

Her fingers slipped beneath the hem of his t-shirt, sliding up the swell of his stomach, and he sucked in a sharp breath.

They hadn't gone very far, in the few weeks they'd been together at Hogwarts. Between exams and everything else, there hadn't been much time for it — and Neville had never so much as kissed a girl before her, was nervous and tentative and so very *proper*. It took a week for her to get him to stop asking permission every time he kissed her. But the few times he had slipped a hand beneath her school shirt, or trailed kisses down her neck, it lit her up in a way that anything she'd done with Michael had never even come close to.

"Is there a bench here, or anything?" she asked, suddenly feeling a little weak in the knees. Neville's large hand settled on the curve of her waist, directing her over to a simple wooden bench nearby. He sat down, and Ginny sat beside him, legs pressed close together as sparks pulsed deep in her belly. She happily went back to kissing him, her hand sneaking under his shirt once more to slide up his broad back.

Neville was one of those kids that had puberty hit them like the Hogwarts Express; he'd come a very long way from the round-faced, slightly buck-toothed boy she remembered from her earlier Hogwarts years. Even in the few weeks since she'd seen him last, he'd grown an inch or so and lost more of the baby fat from his cheeks. And his time working with his plants had built some muscle across his shoulders, helped by his work with the HA in the last year. There was still more softness to his body than she knew he was comfortable with, at his waist and thighs and chest, but Ginny liked that about him. Knew she'd like it a lot more, if she ever got him brave enough to take his shirt off in front of her.

He was turning into a handsome man, and Ginny knew she'd have some jealousy to deal with once they got back to Hogwarts.

But inside, he was still the shy, earnest, clumsy boy who had been so very sweet to her at the Yule Ball, and stolen her heart without either of them realising.

Slowly, tentatively, his hand moved from her waist, down to her knee. Ginny's breath hitched, and he froze. "No, keep going," she urged, lips moving to his jaw.

His hand moved again, sliding under the hem of her skirt, strong fingers wrapping ever so tenderly around her thigh. His touch was like lightning straight to her core, and Ginny hummed in encouragement, gripping at his shoulder beneath his shirt. "You can keep going," she breathed, pulling back a little to meet his wide-eyed gaze.

"I— out here? Are you sure?"

"Who's going to find us?" Ginny pointed out, voice growing husky with lust.

"O-okay."

"Only if you want to," Ginny said — she didn't want to push him, didn't want to make him uncomfortable, but *Merlin* if she didn't get some kind of touch down there soon she might explode. "I didn't actually mean to jump you as soon as I got here," she added, a little sheepish. Neville huffed out a laugh, his eyes darkened.