

Big Problems

Chapter 1

Harry had only gotten home an hour before and had just finished eating when he received an urgent call through the Floo. The Weasleys had been attacked.

As Harry rushed to put things in order before leaving, a million thoughts rushed through his head. One of which was how they all had gotten to such a place. Harry, with the help of his friends Hermione and Ron, defeated the Dark Lord at the end of their final year at Hogwarts. Obviously, the entire country was ecstatic that the evil bastard was done with once and for all. As such, Harry was heaped with praise and gifts, most of which were donations of gold. He did the right thing and made sure that his friends received their fair share of the credit. After all, he couldn't have done it without them.

Hermione had taken her money and opened a small business that sold enchanted items. She was quite good and before long, her business was doing very well for itself. Her boyfriend, Ron, had decided to try his luck with Quidditch. While he wasn't a superstar, he did eventually make a roster as a backup Keeper. Harry had decided to try his luck in the Auror Academy.

The Academy was long and grueling. Harry had to work his butt off just to make sure that he didn't flunk out. He wasn't given any special treatment by the Head of the Auror Office. During the particularly brutal parts of the bootcamp, he kind of wished that they had. The majority of applicants failed the first week. The second week wasn't much better. By the third week, things seemed to get easier, but in reality, they were just getting used to the strenuous activities. After the fourth week ended, Harry and a handful of others graduated and moved onto the next level of their training.

While this part wasn't as physically taxing, it did involve a great deal of studying, which annoyed him greatly. He had very much hoped that his studying days were over once he finished school. After another month of this, he moved on. Next, he joined the Auror force as a Trainee and was assigned an old, grizzled veteran to mold him into a proper Auror. The Trainee portion lasted for another year. Thankfully, once that year was done, he became a full Auror and was finally given something more exciting to do than patrolling the streets of Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade.

By then, most of Voldemort's Death Eaters had been captured, tried, and sentenced, but there were still a few that evaded capture. Harry always volunteered to be on any team that went after any of the fugitive Death Eaters when credible intel was received. He did his very best to rid their world of the scum that had nearly ruined their society. He wasn't alone in this venture.

Arthur Weasley had moved up in the Ministry after the fall of Voldemort. He had been made Minister Shacklebolt's second in command, so he wielded quite a bit of power. He used that power to take down as many blood purists as possible. He went after businesses, bank accounts, supporters, pretty much anything that was involved with Voldemort or his followers.

He made more than a few enemies by doing that, but he didn't care. He was doing the right thing. His son, Bill, even helped out by getting the Goblins onboard ... for a reasonable fee, of course.

Because of all of this, Harry wasn't surprised to hear that the Weasleys had been attacked. It certainly wasn't the first time.

Harry had been dating Ginny off and on for a while. Currently, they were on-again, so when she invited him to go on their family vacation, Harry jumped at the chance. It wasn't often that the whole clan would get together like in the old days. Everyone was simply too busy to make it happen. They were planning to take a Portkey down to the Spanish coast where they had rented a large villa. The whole group was going to spend two weeks enjoying the sun and surf. It sounded like heaven to Harry. He had been working his butt off for several years by that point and hadn't taken a vacation since joining the Aurors.

Unfortunately, Harry had to take a separate Portkey a day later. He had some important paperwork to fill out that couldn't wait. So when the Weasleys took off without him earlier that day, Harry didn't expect anything shady to happen.

He put on his Auror uniform and immediately Floo'ed to St. Mungos Hospital. As the fireplace spat him out, he saw the women of the family pacing back and forth. Ginny looked up and made a beeline for him. The others quickly followed. The cute redhead hugged him tightly as she met him. Harry hugged her back. "What's going on? How bad is it?" he asked. Looking around, besides Ginny, he saw Hermione, Molly, Fleur, and Angelina.

"Don't worry. Nothing was lethal," Mrs. Weasley told him.

"We just appeared at the Portkey point in Spain when we were barraged by spellfire. Fred and George took a few nasty curses, but they'll recover soon enough. The rest of us began returning fire. Whoever they were, they weren't very good at fighting and were quickly pushed back. Seeing that they were about to lose, they Apparated away, but not before throwing a large vial of something," Hermione explained, now by his side as well. Ginny nodded.

"The vial exploded and covered us in a hazy, dark blue mist. It smelled really bad and made our skin tingle. It affected the men worse, however," Ginny told him.

"Yes. They screamed in pain and doubled over. They fell to the floor and curled up in a ball, shaking badly," Fleur told him, turning her big, beautiful eyes to him. "It wasn't long before they fainted from the pain."

"I wonder why it only affected them like that and not us," Angelina chimed in, nervously wringing her hands.

"How did you all get back here?" he asked.

“They were treated to make sure that they were stable enough to be moved and were quickly transferred back to our home country. With Arthur being the Undersecretary, we were given priority,” Hermione jumped back in.

“How long has it been since you heard anything?”

“About half an hour,” Molly told him, looking like she wanted nothing more than to demand answers from the overworked girl at the front desk.

“Let me see if I can get some answers,” he told them, tapping his Auror badge with authority. The women smiled and nodded. He walked over to the desk and showed his badge. They watched as Harry talked to the girl for a few minutes before returning to them.

“The Healer in charge will be out in a minute,” he told them. “He’ll be able to tell us what’s going on.” The wait seemed like forever for them as they sat in the Waiting Room anxiously tapping their feet. When the Healer finally came out, all of the girls jumped to their feet. He didn’t wait to be asked before filling them in on the situation.

“There’s good news and bad news,” he told them, checking his chart. “The good news is that they’re no longer in critical condition.”

All of them let out a sigh of relief at hearing that. Some of the girls hugged while Harry waited to hear the rest. After all, he did say that there was some bad news as well. When they turned their attention back to the Healer, he continued.

“The bad news is that the aerosol that they were exposed to was a combination of nerve gas and a potent acid. Their bodies were severely harmed by it,” he explained further.

“But that doesn’t make sense!” Angelina joined in. “We were hit by it as well, and we haven’t suffered terribly because of it,” she told the Healer. The Healer simply nodded.

“Analysis shows that the particular potion that was used was designed specifically to target the male reproductive system. Females wouldn’t be adversely affected by it if exposed.”

“Reproductive system?” Fleur caught that part. All of the women looked at the Healer with wide eyes. He sadly nodded his head.

“Their nervous system was damaged during exposure, and while it may recover somewhat in time, the damage to their genitalia was severe and untreatable.” As a man, he certainly didn’t want to give this kind of update to their loved ones.

“D-Damage?” Molly stuttered. The Healer nodded and waved them to the back. As they entered the private ward, each of the Weasley men was unconscious and in bed. As Molly, Hermione,

Fleur, and Angelina went to their respective partners and pulled the curtains for privacy, that left Charlie, Fred, and Percy alone. Neither Harry nor Ginny wanted to take a peek at what was going on under their trousers. Whatever it was, it wasn't good. Harry heard the horrified cries of shock from each of the women. When Hermione started crying, he bit the bullet and joined her. He nearly gagged when he saw what she was seeing. Ron's junk was shriveled up and blackened. The damage was so bad that Harry couldn't even tell that it was supposed to be a cock and balls. He flipped the sheet back over the sleeping Ron and hugged Hermione tightly. She cried into his shoulder as he rubbed her back. Harry knew that things were going to be hard for them from now on.

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Harry took a sip of his glass of wine and winked at the two cute girls that kept checking him out. They burst into giggles before they scampered off back onto the busy streets of Paris. Just then, soft hands grabbed his face and a pair of lovely lips kissed him deeply. When she broke the kiss, he saw Gabrielle Delacour smiling back at him. Harry stood up and hugged her. After that, he pulled the chair out for her and let her sit down. She immediately began on the cheese and bread while Harry poured her a glass of her favorite wine. She smiled appreciatively while she munched on her bread.

"Merci! My first month at my new job 'as been rough. Long hours," she explained away her ravenous appetite. "I barely 'ave time to eat a snack before I am forced back to work," she told him. Gabrielle had decided to become a Healer, which Harry thought was a very noble profession. Unfortunately, the hours were long and the job was unforgiving, especially to the trainees. Harry inwardly chuckled when he remembered his time as a trainee. He really felt for the poor girl. He studied her gorgeous face as she ate. She looked so much like her older sister. Sadly, Fleur rarely had a smile on her face these days.

Harry still spent a great deal of time with the Weasleys. He certainly wasn't going to abandon them when times got tough. His relationship with Ginny had been off again for the last year or so, which was why he was in sunny Paris. He was visiting Gabby for the weekend. As a student Healer, she didn't have time for much of anything, let alone romance. So Harry took it upon himself to visit her on the weekends. It was a tough job, having to pleasure her over and over again, but it was a sacrifice that he was willing to make. Since he was promoted into an Auror Captain, he had much more free time than he had in the past. Mainly because he could push the paperwork off on his poor Junior Aurors, just as his Captain had done with him. The man had earned the privilege, and now Harry had earned it as well.

When she was done eating, they finished the bottle before standing up. Gabby threw her arms around his neck and kissed him deeply once again. "Let's go back to my apartment and spend our last few hours in bed," she told him sexily as she nipped at his jaw. Harry certainly wasn't going to say no to that. He had to leave later that night because he had work in the morning. Unfortunately, he wouldn't be seeing his favorite Veela again until the following weekend. His life was tough, but he'd survive.

After work the following day, Harry trudged into the renovated Grimmauld Place and flopped back onto his favorite chair. It was soft and cushy and situated right next to the fireplace which was crackling merrily. Kreacher had left out a bottle of firewhiskey so that he could have a nip before dinner. That mangy, old elf had definitely improved over the years. He had barely taken a sip of his drink when Hermione jumped through the Floo as it burst into green flames. She was holding an overnight bag which she let drop to the floor.

“Hermione!” Harry happily called out, getting up to greet her. However, he could see that she wasn’t in a very good mood. He sighed and grabbed a second glass. Pouring her three fingers of whiskey, he handed it to her, and she didn’t even bother thanking him. Instead, she tilted her head back and guzzled down half the glass in one go. Harry was surprised and a little impressed by her ability to take that amount of firewhiskey straight to the gut. “Let me guess ... Ron again?” he asked, pulling another chair close to his. Hermione sat down and looked forlorn at him.

“How did you know?” she asked, sipping her drink this time.

“It’s the same with all of the Weasleys these days,” he told her sadly. Hermione nodded.

“I had been wondering why things became strained between us. If it were just us, then I could understand, but it’s not. It’s all of the Weasleys’ relationships. Ever since that day, things have been going from bad to worse, and I needed to figure out why. And I think that I’ve done it,” she told him. Harry just chuckled and smiled at her.

“Of course you did. Smartest girl of her generation and all that,” he teased. Hermione’s cheeks blushed pink, and she looked slightly embarrassed by his praise.

“Yes, well ... It was difficult and it took a long time, but the answer finally came to me.”

“Don’t keep me in suspense. What’s the problem?”

Harry wanted to help his friends. He didn’t like seeing them so miserable. Hermione had been correct. Ever since the day that they were attacked, things hadn’t been going well for the couples. It started with bickering, then that turned into arguing. These days, it wasn’t uncommon to see one or the other say some nasty things before storming off. It seemed like every day that there was someone, or even multiple people staying in his guest rooms.

“This might be embarrassing to talk about, but I’ll just come out with it,” Hermione said before she took a deep breath and continued with her explanation. “It’s all about sex.”

“Isn’t everything?” he teased which earned him a slap on the knee.

"I'm serious!" she huffed. "Look ... You know when magical people get married and during the ceremony, there's that ribbon of magic that binds the bride and groom's hands together?" she asked. Harry had been to enough weddings to know what she was talking about.

"Yeah."

"Well, that isn't just for show, you know," she told him. "It actually does bind the two together. That's why it's so hard to get a divorce. Most just separate but stay married."

"That's nice to know and all, but what does it have to do with you lot being at each other's throats all of the time?" Hermione rolled her eyes.

"I'd tell you if you'd just keep your gob shut for a minute," she rebuked him. Harry snorted and let her continue. It seemed that someone was still a tad testy from arguing with her significant other. Harry felt that it was best if he just kept his mouth shut and listened.

"I read an article in a magical research journal that was recently published about the effects that sex has on our magic. As it turns out, sex affects us greatly," she said excitedly. Studying and research always got her going. "I won't go into all of the ways that it does, but believe me when I say that it's important to us." She got up and started pacing back and forth. It was a sure sign that she was going into "teacher" mode.

"That's what gave me my idea. I figured that maybe sex, or the lack thereof, had something to do with it. As it turned out, I was right!" she smiled excitedly. "You see ... sex between married couples is a union, just like the binding during the wedding ceremony. Sex strengthens that binding continuously. That's why every couple that has separated is miserable and crabby. They're fighting the binding, and the binding is fighting back!"

"So because you all are not having sex, the magic of your bond is making you irritable?" he asked for clarification. Hermione nodded. "Okay ... So how do you fix it?" Hermione's face fell slightly.

"I haven't figured that out yet. One way is divorce, but that option is very difficult and dangerous, not to mention that I'm sure that none of us actually want to get divorced. We just want to be happy again," she said sadly. Harry wrapped his arms around her and hugged her. She hugged him back tightly.

"It'll be okay, Hermione. You're smarter than anyone I know. I'm sure that you'll figure it out, and I'll help in any way that I can. Just let me know what I can do, okay?" he said, trying to cheer her up. Hermione nodded her head against his chest before breaking away.

"Anyway ... Is it okay if I stay here tonight?" she asked. "Ron and I had a fight, and I need time to cool off. Besides, I need some peace and quiet so I can do some research."

“You don’t need to ask,” he told her. She smiled and kissed his cheek before grabbing her bag and going upstairs to figure out the answer to her problem. What she didn’t know yet was that the answer was downstairs drinking a glass of whiskey while waiting for dinner to be served.