

And maybe in time he could get them to trust each other once more.

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To her credit, Ginny didn't try too hard to avoid Harry in the days that followed. He let her have Christmas, and Boxing Day, but on the 27th he shot her a loaded glance over lunch, and when he went up to the little-used parlour on the family floor, she came with him.

He warded the room discreetly, not wanting Ginny to realise he was using magic outside of school. Then he gestured to the sofa, a hand-knitted blanket draped over the back. "So," he began, once they were both sat down. "Tell me about Michael."

That didn't seem to be what Ginny was expecting. She blinked, thrown off-guard, then bit her lip. "I... I did like him, at first. Not as much as... I did like him." Harry wasn't sure if she was trying to convince him or herself, and stayed silent. "He was sweet, and he wasn't expecting any promises or anything. But it was nice, y'know? At least at first. Then... When I was with him, I just started feeling this awful guilt. Like I was cheating even though I wasn't. And sometimes I would see Neville look at me..."

She shuddered. Harry knew the looks she was speaking of.

"I talked to Nev a couple of times, and he said I should just do what made me happy. That he could wait for me to figure out what I wanted. But even just sitting and studying with him made me feel ten times better than anything I did with Michael."

"Please don't go into detail," Harry urged, looking a bit nauseous, and Ginny giggled.

"Ask me no questions, I'll tell you no lies," she teased. Then she sobered once more, tugging at her braid. "I think Michael could tell something was off. He started getting... weird. All possessive, wanting to know way too much about who I was with and what I was doing all day. Trying to tell me who I could and couldn't hang out with." Her brown eyes flashed angrily. "Then about a week before we came here, Michael and I had this *horrible* fight. He got really jealous about how much time I spent with you and Neville. Said that he hated when I was in my common room instead of in the library or wherever because he couldn't *keep an eye on me*, that he couldn't trust me when I wasn't with him. I yelled at him about it — we agreed when we got together that it wouldn't be anything serious. We both said terrible things, but he said some *really* gross things about me and I just couldn't take it anymore, so I dumped him."

Her eyes began to water, and suddenly she let out a sob. "The worst part, though, was when he said I'd been leading him on, and I couldn't even deny it because *fuck, I was*."

Ginny started to cry, and Harry shuffled closer to wind an arm around her. She fell into him, tears seeping into his t-shirt. "You said you told him it wasn't serious," Harry pointed out.

"Yeah but I still agreed to be his girlfriend knowing it wasn't going to go anywhere! Knowing I didn't feel about him like I was supposed to."