel if I had no one to turn to when I needed answers about certain… things."

Harry was more confused than ever now and his head reeled as he tried to follow Hermione's rapidly firing brain. "Er… I suppose."

"And I wanted you to know that you can always turn to me, Harry. I know you and I haven't had that sort of relationship in the past, but I don't want you blundering about—"

"Blundering about?" Harry growled. "I do *not* blunder—"

Hermione rubbed her forehead and huffed. "Oh, I'm saying everything wrong today. I've been so nervous trying to figure out how to approach you about this and now I've gone and messed it all up." She turned away and chewed on her fingernail for a moment, deep in thought.

He hadn't seen her do that in ages and it made him think back over what she was trying to say.

"Hermione, don't worry about the words, just… just say what you wanted to say."

She eyed him for a moment before sighing. “Harry, I wanted you to know that you can come to me with questions about sex if you need to.”

His eyebrows shot up and his chest tightened in panic. “Er…”

“Ginny was mentioning something about your… er, relationship… Not that she was complaining, at all, Harry. We were just… talking, like girls do. In fact, she was rather bragging, if you must know, and I was telling her that Ron and I—”

“Do *not* mention a single, solitary word about your… relationship with Ron to me!” Harry lurched off the sofa and pulled his wand, readying to Apparate out of there. The childish urge to stuff his fingers into his ears struck him and he grimaced. “He and I have worked very hard not to be in each others business about… about that.” He flailed his hand about in front of him to indicate what he was talking about. “Tie on the doorknob when Ginny is there, no stay-overs, no sharing. At all!”

“I know.” Hermione stood and held her hands out to placate him. “I know. Ron’s made it particularly clear to me, as well.”

“Then why, in the name of Merlin’s left—”

“Who else are you going to talk to, Harry?” Hermione sounded completely exhausted. “When Ginny was talking I realized that my parents talked to me, Ron’s sat him and Ginny both down, but no one did for you. And since I’m practically as close as a sister, I decided it should be my responsibility.”

Harry stammered for an answer. In truth, he might not know all the technical things about sex, but he and Ginny had managed so far on their own. They hadn’t progressed to fully having sex, yet, but Harry certainly didn’t need advice from Hermione. And it wasn’t like he and Ginny weren’t doing *anything*, just that they were working up to doing *everything*.

“I’m sure I can find someone—”

Hermione’s expression turned from one of anxiety to determination and Harry didn’t have a chance to pull his wand before her spell hit him.

“Petrificus Totalus!”

He toppled precariously, but Hermione levitated him toward the sofa.

Harry thought darkly that he was thankful she’d at least remembered to use magic on him, rather than struggling to lift him onto the cushions.

She smoothed her ruffled hair down and gave him a sympathetic look. “Please don’t glare at me like that, Harry,” she pleaded. “I know you don’t want to think about these things, but at least you’ll be prepared. You and Ron never liked to do your homework, but this time no one will be around to let you copy off of.”

Harry did everything he could to break from the spell, but it was no use. He was trapped.

Hermione summoned a chart and a large folding easel from the back bedroom and arranged them in

front of Harry. “Now, we’ll run through this bit quickly, because some of it may be review…”

* * *

Despite the tears in his eyes and the way his throat burned, Harry drained his entire Firewhiskey in one long gulp.

“… and then she proceeded to explain *technique!* I thought I was going to die!” He muttered mutinously to the scared surface of the bar.

Ginny rubbed her hand up and down his back, but he could tell she was smiling. He silently dared her to laugh. He’d leave if she did, in love with her or not. Some things were simply taboo.

“At least she was very thorough,” Ginny pointed out. “And you have a resource if you have any questions.”

“It’s not funny,” Harry protested and glared at his girlfriend. “Would you want to have Ron petrify you and discuss *your* sex life?”

A slightly horrified look broke over her face, but she schooled it quickly. “If you think about it, what Hermione did was quite thoughtful—”

Harry snorted in disbelief and signaled the bartender for another drink. “Yeah, forcing someone to listen against their will is very—”

“Oh, stop being a drama queen,” Ginny said. “Eventually you’ll see that she meant well and you’ll forget all about it.”

“Right.” Harry nodded. “Because I’m going to ask Kingsley to Obliviate me tomorrow morning. That way I never have to think of it again.”

Ginny’s fingers played along the collar of his shirt. “It would be a shame to waste all of that knowledge, don’t you think?”

“I think it would be a shame to waste a perfectly good erection when I think of Hermione telling me precisely what to do with it,” Harry quipped in a low voice.

Ginny burst out a laugh and then bit her lip. “Point.”

“And it’s not like I’m completely hopeless in that department, you know.”

The corners of her lips lifted slightly. “Not completely, no.”

Harry nudged her and she leaned further into him. “I mean, you’ve not complained, have you?”

“Not at all,” Ginny said. “If I remember correctly, I was extolling your virtues in that particular conversation that prompted Hermione’s action.”

“Then it won’t hurt me to have this particular memory removed completely.”

She sighed and moved her hand up his thigh. “I think you’re getting a bit carried away. After all, you know she meant well, and I’m betting that once you get into things you can handle a little… tutoring.”

Her cheeky insinuation made something spark inside Harry that pushed Hermione’s lecture further to the back of his mind.

“Oh yeah?”

Ginny gave a quick glance around the dark pub, laid some galleons on the bar and slid off her stool. “Care to demonstrate the practical application of the theory, Harry? I’ll bet I can do almost as much as some obliviation spell to get rid of that unsavory memory.”

While Harry could admit that Hermione’s motivations had been good, he knew he wouldn’t be sending her a thank-you gift anytime soon.

He was certainly willing to test Ginny’s theories. After all, he could always owl Kingsley later and beg for help.

Part 10: Lessons in Sex And Broom Riding

"It's getting late, Gin, maybe… maybe you should go."

Ginny pulled back from kissing Harry's neck and blinked at him. The haze began to clear from her mind and she studied the rigid way he held himself, and the way his fingers were pressing into her hips, keeping her from rubbing against him.

His expression was a mixture of things that Ginny couldn't quite define.

"I don't have to go, you know," she whispered and let her fingers play with the hair that was barely on the back of his neck. "I could… stay."

Harry sucked in a breath and physically lifted her off his lap. "Er… no, I… I have to work early."

The excuse was thin and Ginny fought the urge to get angry. This was the third time in the last week they'd gotten carried away on the sofa and Harry had ended things abruptly. It was almost as if…

She shook her head. No, his body certainly wanted to be with her—that much Harry couldn't hide.

But Ginny couldn't figure out why he kept pulling away. Did he want to wait for marriage? Was there something wrong between them that she wasn't aware of? Was there something he was embarrassed about?

She simply didn't know.

"If you're sure," she said. Her fingers slowly worked to refasten the buttons on her shirt as she forced the disappointment away. What was she going to do with him?

Harry hesitated as he stood and gave her a long look. "Er… yeah. I'm… I'm sort of tired."

"Fine," Ginny said. She was unable to stop the bitterness in her tone and slung her robes over her shoulder. "Talk to you tomorrow." She snatched a handful of floo powder from the mantel and ignored the way leaving like this made her feel.

"Ginny, don't be—"

Harry disappeared in a swirl of green flames as Ginny flooed away.

The kitchen at the Burrow lay before her and Ginny stepped into the darkness. She slumped to a seat at the table and grumbled to herself.

Honestly, she'd put up with so much from Harry over the years—first was his emotional distance and thickness, his sickening crush on Cho bloody Chang, his destiny and all that it entailed, and then the recovery from the war. Wouldn't there be one minute of their relationship that could simply be *normal*?

Merlin, he was almost nineteen, shouldn't he be jumping at the chance to sleep with her? His body

certainly gave enough clues to lead Ginny to the assumption that he wanted to be with her as much as she wanted to be with him. He just seemed… hesitant for some reason.

Ginny blew out a deep breath and rested her head against the cool table top. Things were getting out of hand between them and they needed to set aside time specifically to talk. Ginny couldn't take this much more. Her body craved his, and kissing simply wasn't enough any longer.

An idea formed slowly in the back of her mind, building and building until it was so huge, so epic, that it literally stole her breath away.

Harry might not know what to do about what he was feeling.

It wasn't as if Hogwarts had a Sex Education class or anything. Ginny's mother had been the one to take her aside and tell her all about the relationship between a man and a woman. And she knew her brothers had all been the recipients of lectures by her father.

But Harry's parents weren't around. And Sirius had died far too early to be of much use in that department.

Ginny felt horrible when she considered poor Harry's fumbling touches and the tentative way he approached their interactions. Once they were into the moment, things fell into place, but there was certainly enough hesitation to make Ginny think she'd stumbled onto truth with her idea.

She took a deep breath and considered the best way to approach the subject with him. Would he be more comfortable talking with someone else rather than having his girlfriend explain things?

But when she imagined who might actually take the initiative—and not fill his head with misinformation like George would—no one popped into her mind.

Determination filled her and she gathered herself.

"I'll just take care of this myself," she said to the empty kitchen. With a firm nod, she flooed back through to Harry's flat.

* * *

Harry lay in bed, glaring up at the ceiling. All he could think about was Ginny: Ginny in his arms, Ginny kissing him, Ginny rubbing up against him in a way that made every other thought flee from his head.

His fists gathered the blankets in frustration and he growled into the darkness of his bedroom. He was so aggravated right now he could punch something. If only…

If only he had any idea what he was doing. If only he had someone he could turn to who could give him honest, good answers. If only his best mate—all of his best mates, really—weren't brothers of the girl he wanted to put the knowledge to the test with.

After Ginny had come home from Hogwarts, Harry had been looking forward to their physical relationship expanding and exploring new boundaries beyond kissing and the occasional touching.

But when it came down to it, Harry had to admit to himself that he honestly had no idea what he was doing.

It didn't help that several weeks ago while grabbing a pint at a pub, Harry had overheard two blokes talking about sex. He hadn't meant to listen in, but once he heard the subject, his ears locked in and he couldn't tear himself away. It seemed one of the young men had had a bad experience recently. The other commiserated that being with a woman for the first time didn't always end well. The first lamented that he wished he had any idea what he was doing so that he could have made it good for her and not seen her cry.

It had troubled Harry deeply. That whole day he'd wandered about, trying to decide what to do. He really knew nothing about sex other than the basics of what went where. He didn't know how to make sure everything went perfectly. Sex with Ginny was important, and Harry didn't want to muck it up.

After contemplating the different avenues of information, Harry had sought out a book. He obviously couldn't walk into Flourish & Blotts looking for a sex manual. The press would be all over him in a minute and the headlines would cause a permanent blush to his face. Not to mention what the Weasley brothers would say when they read the article. And *Molly!* What would *Molly* say about an article like that?

Harry had purposely gone into a Muggle bookstore and grabbed the first thing on the shelf in that particular section. It wasn't until he got home and opened it that his heart sank. It was massive—over two hundred pages with very few drawings and miniscule type. And to make things worse, it read like some medical manual and left Harry floundering in technical anatomical terms.

His desperation was reaching epic proportions, and Harry knew he was going to have to swallow his pride and find someone to speak with about it. He just couldn't let Ginny down. And the idea of watching her cry over something that was supposed to be magical and wonderful was just too much.

With no idea who he was going to approach, or whether his anxiety would simply drive him to buy some porn somewhere to study, Harry waited. But each time he sent Ginny home dug deeper. Tonight had been the worst.

The whole time they were kissing, Harry was talking himself into making a move and simply letting things progress. But then an image of Ginny crying would enter his head and his ardor cooled quickly.

The sound of the floo activating made Harry sit up in bed, wand clasped in his hand. Very few people had Harry's floo address—it had to be Hermione or one of the Weasleys.

Harry peeked out of his bedroom door and squinted into the darkness.

It was Ginny. He could clearly make out her form silhouetted by the moonlight from the window.

"Gin? Is everything all right?"

She took a step forward and then another until she was standing right in front of him, that blazing look from earlier on her face.

“I didn’t want to be angry with you,” she said.

Harry’s face heated and he rubbed the back of his neck. “Er… about that…”

“And I was,” she interrupted, “but then when I got home, I thought about it. I don’t *want* to be angry.”

“I’m sorry,” he said and pulled her into his arms. “I just…”

“I thought about it, and part of it is my fault.”

Harry’s explanation derailed and he blinked down at her. “Er… how do you… What do you mean?”

She was quiet for a moment, studying his face in the dark. “I’ve been pushing you to do something you’re not ready for. Just because I am ready, doesn’t mean you—”

“I am!” It burst out of him in a hasty breath. “I am,” he repeated softer. “I just…”

Admitting that he was scared was going to make him sound like the worst sort of nancy boy, wasn’t it?

“It’s okay to be nervous,” Ginny said. “I know I am.”

“You… you are?”

“Of course. Neither of us has done this before.” Her hand slid into his and he felt a small sliver of courage appear inside him. She was right, even though he knew she had more information than he did.

“I just want… It has to be perfect.”

A smile spread across her face. “No, it doesn’t, Harry. It’s like flying. Did you have a perfect flight your first time on a broom?”

Her comparison made Harry think. “Well, it was… a bit wobbly, I suppose.”

“I fell off twice,” Ginny said with a smirk. “I’m pretty sure you and I can do better than *that.*”

He couldn’t help but chuckle at that idea. “I would hope so.”

Ginny grew quiet and Harry leaned down to press his lips to hers. This witch was amazing. Just how she was able to know what he was thinking—or guess, at least—and calm his fears made him surer of how he felt.

“Can we try?”

He couldn’t believe the words had actually left his mouth and he thought about recalling them, but the look on her face convinced him it was the right thing to ask.

“I mean… you know, only if your earlier offer still stands.”

“Try and get me to leave, Harry,” she challenged. She was lovely—with her hair mussed from their earlier kisses, and a smudge of floo powder on the side of her nose. He brushed her cheek with his fingers and pulled her to him again.

“I think we’ll try that flight now.”

“Lead on, Seeker.” Ginny laughed softly and let him guide her back to the bedroom.

“Do you… erm, should there be something?” he asked, gesturing to the room. “Candles or… flowers?”

Ginny snorted. “Do I seem like the flower kind of girl to you?”

“Not really.” He shrugged helplessly.

“Harry, do me a favor and stop over thinking things. Just… just let it happen.”

He nodded and chewed at his lip momentarily. “Just let it happen,” he repeated.

“Yep.” She leaned in and kissed him. “You’re not going to muck it up. And I promise I have just as many butterflies in my stomach right now as you do.”

He pushed the worries aside and tried to focus on what Ginny had said. Just letting it happen. They’d been so close a number of times over the past week—and then Harry had let his mind take over.

Rather than talk about what they were going to do, Harry dove in, head first. He kissed her and slid his hands to the skin just under the edge of her shirt. They kissed and kissed, until Harry’s head spun and his body hummed in desire. He backed her toward the bed and they lay down together, side by side.

“Are you over thinking?” Ginny asked.

“Not really,” he said. “I just… I’ve heard that the first time can hurt for you and I… I don’t want you to think that I’m doing this just for me. It’s not… I mean, I *want* it. It’s going to feel good for me, but…”

“I know.” She let her fingers trail along his chin and jaw. “It’s going to hurt—I won’t lie. But it’s okay. Sometimes we have to go through pain first, yeah? To get to the good stuff.”

He couldn’t help but smile at her optimism and innuendo. “The good stuff?”

“Yeah. That’s the part I want to get to.”

Harry’s throat grew dry. “Yeah… that part. I, er… I want that too.”

Ginny chuckled and let her finger drop to trace his chest. “Then you’d better get started.”

“All right,” he said.

“Are you sure about this?” Harry asked.

“Are you trying to back out?” Ginny challenged.

He laughed. “Not at all. I’m just being a gentleman and giving you a chance to change your mind.”

“I appreciate it,” Ginny said, “but I’m fine.”

“Okay. I’ll stop when you want.”

“I’ll let you know when that is.”

Each movement drove them closer to that unbelievable moment, but Harry found himself getting lost in the feel of Ginny, the salt of her skin, the smooth curves of her body and the sighs escaping her lips. The more he dove in with abandon, the easier it became.

“I knew you’d be a natural at this.” Ginny sighed and arched against him. Harry couldn’t help but smile at the compliment, even though he felt it was a bit premature.

“I don’t want to hurt you.” His lips brushed along her shoulder and finally found her mouth again.

“You won’t,” she said. “It’s because I know you care so much that I’m here, Harry. All in. Nothing held back.”

* * *

“Well, that was… definitely the good part.” He could hear the amusement in her voice and was grateful that Ginny was who she was. She didn’t take much seriously and had a way of making him relax when he didn’t want to. “Er… Harry… you’re sort of… heavy.”

When he realized he was lying fully on Ginny, Harry jerked backward.

“Sorry.” He lay down next to her, unsure what to do right now. They’d just had sex! And despite his fumbling around and not knowing what the hell he was doing, everything had turned out wonderfully. He quickly checked Ginny’s eyes and cheeks for tears, but she was smiling dazedly at him. No wetness in sight.

“That was…”

Harry let out a breath and resisted the urge to fall asleep. “Yeah,” he agreed, even though she hadn’t finished her thought.

A soft giggle from her made Harry open his eyes. “I told you we would manage.”

“I know,” he said, “I just… I wanted it to be perfect for you.”

“It was,” she said.

“I needed it to be because I love you, not just because I can’t keep it in my pants.”

She chuckled and laid her hand on his cheek. “And I needed you to understand that it’s something we work on together. I hadn’t even considered that you didn’t know… you know… before.”

“It’s not like I could talk to anyone about it,” Harry said. He felt the undeniable urge to touch her again, but not necessarily in a lustful way. Once their fingers were intertwined, he felt better. “I… I bought a book, but it’s rubbish.”

Ginny smirked, but then it turned thoughtful. “You bought a book?”

“I did,” Harry said. “But I took the first one on the shelf in a Muggle store. Next time I’ll have to pay more attention.”

“Next time you won’t need it.” Ginny leaned in and kissed him.

“I think a map would have been more helpful.” Harry nudged her over and pressed his face into her neck before blowing on her skin.

Ginny laughed and rolled to get away from his tickling. “Harry!” They wrestled playfully and ended all tangled up in the sheets, facing each other.

Harry reached up and smoothed a piece of hair out of her face. “Say you’ll stay. I don’t want you to go.”

She smiled. “I’ll stay. Mum will lecture in the morning, but I’ll stay.”

Harry flushed at the thought of Mrs. Weasley knowing precisely what they’d gotten up to, but it didn’t deter him from wanting to sleep next to Ginny. He wanted to be able to reach out and feel her there in the night. And, truth be told, he wanted to make love to her again.

“So… it wasn’t perfect,” Harry said, “but nobody fell off.”

Ginny grinned and leaned up to kiss him. “A bit wobbly, perhaps, but we’ll work that out over time.” Harry laughed. “We’ll work on it together,” Ginny promised him.

Harry rested his head down on her shoulder and melted into the mattress, perfectly content with the world.