

Harry Potter

In Search Of

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In Search Of

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Chapter 1: In Search Of... Time

Trouble In Paradise For Newlywed Potters?

By Glow Pushbody

Rumors abound that The Chosen One and his wife of just over two years, Ginevra Weasley (Chaser for the Holyhead Harpies) are headed toward a possible split. Whatever will our beloved hero do with a broken heart?

Although notorious for loving their privacy, the couple has been sighted several times at local places in the Godric's Hollow area. The shocking scandal of this whole affair is the complete lack of intimacy between them. One source tells us that they didn't hold hands the entire time they were in her establishment, nor did they share more than a few clipped phrases between them.

Our frequent readers will remember the heartbreaking tale of the couple's ruined trip to Shangri-La just months ago. Reports of arguments in portkey stations, yelling behind closed doors, and general misbehavior astounded us all. Could that have been the breaking point in the now-spiraling marriage?

What was once rumored to be a hot relationship now seems to be fizzling, rather than sizzling. Keep your eyes here, dear readers, and we'll bring you the latest gossip about our beloved Boy Who Lived and his Quidditch-obsessed companion.

Those who are in the know, know to turn here for all the juiciest news! Your devoted correspondent, Glow

* * *

They both lay on their bed, too tired to get up and make a proper supper, too tired to think of more creative ways to spend their time.

"We're pathetic," Ginny grumbled into the duvet. She was lying on her stomach, sprawled across the lower half of the bed while Harry took the upper half. She hadn't even fully changed out of her practice kit before collapsing there, beside Harry, who had been napping when she got home. He wasn't much better, crumpling his Auror robes beneath him and still wearing his glasses.

Harry gave a sigh that was slightly amused, but mostly apathetic. "Can't find the energy to move."

Ginny forced herself to roll onto her side and looked at his profile. It wasn't that their marriage was stale—they'd only been married for two years, for Merlin's sake—and they still had plenty of sex, but something was off.

And Ginny was pretty sure she knew just what it was. They were both putting in atrocious hours at work. Harry was advancing up the ranks of the Aurors just like she'd always known he would; he never gave himself enough credit for how brilliant he was at what he did. And she was stretched to the limit with her commitments to the Harpies. There were practices and games, interviews and appearances, endorsements and strategy meetings.

All of it combined to leave them little time together. And when they did manage to squeeze some time for themselves it was always tempered with the reality that someone would encroach somewhere. If her family wasn't flooding in at all times, the press was stalking them through Diagon Alley, snapping pictures. The headlines were enough to send Ginny 'round the twist. Just the other day...

No! She refused to think about that ruddy article in that ridiculous gossip column. And she refused to think about how satisfying it would be to march down to that rag of a paper and shove the article...

No doubt any action would bring another salacious headline and hundreds of owls back to peck out their windows.

"It's days like today that make me think none of it is worth it. Maybe I wasn't cut out for this."

Harry turned his head toward her slowly and his hand slid into hers, the warmth of his palm welcoming.

"Which part would you give up? Me or Quidditch?"

He knew the answer, cheeky man; the smile that tugged at the corners of his mouth was enough to assure Ginny. She wasn't going to give him up, ever. She'd lasted all through school and through a war; a few press articles weren't going to break her.

"That's a tough choice," she said, "You know how much I love Quidditch."

Harry's smile widened and he tucked one hand beneath his cheek, curling his whole body toward her. "We need more time together."

Ginny snorted inelegantly. "Yeah, you mean more opportunity for them to speculate on the million things going wrong in our marriage."

He chuckled but shook his head. "No, I mean time. Although, they do have a knack for mucking up the simplest of things and making it seem like we're headed for ruin, don't they? The blokes were taking the piss the other day about that one article."

She growled low in her chest and scowled. "The one where some bint saw us at the market and decided that the whole two minutes spent in there gathering necessities was enough to flog that damned gossip columnist about?"

"Who would have thought buying toilet paper and a bag of crisps would end our marriage." He seemed much more amused by the whole idea than Ginny was, but, then again, he'd been dealing with this sort of thing far longer than she had.

"Or that our little disagreement over the portkey arrival time last summer would signal how wrong we were for each other." It was easier to see the whole situation as funny if she distanced herself from it, Ginny supposed. She shifted until they were cuddled together, faces only inches apart. "And you, sir, have got to do something about those temper tantrums you're famous for! Anyone would have thought you were beating me to death in that hotel room."

Harry grinned and leaned up to kiss her. “I believe they call that passion, Mrs. Potter. And, as I recall, you weren’t complaining at the time.”

“If I had any energy left, Mr. Potter, I’d make you remind me just what I found so horrifying about it all.”

They kissed lazily for a few minutes and then settled down into each other’s arms.

“I’m nearly finished with the season,” she murmured. Her fingers traced along Harry’s arm slowly, raising the hairs there and then smoothing them back down. “Maybe we can steal some time then?”

“Yeah, but then we’ve got the holidays,” Harry said. “And your mother has already informed me that we’re *required* to be there since we missed Christmas last year.”

The reminder of a string of entire days spent in bed and exploring their new home brought a smile to Ginny’s face. “It was our first married Christmas, what did she expect?”

Harry laughed and ran his fingers through her hair. “I doubt she expected what Ron walked in on.”

Ginny grinned. Although it had been horrifying at the time, having her older brother floo in and catch them on the living room sofa, she found it immensely enjoyable now as Ron turned four different shades of red and spluttered like a sick crup when she reminded him. “Serves him right, the git.”

“It might be fun to go somewhere... Somewhere the press won’t follow, and won’t care what we get up to.”

Ginny scoffed at the idea and propped herself on Harry’s chest. “Yes, because our last trip was such a huge success.”

“That was *not* my fault,” Harry said pointedly. “George recommended that travel bloke. How was I to know he’d go and sell all our secrets to the press?”

It was no use dragging it all up again, because it would simply upset them both. And Ginny didn’t want to think of the pictures that one camera man had captured before Harry summoned his camera and damaged the film beyond salvaging. At least *those* hadn’t been printed. Her mother would never forgive topless antics, even if they were in a *supposedly* private swimming pool.

“We’ll just have to be more careful this time,” Ginny said. “Plan everything ourselves. Maybe even use polyjuice. There’s time to make up some batches. Come to think of it, George has a whole shelf of vials of the stuff at the shop—I chose not to ask why when I saw them there.”

Harry grimaced and twirled a lock of her hair around his finger. “Yeah, but it sort of defeats the purpose, you know? When I’m alone with you, I want to be alone with *you*.”

Ginny grinned. “You don’t ever fantasize about me looking different? Or even being someone different?”

His eyebrow rose slowly. “I think you’re trying to trap me into saying something stupid and then I’ll

end up sleeping on the sofa.”

She laughed and planted a quick kiss on his lips. “I hadn’t thought of it that way.”

“You’re enough for me, Gin. Great Merlin! What would I do with anyone else?”

“Good answer,” she murmured against his lips.

They lay down together, each lost in their own thoughts. The idea of planning a trip complete with secret locations, undercover identities, and sneaking around like some spy sounded thoroughly exhausting.

“Somewhere foreign?” she asked.

Harry hummed noncommittally. “Maybe.”

“America?”

“Too crowded.”

“France? I’m sure Fleur would love to tell us all the places we should go.”

“Too... French.” He chuckled as they took turns listing holiday locations, each growing more exotic than the last.

“Somewhere Muggle then?” Ginny asked. “Majorca?”

“No! Great Merlin, no,” Harry burst out. “With our luck we’d run into the Dursleys. Our rooms would be adjacent and then I’d have to hear Uncle Vernon complain about how loud and inconsiderate we were, and see Aunt Petunia look down her nose at us.”

Ginny growled low in her throat. “Not at all. They’d never live past the first meeting.”

He smiled and tucked her hair behind her ear, a fond look on his face. “My little warrior. We’ll think of some place, I promise. Somewhere where it doesn’t matter what we do, or who sees us. I don’t want to be polyjuiced, but a decent name change might work to hide who we are.”

“Mr. and Mrs. Roonil Wazlib,” Ginny said, “just out for a pleasant holiday.”

Harry laughed. “Exactly.”

* * *

Ginny arrived late for lunch, but Luna didn’t seem to mind. She had on her Spectrespecs and seemed to be completely enthralled in watching the crowd passing by on Diagon Alley.

“Oh, hello, Ginny.”

“I’m so sorry I’m late, Luna. I needed to drop a package off at the Burrow and Mum cornered me about Christmas. And you know how she loves to talk. I didn’t think I’d ever get out of there!”

Luna slipped her glasses off and smiled serenely. “Were you late? I hadn’t noticed. I was perfectly content sitting right here, watching the mold biters over there near the cauldron shop.”

Ginny, completely used to Luna’s oddities, only nodded and perused the menu for something that sounded good.

“They’re quite mesmerizing, you know, the way they walk backwards and yet still manage to avoid getting stepped on, or eaten by owls. Daddy and I have been talking to Hagrid about breeding them, you know. The only glitch has been the fact that they’re invisible to the naked eye, so Hagrid is concerned he might not know when they need help giving birth.”

“How fascinating, yet horrifying at the same time.” Ginny could see how invisible, tiny creatures roaming Hagrid’s hut in misery might be an issue.

They ordered their lunch and talked amicably about their lives, catching up on Luna’s world travels and Ginny’s Quidditch matches and marriage.

Luna reached over and patted Ginny’s hand gently. “I want you to know that I don’t believe a word that Witch Weekly prints in that gossip column. It’s not fit to line the bottom of an owl cage.”

Ginny was surprised by the venom in Luna’s words and gave a grateful nod. “Oh, well, er... We don’t really take it seriously, you know. It’s certainly not nice to wake up to dozens of owls with threatening letters and such, but we’ve gotten good at ignoring it all.”

“Good,” Luna said. “Anyone who truly sees you and Harry together will know immediately that you’re soul mates.”

Both women smiled. Ginny wasn’t sure she believed in the concept of soul mates, but hearing how strongly Luna believed in she and Harry was nice.

“Daddy and I would never think of writing about your private lives, unless, of course, you wanted us to. But there are so many more interesting subjects out there, don’t you think?”

“Definitely.”

“After all, who cares if Harry was arrested for posing as the Russian Ambassador to Australia?”

Ginny laughed at the reminder of the misunderstanding on their honeymoon. She had *meant* to Confund the reporter following them, *not Harry*, but she panicked and the Babbling Hex that followed went astray as well. At least she’d been able to talk the two Aurors into dropping the charges and looking the other way for a few autographs and tickets to an England/Italy exhibition match, rather than having to bail Harry out of detention. And poor Harry had no idea what had gone on or why people were congratulating him on his appointment as they left the Ministry in Rome.

“Holidays really haven’t been our strong suit, have they?” Ginny asked. She rubbed her forehead and tried to imagine where on earth they could disappear to after Christmas. So far neither of them had been successful in coming up with ideas.

“What you need is for someone to plan it all for you,” Luna said thoughtfully, “that way you’re not

bothered with the details and you can really just spend time together.”

“We tried that,” Ginny said with a grimace. “Shangri-La. George knew a bloke who said he’d be discreet with the details. I knew I should have hexed George years ago; his business connections are always on the questionable side. I should have known when the bloke bragged about getting George his supply of Bundimun secretions and having to smuggle them into the country disguised as a hag with a harelip. Nothing good could come of that sort of story.”

“I meant someone you trust,” Luna said. “Someone who travels enough to know the best places where you wouldn’t be bothered. Someone who wouldn’t be noticed handling all the details of such a trip.”

Ginny’s smile grew wider and wider as she considered Luna’s offer. “But... are you sure you could handle planning something like that?”

Luna looked surprised, although it was sometimes hard to tell with her. “Me? I was thinking Neville, but...” She trailed off and was quiet for a few minutes, staring with wide, unblinking eyes before she started and gave a firm nod. “But you’ve talked me into it.”

Ginny felt relieved enough to squeal with happiness. She and Harry trusted Luna with their lives and knew their friend wouldn’t let them down. And maybe they’d have a grand adventure while they were at it.

“Are you sure?”

“Of course. I have a trip coming up just after the holidays that I’ve been planning for weeks. Newt Scamander and I have been writing back and forth for years now—let me tell you, it’s not easy reading his handwriting—and he’s invited me to come and visit one of his scouting sites. I think bringing you and Harry along with me would be just lovely!”

She sounded so excited and her enthusiasm was catching. Honestly, Ginny didn’t care where they went, as long as no one would be following, snapping pictures along the way. And a nature-based trip might just be the ticket. It was a perfect cover for a quick little holiday.

“Brilliant. I can’t wait to tell Harry!”

* * *

Harry was pleasantly sipping his second cup of spiked eggnog when Ron cornered him.

“Are you barmy?”

“Only on Thursdays,” Harry answered cheekily. He watched Ginny from across the room as she swung little Teddy up into her arms and cuddled him closely, bringing a wild round of laughter and cycling hair colors as the little boy clung to her. She was brilliant with children and he couldn’t wait until they were able to have a few of their own.

“You’re letting Loony Lovegood plan your holiday.” Ron peered closely at him and then at his cup. “Did George slip you something?”

Harry turned to his friend and laughed. “We trust Luna, Ron. And I think it’ll be great. After all, anything she plans can’t be worse than what we’ve already gone through, right?”

“Oh, I have no doubt you’re in for an adventure, it is *Luna* after all. And you know I love her, but...” He gave a pained, wary look that made Harry laugh.

“Well, I think it’s a grand idea,” George said as he joined the conversation. “Luna’s always good for a laugh, and I can only imagine the places you’ll see. Be sure to bring me something nice.”

Harry stared at his brother-in-law incredulously. “I ought to bring you a heaping pile of nundu dung after you stuck us with that travel bloke!”

George had the good grace to look sheepish. “Yeah, I told you I was sorry about that. And Ginny’s already hexed me seven ways from Sunday. But... if you happen on some nundu droppings, I could use them.” He wagged his eyebrows and then skirted behind them, out of the watchful eye of both Angelina, who was largely pregnant and very testy, and his mother, who was not due to give birth but still had an eagle-eye for mischievous sons.

“Barmy ass,” Ron muttered. He and Harry shared a chuckle that grew into a deeper laugh.

It felt good to simply relax. Things had been hectic at the Ministry before the holidays—the rash of mistletoe hexing had perplexed Muggle and Wizard alike for weeks—and the Harpies had kept Ginny running so that he and Ginny had barely shared a few phrases in passing. He couldn’t remember the last time they’d sat and had a full meal together. And while they managed some stolen kisses and caresses, and a couple of quickies on various surfaces in the house, Harry was looking forward to escaping it all.

“Do you even know where you’re going?”

Harry grinned happily. “Not a clue. Luna’s sending a list of what to pack next week and we’ll leave whenever she sends the portkey. It’s sort of... freeing, you know, not having to worry about the details.”

Ron snorted and shook his head. “You’re either braver than me, mate, or completely, irrevocably insane. And, yes before you ask, I know what irrevocably means.”

Harry bit his lip to keep from laughing, because he had been about to ask. Apparently, being married to Hermione was indeed changing Ron, or at least broadening his vocabulary.

“What can I say?” he asked. “I’m all about adventure and the thrill of not knowing where I’m going to wake up.”

They shared a grin and clinked cups together before walking across the room to join the rest of the family.

Chapter 2: In Search of... Us

Terrible Tales Still Plague Photo-Timid Potters
By Glow Pushbody

My most faithful readers, this reporter has been witness to some scandalous affairs in the past (see Ludo Bagman, Lucky In Love At Last Or Eleven Time Loser, recapped on page 5, and Is That Really A Wand In Myron Wagtail's Pocket, Or Is He Just Happy To See Everyone, reprinted on page 3) but the continued downward progression of our adored Harry Potter's nuptials is among the saddest I can truly say I've witnessed.

It seems months since we've seen a photograph of the Wizarding Hero where he was truly happy. Oh, some of you may point to the wedding spread done by The Quibbler, or the engagement photograph published in The Daily Prophet as evidence that I'm off my rocker, but I have reason to believe it's all been a horrific ruse to hide poor Harry's mangled heart from the public. Such a noble young thing he is!

Your fearless reporter, Glow-In-The-Know, has now uncovered evidence that Mr. Potter has taken a leave of absence from the Ministry's Auror Division in order to sort out the charred remains of his love life. His wife, Ginevra Potter, is currently off season with the Harpies, who declined my request for a statement. Mrs. Potter's family also declined to answer any questions, and were rude enough to threaten me at wand-point, if you can believe it.

We here at Witch Weekly are sympathetic to the distraught feelings that must be prevalent in the Weasley family at this time, but it doesn't excuse such discourteous behavior. Our thoughts go out to the family and friends at such a tragic time, and we hope that they can come to grips with the split between our beloved pair.

While the couple seems to have disappeared, I have uncovered evidence that they are undergoing intensive couple's therapy at an undisclosed location to try and decide upon an amicable division.

Have no fear, dear readers, your thirst for knowledge will keep me pressing on until the bitter end, until we have every last detail of the minute-by-minute tragedy unfolding. In fact, your response to the Wizarding World's Hero and his marital woes have overwhelmed us so much that Witch Weekly will be sending out special daily editions (at a meager extra three knuts an issue) for all our loyal followers. Keep your eyes here for all the latest, so you, like me, will be in the know. Yours always, even in sorrow, Glow.

* * *

Harry looked up and down the odd little inn and then turned to look at Luna. She was staring blissfully up at the floors that were stacked askew. It was painted bright yellow with shocking blue Victorian trim full of loops and scroll-work that was quite impressive, but impossibly cobbled together.

"It reminds me of the Burrow," he mumbled. Ginny nudged his side and they shared a grin.

"Oh, is it full of my favorite people, as well?"

They both laughed at Luna's innocent question and Harry bent to lift his and Ginny's bags. "Well, only one way to find out, I suppose."

"Oh, yes," Ginny said. "Any place that looks like that requires further inspection."

As he suspected, the Bed and Breakfast was much larger on the inside than it originally appeared. Inside the lobby was a pure white grand piano being played by a ghostly specter.

"How do you think he..." Ginny trailed off, staring at the sight. "His fingers should go right through..."

"It's magic, love," Harry said. They laughed and followed Luna as she marched toward the grand counter and the man who looked too thin and tall to be allowed. He was stooped up against the ceiling almost, and had to duck his head to miss running into the impressive chandelier that hung above him.

Harry set the bags down and turned in place, eyes wide. It was truly amazing, he thought, that this little place could be full of such grandeur. Not only that, but it was sitting smack dab in the middle of a pure white plane of snow. Off behind the house was a dark line of trees that eventually led to the range of mountains called The Fells that Luna believed housed her elusive Crumple-Horned Snorkack.

Honestly, Harry didn't care if there were a herd of never-seen-before Finnish Coldwinged Glow-in-the-Dark dragons, as long as there was a warm bed with his and Ginny's name on it, and no reporter in sight. So far, they'd been very fortunate and hadn't been spotted at all on their trip.

"Luna is planning every single holiday from now on," Ginny murmured. She, just like Harry, was taking it all in. Harry had to agree; everything had been perfectly smooth, although slightly odd, on the trip so far. But he could handle odd.

"We're all set!" Luna said. She grinned and handed them an oddly shaped key. It was heavy, made of cast iron, and looped with a garish orange ribbon. "You two are on the Cottage floor. I'm on the Swamp one."

She skipped off, heading toward a grand staircase, her small rucksack hovering along behind her.

"I really don't want to know," Harry said. "But I'm very glad we got the cottage."

"I might have to strangle her if we'd gotten the swamp," said Ginny. They each grabbed a bag and followed Luna up.

The grandeur and majesty of the reception area faded and Harry was unimpressed to find a narrow, cramped staircase with oddly uneven stairs. This holiday was getting stranger by the minute, but he was still happy. Not one camera flash blinding him, not one nosy reporter begging for a quote or asking barmy questions. One unusual little Bed and Breakfast certainly couldn't dampen his spirits

right now.

On the second floor they ran into a large, round man who was struggling to levitate several trunks at once up the stairs, and Harry's resolve was tested. He reminded Harry of Horace Slughorn, but with an impossible German accent. And he grumbled and swore at his steamer trunks the entire way up to his floor.

Ginny seemed amused at the character while Luna floated from step to step, lost in her own world.

"Oh, look how lovely this is," Ginny said as they found their floor with the 'cottage' sign on it. Thankfully, the German bloke had disappeared on the American West floor, passing through two swinging, wooden doors marked with 'saloon', still grumbling.

"Looks like I'm up two more flights," said Luna.

Harry peered up the rickety staircase and wondered just how many floors they had charmed into the structure. It was impossible to tell from where they were, however.

"I have a meeting with Mr. Scamander this afternoon, but I knew the two of you wanted a little private time, so I didn't plan anything for you until tomorrow afternoon."

Harry almost asked what they were in store for, but Ginny gave a quick tug on his robes and tilted her head in the direction of the corridor in front of them.

"Thank you so much, Luna," she said. "You have no idea how wonderful this all is."

Luna kissed Ginny on the cheek and then did the same to Harry, startling him with her sudden affection. "It was really no problem at all, and I was glad to be able to help."

"Let's go, Harry. I'm ready to see what the room has in store for us."

* * *

"I can't believe we're on holiday in January," Ginny could hear the amusement in Harry's voice, even if his words sounded incredulous. "In Sweden. Hunting Snorkacks. *With Luna.*"

They both laughed and Harry flopped back on the bed, tucking his hands behind his head. Ginny continued unpacking a few things, filling the drawers of the wonky little wardrobe in the odd little room. It definitely had the cottage feel to it, with the squeaky iron-framed bed, the homemade quilts, and frilly curtains.

"At least no one will think to look for us here," she muttered. Their eyes met and they both sighed at the quiet around them. The reminder of trips past, even their honeymoon, was just... not pleasurable.

Well, there were parts that were brilliant, Ginny could admit, but other parts that she'd just as soon have Harry memory charm away.

But this trip was going to be different. Having Luna plan it all was a stroke of genius, Ginny decided, even if they were in the middle of nowhere.

And, when Ginny thought about it, it was a perfect location to hide away for a few days of together time without having to worry about the flash of a photographer's bulb, or the endless speculation about when the newest generation of Potters would begin to arrive. Not that Ginny didn't want children—or more specifically *Harry's* children—but there was plenty of time for that. A time and a season for everything, right? Wasn't that how the saying went?

And if they weren't guessing at expected birth dates, or names, or genders, or sheer numbers of children the two might pop out, they were insinuating nothing good about the marriage. It was all very tiresome to think about.

She wiggled the drawer closed after dumping the last of their socks in and turned to look at Harry. He'd slipped his glasses off and was completely relaxed. It was a look Ginny hadn't seen on him in far too long. Stress at the Ministry, a hectic fall travel schedule, and family obligations had stolen away much of their time until Ginny felt she had to secret Harry away in remote areas of another country just to get a few minutes with him.

His eyes fluttered open and he focused on Ginny across the room. A slow smile started to twitch the corners of his mouth and spread into a wide grin.

"Why are you still dressed?"

"Very good question, Mr. Potter," said Ginny. "Probably because I'm too busy thinking about the best looking bloke in the place."

He laughed and sat up, leaning back on his hands. "The bloke in the stairway was quite fit."

"Oh how well you know me." She sighed theatrically and moved to stand at the foot of the bed, just out of Harry's grasp. His feet, however, could reach her and wrapped around the outside of her thighs, tugging her minutely closer to him.

"You never know," Harry went on, mischief in his eyes, "maybe those trunks were full of something you'd like very much." He waggled his eyebrows and fought back a laugh. "Like, treasures from Catherine's Covert Unmentionables—that place where you get the purple bags."

Ginny bit her lip and mentally patted herself on the back for dropping by Catherine's before they left. Harry always got that *look* when she brought out one of those mysterious purple bags.

"Right. I'm thinking all he has in those trunks is extra helpings of German stollen, bratwursts, and heavy chocolate tortes."

Harry laughed and inched downward until he was wrapped around her, his fingers playing with the edge of her shirt. "Much less creative than me, Gin. I win the points this time."

She sighed at the reminder of their game; it wasn't an ongoing thing, per se, just something that they liked to joke about on and off. On their honeymoon, Ginny had teased Harry about having a lack of imagination regarding just what they could get up to with the two point five seconds they were allowed to roam the Italian countryside before someone arrived to try and get a quote or snap a photo of them in a compromising position.

Ever since then, Harry had made a game of being more creative than Ginny. And he gave himself points for it. According to his tally, he was winning by well over a thousand.

“Yes, but my image doesn’t cause the dry heavens.” Ginny grinned and traced the line of his jaw with her finger. She leaned down and pressed her lips to his, a quick, chaste peck, before pulling away.

Harry groaned and tried to tug her back to him. “Gin! We’re all alone, and Luna said she was going to meet that Scamander bloke today... could take her all day, you know.”

She smiled at his coaxing. He was quite good, but the problem was he knew it all too well. And his fingers—the ones slowly unbuttoning her jeans and sliding them down her hips—were magical.

“And the bed is squidgy, not at all hard like that one in—”

“I’m all sticky and filthy from traveling, Harry.” Ginny laughed as she continued to try escaping, but Harry was far too tenacious to allow her to get away completely. And, truthfully, a few hours in a squidgy bed with her husband sounded like the perfect holiday, but only *after* she wiped some of the residual floo powder and other traveling grime that mysteriously collected all over her.

“Brilliant. Shower sex.” Harry jumped up from where he’d been kneeling, trying to remove her socks, and pulled her to him. “We haven’t done that in ages.” With his mind made up, Harry began pulling her toward the small door that must have led to the en suite bathroom.

“We did it just last month,” Ginny reminded him. She couldn’t help but laugh at his enthusiasm, though. “And you have a one-track mind.”

“You’re just as bad as me,” Harry said with a laugh.

All humor melted away when the creaky door gave way and revealed the smallest bathroom Ginny could ever imagine.

“Er...”

It was an explosion of pink: pink flowery wallpaper, pink tiles on the floors, fuzzy pink towels that had to be at least fifty years old, and a pink plastic shower curtain that hid the shower stall. The ceiling sloped at an odd angle and Ginny knew immediately that Harry wouldn’t be able to stand upright in the stall unless he was immediately under the shower head. And getting them both into the tight space would take an act of extreme coordination.

“Still interested?”

“Hell yes,” Harry mumbled. His hand gripped hers tightly and he took one short step in, tugging her with him. “Didn’t you tell Ron that traveling with Luna was bound to be an adventure? Well, here’s our first test of that theory.”

His smile helped to ease some of the trepidation Ginny had about the strange little bathroom. She looked around and let out a sigh. “Make the best of what you’ve got, yeah?”

Harry pulled her close. “Best idea I’ve heard in a long time.”

They kissed and took turns undressing each other, losing themselves in the moment. Harry stubbed his toe on the wooden vanity and Ginny laughed and offered to kiss it better, but she wasn’t sure if she could get back up if she bent over that far.

During a thorough examination of her body—one of Harry’s favorite past times—Ginny reached into the stall and turned the water on fully, hoping that the little room would fill completely with steam and obscure the feeling that they were about to make love in one of Auntie Muriel’s bathrooms.

Harry glanced around. “We may need more towels.” He pulled one of the bright pink ones off the rack and held it up to him—the fabric barely covered his chest and legs, and would never wrap around him.

“There’s a cupboard over there,” Ginny said and pointed toward a door in the corner that she had dismissed on her original inspection. “They probably have loads more. We can stitch them together to cover your arse.”

Harry tossed the towel at her face and then leaned in to kiss her once more. Steam billowed out from the top of the shower and made the oval-shaped mirror all frosty.

“Come on then, Mrs. Potter, let’s get you really dirty before we find the most creative ways to wash it all off.”

Neither of them paid any attention to the magical mirror, or the way it cleared its throat. After all, they’d grown used to ignoring the interfering mirror in their house, and the rude one at the Burrow.

“I’d be careful if I were you, dearies, you never know—”

“Thanks. We’ve got it.” Ginny dismissed her concerns as Harry carried her into the oddly shaped stall and adjusted the water so that it wasn’t scalding.

Ginny’s assessment of Harry needing to stand at the tallest end of the shower proved correct, and it took them a moment of coordination and trial-and-error to find the perfect positions. Ginny ended up in the shorter end and there wasn’t much room to maneuver, but they eventually figured it out.

Harry was just getting carried away with his kisses, pressing her back against the cold shower tiles when it happened.

“Oh, my! Marvin! You won’t believe...!”

They both froze at the nasal voice just outside the shower curtain.

“I do believe we’re sharing our bathroom with honeymooners. Oh, you can’t get much more precious than that, don’cha know.”

A man’s voice called out from another room. “Give them some privacy, woman!”

Ginny barely allowed herself to breath. Harry slacked his grip and they stood, chest to heaving chest, completely shocked.

Sharing a bathroom? Had the clerk even said anything about that? Had Luna simply forgotten to tell them? And how on earth were they supposed to share a space this small with two other people? Ginny could imagine them now, all pressed into the tight space, elbowing each other as they brushed their teeth.

“I’ll bet the poor dears were just so excited to get up here they completely forgot that these European hotels share bathrooms.”

The woman sounded like she might just stay outside the curtain talking forever. Eventually, Ginny knew they were going to have to turn the water off—it was already only lukewarm—and face their audience.

Harry stared with wide, panicked eyes at the curtain. What would they do if she refused to leave? Wouldn’t it just be their luck to finally squeeze a few moments of privacy, only to end up running from the loo wrapped in only a shower curtain?

Ginny was just about to whisper her plan to remove the curtain and take it with them—an impromptu Invisibility Cloak—when the woman patted the curtain fondly.

“I’ll just let you two get back to it.” She gave a knowing giggle and they assumed she left. Just before they heard the sound of the door closing, they heard her voice again. “Don’cha think it would be exciting, Marvin, if it had been someone *famous* in there?”

Marvin mumbled his reply and the door closed completely.

Harry and Ginny stared at each other and both let out a slow sigh.

“Well, you wanted adventure,” Harry said. The sides of his lips quirked up and a laugh rolled up from deep inside him. Ginny couldn’t stop her own laughter and clung to him. She knew her cheeks must be bright red with mortification.

“It’s like trying to have sex at the Burrow,” she whispered.

“There’s always someone knocking on the door,” Harry said, “interrupting just when I’m concentrating the most.”

Their laughter built until they were holding each other up and probably sounding like a couple of loons. “Guess that’s what we get for trying to squeeze in those few minutes together.”

“Think it’s safe to chance it?”

“As long as Marvin hasn’t come in to check if we *are* someone famous...” Ginny said.

Harry laughed and ducked his head out, peering around the tiny space. “If only I hadn’t left my wand in my trousers, back in the other room, I could disillusion us. I’m guessing that the cupboard doesn’t hold towels.”

He reached out and snatched a pink towel off the bar before handing it to Ginny. “We’ll have to make do with these, I suppose.”

“Make sure to cover my arse with it,” Harry said. He grinned and leaned in to kiss her.

“Oh, come on, I’ll bet Marvin could make a few galleons off *that* picture. Imagine the headlines: Harry Potter and Wife Involved In Bizarre Foursome At Exotic Swedish Location.”

He grimaced and took the towel from her. “Just for that, woman, you go nick me some clothes. Hurry, before Marvin finds his camera.”

Ginny laughed. “I suppose this is an adventure we might not want to share with Ron and Hermione when we get back.”

“We’ll omit certain parts, yes.”

“Leave it to Luna to plan the most adventurous holiday—and we haven’t even left the hotel yet!”

Chapter 3: In Search of... Adventure

Mysterious Disappearance of Potters Baffles Ministry and Fan Alike

By Glow Pushbody

The morning sun brings even more scandalous news to report, my ever-diligent readers. Owls have been fluttering all over the British Isles toward me, sharing your concerns for our Wizarding Hero and his bride, as well as reporting that the Potters are not listed as attending any counseling sessions anywhere, it seems.

Are we all simply being deceived?

Reports that Harry and Ginny Potter have been officially listed as 'missing' by the Ministry of Magic cannot be confirmed. When approached by this fearless reporter, Glow-In-The-Know, Percy Weasley, brother of Ginevra Potter and personal secretary to the Minister of Magic, Kingsley Shacklebolt, made this statement: "It is inappropriate at this time to make an official Missing Persons report, although I believe the claims to be false, anyway. Mr. and Mrs. Potter are public figures, thus I understand the concern, but I assure you, as a family member, that they are just fine."

Official denials aside, the public can't help but be anxious over the disappearance of the celebrities. Surely someone should be concerned for their welfare! After all, we know that they have both, in the past, shown propensity toward angry outbursts, and, on occasion, even violence.

Could this vanishing act be the work of dark wizards? Are they simply secluding themselves away completely in order to salvage the dying embers of love? Or are we all being bamboozled by this duo of web-weavers?

Keep those eyes open, readers, keep the owls flocking, and your prayers vigilant for our heroes. And rest assured that your faithful correspondent will be busy digging up every lead that comes her way and passing every scrap of information on to you. Concernedly yours, Glow.

* * *

Harry woke in the most blissful place: wrapped around his wife in the warmth of the bed. For a moment, he even forgot they weren't at home, enjoying a late morning cuddle before they would rush off their separate ways. Slowly, memories of their travel and interesting experiences yesterday seeped back into his mind and he opened his eyes, smiling at the absurdity of the whole thing.

With the exception of being *almost* caught naked in the shower together yesterday afternoon, everything had been perfect so far. And even that, although slightly embarrassing, wasn't that bad. After all, nobody had seen anything.

The rest of their afternoon had been spent in perfect contentment, wrapped together in bed, talking, kissing, and planning a future together.

Harry's stomach growled loudly and he sighed, wondering when Ginny would wake so they could head downstairs for a bite of something. But Ginny continued to sleep, dead to the world. Harry watched her for a minute before deciding he was simply too famished to wait any longer; he'd leave a quick note and then bring something up to her if she hadn't woken yet.

After a quick check to make sure he would have the loo alone, Harry dressed and made his way downstairs. The entry to the hotel was deserted, but Harry followed the clink of dishes and low chatter to a long, narrow room where several people were sitting at a low, long table. The rich brown wood took up the entire center of the room and looked centuries old, with scarring and marks all over in it.

"Come in! Have a seat! Tea or coffee?" A rotund, jovial woman approached and ushered him unceremoniously into a chair before setting a heavy dish in front of him and serving up spoonfuls of every manner of food that sat displayed on the table. Through it all, she spoke in heavily accented English.

"Er..." Harry watched as his plate disappeared under all the food and simply nodded helplessly when she asked if he wanted more of something. "Tea, please," he finally managed to get out.

"Right away. My name is Pernilla, and if you need anything while you're here, just ask."

She was gone in the next breath, waddling away and refilling the plates of others sitting along the table.

The whole setup of the room was rather awkward, as Harry had to lean down over the table to see who his breakfast companions were. Luna was at the far end. She waved at Harry when he caught her eye but continued to talk to the large German bloke who they'd met in the stairway last night.

"Oh, look, Marvin, I'll bet that's one half of our newlywed couple." A sugary giggle startled Harry just as a woman plopped into the seat next to him. Her weary looking husband slid into the spot next to her and gave Harry an apologetic look.

"And where's your wife, deary?"

Harry cleared his throat. "She's, er... she's having a lie in."

The woman giggled again and turned to her husband, who was now receiving Pernilla's special brand of hospitality.

"Don'cha just love the way everyone talks over here, Marvin? I think I'll have to start saying that at home. 'I'm having a lie in'! It sounds so much better, more dignified, you know, than saying 'slept in'. My friends at the book club won't know what to do with themselves!"

Harry smiled weakly and turned his attention to his breakfast. There was no way he would be able to finish it all, especially not with Pernilla's attentive refilling every few minutes. He'd be just as big as the German bloke if he even tried to keep up with her.

"I'm Mavis, and this is Marvin." Harry shook her hand, shocked at how firm her grip was, and listened politely as the American woman told him all about winning the Wizarding lottery and using

part of their money to travel around the world, as it was the only thing they could imagine doing with all of that left-over money, after they'd spent some on their two beloved daughters (would he like to see pictures?) and bought a newfangled Wizarding R.V., complete with magical outhouse and self-lighting floo.

Harry's head was spinning and he found himself stuffing more food than was socially acceptable in his mouth, simply so he didn't have to answer more than a polite head bob now and again.

Despite Mavis' constant prattle, Harry found himself enjoying the morning. The diversity of the inn's customers was astounding. Besides the American couple and the German man, there seemed to be two French women, an older Asian couple who ignored the piles of food in front of them, and a pale, thin man with plum-colored hair that reached his shoulders.

"Saved me a spot, I see."

Ginny's arms wrapped around him from behind and Harry breathed a sigh of relief. He was sure he'd have gone deaf before she made it downstairs.

"Ahh, there's the prettier half! Isn't she lovely, Marvin?"

Ginny shook their hands and watched Pernilla heap food on her plate with a terrified expression.

Marvin only grunted and ate faster. Pernilla was keeping up with the challenge of never seeing the bottom of his plate, but just barely.

Mavis, seeing the way Ginny leaned into Harry, let her conversation fade out, but did watch them closely with sighs of longing and contentment.

"I thought you might sleep the day away," Harry said. "I was looking forward to crawling back into bed to wake you."

Ginny sipped at her tea and smiled. "I'm sure you could have found some inventive way of doing so."

"Sounds like a challenge," Harry murmured.

They did their best to sample a little of everything on their plates, but were soon full. The dining room cleared out mostly, until only a few people were left and Pernilla had stopped hovering.

"Odd little collection of people, don't you think?" Ginny mused. "It sort of makes you wonder what all their stories are. What's brought them all here and where they're going next?"

"Mavis could tell you, I bet," Harry said quietly.

Ginny chuckled and eyed the American woman, who was rattling on to her husband about the rich food and how she'd never fit into her clothes again once they were home.

Harry pondered the lone man at the table, separated from everyone else and wondered if even Mavis could get him to talk. His hair hid most of his face, but now and again Harry would catch a glimpse of the whitest skin he'd ever seen. His dark eyes glanced down the table and Harry shivered

at the vacant look in them.

“What about him?” he asked Ginny. “Vampire you think?”

“Probably,” Ginny said. “I’ve never actually met one. Slughorn had that one at his Christmas party, but I didn’t get more than a glimpse. I remember when we were younger and went to the Leaky Cauldron. Ron said he saw one, but I never did know if he was lying or not. Mum kept putting her hands over my eyes.

Harry nodded and tried not to stare. “Why does he... sparkle? I wonder if that’s normal.”

Ginny peered at the sallow man with the plum-colored hair and shrugged. “Got in the way of a bad glitter hex? Or maybe he’s been using a Gilderoy Lockhart beauty product? I honestly don’t know.”

It took all Harry had not to shoot tea out his nose.

When Luna joined them, Harry listened with only partial attention as she described her day with Mr. Scamander yesterday. There was mention of some horrifically mythical creatures, but a few that Harry knew were in *Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them*. He’d thumbed through it several times, and played a game of hangman with Ron on the title page, but certainly hadn’t studied it cover to cover.

“Are you two up for a little adventure today?” Luna asked, her eyes sparkling with mirth.

“Of course we are, Luna,” Ginny said. “This whole trip has been an adventure—that’s why we let you plan it.”

Luna gave them a thoughtful look. “Well, I would like to share some of it with you, as long as you can tear yourselves away. I just figured you’d want to be locked away in your room most of the trip, having copious amounts of sex.”

This time the tea exploded from Harry’s mouth and nose; he could do nothing to hold it back.

Those around them laughed awkwardly, but gave the blushing couple the brightest knowing looks.

“I’m sure we can manage to behave ourselves for a few hours, Luna,” said Ginny. “What did you have in mind?”

Mavis and Marvin excused themselves, Mavis nattering on about possibly going into town to see if they could stumble on anyone famous. Harry watched them go with incredulity. He interrupted Luna’s sketchy agenda for the day.

“I wonder... How is it that they don’t know who we are?” he asked. “Not that I mind, at all, but we didn’t do any glamour charms or anything to disguise ourselves.”

“Well, I did book the rooms under my name, and all the travel documents are under Lovegood.”

Harry smiled. He didn’t think a simple name change on a piece of paper would hide their identities, but perhaps that’s all it took. Who in their right mind, after all, would picture Harry Potter and his Quidditch Star wife to be traveling through Sweden in the middle of January with such an eccentric

friend, hunting down Blubbering Humdingers, or whatever it was that Luna was going to take them trekking through the wilderness to find?

Or perhaps Mavis' eyesight was so bad she simply had no idea who she was looking at.

He gave Ginny a peck on the cheek and relaxed back into his seat, perfectly content with following Luna wherever she might take them. She was quite brilliant, after all, once you got over her peculiarities.

* * *

"What is it we're supposed to be looking for?"

Ginny turned to whisper to her husband, who looked completely insane wearing the same contraption that was strapped to Ginny's head. Supposedly, it was to open their minds to the possibilities around them, and help them focus on seeing things that they would normally overlook. Harry had described it as similar to a helmet a Muggle riding a bicycle would wear, only covered in mirrors that protruded out on bendable arms, and fuzzy orange and yellow fur. The special glasses that Luna had provided probably didn't help the whole image: they were dark and thick, and they made Ginny feel wobbly when she stared too far into the distance through them.

"Absolutely no clue, love," Harry said with a laugh. "But I think you're dead sexy with that on."

Ginny laughed and sat back in the bench they shared. The bus that was taking them deep into the Sarek National Park, where they would be searching for the Crumple-Horned Snorkack shuddered beneath her and she forced herself to relax. After all, it might be something she hadn't experienced before (powered completely by floo powder) but it wasn't nearly as intimidating as the Knight Bus back in England was. And Sigvard the driver was a sight more pleasant to look at than old Ernie Prang, anyway.

"So this Scamander fellow is meeting us there, Luna?"

Luna's headpiece was much more decorated (it even had furry flaps that folded down to keep her ears warm as they hiked the mountain ranges) and the purple spotted fur designated her the guide of their rag-tag search party. Her glasses, rather than magnifying her already protuberant eyes, made Ginny feel as if she were looking through omnioculars the wrong way around. Luna's eyes were two small blue specks at the end of a long tunnel.

"Yes," said Luna. "He was quite excited to have three people signed up for the adventure today. Normally the off-season is quiet for him. He even said he might come along with us he was so intrigued by our questions."

"*Your* questions, you mean," Ginny murmured to Harry alone. He chuckled and patted her shoulder comfortingly.

Luna drifted off in thought, watching the white, frozen landscape out the window.

"Isn't this bloke supposed to be around a hundred years old?" Harry asked quietly.

Ginny gave a shrug. "No clue, actually, but his book has been around for ages, I know. So I expect someone around Xeno's age, or maybe older. Can you imagine what this day is going to bring?"

Harry chuckled and shook his head. "Well, it's a story we can tell the kids one day, I suppose."

Ginny rested her head against his shoulder, or, well, as close as she could get with the contraptions on their heads. This was one other thing she could add to the list of things she loved about Harry Potter. He may have absolutely no interest in whatever mythical creature they were searching for, but he was determined to relax and enjoy it all the same. And he never looked down on Luna or her odd views of life; he supported his friends one hundred percent, in whatever paths life took them.

When they arrived at the only sign of civilization they'd seen for miles and found a massive sign with *boskapsgård* carved into the wood.

"It means ranch, roughly translated," Luna explained. "Mr. Scamandar and his family keep a residence here during the year and along with studying various creatures, actually breed and raise several varieties of endangered species. Nothing harmful, mind you. I heard they tried once to cross-breed a Swedish Short-Snout with a salamander, trying to make a more family friendly version." She trailed off and scowled slightly. "I never did hear how that project turned out. Definitely something to ask Mr. Scamander about."

"Brilliant," Harry said with a chuckle. "Honey, let's get the kids a pet. I know you had your heart set on a crup, but I was thinking... why not a quadruple X rated beast that adores fire and eats small children when cranky. It'll be perfect."

Even Luna laughed at his joke.

"Hagrid would be the first to buy one and you know it." Ginny poked Harry's side and they smiled fondly.

"Regardless of the fact his house is made of wood. I know. Let's not mention it to him, shall we?"

"Oh, he knows all about it," Luna said. "He has a lifetime subscription to the Quibbler and we did a feature article on it a few years ago. He even wrote in about it."

"Perfect." Harry rubbed his face and sighed. "I'll go talk to him when we get back."

"Oh, send Hermione," Ginny said dismissively. "She's run out of causes lately and needs a good challenge."

Their musings fell silent as a man came trotting up. "Sorry to keep you waiting. My grandfather wasn't feeling well today and asked that I take you up the mountain. I'm Rolf Scamander."

He was young, although older than the three of them. He had a full head of dark hair that looked as if he'd attempted to comb it down, but had gotten distracted half way through; the whole back half of his head stood at odd angles. It was far worse than Harry's unruly hair, in fact.

His skin was weather worn and crinkled pleasantly around his mouth and eyes when he smiled.

They stood, awkwardly watching each other while Rolf held his hand out for Luna to shake. But Luna seemed to be in a trance; she stared with wide eyes and her mouth hanging slightly open.

“Er... I’m Harry and this is my wife, Ginny.” Harry nudged gently past Luna and shook Rolf’s hand. “We’re, er... definitely looking forward to today. Never thought I’d see a Snorkack in my life.”

Rolf laughed quietly. “One never knows what adventures await until the possibilities unfold in front of them.”

Ginny moved to stand next to Luna and slid her arm around her friend’s shoulders. It was clear to Ginny that Luna was stunned by the appearance of Rolf and was completely tongue-tied. Ginny had suffered from the same symptoms once when she was eleven and a knobbly-kneed, waif of an orphan boy had walked into the Burrow.

“I brought the potatoes.” Luna held up the large bag to Rolf, who smiled.

“Perfect.”

“Snorkacks aren’t carnivorous?” Harry asked. “That surprises me.”

“Oh, heavens no,” Rolf said. He clapped Harry on the back and the two men moved off down the trail to the sprawling house. “They like a variety of root vegetables, but potatoes are a special treat.”

Ginny and Luna fell a few steps behind, and Ginny cleared her throat. “I take it you’ve not met Rolf before?”

Luna started and shook her head. “Er... no. No, I’m sure I would have remembered.”

“He seems very charming,” Ginny said diplomatically. Honestly, she hadn’t been able to read him well, but he seemed polite enough. He and Harry were carrying on a conversation easily, anyway.

“Oh, Ginny, I’m making a fool of myself, aren’t I?” Luna looked completely disturbed. “I’ve barely met the man and already I’m...”

“You’re smitten,” Ginny said with amusement. “It’s perfectly fine; just watch your elbows around any butter dishes and you should be all right.”

Luna looked amazed. “I feel so very young. I can’t remember ever feeling this way.”

“You’ve never had a crush before?” Ginny asked. “But you’ve dated....”

Luna collected herself and nodded. “Yes, of course, but I never felt like a snidget has been loose inside me.”

Ginny bit her lip to keep from laughing too hard. Both Rolf and Harry kept checking over their shoulders, eyeing the two women warily.

“Well, sometimes it’s like that. I was completely taken with Harry the first time I saw him. Granted, I was ten, but I still get butterflies in my stomach when he looks at me. And the next summer when

he actually showed up in the Burrow..." Ginny's voice trailed off. It was the truth and it made Ginny feel warm inside. She'd had them all those years ago, and then again when Harry kissed her, and even on their wedding day. The butterflies had become a welcome friend over the years.

"And that's a good thing, Luna," said Ginny. "It's when they look at you and you don't feel anything that means you need to start paying closer attention to what's going on."

After a few deep breaths and some encouraging words, Luna looked composed enough. She stammered a few times when Rolf asked her a direct question, but did admirably well, Ginny thought.

"Er... am I missing something, or is Luna acting a bit... strange?" Harry asked as they got all their Snorkack hunting gear strapped on.

"She doesn't remind you of anyone? Staring and stammering, blushing every time he looks at her?"

Realization dawned on Harry and his face lit up. "Now that you mention it..." He leaned over and kissed her quickly. "I miss those blushes. You rarely do that anymore, you know."

"It's a good thing I got over how charming you can be," Ginny quipped. "Otherwise I might end up with very greasy elbows, spouting horrid poetry, and tripping every time you winked at me."

Harry laughed and his eyes traced her up and down. Even dressed the way she was—barmy head contraption, layers and layers of cold weather clothing, multi-colored striped socks pulled over her trousers up to her kneecaps, and hiking boots with warming charms on them—he looked like he might devour her whole.

"Want to get lost up here?" He nodded mischievously to the mountain they were about to be exploring.

Ginny pretended to think about it. "Tempting, but I don't really want to freeze my arse off. I think I can manage to hold out until we're all warm back in our room."

"With Mavis and Marvin listening in at the door?" Harry asked with a snort. He slid his arms around her waist and pulled her to him. However, they were both wearing so many layers that their faces were still a foot apart. As they leaned together, their helmets became entangled. Rolf and Luna both laughed and helped them get untwisted.

When they were all equally outfitted, looking like flaming mad idiots, Rolf led the way up the mountain. Harry and Ginny shared a quick smile and a blown kiss (no sense stopping the whole trek to get their antlers unstuck once again) and held hands.

* * *

The faces surrounding the table were grave. The tension was thick. Ron felt it crawl up his spine and take root in his shoulders, giving him an instant headache. Why couldn't life ever be easy?

"... situation is getting out of hand..."

Ron's eyebrow twitched and his palm itched. His eyes slid away from Percy, who was preparing for an hour-long speech, apparently, and toward the plate in the center of the table. The plate holding the lone, remaining biscuit.

The biscuit that George was also eyeing.

In the back of his mind, dark and foreboding music was playing; the type one might hear in one of the Muggle films Hermione was always trying to drag him to. It was the type of music that played just before the hero was about to bite it, or before the girl was about to be kidnapped.

"... would want us to help in any way possible..."

George's hand twitched and Ron felt a jolt run up his fingers, across his arm, and up into his back. Could he possibly snatch the biscuit before George did? He visually measured the distances between the hands and the plate, noticing that he had the advantage, if only; the plate was slightly off center and the biscuit was more on his side of the table than George's. By all rights, it should belong to Ron.

Hermione elbowed him and Ron winced. Bloody woman had sharp elbows. She always had and she always knew just when to dig them into his ribs.

"... can we do to help?"

His mother asked a question and George's eyes strayed from the treat upward for a fraction of a second. Ron almost darted his hand out, but pulled back at the last breath. It was no fun playing the game if George was distracted. And it seemed Angelina had sharp elbows, as well.

Their eyes met again and the challenge was issued, silently. Whoever got the biscuit first would win. It didn't matter what they'd win, it was the principle of the thing, anyway.

"... is what I propose. I really think it would work as long as we..."

Percy droned on and Ron tuned him out as he slowly lifted his hand. George flexed his fingers and slid forward on his chair.

Ron narrowed his eyes and focused on the biscuit, counting each bit of chocolate perfectly melted into it. Fifteen in all. A perfect proportion of chocolate bits to crunchy biscuit. It would be *his*.

"... and then we can explain when they get home..."

George's hand darted forward, but Ron was quicker. His fingertips closed around the prize and he let out an enthusiastic, "ha!" as George scrabbled for hold.

"All in favor?"

Ron yanked his hand, completely wrapped around the treasure now, back and let his chair slide away from the table. He hadn't counted on George launching himself over the table and tackling him to the floor.

"It's not... yours... until... it's in... your mouth..." he grumbled as they wrestled. Bits of biscuit flew

everywhere. Ron managed to stuff most of it past his teeth, ignoring the shouts of indignation and the stomping of Hermione's foot next to his head.

"Boys!" his mother called. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw her pull her wand, but didn't think she'd hex him too bad. He rolled George her direction just in case she got off a good shot.

"'ff mime!" he cheered once he got the majority of it behind his teeth. George growled and looked on the verge of reaching past to retrieve it, but then thought better of it. He'd been on the wrong end of Ron's teeth before.

Ron crowed in triumph when George stopped struggling, but the amusement of the moment faded away when he looked up at the shocked, stern faces above him.

"Wha?"

"Ronald Weasley!" Hermione stomped her foot again and crossed her arms over her chest. She must have learned the pose from his mother, or possibly Ginny. Ron needed to get her away from the family more often; bad habits were easily learned and hard to break.

Hermione huffed. "I'm going to assume you heard nothing of what Percy said? He's worked hard to put together this plan to save Harry and Ginny's marriage and all you can do is roll around on the floor like a child, fighting over a silly biscuit!"

Ron blinked at her, trying to piece together the bits of Percy's dull speech in his head. He looked at George, who was lying on his back next to Ron, and looking equally lost. No help there.

He was about to protest his innocence (there had been a perfect biscuit involved, after all, who could blame him?) when he realized his full mouth would win no points with his wife. So he chewed quicker than he ever had in his life. Too bad his milk glass on the table was empty. He was parched.

"What's wrong with their marriage?"

"Mon dieu!" Fleur huffed. "'ave you not read ze papers?"

Ron sat up and scratched his head. "I've read the Quidditch standings."

Collectively, his entire family (minus George) rolled their eyes.

"Is this about those barmy articles that Witch Weekly has been printing?" George asked. "Not that I've been reading them, but I lined Barny's cage with them the other day. They make good—"

"Ahem." His mother's severe look cut off the rest of George's thought.

"We must take action," Percy said. "Are you in or out?"

Warning bells went off in Ron's head. He honestly hadn't been paying attention to any of the meeting once the biscuits had been set out, so he had no idea what he was being asked. For all he knew, they could expect him to run starkers down Diagon Alley to detract from Harry and Ginny's headlines. Not that he expected Percy to be that creative...

“We’re in.” George clapped him in the shoulder and then offered his hand to help Ron stand.

“Er...” Ron flashed one panicked look at Hermione, who was still looking at him with those narrowed eyes. She was no help at all, honestly. “Yeah. We’re in.”

Chapter 4: In Search Of... Future

Shocking Secret Life of Harry Potter: Bigomist!

By Glow Pushbody

It is, sadly true, my dear friends. And you've read it here first!

On a very reliable tip from Ms. Giselle Khan, a most loyal reader for more than fifty-three years, this reporter traveled to London to search out one of many Harry Potter sightings.

"I was walkin' my little crup, Dozer, just like I do every mornin', when I seen 'im, just walkin' down the street, 'and in 'and with some floozy. I was 'eartbroken, I tell yeh," Ms. Khan reported. "I even cleaned me specs jus' so's I could make sure, yeh know? Bu' it was 'im alright, gettin' righ' cozy with some little chit of a thing. Shameful behavior, if yeh ask me."

When approached about his reprehensible behavior, Mr. Potter—who claimed his name is truly Hamish Fournier and that he'd never heard of Harry Potter—denied any wrong doing and defended his "wife", a woman he called Daisy.

His response to my repeated questions about his infidelity provoked this response: "I don't know who you fink you are, accusing me of somefin' like that! And I don't know who this Harry Potter fellow is, but he's not worf a shillin' if he's out cattin' around on his missus, is he? I don't go in for all of tha' nonsense. Say... what's wif that wonky camera? Who did you say you was again?"

Come now, Mr. Potter, enough of all this evasion. And, really, if you're going to run about with a new girl, at least have the decency to use a proper disguise. We saw right through that shoddy charm work. Simply changing your hair color, eye color, removing your glasses, elongating your nose, thinning your lips, and raising your cheekbones wasn't enough to keep you from the eagle-eyes of our faithful followers. And, take another piece of advice from us here at Witch Weekly, you could stand to lose a few stone. (See, Authorities To Look Into Corruption In Auror Training on page 4 to learn how a top Auror might pass Charms Training and still be unable to conceal his identity.)

Shock and awe aside, now that we know the sort of person Harry Potter is, we must wonder what has become of his lovely, talented young wife. Mrs. Potter was well on her way to being a celebrity in her own right. Is it logical that Ginny might have caught on to Harry's depraved lifestyle and confronted him about it, thus suffering a horrible fate? Or is the whole Potter-Weasley marriage a sham to hide scandalous lifestyles on both sides? Perhaps Mrs. Potter has a few dashing young men hidden away herself?

Only you, our dear readers, might know the truth. Keep those wits sharp and send in all your Harry Potter sightings as we continue to unravel this mystery together. Yours, Sleuth Glow.

“I think my feet might fall off.”

Ginny laughed at Harry, who was staring down at his wrinkled, completely red feet. Little wisps of steam trailed off the toes every so often. Ginny was tempted to pull out her camera and take a shot, but Harry had already warned her away from doing so, otherwise he'd share the picture he took of her with her mouth stuffed full of roasted potato.

“I told you not to put so many heating charms on your boots,” she said.

Harry gave a pitiful moan and lay back on the bed. “I think I may be paralyzed. I can't feel my toes.”

If she'd thought he was being serious and not just angling for a foot rub, Ginny might have had a little sympathy for him. He'd been attempting to get her attention ever since the soles of his boots had caught on fire half-way down the mountain. All three of his companions had been so shocked that they'd immediately doused him with water, which had put out the fire effectively, but left him shivering, with icicles hanging down from his Snorkack-hunting helmet.

Just looking at him now, however, all wrapped in quilts—except his feet, which were bare and still looked like steaming cherries—and still shivering, made Ginny's heart twist in sympathy.

“I'm going to go down and get you some hot cocoa, then I'll be back.”

“And we can share a cuddle?” Harry asked hopefully.

Ginny laughed and pressed a kiss to the tip of his nose, which was about as much as she could see of him. “I think we can manage that.”

Downstairs, Ginny asked Pernilla to get her a plate of biscuits, as well as two cups of hot cocoa. While she was waiting, she spotted a very nervous looking Luna pacing in the grand entry hall of the bed and breakfast.

“Luna, is everything all right?”

Luna stopped chewing her fingernail and stuffed her hand into the pocket of her robes. “Oh, Ginny, I'm horribly nervous. Rolf had such a wonderful time today that he asked me to join him for dinner. He's coming in to town and wanted to talk with me about doing an interview for the Quibbler.”

“That's great, Luna! I thought the two of you hit it off well.”

“Once I got over my stuttering,” Luna said with a nod. “And after I accidentally charmed his trousers to flash purple and green... And then there was the whole rutabaga incident... I thought it went... well.”

Ginny bit her lip to keep from laughing at her friend's antics. The Snorkack hunt, while producing no viable evidence of the animals, had definitely been a journey to remember.

“Oh, I think he hardly noticed his trousers,” she consoled Luna, “and while he did have to dig the

rutabaga out of his ear, I doubt he minded much. He seemed quite... interested, if you ask me. The two of you barely talked to Harry and I at all—not that I’m complaining, believe me. We, more than anyone, know the need to be alone when the moment strikes.”

Luna nodded distractedly, but she did seem more calmed than before. “How are Harry’s feet?”

Ginny laughed. “Bright red and still steaming, but he’ll be fine soon. I’m taking him a little treat, and I might have another little surprise hidden in my bag that I’ll bring out later. He’ll forget all about his feet, I promise you.”

They giggled but then Luna froze. “Oh dear. I’m not wearing fancy underthings.” She glanced down at her bright pink robes and turned this way and that, examining them closely. “Do you think Rolf will worry about that?”

“Are you planning on... well, that is...” Ginny trailed off, unsure how much Luna would tell her, and how much she actually *wanted* to know.

“Oh, heavens no! Not on the first date, at least.” Luna smiled serenely. “I just thought... perhaps it might give me a bit more confidence if I know what I’m wearing underneath. While comfortable, my ‘I love Heffalumps and Woozels’ underpants might not be the best thing if I want to attract a mate.”

Once again, Ginny found herself biting her lip to keep from choking on laughter. “Well, I’d suggest simply relaxing and forgetting all about your knickers, Luna. After all, if you’re concentrating on that, you might accidentally—”

“Great Merlin, you’re right!” Luna smacked her forehead and then seemed to calm down. “No sense getting ahead of myself. Rolf might only be interested in the article, in the end.”

Ginny kept her suspicions to herself and gave a solemn nod. “Just have fun and be yourself. If it’s meant to be, then things will happen. If it’s not, then you’ve made a friend and have a wonderful memory.”

Luna launched herself at Ginny and held her tightly, squeezing until Ginny thought her eyeballs might just pop out. “You’re such a good friend, Ginny. I’m so glad you and Harry came along with me.”

Ginny returned the hug and then sucked in a deep breath when Luna finally let go. “It’s our pleasure. We’ve had so much fun, Luna, and we haven’t had to worry about a single reporter or photographer. We haven’t even seen a Wizing paper with our names in the headlines since we’ve been here. It’s been fantastic!”

“It looks like your cocoa is ready,” Luna said as Pernilla cleared her throat and handed the tray full of goodies over to Ginny. “I’m going to meet Rolf in town. You go and take care of Harry and we’ll meet up for breakfast tomorrow. If I don’t see you, I’ll know that Harry has completely forgotten about his feet and you’re engaged in the mating ritual of the Lumpy-Winged Woolly-Footed Snarklepod.”

Ginny felt her face heat as Pernilla walked away giggling. “Thanks, Luna. Good luck with Rolf. Don’t

do anything I wouldn't do!"

Luna's eyes went wide and then narrowed as she thought about that. "Oh, is there anything you wouldn't do? Just so I can be forewarned."

Ginny laughed and shook her head. "Not much."

Luna cackled with delight. "Harry is a very lucky wizard."

"I'll be sure to tell him you think so."

* * *

Harry, once again, found himself in the best place in the world. He rested his head on Ginny's back, listening to her heart beat and the soft, rhythmic sound of her breathing.

He couldn't feel his feet anymore, but he wasn't sure if that was a consequence of the hiking yesterday or if the more than twelve hours in bed with Ginny had erased all effects of the mis-laid charms. He was hopeful that it was the later. In fact, he could care less if he ever felt his feet again after Ginny had pulled out that perfectly purple bag and disappeared into the loo. She emerged and most of the feeling in Harry's body had fled when he caught sight of the lacy bit of fabric she modeled for him.

"I think this has been the best holiday ever," he mumbled.

Ginny sighed and rolled until they were curled together, their legs tangled. "I agree. It might even beat our honeymoon, but mostly because we haven't seen a single reporter."

"And because we have a few less inhibitions," Harry pointed out. He remembered all too well those first fumbling nights and how he'd been so nervous to make sure that Ginny enjoyed herself and that everything was perfect.

"We've certainly had enough practice," she laughed.

He ran his hand up her side, relishing the soft, fragrant skin there. "Never," Harry said. "I don't think there is such a thing." They shared a soft laugh.

"I'm surprised Luna hasn't sent up a tray full of provisions. It's almost noon." Her fingers scratched his scalp lightly and Harry let his eyes close in pleasure. It was perfect right here, lost in the moment, with nothing important pressing. He was tempted to ask if they could stay here forever. Pernilla could keep them well fed and there were enough rooms for the Weasleys to come and visit when necessary.

"Then again, I'm not positive she even came back last night." Ginny giggled. "You should have heard her, going on about her knickers and which I thought Rolf might prefer. I thought I was going to explode with laughter."

Harry groaned in protest. "I love her, I really do, but there are some things a friend shouldn't know, you know? Luna's like... well, she's like a younger sister to me. I certainly don't want to dwell on

her personal life. If she's happy, that's enough for me."

Ginny gave him a look full of fire and it stirred something deep inside him. "You're amazing, did you know that?"

"What?" He wasn't sure what he'd said that brought on this change of mood, but he certainly wasn't going to complain.

* * *

They held hands as they walked through the quaint little village, slowly meandering and enjoying the time together.

"This place looks like some sort of fairytale, you know?"

Ginny made a noise of agreement and rested her head against his arm. "Luna told me it's not even all Wizards that live here, but the Muggles live among them, completely oblivious."

Harry's eyes scanned the buildings with showy facades and intricate scrollwork. It seemed odd to him that Muggles would ignore the moving advertisements in the windows and the other unique features on the businesses, but he supposed some people simply either didn't care or chose not to notice things that were odd. Although, he wasn't sure how anyone could explain the intricate dragon carved on the sign of the local tavern that actually shot real fire now and again.

"I'll miss it," he said. "I know it seems odd, since we haven't really been out here much."

Ginny's contented smile grew and she poked his ribs through his heavy cloak. "That's because we've been too interested in our room."

"Yes," Harry snorted, "the room is very... interesting."

"You know what I mean."

And he did. Spending time with Ginny—without someone interrupting—was addictive, Harry decided. The more he spent with her, the more he wanted. They were fools for letting his cases and Ginny's schedule separate them for so long, but if there was one thing that he'd learned on this little holiday, it was that them spending so much time apart wasn't going to happen again.

"It's been nice not having someone pop up in our faces and blind us with flash bulbs."

Harry agreed. "Or write some rubbish about us simply because they can. There should be some sort of law against that."

"Hermione really should get on that, you know," Ginny said, half-amused.

Harry laughed softly and tucked their intertwined hands further into his pocket. Their feet crunched on the snow pleasantly. "Right after she finishes freeing all the House-Elves and lecturing Hagrid about his dragon-salamander desires."

Rather than keep the joke going, though, Ginny sighed. Harry wanted to ask her if something was

wrong, but he suspected he knew. She was feeling the same way he was—satisfied after spending time together, torn about the need to get back to their lives, and pondering the future.

“I... I’m going to find a way to reduce my hours at the Ministry,” he said quietly. He chewed his lip thoughtfully and felt Ginny’s questioning gaze on him. “I don’t really need to prove myself anymore, do I?”

“Of course not, Harry. What’s brought this on?”

“Just thinking,” said Harry. “Mostly about us, about what comes next.” They’d spoken about having a family, but the label ‘one day’ had always been applied. And it wasn’t like he expected Ginny to give up Quidditch and her dreams to stay home and raise a houseful of kids like her mother had done, but that he wanted her to know he was going to be around if and when they decided to make ‘one day’ happen.

“I have been, as well,” Ginny said. “We haven’t had nearly enough time together, have we? I mean, seeing each other an hour a day, or rolling over in bed to make sure you made it home is... Well, it’s not enough.”

They stopped walking and turned to face each other. “I agree.” Harry freed his hands from his pockets and brushed a stray piece of hair off Ginny’s cheek. “I hadn’t realized how bad it was... but I’ve *missed* you.”

“Me too!” she burst out, and her already-flushed cheeks darkened. “I mean, I’ve missed *you*, I missed what we have together.”

A massive warming charm couldn’t have brought Harry more comfort at that minute. He stared at her, wondering if there was something he needed to say, something he *could* say to both apologize and promise it wouldn’t happen again. But he didn’t know the words. He didn’t know the things to say to make it an official promise. Did he really need to?

“We just need to remember this moment—this one right here,” Ginny said, stealing the words from his muddled mind. “Whenever things get barmy, and we realize there aren’t nearly enough hours in the day, we think back to right now and we remember how it’s supposed to feel.”

Her arms wrapped around him, barely able to clasp around his back, he was wearing so many layers. He held her to him tightly, and the moment felt magical—not in the story-book sense, but in an actual spine-tingling, hair-raising *magical* way, as if they were making some sort of binding agreement.

“Harry, I think... I think this is my final season with the Harpies.”

Ginny’s words couldn’t have shocked him more. She looked nervous and unsure, but then resolve spread over her features, replacing doubt with that blazing look he loved.

“You don’t have to,” Harry said. “You know we have forever.”

“I know we do,” she said. “But I really feel like... like this is what’s meant to be. I have other things I want to do, as well, not just play Quidditch.”

“You do have many talents,” Harry said. He waggled his eyebrows and Ginny squeezed him playfully.

They slowly broke apart and clasped hands once more. A few onlookers chuckled at the loving couple, but no one took pictures, no one stopped them for autographs, and no one stood in the middle of the snowy sidewalk and gaped at them.

“And I’m not saying I want to start creating little Potters immediately,” Ginny warned lightheartedly, “but maybe we can start thinking about it.”

Harry’s heart thudded in his chest as he considered the idea. Children. He always knew he wanted them—especially now that he’d grown comfortable with caring for Teddy.

“But I also wouldn’t mind helping George at the shop, or letting Mum convince me to finally learn how to cook.”

Harry scowled into the distance. “You cook just fine!”

Ginny laughed. “Oh, you and I both know it, but Mum is convinced that I’m failing at that part of my wifely duty since you’re still skinny as a rail.” Harry grumbled quietly and that made Ginny laugh even more. “Oh, don’t worry about it, she just likes to fuss.”

It was true, but Harry felt odd being the target of her fussing, even after so many years. There was still a part of him, although it grew smaller and smaller the more time he spent around the Weasleys, that was in awe at how much they had accepted him into their lives. Maybe it was something he wasn’t ever supposed to get used to feeling, maybe that was the important part—that he always hold onto that feeling of amazement and gratitude.

“Which one are we meeting Luna and Rolf at?” he asked, peering at the end of the road where the last few buildings sat before the frozen Swedish landscape took over again.

“Hmm, she said to look for a huge bubbling cauldron and we’d have the right one.”

Harry’s eyebrows rose at the sight of the building in question. How on earth did Muggles miss *that*?

It was massive. A huge black cauldron sat perched on the roof, steam and actual bubbles rising from it in a steady stream.

“This place is definitely... unique,” Ginny said with a laugh.

Harry had to agree. And while very odd, there was something about it that made him feel... almost at home.

“Just so you know,” he said, “we’re hiring Luna to plan *every* holiday from now on.”

“It has been brilliant.”

“I’m not sure how she managed to keep everything away from the press, also. I mean... think about it. Not one article. Not one picture. No one knows where we are, they’ve left us alone. No one cares that we’re on holiday, hunting mythical creatures that probably don’t even exist!” He

probably sounded like a fool, but that had been the best part of this little trip.

“It’s like we’re just everyday people,” Ginny agreed happily.

“I like being everyday people,” Harry said. He spotted Luna in the window of the pub, waving at him, and Rolf in the seat next to her. “Is it mad that we’re where we are, with who we’re with, and it feels like we’re normal people?”

“Absolutely,” Ginny said. She tugged him forward with their joined hands. “But that’s the best part.”

Chapter 5: In Search Of... Peace

Sightings of Famous Couple Crop Up All Over England

By Glow Pushbody

After a tense week of buzz and speculation, not to mention the horrific proof that the Hero of the Wizarding World leads a double life, one would think that we could take no more!

No more shocking lies, Harry Potter! No more heartbroken heroes, Ginny Potter!

And it seems as if the counseling, wherever the couple received it, has been a success.

The duo was seen walking down Diagon Alley, hand in hand, window shopping, on Tuesday. Eye witnesses report they were stiff and rather aloof in their interactions, and the chaste peck on the lips they shared was far from passionate, but at least the fences seem to be mending. Mr. Potter, who seems to have taken our advice and slimmed down, (See Charming Away Those Sneaky Holiday Stones, page 6) even stopped to lecture a few children who were over-enthusiastically running about.

On Wednesday, quite the opposite behavior was witnessed. The couple was observed in Hogsmeade, in a very demonstrative, amorous clutch that made Mr. Rufus O'Keef, an onlooker, blush horribly. "That Mrs. Potter sure can kiss," he reported. "And Mr. Potter is quite, er... well... responsive, too. Wherever they went to get counseling, make sure not to mention it to my wife, yeah? She might want me to do the same."

Thursday found the couple, once again in Diagon Alley, holding hands and canoodling. They were much more affectionate on this trip than the previous London excursion, but far more discreet with their exchanges than in Hogsmeade. (One does wonder what Madam Rosmerta puts in her mulled mead!) The couple made several stops on their trip: they visited Fortescue's Ice Cream Parlor, were seen entering Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes, and exited giggling from Catherine's Covert Unmentionables with a rather large-sized, scandalously purple bag. Ginny did scold Harry several times for insisting that they take a trip into Muggle London to 'see the sights', one observer noted.

Friday, Mr. Potter was seen in both Hogsmeade and Diagon Alley alone, but he seemed intent on providing all sorts of treasure for his bride, wherever she was. (Unless he was purchasing presents for any other witches out there that we haven't discovered yet.) He bought several boxes of Honeydukes finest, a case of butterbeer from The Three Broomsticks, one triple-chocolate and snazzleberry sundae from Fortescue's, three extra-large robes from Madam Malkin's, and a highly questionable copy of What Every Expectant Wizarding Father Should Know, which he claimed was a gift for his brother-in-law, George Weasley, whom he described as a handsome, enterprising young wizard. Such eccentricities make one wonder what surprises Mr. Potter might have up his sleeve.

Saturday found them visiting the Museum of Quidditch and then spending time together at the Chudley Cannons/Appleyby Arrows match later that evening. Mr. Potter seemed

extraordinarily exuberant, cheering for the Cannons. It surprised me, dear readers, as Mr. Potter has always worn Harpies' green and gold, ever since his then-girlfriend signed with the team. Mrs. Potter seemed far less interested in watching the game than in reading the thick tome in her lap, it is reported. Perhaps the obsession with Quidditch is wearing off for the Holyhead star player? Possibly the recent upheaval and then settling of their marriage has turned Ginny's head away from the spotlight and toward more ladylike pursuits?

In all instances, the Potters seemed thrilled to find themselves being photographed and even gave a few quotes to this reporter, although the string of adjectives used to describe the Appleby Arrows is far too tawdry to print here. And one would assume that whatever chasm existed between them last week has been bridged. Or, is it another case of those deceitful Potters pulling the demiguise hair over our eyes?

One dedicated reader, who wishes to remain anonymous, commented that all the sightings seemed to point to use of a dodgy love potion. The attractive young lady, with a penchant for wearing the latest Wizarding fashions, said she'd had some mild experience with love potions in the past and that she could spot the side effects from a mile away. "It wouldn't surprise me if Harry—er, Mr. Potter, that is—has grown tired of the ridiculously mundane life his wife provides and attempted to look elsewhere for the love and devotion he deserves. I wouldn't put it past Ginny Weasley to slip him a questionable substance to keep her hold on him, as well as his family fortune."

Neville Longbottom, a long-time friend of both Mr. and Mrs. Potter, denied the claim. "That's absolute rubbish. Ginny would never stoop so low, and she wouldn't need to, anyway. Harry adores her and anyone who believes the lies printed in that (censored for the sensitivity of our readers) rag is full of dragon (censored for the delicate eyes of faithful followers)!" Needless to say, we now know where Mr. Potter learned his colorful array of words. With friends like this, Mr. Potter, who needs enemies?

As a life-long fan of the illustrious Mr. Potter, I, Glow Pushbody, urge him to come forward and give an exclusive interview with me. I'd be happy to meet him at the place of his convenience so that we can straighten out all this rumor and innuendo. It's time that our reluctant hero set the record straight! The public demands it, sir!

Until then, yours in ink and heart, Glow

* * *

Ginny surveyed the disaster, letting her eyes scan the heaping mound. Her hands lifted, as if to start digging through it, but she was unsure where to even begin.

"I'd say it's good to be home, but..."

Harry chuckled from behind her and nuzzled his face into her neck. "I know what you mean. Unpacking is always the worst. I never used to do it after Hogwarts; I just lived out of my trunk until everything was scattered everywhere. It drove Aunt Petunia 'round the twist."

Ginny laughed. "Oh, so did I! Mum and I used to have the worst rows about it."

"Then why do we have to worry about it at all?" Harry asked, a hint of mischief in his voice. "Your Mum isn't coming over anytime soon and there's no way Aunt Petunia will show up. And I certainly won't tell anyone we're being slob."

She turned in his embrace and wrapped her arms up around his neck. "Well," she said slowly. "I suppose we could leave it the mess. But it feels rather childish, don't you think?"

Harry was completely distracted, though, by the skin at her neck and the freckles on her collarbone. He seemed to think they needed kissing and exploring right then. "Not at all. It's completely adult of us to ignore it in favor of doing something much more satisfying."

Ginny squealed when he snuffled his nose against a particularly ticklish spot. "Yes, but... it might help... if we hadn't....covered the bed!"

Harry lifted his face and peered bleary-eyed at the heap of clothing and personal items scattered all over their bed. He sighed and slid his glasses back on.

"Who says we need a bed, though?"

Ginny laughed and kissed him. "Come on, we'll both tackle it and then maybe, once we find the mattress, I'll let you distract me completely."

"You're a killjoy, you know," Harry grumbled. He slid his hand into hers and tugged her toward the mess. "I think we should make love right here on top of everything. It'll be like the ending celebration to our trip."

"That's what you said when we snuck into that cupboard in the Portkey office," she reminded him. "And right before we checked out of the hotel."

"And when we got home," he said with a sigh. "I have a one-track mind, apparently."

"Not that I don't love the idea," Ginny continued, "but I don't particularly fancy digging this out of my backside." She held up her Snorkack hunting helmet—a gift from Luna to remember the trip by. Harry burst into laughter.

"You should definitely wear that later," he said. "That and nothing else."

The vision made her laugh. Imagining the two of them trying to be amorous while both sporting their helmets was certainly... something.

"And maybe these." Harry tugged Ginny's long, striped socks out of the pile and waggled his eyebrows.

"I'll wear them to the Burrow when we go for dinner, shall I? Although, if it's all the same to you, I'd prefer to wear something along with them."

Harry sighed dramatically and banished the socks to the growing laundry pile. "If you must."

Dinner at the Burrow was far more relaxing than Harry expected it to be. Yes, there was a bit of chaos, but that was quite normal. Victoire often upset her drink at the table, Teddy was constantly cycling hair colors, invariably someone turned into a canary, or an emu, or some other creature, and the noise level was always just below completely deafening. That's just how the Burrow was.

Ron thrust a warm butterbeer into his hand and Harry drank deeply, keeping an eye on Teddy, who was trying to talk Victoire out of playing house and into something far more interesting, like dress up.

"How was the trip? Where did you end up, anyway?"

Harry chuckled. "Sweden. We went on a Crumple-Horned Snorkack hunt."

Ron choked on his drink, spluttering butterbeer down the front of his robes. "You're taking the piss."

"Not at all," Harry said with a grin. "Best holiday ever, I'm telling you. Luna should go into business as a travel planner. She was brilliant."

Ron scrunched his face up in thought. "Did you actually find something?"

"Oh, not at all. No Snorkacks, anyway. Luna found a bloke that she fancies, though." Harry smiled at the memory of a tongue-tied Luna. When he told Ron the story, Ron burst out laughing.

"That's perfect! I never thought anything could ruffle Luna's feathers."

"Oh, she's gone over him, I think. Poor bloke has no idea, I don't think, though. He seems to be a nice sort, though. Older than us. I know they spent most of the week together."

"What do you mean? You weren't all together?"

Harry grinned and shook his head. Teddy ran through the living room, trying to escape Victoire's clutches, but Ginny caught the two sprogs before they could do any damage to anything. "We went on the expedition with them and had dinner a couple times together, but we were mostly on our own."

"Doing what?" Ron asked with a snort.

Harry smirked at his friend and the tips of Ron's ears turned red with the realization of what Harry was going to say. "Erm, well... A little of this, a little of that."

"Oh."

"Yeah."

The two friends trailed off to slightly awkward silence. Harry watched Ginny mediate between Teddy and Victoire. Since her confession that she wanted this season to be her last in professional Quidditch (something they'd both decided to keep secret until the end of the season) Harry found himself daydreaming more and more about starting a family with her. The image in his mind of her growing large with their child inside was one that sent pleasant shivers all through him.

“... I didn’t know you didn’t like pickles, Angie! Last week you said...”

George trailed after his largely pregnant wife, pleading his ignorance of her finicky eating habits and both Ron and Harry laughed. Angelina, while passionate about Quidditch, was a fairly docile woman, but George’s stories of the things he got in trouble for lately were alarming.

“I don’t envy him. Both Fleur and Audrey were barmy when they were pregnant,” Ron said. “You remember that one time when Bill showed up with that obscure hex on his...” They both shuddered in memory. It had taken three hours of studying Hermione’s collection of ancient texts before they’d found the spell to reverse Fleur’s creative release of emotions.

Maybe Harry could wait a while more until he and Ginny tried to get pregnant. After all, there was no rush, was there?

“Besides all the... erm... *time*, what was the best part of the trip?” Ron said. “I’m sure now that you’re back, Ginny will tell Hermione all about it and we’ll end up with Luna dragging us off to Bora Bora, searching for the Banded Bulbous Snarfblat.”

Harry chuckled. “Well, it’d be different for you, wouldn’t it? The best part for us was getting away from the press, mostly, and just spending time together. Did you know there wasn’t a single paper waiting for us when we got back? No mail, either.” Harry shook his head in amazement. It was thrilling to come back to a house not buried in post and newspapers.

“Er... well... about that.” Ron’s ears turned even redder and Harry leaned back against the wall, preparing himself for whatever Ron was going to confess. Most likely, he and Hermione had arrived before Harry and Ginny and gathered anything questionable up. When Harry asked him, Ron nodded.

“Well, we did that, as well.”

Now Harry was wary. “As well?”

Ron sighed and rubbed his forehead. “You’d better sit down. In fact, call Ginny over. This may take some time.”

Before he knew what was happening, there was a full-blown Weasley Family Council in progress. Angelina offered to take the children upstairs, claiming that she was the only innocent one as she’d had no active part in their insane plans.

“Now that they’re out of the way,” Ginny said as she narrowed her eyes at her family. “Tell us what’s going on?” She surveyed the room and then focused in on Ron, who was the most likely to break under his sister’s wrath. Harry rubbed his hand up and down her back to soothe her. If all they’d done was just vanish the junk mail, there was no reason to get worked up. Granted, they’d broken into the house to do it, but Harry could forgive that.

“It all started when that mad Glow Pushbody wrote that article about you having a second wife, Harry,” Ron said with a scowl.

Harry’s jaw dropped and Ginny made a sound like an angry cat.

Percy cleared his throat. “To be honest, the problem started long before that.”

“Weeks ago,” Hermione agreed with a nod. “Someone should really look into her ethics—”

“I offered to take care of the problem,” George said. “I have some contacts that assure me they can make someone—”

“It’s horribly unfair,” Molly agreed, right over the top of everyone else. “They don’t even know you, and here they claim your marriage is failing—”

Bill had turned to George. “... bet we know some of the same blokes. There used to be this one cursebreaker in Egypt—”

“It wuz all for your good, 'arry, you 'ave to believe uz,” Fleur pleaded. “I am too beautiful to be parading around az zomeone uzzar zan myzself, obviously—”

“... and I couldn’t just let them get away with *that*, Harry, not after all we’ve been through. And Ginny... well, she’s my little sister—”

Hermione and Percy were talking excitedly about new legislation to prevent something from happening, but with all the conversations bursting around him, Harry only caught a few words.

“Of course, we don’t believe you had anything to do with love potions, dear, but one must consider one’s reputation—”

The chaos of the moment made Harry’s head spin. Ginny looked as if she might get a crick in her neck from swiveling her head back and forth, trying to follow what was happening. Finally, she huffed and slapped her hands down on her thighs before retrieving her wand.

The bang she let off rattled pictures on the wall and made everyone jump.

“You,” she said firmly and pointed her wand at Ron. “Tell me what’s going on, and what the hell everyone is talking about.”

Ron had his hands up in front of his face, probably to ward off any incoming hexes. He swallowed thickly. “Me? Why me? It was all Percy’s idea! I had no idea what he was going on about. There was this biscuit, you see. With chocolate bits...”

Hermione poked his side and Ron winced.

“Witch Weekly has been running daily articles on the two of you,” Hermione said. “It’s ridiculous, if you ask me. Since they’ve started this daily format, there isn’t anything but this rubbish they’ve made up about the two of you to put into it.”

Harry and Ginny looked at each other. “We haven’t heard anything about them,” Ginny said.

Hermione scowled. “Well, that’s... odd, but not entirely unexpected. Perhaps Luna made arrangements with the hotel to hold all post, or... perhaps she even cast an Untraceable Charm on you. They’re notoriously unreliably, actually, but—”

Ron sighed loudly. “Hermione. The point.”

“Oh, yes, well... at first the articles were just the normal rubbish—marital troubles—”

“Scandalous rag,” Molly swore softly. Arthur patted her shoulder fondly. The amused smirk he wore did more to settle Harry’s nerves about the whole situation than anything. If Arthur wasn’t too worked up about it, how bad could it be?

“But then things got nasty,” Bill picked up the story. “Since no one outside of us knew you were on holiday, everyone was speculating about the disappearance. They said you were in counseling to save the marriage, or counseling to stop from killing each other.”

Harry snorted and raised his eyebrow at Ginny. “They’ve got you figured out, love. You and your horrid temper.”

She shook her head. “You know me too well.”

“Then when no one could track you,” Percy said, “they started to come into the Ministry to make Missing Persons reports. I must have fifteen files on my desk from people convinced you’d been attacked by dark wizards, or kidnapped for ransom.”

Harry stared at the family incredulously. “We’ve only been gone for a *week!*”

“Doesn’t matter, mate,” Ron said sadly. “You’re a hero, and Ginny’s... well, she’s *Ginny*.”

“The best was when that reporter found that Muggle bloke that looked sort of like you—”

“If you covered one eye,” Ron interrupted George.

“Yeah, and squinted the other one.”

“Through the rain,” Bill added with a laugh.

“—and had the whole Wizarding world convinced you had chucked Ginny and were married to some woman... what was her name?”

“Daisy,” Audrey supplied with a small smirk.

“What?” Harry sat forward and gaped at them. His head was spinning, not only from the patchwork explanation, but from the idea that all of this had gone on while he and Ginny had been on holiday. Would they never be allowed to have a nice, quiet life?

“That’s when we all decided—”

“*You* decided, mate,” Ron corrected. “George and I were busy with the biscuit.”

“The Great Biscuit Battle.” George laughed fondly. “The Clash for the Cookie. The—”

Molly clucked her tongue. “Enough, George.”

George gave a sheepish look to his mother but exchanged a grin with Ron.

“Well, I admit it was my idea,” said Percy.

“What was?” Ginny exploded. “I still have no idea what you’re all on about!”

“Me either,” Harry added for good measure.

“We decided that the press needed something good to report,” Percy said. He adjusted his glasses primly, but the smile he wore reminded Harry of his twin brothers. “They needed to see you as a happy couple, completely in love.”

“Of course we’re in love,” Ginny said moodily.

“We all know zat, Ginny,” Fleur said, placatingly. “But ze press... zey just do not understand zes zings. Zey say ze marriage iz in trouble, and people believe zem!”

“So we polyjuiced ourselves, as couples, to make appearances around England.” Ron’s explanation stopped there and everyone beamed at Harry and Ginny.

“You... er...”

“Are you *insane*?”

Ron rolled his eyes. “It really was the perfect plan, if you think about it.”

“Very creative,” Hermione said. “And while I don’t like breaking the rules—”

Ron snorted. “Yeah, you’ve never done that in your life.” He coughed something that sounded suspiciously like ‘gringotts’ and received an angry hiss from his wife in return.

Harry stood and pressed his finger and thumb beneath his glasses. “Hang on, let me get this straight. To stop the articles, you used polyjuice to pretend to be Ginny and me, and... and what?”

“Made appearances,” Percy said, as if it were the most logical thing in the world.

“We let people see you as you really are,” Audrey said. “Happy together and in love.”

“We certainly didn’t mean to upset you,” Arthur said. His eyebrows were pulled together and he looked torn between begging for forgiveness and defending what they’d done.

In reality, Harry wasn’t upset at all. He was just astounded that they’d gone to such lengths. He looked at Ginny, curious at her reaction, but she was bent over his knees, clutching her stomach and laughing so hard her face was red.

“Well, that’s gratitude for you,” Bill mumbled, although he looked more amused than annoyed.

“You... were... us?” Ginny managed between sucked in breaths.

“All of us had a turn,” Arthur said proudly.

“Even moi,” Fleur said with a proud smile. “Alzough zos reporterz were impudent, zaying my Beel ’ad wandering ’ands when / invited zem to wander.”

Harry tried to imagine each of the couples taking part in such a crazy scheme but it was hard to picture.

“Percy and I took a little walk through Diagon Alley,” Audrey said. “We made sure to share some appropriate kisses now and again, and always held hands.”

“Fleur and I were next,” Bill said. “And we might have gotten a little carried away in Hogsmeade, but in our defense, everyone bought us rounds. Do you ever pay for drinks, Harry?”

“Rarely,” Harry said absently.

“Arthur and I had our turn, as well,” said Molly. “We spent such a delightful day in Diagon Alley and we even shared a sundae at Fortescue’s.”

“And then Molly let me go out into London,” Arthur burst out. “Did you know there are machines that when you stick a little card into them, they give you money? It’s quite brilliant!”

Harry followed the natural progression and turned to look at George.

“Well, of course I wore a Harry suit for the day! Don’t be absurd! How many opportunities like that am I going to get in a lifetime? Angie would have been game, but she’s too shirty—”

“Ahem.” Fleur’s cleared throat and Audrey’s glare made George’s words evaporate and he swallowed quickly.

“We weren’t sure the advisability of taking polyjuice while preggers. By the way, mate, you owe me three hundred galleons. I had a bit of a shopping spree for Ginners, there.”

Harry gaped at him and Ginny snorted.

“And just when do I get my presents?”

George grinned. “I’ll be happy to share the spoils when you get ready to pop out the first wee Potter, there, Gin. Get on that, would you?”

Harry felt his face heat but chose not to respond. Ginny’s choked sound was enough answer for them as a couple.

“How about you?” he asked Ron and Hermione. “Done anything interesting while you pranced about as us?”

“Just a Quidditch match,” Hermione dismissed.

Ron spluttered and jumped to his feet. “*Just* a Quidditch match? *JUST*? Hermione, the Cannons almost won that one! They only lost by a hundred points and it was close for the first two hours.”

Harry’s incredulity about the whole situation fled and was replaced by the need to laugh that rose

up from his toes. It consumed him as he realized that the entire Weasley family had been traipsing around, pretending to be them, all to stop the press from making up lies. It was horribly touching, but hilarious all the same.

Ron and Hermione carried on their bickering. "I certainly wasn't going to spend the day in some library somewhere."

"For once, I'd like to see us do something that interests me, Ronald."

"We flipped a coin," Ron said with a far too innocent shrug.

Hermione's eyes narrowed. "I know you cheated somehow, Ron, but I just can't prove it."

Ron grinned triumphantly and kissed her on the head. "It's a good thing you love me, then."

Everyone shared a laugh while Harry and Ginny processed everything. While they'd been on holiday, enjoying the peace and quiet of Sweden, all hell had been breaking loose at home. And yet, their brilliant family had done something certifiably mad to protect them.

"So... what ever became of the articles?" Ginny asked. "Did they believe it was us or did someone catch on to how you tricked them?"

"Oh they believed the sightings just fine," Percy said. There was something he was holding back, though, Harry could tell. "But... well, there were suggestions of a love potion."

Ginny snorted. "As if I'd need one."

Harry grinned at her. No, she would never need a love potion to make him fall for her.

"That'll be taken care of soon," Ron said. He grinned proudly and everyone in the family turned to look at him. "Er... I mean... well, it will."

Harry was about to ask him to elaborate when Teddy and Victoire thundered down the stairs.

"I'm *not* wearing makeup!" Teddy roared. He dove for Harry and burrowed in the small space between him and Ginny.

"Teeddyyyy," Victoire wined. "It's only lipstick!"

Harry shielded his godson from Victoire's determined efforts to get him to wear the bright pink makeup. Bill finally snatched his daughter and took her to the kitchen to get some pudding.

"Aww, come on, little man," George cajoled Teddy. "It was just the perfect shade to match your hair."

Teddy scowled at George and Harry patted him on the back reassuringly.

Arthur stood and clapped his hands together happily. "I don't know about anyone else, but I don't plan to let Bill and my little granddaughter have all the pudding!"

Ron swung Teddy up on his shoulders and the family all filed into the kitchen, leaving Harry and Ginny alone.

They sat in stunned silence for a few minutes, listening to the din of pudding being devoured in the other room.

“I don’t know what to say, honestly.”

Ginny lolled her head against his shoulder. “I know. How could we have been completely oblivious to it all?”

“I don’t know,” Harry said, “but... in a way... it’s brilliant.”

Ginny peered at him. “How do you figure? People honestly believe those rubbish articles, Harry. They believed that our marriage was in trouble.”

Harry shrugged and slid his arm around her shoulders. “Let them believe what they will. We know the truth, and your family knows the truth. They’re the most important ones. Our friends most likely don’t read them anyway.”

Ginny looked somewhat mollified. “I suppose so.”

“And, from what it sounds like, they’ve been given proof that there’s no need to worry about us.”

“Can you imagine, though? My *parents*, Harry, pretended to be us. That means...” She paled and stared at him with wide eyes. “Mum probably knows about my tattoo now.”

Harry sobered and winced. Molly wouldn’t like the idea of that at all, he knew. “Well, if she did, I’m sure she would have mentioned it right off.”

“I suppose so,” Ginny said again. She chewed her lip, but then a smile took over. “I’m going to have to explain to the Harpies why my *husband* was acting like a stark raving lunatic at a Cannons match now.”

Harry laughed and kissed her temple. “Just tell them he was pissed and had no idea who he was cheering for.”

“That’s plausible,” Ginny said with a laugh, “it’s a known fact that you don’t hold your liquor well.”

Harry pulled her onto his lap and blew a raspberry on her neck. “Take it back!”

“Or what?”

“Or I’ll eat your share of pudding,” Ron said from the doorway. He held two plates with heaping servings of treacle tart. He delivered the food and he and Hermione sat across from them. Ginny stayed on Harry’s lap and they both dug in.

The warm treacle melted into Harry’s tongue and he nearly sighed in satisfaction.

“So... what was this about Harry being married to some other witch?”

“Oh, it wasn’t a witch,” Hermione said. “It was a Muggle. They both were.”

“Kingsley took care of it for you, wanted me to tell you.” Ron chuckled and licked treacle off his finger. “Said that Pushbody witch must have learned her memory charms from Lockhart. Not sure if the poor Muggle will ever lose that odd twitch in his left eye, but there you have it.”

Hermione scowled. “Professor Lockhart was quite good at memory charms, if you think about it.”

They all laughed at her indignation. “I’m talking about Lockhart *now*, love, not when you worshiped him.”

Harry winced when Hermione gasped and they started arguing again. Ron only laughed, though.

“He loves winding her up,” Ginny said quietly. “It’s foreplay.”

Harry laughed and pretended to gag on his bite. “I prefer not to think of it that way, thanks, Gin.”

“Oh, you should be used to it by now,” she said with a wink. “After all, they’ve been doing it since they were eleven.”

Harry narrowed his eyes at her and set his pudding to the side. “You know, there’s only one way to shut a Weasley woman up.” Ginny squawked, but stopped protesting when Harry kissed her.

Harry felt triumphant that she wasn’t arguing with him, or telling him about his best friends’ love life, anymore. His idea had been a success.

“Didn’t you get enough of that on your trip?”

Harry grinned against Ginny’s mouth when Ron’s question broke through the haze.

“Not nearly,” Ginny answered. She leaned against Harry and finished off her treacle, feeding Harry bits and pieces now and again.

“Oh, I’d love to hear about your trip!” Hermione said. “I’ve never been to Sweden but I’ve read about how wonderful it is.”

Harry and Ginny exchanged knowing glances and Ginny fielded the voracious questions of their friend.

“I owe you, mate,” Harry said, “for the polyjuice thing.”

Ron’s grin slowly spread. “You’d do the same in my place.”

“Not so sure about that,” Harry said. “I can’t think of a time when I’d want to be a gangly ginger git.”

Ron guffawed. “Much better than being a scrawny specky squirt. Honestly, Harry, how do you see out of those things?”

Harry took his glasses off and examined them. “Don’t know. I’ve always had them, I suppose. Oi,

where did you get glasses to look like mine, and... clothing?"

"Don't worry, Harry," Hermione interrupted, "I didn't let them paw through your things. I discreetly gathered what we'd need, but it's all back in place now." She turned back to ask Ginny about Rolf.

"So, you said something about everything being taken care of?"

Ron nodded. "I took care of everything. Don't worry about it."

Harry was touched that they'd all gone through so much to appease some silly witches and wizards who couldn't mind their own business. But, Harry guessed, it wasn't really for *them* that the Weasleys had done it, but for Ginny and Harry.

And it meant the world to Harry.

* * *

Harry Potter's Nearly Perfect Life: An Exclusive Interview
By Glow Pushbody

You read that right, my darling, devoted readers! The Savior of the Wizarding World, Harry Potter himself, stopped by my office just this last week, only two days after his appearance at the Chudley Cannons Quidditch match with his wife, Ginny, to chat.

While he normally shies away from attempts to know more about his private existence, Mr. Potter was quite candid with me as we spoke about his life and his love for his wife, the only woman he's ever loved.

"I was head over arse—er, sorry—head over teakettle for her for awhile before I knew what the feeling meant," he said with a fond twinkle in his eye. "But my wife will be the first to tell you I'm more than a bit thick..."