

Harry Potter

The Ticking of the Clock

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Six Weeks

Harry looked up as Ginny came out of the bathroom. He really couldn't tell anything from the look on her face; half-pensive, half-unsure. He glanced over to where James was building a tower with his brightly colored wooden blocks, just in time to see Al reach forward and knock it over with his pudgy little hand.

"AaIII," James complained, but then went about building it right back up again. Al clapped merrily and handed his older brother more blocks to add to the building.

Slowly, so the boys wouldn't notice him, Harry stood and moved into the hallway, where Ginny still lingered.

"Well?" he asked, stuffing his shaking hands into his pockets. Really, he shouldn't be nervous about this.

This... it was a good thing. No, a *great* thing.

"Yes," she said, her voice low and a bit scratchy.

Harry nodded, chewing a bit on his bottom lip before his face cracked into a huge smile. Ginny stared at up him, the strange expression still on her face. His enthusiasm must be wearing off on her a bit, because she slowly let a smile settle in.

"You're not happy?" he asked, glancing back at the boys as they both giggled loudly, their blocks scattering everywhere. Harry took a step forward and wrapped his arms around Ginny's waist.

"No," she shook her head, "I am. I'm happy. Just a bit... nervous too."

He nodded his head. "I think I can understand that."

"You'd think I'd be used to it by now," she shook her head and returned his embrace, pressing her face into the soft shirt he wore.

"It's always an adventure," Harry said, lifting his hand to rest along her cheek, and then leaning down to kiss her. "The best kind of adventure."

Ginny kissed him back and then laughed just a bit. "Do you think we can handle a third?" she asked, her eyes resting on the two dark haired boys who were now giggling and pointing at them as they embraced.

Harry sighed mightily. "I think we don't have much of a choice. But," he trailed off, trying to think of the right words. "I think that a day ago I wasn't as happy as I am now. And I'll be even happier tomorrow."

Ginny chuckled. "You remember that when I'm bent over the loo tomorrow morning."

Harry laughed. "I'll do my best."

Six Months

Harry wasn't sure his face could stretch any wider.

They were having a girl.

The midwife confirmed that Baby Potter, now about as big as Harry's hand, was indeed a female Potter. The words had taken a few minutes to settle into his brain, but when they did, all sorts of new pictures flashed through his mind.

He'd seen enough pictures of Ginny as a little girl to know that he wanted their daughter to look just like her mother.

Well... maybe if she wasn't making the face her mother was making right now.

"A... girl?" Ginny asked again, staring up at the elderly woman who was directing her measuring tape all over Ginny's belly.

"Yes," the midwife nodded, a very pleased look on her face as she jotted down the measurements.

"What are we going to do with a girl?"

That question was voiced up to Harry, who was still trying to wrap his head around the concept. He was going to have a daughter.

"Oh, er... we'll treat her just like the others, I assume," Harry spluttered, looking toward the midwife for advice.

The woman just winked at him and went on about the exam.

"She could play Quidditch," Ginny said, although it was rather half-hearted.

"She'd be brilliant," Harry nodded firmly. "Just like her mother. Maybe... maybe she will play professionally,

like you did."

"Or maybe she'll be an Auror, like you," Ginny suggested.

The thought made Harry wrinkle his nose a bit. He knew it was possible. After all, there were female Aurors at the Ministry. And Tonks had been a brilliant Auror. But the idea of his baby girl—so tiny and small—being an Auror just didn't sit well.

"Or, maybe she'll be completely her own person," he suggested, tightening his grip on Ginny's hand and bringing it up to his lips, placing a kiss on the back of it.

Ginny sighed and relaxed back into the bed. "We'll have to buy... girl things," she said, wrinkling her nose just a bit. "I am *not* painting her room pink," she pronounced.

“Fine,” Harry held up his hands in defense. “Whatever color you like, love.”

“I always hated that my room was pink. And no flowers either.”

Harry chuckled and nodded. “We could do brooms, like the boys’ room... just... a different color.

“We could,” Ginny mumbled thoughtfully. “Maybe a nice yellow... or purple.”

Harry nodded, glad that the idea was finally starting to take hold on his wife. Oh, he had no doubts that Ginny was just as excited about their new child growing within her as he was, but she always took a while to get used to new ideas.

“The boys won’t know what to do with themselves.”

“We’re not going to let them be protective,” Ginny scowled, reaching down to rub her hand over the swollen bump of her belly.

Harry chuckled. “I’m not sure we can do much about that.”

“I always hated that,” Ginny shook her head and used Harry’s leverage to sit up when the midwife proclaimed that the exam was over. They sat side by side, heads almost touching. Harry wrapped his arms around her,

his hands settling over their baby. Their daughter.

“I know, but... I think it comes with being a brother. I’m just guessing, of course,” he shrugged. “Or maybe it’s just part of being a family.”

Ginny nodded and laid her hand along his cheek. “What are we going to do if she turns out to be like me?”

she asked. Harry could tell she was joking, but then the humour wore off of the statement and they both realized that it was a very real possibility.

“I’m going to start training harder,” Harry shook his head. “Because the boys are going to be all over her.”

Ginny snorted and rested her head in the crook of his neck. “But you’re not going to scare them off.”

“I might,” Harry promised with a bit of growl to his voice.

“No, you won’t,” Ginny chuckled. “Because you’ll want her to be happy, and scaring off boys won’t make her happy.”

Harry sighed and grumbled at the same time. “I guess so.”

“A daughter,” Ginny mused, her hand joining his on top of their child.

“Yeah,” Harry said, his face stretching again.

Six Minutes

“Look at all that hair,” Ginny cooed as she rocked the pink, squaling bundle in her arms side to side. Harry’s heart was stuck somewhere in his throat and he couldn’t quite find the place where it was supposed to be yet—his chest was just too full right now.

“She’s... she’s beautiful,” he finally managed to agree, sinking down on the side of the bed next to Ginny and wrapping his arms around his wife and new daughter.

“She is,” Ginny nodded, tears splashing down her tired, pale face.

Harry couldn’t help himself; he leaned in and kissed her, trying to convey every thought, every emotion that was overwhelming him right now.

“She looks like you,” he said finally, as they both stared down at her. “See... how her nose is just like yours.”

“Poor thing,” Ginny chuckled softly. “It’ll be covered in freckles in a matter of weeks.”

“What’s wrong with freckles?” Harry protested softly, reaching up to brush along Ginny’s nose.

“Nothing,” Ginny said, peering back down at their daughter. Another tiny little miracle that they’d created.

“Nothing at all.”

“Have you decided on a name?” the midwife asked as she finished cleaning the towels and sheets that had been used during the delivery.

The baby made a protesting sound as Ginny shifted her, trying to sit up higher in the bed. Harry wrapped his arm around his wife and tried to help lift her into place.

Ginny caught his eye for a minute and he nodded, again too overwhelmed to speak.

“Lily,” Ginny said, brushing her finger along the baby’s perfect skin. “Lily Luna.”

“It’s lovely,” the woman nodded, returning to her work.

“It’s almost bigger than she is,” Harry protested with a chuckle. The tears he’d been holding back for a good portion of the day now spilled over and dripped onto Lily’s pale pink blanket.

“She’ll grow into it,” Ginny said, reaching up to wipe Harry’s cheek dry with her fingers. “Here, you need to hold her.”

Harry didn’t protest, like he had at first after James was born. It still made him nervous to hold something so delicate and... perfect. But he was experienced enough to know that these first few minutes faded so fast.

“Hello my little Lily,” he whispered, standing and bouncing the baby lightly. Her face twitched just

the slightest bit, round cheeks moving when her mouth opened and closed. She squirmed in his embrace and grimaced before cracking open her eyes just the tiniest bit.

And just like that, Harry fell in love all over again.

He should have known it would happen, because it had with James and Al. But it still took him by surprise.

"I'm your Daddy," he said, his thin fingers looking huge as they touched her face and head. "And I'm going to love you forever."

Six Years

"Are you sure we should be out here?" Harry asked again, glancing up at the full moon that flooded the clearing behind their house with soft, silvery light.

"Relax," Ginny said, scooting further down the tree branch that they were hiding on so that she could see the back door that led out from the kitchen.

Harry shifted nervously and yawned. "You really think she'll sneak out tonight?"

Ginny smirked at him. "I know my daughter, Harry. She was after the boys all afternoon to let her play Quidditch with them, but they wouldn't let her."

"I would have let her," Harry protested.

"I would have also," Ginny said. "But... there's something to be said for being your own person, and doing things your own way."

"Lily is nothing if not her own person," Harry shook his head, a soft smile spreading through his whole body.

Their daughter had changed the dynamic of their entire family from the moment she first drew breath. But not in a bad way; it was just... different.

"She's a hellion."

"That too," Harry chuckled right along with his wife and tugged her closer as they sat on the high branch together, the perfect summer night shrouding them in darkness.

"Ron told her all about when I used to steal their brooms and how I taught myself to fly."

"I wish I could have seen that," Harry mused thoughtfully.

"I think you're about to get the next best thing," Ginny said in a whisper, nodding to the back of the house where the door creaked open.

Lily, her flaming red hair pulled back into a messy, self-styled ponytail peeked her head out into the deserted garden.

“She looks so small,” Harry observed quietly. “Like the first time I held her.”

“She’s tough,” Ginny protested, although Harry could tell she was just as worried about their daughter as he was.

“She is,” he confirmed, giving his wife’s shoulder a squeeze.

Together, they watched as Lily left the house, careful to keep the door from squeaking as it closed. She tiptoed across the garden, hiding in the shadows as she went, until she came to the small broom shed.

“That little...” Harry cursed softly. “She nicked my wand.” He patted his jeans just to be sure.

“She took it when we tucked her in,” Ginny smirked.

“And you didn’t stop her,” Harry stared at his wife incredulously. “I didn’t lock the shed, just like you asked.”

“I know,” Ginny protested. “But it’s all part of letting her do this for herself.”

“I still don’t understand why we couldn’t just talk to James and Al. They should be nicer to their sister.”

Ginny sighed and reached up to pat his cheek. “Take it from a younger sister—this is something we girls just have to do.”

Harry sighed and grimaced. But he knew he couldn’t protest much. After all, these Potter women had him wrapped around their little fingers.

“Look,” Ginny nodded toward where Lily had moved out into the clearing. “She’s at least chosen a sensible broom to start with.”

“That’s because I disillusioned our Firestorms,” Harry grinned, proud of himself for thinking of it.

Ginny chuckled softly. “That’s probably for the best. I know I went straight for the fastest broom in the shed.”

Harry shook his head wryly at her and watched as his daughter mounted the broom and gave a gentle push to kick off.

“Wow,” he murmured, watching as Lily made slow circles in the clearing, picking up speed and trying different positions on the broom.

The Potter children had always been raised around flying. In fact, all three of them had been gifted toy brooms for their first birthday. But Lily hadn’t been out flying by herself yet.

“She’s just like her mother,” Harry murmured, leaning in to kiss Ginny’s tear-stained cheek.

“I can see a bit of her father in there too,” Ginny smiled back.

Harry chuckled softly as Lily leaned forward and shot off across the opening, a wild and barely-contained giggle echoing out of her.

Harry shook his head. "She's going to be the death of me."

Ginny only smiled and snuggled down into his embrace, swinging her legs in the open air beneath them.