

# Harry Potter and the Dark Lord Wars

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*A Harry Potter Fanfiction by Gregor McNeil*

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*A large fire broke out in the woods surrounding the Quantock hills outside Bridgwater, muggles attribute the fire to the antics of some muggle children. The Ministry reports, however, that the fire was more likely started by a duel. Auror intelligence suggested the warlock Tyran was using the Quantock hills as his base of operations in the continuing Dark Lord wars. Furthermore, the Ministry reports they had not yet acted on this intelligence believing Tyran to be a minor threat at the current time. The conclusion the Ministry is operating on at this time is that a rival dark wizard and Tyran fought at the sight; the battle caused a large forest fire. The Magical Law Enforcement Squad has taken over the investigation from the Aurors who dropped the case despite there being no evidence that either Tyran or his rival perished. No auror was available for comment but the Ministry ensures us that the incident will be fully investigated and all involved will be brought to justice.*

Ginny turned off the Wizarding Wireless Network making a sound similar to that her mother would make when she disapproved of something. Voldemort was gone but instead of working to ensure peace the Ministry was resting on Harry's laurels and let more dark wizards run amok. There had to be a limit to incompetence, but the Ministry raised the bar with every new problem. If only Moody had taken over the auror office the recent tragedies would not have happened. She stopped cooking for a moment remembering the massacre at St Mungos and the sack of Gringotts. The little money her family had was stolen, only the deepest and most protected vaults were safe. The Weasleys had lost their home and now their savings; they would have died on the streets if it wasn't for Harry. Now Ron was playing as keeper for the Chudley Cannons and the team was doing much better for his contributions. So much so that Ron bought a new house for his parents and was living in his own house with Hermione who was working in the Department of International Magical Cooperation.

Now it was just Ginny and Harry at 12 Grimmauld Place and over the last three years they had finished what Molly had started. They had made the house habitable again; it was much warmer and more welcoming than the dark wizard sanctuary it was previously. The only reminders of the Black's gruesome past were the family tree and the portrait of Sirius's mother which still could not be removed. She turned her attention back to making dinner, Harry would be home soon and he would be tired. The Ministry might be incompetent but Harry was working hard to fix their mistakes now that he had completed auror training. Ginny knew Harry would make a difference, not because he was The Boy Who Lived or the Chosen One; she knew it because he would give everything he had to protect good people from evil. She smiled as she recounted all the good times they had had together but her reminiscence was interrupted by a familiar, unbearable screeching. Walburga had somehow woken up despite the seal Harry had placed on the curtain which usually hid her from view.

*"Now that's not right!"* Ginny spoke aloud but could barely hear her own voice over the screaming. She picked up her wand and ran into the hallway to silence the old hag, the noise stopped abruptly as the young red haired woman closed the curtain. An ominous silence had fallen on the house as Ginny started to think. Who had released Harry's seal and woken Walburga? How did they get into the house? Number 12 Grimmauld Place was still under the protection of Dumbledore's Fidelius charm. Even after his death the secret was protected by all those who had been told it. Could someone have betrayed Harry? Voldemort was gone, but his death hadn't ensured Harry's safety. In fact, his death had cleared the way for more dark wizards to come forward to claim the title of Dark Lord. Harry Potter, the man who defeated the heir of Slytherin and most feared dark wizard of all time was a threat to all these new villains. Ginny spun on one foot with her wand ready; she wouldn't let anyone threaten Harry or the life they had made together. A floorboard creaked upstairs, she wasn't alone. She hesitated, whoever the intruder was they had somehow gotten information from a close friend. Was she a match for someone like that? Ginny was a perfectly competent witch but Harry was the dark wizard catcher. He should be home soon, maybe it would be best to run; that's what Harry would tell her to do.

But she was always the one to be rescued and she had fought against the Death Eaters. This person couldn't be worse than those animals. She gripped her wand tighter and slowly made her way upstairs, skilfully avoiding the creaking boards. There was only one door ajar and the setting sun outside cast a sliver of orange-red light on the floor. She approached it carefully, then, a shadow flitted across the doorway. Terror and doubt gripped her heart and froze her body momentarily but she knew they were there; they had lost the element of surprise. The brave Weasley girl steeled her nerves and pushed the door open wide, her wand up and spell in mind. The first stunner went wide and struck the wall. Ginny's broke the window behind the intruder but she did not wait and tried again. The stranger was tall, hooded and masked and he spoke no words as he deflected the stunner back at Ginny. Her counter was too slow and she fell unconscious on the floor, her face frozen in the expression of realisation that she should have run away.

The door to 12 Grimmauld Place opened and Harry Potter walked in, greeted by the smell of burning food. *"That's strange!"* Harry thought to himself, Ginny never burned food. He walked into the kitchen to find it empty but the stove was on still, he turned it off. *"Ginny?"* He called out only to be greeted by the dulcet tones of Walburga Black. *"Now that's not right!"* He said, unwittingly repeating Ginny's words. He had sealed that portrait so that they never had to hear that torturous voice again. He walked back to the hall and resealed the ancient witch with a wave of his wand, then Harry started looking for Ginny. He already suspected he wouldn't find her, the burning food, the unsealed painting and her silence all added up to foul play. She wasn't downstairs and Harry could feel his heart racing, he ran upstairs. There was still only one door ajar but the light on the floor was a sickly yellow cast by the street lamps. A great sense of foreboding lay on Harry as he walked into the room and his heart sank at the sight of spell damage.

A wand lay on the floor and Harry knew it; maple, seven and three quarters on an inch long and though he couldn't see it, a core of dragon's heartstring. Harry fell to his knees and picked the wand up, tears welling in his eyes. He wasn't a boy anymore though and he had a duty to protect Ginny, he wiped his eyes on his sleeve and stood up. He was ready to leave that instant, even though there were no clues. He would scour all of England looking for her and if she wasn't there then he would search the world. Just as he was about to turn and leave he spotted a piece of parchment lying on the bed, he picked it up and read it hastily.

*Dear Mr Potter,*

*Thrice now have you given me grievance*

*Though you may know it not.*

*Now three lives in my hands to be your penance,*

*And that shall be your lot.*

*Lest I obtain the symbols three,*

*Which reside now in your keeping.*

*These relics you will bring to me,*

*Or these lives be fleeting.*

*'Til All Hallows Eve on the twelfth hand,*

*Have you the objects to bring*

*Here where I wait in a fire-ravaged land,*

*Close at hand the white lion sings*

*Yours sincerely,*

*A peeved wizard*

Harry swallowed hard, whoever took Ginny had two more hostages and they were probably close to Harry. The riddle on the parchment was obviously the demands of this wizard and where to find his friends. Harry wasn't very good at these kind of things; the only things he could figure out was that his friends were hostages and he had until midnight on Halloween to meet the wizard's demands... or else the hostages would die. Both were important pieces of information but the remaining riddle was even more vital. Harry was sure that they told him what the wizard wanted and where to find him. He didn't know,

however, what 'symbols three', 'fire-ravaged land- and 'white lion sings' meant. Harry needed Hermione for this but if his guess was correct she would be one of the three hostages.

He had to be sure that Ron and Hermione weren't involved although he had little hope for it. He locked the house and walked out to the street. It was a cold night and clouds darkened the starless sky as though the air itself was responding to Harry's fears. The anxious auror looked around carefully to check he was not being watched. As an extra precaution the street lamps dimmed as Harry spun on his heel, the quiet swish of his robe was followed by a loud crack. The lamps returned to normal but Harry was nowhere to be seen, he had disappeared. Ron's street was eerily quiet as Harry walked down it towards his friend's house. It must have been quite late because there were almost no lights on in any of the houses except one. All the lights were on in Ron's house and through the upstairs window Harry could see a silhouette moving around as if searching for something. Maybe it was just the effects of the night's event on Harry but he thought this was very suspicious behaviour. He drew his wand and let himself into Ron's house but it was clear upon entry there was no intruder here. Ron's voice was panicked and Harry's initial joy at hearing his friend was deflated when he realised what Ron was saying.

*"Hermione! Hermione!"* Ron called for his partner but there was no answer. Harry ran upstairs and into the room Ron was searching. The distraught Weasley had evidently taken leave of his senses as he emptied drawers and checked cupboards in his search for Hermione.

*"Ron! Stop!"* Harry announced his presence with a commanding voice, attempting to bring his friend round. Ron looked up at Harry with a mixture of confusion, distress and relief. He seemed to realise he was rummaging through his own underwear as if Hermione might be hiding in the small drawer. He through the socks he had in his hand back in the drawer and slammed it shut turning to Harry.

*"Harry, I can't find Hermione. She was supposed to meet me at the train station but when she wasn't there I just assumed she was working late so I came home myself but she hasn't shown up and it doesn't look like she has been home for a couple of days."* Ron spoke without stopping for breath and he was starting to turn blue when Harry finally stopped him.

*"Calm down Ron!"* Harry said with his hands out in front of him as if signalling

someone to stop. *"Have you checked with the Ministry? Maybe she's just really busy."* Even to himself Harry didn't sound very convincing. The Department for International Magical Cooperation was busy working with other Ministries to combat the recent events. However, now that he thought about it, he hadn't seen Hermione at work. They worked in different departments true but they usually ran into each other. He had just assumed they were both so busy that they had no time for their usual lunch. Ron wasn't convinced either and he shoved a piece of parchment into Harry's hands. Harry, fearing the worst, unrolled and read it but it was less sinister than his own message.

*Dear Ms Granger,*

*Due to your failure to report for work over the last three days without notifying the office it is with regret that I must inform you of a disciplinary hearing. You are required to be in attendance at court one on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October. Failure to attend will result in an immediate dismissal; contacting the office before the court date with a sufficient explanation may result in exoneration.*

*Sincerely,*

*Helena Hufflepuff, Head of Department of International Magical Cooperation*

It wasn't a riddle from some strange wizard but its message was twofold, Hermione would never miss work unless she had no choice. Harry couldn't say anything, his heart was in his throat and it was clear to him that Hermione had been kidnapped like Ginny. He handed the parchment left at his own house to Ron who read it looking completely nonplussed. *"That was left at my house, there were signs of fighting and..."* Harry pulled out Ginny's wand and showed it to Ron, *"This was lying on the floor. Ron, Ginny was kidnapped."*

Ron turned as white as a sheet and looked at Harry in horror. *"Do...do you think the same person took Hermione?"* He asked, he was too distraught to make sense of the riddle but he felt like that was what Harry was saying.

*"I think so. If this note is anything to go by, this wizard who took Ginny has a grudge against me."* Harry's voice was subdued as the reality of the situation hit home. Ginny and Hermione had been put in danger because of him, why did he have to be Harry Potter? He didn't have time to feel sorry for himself though, he had to save Ginny, Hermione and whoever the third hostage was. *"C'mon Ron."*

Harry said decisively having figured out his next move, if Hermione couldn't help figure the riddle out then he'd go to someone that could.

Ron nodded and after a short pause said quite inquisitively, *"Right...where're we going?"*

*"Hogwarts"* Harry announced but Ron scratched his head.

*"I don't think they're there Harry."* Ron said simply and with a hint of derision towards Harry. Honestly, what use was it going to Hogwarts, no kidnapper could hide there.

*"I know that Ron,"* Harry replied impatiently *"But we need to figure this riddle out and for that we need someone smarter than us. We'll go see Professor McGonagall; she'll be able to help."*

*"Oh, right."* Was all Ron could say as his cheeks turned into a colour similar to his hair.

The two friends appeared in Hogsmeade to find they were alone at the edge of the village. They did not waste any time and immediately turned in the direction of Hogwarts. The mud splattered under their feet as they tramped through the rain, shielding their faces from its icy sting. The gate was guarded by two aurors as a precaution, put in place by the Headmistress. They challenged the drenched friends but stood down as soon as they were satisfied that Harry was Harry. The two rushed into the castle and headed straight for the gargoyle the hid the stairs to the Headmistress' office. It was only when they stood in front of it that they realised they did not know the password. Luckily they did not need it on this occasion as swift, soft footsteps alerted them to the fact that someone was coming this way. Students weren't allowed out at night so it had to be a teacher; just then Professor McGonagall came round the corner. She did not stop at the sight of Harry and Ron but she walked up to them and spoke in a business like voice.

*"Mr Potter, Mr Weasley...what are you doing in the school at this ungodly hour? Perhaps you have decided to complete your final year of education?"* She remarked disbelievingly and a slight curl at the corner of her mouth was the only indication of sarcasm. She adopted her trademark straight-to-the-point attitude

almost immediately though. *"Well don't just stand there, I have no desire to practice Legilimency at this time of night, speak!"*

*"We need your help Professor!"* Harry exclaimed after shaking the water out of his ears. *"Ginny and Hermione have been kidnapped."*

The face of the Headmistress contorted into an expression of horror. *"What? Have you proof of this?"* She asked briskly, it wasn't that she didn't believe Harry but she needed some kind of confirmation to accept it. Harry showed her the note that was left at his house and she read through it quickly. *"Very well Mr Potter, come upstairs. Tabby!"*

It took a moment for Harry and Ron to realise that 'tabby' was the password as the gargoyle sprung aside. Minerva studied the note carefully in her office as Harry and Ron waited, listening to her read aloud. Ron was pacing across the floor but Harry was staring up at the picture of a slumbering Dumbledore. *"This is a riddle but I think I can decipher most of it."* The headmistress finally spoke again drawing Harry's attention and causing Ron to stop pacing. *"There is one thing that eludes me however. That is this 'symbols three' phrase; I cannot fathom what he means by it."*

*"I just need to find them!"* Harry stated determinedly, it didn't matter to him what this lunatic wanted. He would find him and take the girls back by force.

*"Don't be rash Potter, we don't know anything about this wizard. We have..."* McGonagall was on the verge of a lecture but she was interrupted by a former Headmaster.

*"Actually Minerva, we know something about him."* Everyone jumped as the voice of Albus Dumbledore matter-of-factly interjected. *"We know he is irrational because he holds a grudge against someone who he does not know. We know he is dangerous because he threatens innocent lives. And we know he is quite mad because he seeks to master Death."*

The others looked more than a little flabbergasted but it did not last long, they were all accustomed to Dumbledore's brilliant (if slightly eccentric) mind. Harry was mulling over Dumbledore's words, 'master Death'? He seeks to become the Master of Death? Where had Harry heard that phrase before?

*"What do you mean Albus?"* Minerva asked in a perplexed tone but Dumbledore just chuckled.

*"My dear Minerva, you are forgetting your children's stories."*

*"Children stories? Come now Albus, it's hardly the time for..."* The Headmistress often had little patience for Dumbledore's games but this time it was Ron who spoke up.

*"It's the Hallows!"* Ron said, surprising the others but everything clicked into place for Harry. As it did his heart sank, he did not have all the Hallows in his possession he only had one.

*"But I don't have the Hallows."* Harry protested, *"What are we going to do?"*

*"I think, Harry, your rashness must be the course of action."* Dumbledore surmised, *"The stone is lost in the forest and it would take a lifetime to find it. Time is what we lack; the sun rises on the day of All Hallows."* Just as finished speaking a ray of sunlight flowed into the room, it was the 31<sup>st</sup> October.

*"Where are they?"* Harry demanded, panic becoming more and more evident. Minerva re-checked the note.

*"I am certain he is holding them in the Quantock hills, but that range is miles long. It would take weeks to search them all."* The Headmistress sounded a little dispirited but Dumbledore once again interjected.

*"If memory serves me, there is a pleasant tavern by the name of The White Lion in a town called Bridgwater. The town lies close to those hills."* There seemed to be no end to Dumbledore's knowledge but now was not the time to contemplate his extensive life. Before another word could be said Harry had run out of the office, Ron followed close behind leaving Professor McGonagall standing alone. *"It would be prudent to have some backup I think."* The Headmistress needed no other words; she simply nodded and also left. Dumbledore sighed and settled down back to sleep.

The surrounding land was black and charred, a land ravaged by fire. Harry had become separated from Ron but he had to trust his friend to be ok. Ginny and Hermione had to come first, a cave opening in the side of the hill was Harry's only option. He plunged into the darkness with his wand ready but the light outside soon faded. *"Lumos"* Harry whispered and the tip of his wand became his light source. He did not have to go far, before long he heard sounds as if someone was struggling against bonds. He rushed ahead heedless of any danger and found Ginny and Hermione trapped and bound in separate cages dangling precariously over a chasm. When they spotted them they tried to call out but they were gagged and their voices nothing more than muffled ramblings. Just as Harry was thinking of a way to save them a cold voice permeated the gloom.

*"Welcome Mr Potter, please step away from my other guests. It would be a great shame if something untoward were to happen to them."* A tall, lanky wizard with sparse, greasy lengths of hair and a gnarled face stepped into the edge of Harry's wand light. *"I trust you brought me the objects I desire?"* His voice had turned even colder and his wand was pointed at Ginny.

Harry had his wand pointed at the chest of the dark wizard in front of him. *"You're that one that was on the news aren't you? Tyran or something?"* Harry's voice was steady but the contempt was clear, he needed to buy time. He had a clear shot but with Tyran's wand on Ginny it was too risky to attack, now would be a really good time for Ron to show up.

*"That's right, though that information is irrelevant."* Tyran replied icily, patience was apparently not a virtue of his. *"Now hand over the Hallows and you and our friends can be off on your merry way."*

A disturbance that sounded like loose rock being kicked drew everyone's attention but they could not see the cause in the darkness. Tyran had lowered his wand from Ginny and simply was pointing towards emptiness. Harry wouldn't get another chance, *"Stupefy"* he screamed and a bolt of red flew towards the dark wizard.

Tyran was an older, more experienced duellist and reacted almost instantly, he deflected the stunner. Having lost the little patience he had he fired two white bolts towards the chains suspending Hermione and Ginny. Harry managed to save Ginny from falling but he was too slow to stop Hermione's execution bolt. Thankfully Ron had been the cause of the disturbance and now he narrowly saved Hermione by knocking the cage. Hermione screamed as she swung but

she was safely secured still. Tyran screamed in rage but he had to deal with the two armed wizards in front of him. He pulled no punches and both Ron and Harry knew what those flying bolts of green meant. They ducked and dodged the deadly curses whilst firing stunners and any other spell they could think to use. Ron levitated a bunch of rocks and threw them at Tyran but he blasted them away. However Harry took advantage of the dust the broken rocks created as he dashed towards Tyran and knocked him over with a stunner at point blank range.

Tyran's final effort was one of spite as he lost consciousness he fired two more curses towards Hermione and Ginny. They flew past Harry and Ron who were powerless to stop them now and they watched in horror as the cages were blasted from their holdings. Both girls screamed as they started to plummet into the abyss but they did not fall far. Minerva, Arthur and Molly ran into the cavern with their wands pointed at the girls. Arthur and Molly levitated them to safety whilst Minerva restrained Tyran. Ginny ran straight to Harry and hugged him tightly; Hermione did the same to Ron.

*"Phew, that was a close call."* Ron exasperated, his legs feeling like jelly, Harry agreed but they had done it and no one was hurt. There was just one more thing though.

*"The note said there were three hostages,"* Harry looked around expecting to see a third cage. *"Where's the other one?"*

At this Ginny smiled through her tears and took his hand, placing it on her stomach. *"Right here!"*

It took a minute or so before what she said dawned on him, it was completely unexpected but he couldn't be happier. He embraced her fiercely and tears of joy trickled down his cheeks. Ron, Hermione and Arthur all laughed happily whilst Molly was crying openly with excitement. Minerva simply shook her head at them acting as though nothing had happened. They all left with Tyran in tow, they would hand him over to the Ministry then get back to their own, not so simple lives.