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## Chapter One:

"Harry!" Hermione cried, throwing several spells at the snake. She ran over to him, noticing that he was losing consciousness quickly. "Stay with me. We need to leave."

She helped him up and they ran out the window, apparating away.

They arrived back at the tent, and Harry fell unconscious. She ran her hand over his sweaty face before she attempted to remove the Horcrux.

When she touched it, however, it burnt her hand.

**'*What the?'*** she thought, pulling her wand out. She fired whatever spell she could think of in a desperate attempt to remove it before it caused Harry any pain or damage.

No such luck.

**'*I'm so sorry, Harry!'***

She levitated his body into the tent and laid him on the bed, grabbing her bag as she did so. Her eyes watered as she took care of him, hoping more than anything that he would pull through.

She conjured a bowl of water and a rag and wiped the sweat off his head, removing his glasses as she did so. She ran her hand through his hair when he cried out in pain, her heart breaking at the sound.

"I'm so sorry, Harry," she said, grabbing hold of his hand. She laid her head on his stomach and closed her eyes, unaware that their hands glowed.

"What are you thinking about?" Harry interrupted, causing Hermione to shake her head.

"Nothing. How's Ginny?"

"She wanted to be alone."

"I can understand. Ron didn't want me around, either."

"It's going to be a long few weeks," he said, and she nodded in agreement.

"It's all over," she replied, looking over the damage. "You have to be feeling relieved."

"So relieved," he said. "Yet, feeling weird at the same time."

"What do you mean?"

"I don't know," he said, shaking his head. "My entire life has been built around Voldemort, and now that he's gone, I'm not sure how to move forward."

"You'll move forward happily," she replied, staring off into the distance. "I can see you with a beautiful wife, a few kids and you'll be the best auror the Ministry has ever had."

"I don't know if I can be now."

"You'll figure it out."

He grabbed hold of her hand, smiling softly at her. She smiled back, laying her head on Harry's shoulder as she did so.

"Harry," Hermione moaned, as he kissed down her neck. His hands slipped under her shirt and rested on her hips, stroking her skin.

"I want you," he said, his voice husky with desire.

His eyes were dark with lust, and she bit her lip. She pressed her hands against his face and crashed their lips together.

"Take me," she whispered back, and he pulled her shirt over her head. She straddled his lap and rocked her hips against his, wanting to feel more of him.

Their clothes disappeared, and it was just them.

And both Harry and Hermione awoke with a start.

"Minerva," Kingsley said, as he flooed into her office.

"Kingsley. How can I help you?"

"Were Harry Potter and Hermione Granger a couple by chance?"

"Potter and Granger? Not that I'm aware of."

"You may want to look at this. I stopped someone inside the Ministry trying to sell this to the Daily Prophet."

She grabbed the registry book from him and opened it to the designated page. Her eyes widened in shock as she saw the names in the book.

"That can't be right."

"All the information in this book is accurate. The moment it happens it gets recorded in it."

"They were missing nine months. Anything could have happened during that time. The best thing is to ask them."

"I was just a little curious."

"Something just doesn't seem right about this," she remarked, pressing her finger to her mouth. "I think I may go speak with them."

"I need to get back to the office. Please let me know what you find out."

"I will," she replied, and he disappeared into the flames of her fireplace.

"Morning," Ginny said, her eyes bloodshot.

"How are you?" Harry asked, wrapping his arms around her.

"I can't believe he's gone."

She buried her head into his chest. He ran his hand through her hair, trying to her to calm down.

"This is so hard."

"And it never goes away," he said quietly.

Hermione walked into the kitchen, stopping dead at the sight of Harry.

"Morning," she said quietly.

"I think I'm going to try to take a bath," Ginny replied, breaking away from Harry. He nodded and watched as she disappeared up the stairs. He turned back to Hermione, who was hesitant to look at him.

"Is something wrong?"

"No, I just didn't sleep well, I guess."

"That goes for both of us," he replied, rubbing his tired eyes.

"How's Ron?" she asked.

"He didn't want to talk. He went straight to bed."

"I should have stayed with him last night. He needs someone."

"They just need time," he replied quietly.

"Is everything ok?" she asked, looking at his face. "You've barely looked at me this morning."

"I could say the same for you."

"I just had a bad dream last night."

"Same. Do you want to talk about it?"

"No, it was nothing."

He nodded, not wanting to press the issue further. "If you need anything, you know I'm here."

"I could take a walk, actually. I need some fresh air. Care to join me?"

"Sure," he replied, and they set off towards the backyard of The Burrow. "I'm still trying to figure out where we go from here."

"We somehow move on and start our lives."

"There's just one problem," he said, and she stopped dead in her tracks.

"What is it?"

"Teddy."

"Teddy," she whispered, her heart breaking in two. "He's an orphan."

"And I'm his godfather."

"What are you going to do?"

"He's with Andromeda. She and I need to talk."

"Harry, I'm sorry," she said, wrapping her arms around him. "This must be eating you alive."

"There's a difference between Teddy and I," he said, as he conjured a blanket. He put it on the ground and they both sat on it. "I was put with the Dursley's with no knowledge of my background or anything. Teddy has so many people here for him. He'll live in the wizarding world and he'll know everything that he wants and deserves to know."

"His godfather will make sure of it."

"He didn't deserve this."

"None of them did. Just like your parents, Remus and Tonks died giving their son a better world. They will always be remembered, and we'll all make sure that Teddy knows that."

"You always know what to say, Hermione."

"So do you," she replied softly, looking out towards the distance.

Harry turned to look at her, and she looked at him. Brown eyes met green, and something was drawing them in. Their hearts were pounding in their chests, and their eyes fluttered to a close. Their lips finally met, and it was slow, but passionate.

Then it heated up.

He pulled her down on top of him, and the dream the two of them shared began to become true. His hands slipped underneath her shirt, and she rocked their hips together. She moaned out in pleasure as his hands rested on her breasts, and his lips moved to her neck.

Her fingers began to undo the buttons to his shirt, and she ran her hands over his shirt as it opened. She crashed their lips together again, and Harry moaned into her mouth as she started to move their hips together again. His hands began to pull her shirt over her head before she reached down to stop him.

"We can't!" she said, pulling away as reality crashed back down to her. He shook his head, as though realizing the same.

"I'm sorry."

"Me, too," she breathed out, as she rolled off him. "Let's just pretend it never happened."

"Agreed," he said, standing up. "Catch you later."

"Same," she said, as he strolled past her. She closed her eyes and clutched her head, as though she were awaking from a dream.

Off in the distance, McGonagall stopped in her tracks and eyed them, confusion filling her face as she saw the two teenagers walk away from one another, clearly embarrassed from what just happened.

'That's interesting,' she thought, before she turned to walk into the Burrow.

"Albus, what do you know about soul-bonds?" McGonagall asked, as she walked back into her office. Dumbledore's painting came to life.

"Why are you asking this question?"

"I believe that Potter and Granger may have somehow soul-bonded."

"Is that right?" the painting asked, nodding his head. "Why do you believe that?"

"Kingsley showed me the magical records. Their names are written in there under marriages. It says that they became married on Christmas Eve. I went over to the house a while ago, and the two are definitely not a couple."

"Have you consulted them yet?"

"No. I don't even know where to begin. They clearly don't know about it. Clearly they need to know."

"I agree. If they were dating, Harry would never marry Hermione during the war. He would have waited until after. I think we need to speak with them both."

She nodded in agreement, letting out a sigh as she did so. "Tell me everything about soul-bonds."

"This isn't happening," Ron whispered, and Hermione turned sadly to him. She grabbed for his hand and laid her head on his shoulder, trying to remain strong for him.

Harry ran his hand through Ginny's hair, kissing the top of her head as she cried into his chest. Not far from them, the casket began to lower into the ground.

"My son!" Mrs. Weasley cried, blowing her nose into her tissue. Mr. Weasley's eyes were bloodshot as tears fell down his face, and he rubbed his wife's back.

George hadn't said a word to anyone since the battle ended. He had been holed up in his room, refusing to eat and refusing to talk to anyone. Now he sat in his chair, staring with a blank expression at the grave that was now in their backyard.

"Want to go for a walk?" Harry asked Ginny, and she nodded, wiping the tears off her face. He took her away from the grave and they walked around the yard. "I'm so sorry, Ginny."

"I miss him so much," she sobbed, placing her hand over his mouth. "I can't get over the fact that I'll never see him again."

"It gets harder," he replied, wrapping his arms around her waist. She buried her head in his chest. "I wish I could tell you that it gets easier, but it doesn't."

"Stay with me?" she asked softly, and he rested his chin on top of her head, closing his eyes as he did so.

"Stay with me?" he asked his mother. She smiled softly at him.

"Always."

"Ron, you haven't said anything in a while," Hermione said quietly, turning to look at her boyfriend

"This is hard."

"I'm sorry you had to lose him," she said, grabbing for his hand.

He wrapped his arms around her and hugged her, burying his face into her hair. She rubbed at his back, trying to figure out what to say to him.

"Thanks for being here," he whispered.

"I'll always be here. I miss him, too," she replied, resting her head on his shoulder.

They turned and walked back into the house. He went to sit on the couch, and she helped Fleur set the kitchen up. Harry and Ginny returned a short time later, and they both wondered off into the living room.

Everyone was silent during dinner. Hermione kept glancing over at Harry, hoping that what happened between them didn't ruin their friendship. He glanced up once and gave her a soft smile, thinking the same thing she was.

"Hey," Harry said, as he saw Hermione sitting in the living room later that night.

"Hi."

"Look, Hermione, I'm really sorry."

"Me, too. Let's just put it past us, Harry."

"Agreed," he replied, sitting down next to her. "McGonagall wants to talk to the two of us."

"About what?" she asked, her brow furrowing in confusion.

"I'm not sure. She wants to see us tomorrow morning."

She turned to look back at the fireplace, wondering what McGonagall would want to talk to them about. Harry sat beside her, clearly in thought as well.

'Whatever it is, I hope its good news.'

They stepped out of the fireplace and looked around McGonagall's office. Harry's eyes remained on the pensieve, Snape's memories flowing through his head as he did so.

"What do you think this is about?" she asked quietly. He shrugged his shoulder.

"I really have no idea."

"I hope it's not bad news."

The door to the office opened, and McGonagall stepped through with Kingsley right behind her. Harry and Hermione looked at each other.

"Harry, Hermione," he said, nodding his head. They nodded back at him while McGonagall moved to the other side of her desk.

"Take a seat," she said, pointing to the two chairs. They did. "Kingsley and I need to speak to the two of you."

"About what?" Hermione asked.

"Now, this may come as a shock," she said, looking between her former students.

"What do you want to talk to us about?" Harry asked, looking between her and Kingsley.

"We want to talk to the both of you about your marriage," she started slowly. Harry and Hermione looked at her in confusion.

"Our what?"

"Your marriage," Kingsley said.

"We're not married."

"We're not even together."

"That's what I feared," she replied.

"Hermione and I aren't married. I think we would know if we were married."

"Not always," McGonagall replied.

"We're not married!" Hermione said, shaking her head in disbelief.

"Not according to this," Kingsley said. He held up a book.

"What is that?"

"This is the official book of records. It gives the names of people who are married. I came across it from someone at the Ministry trying to sell this information to the Daily Prophet. It has the both of your names in it."

"Not possible."

"It says so right here," he replied, opening the book. They moved in to look. "Yes, right here. Harry Potter and Hermione Granger, December 24th, 1997."

"That's not possible," Harry said, backing away. Hermione looked scared.

"Every record of marriage is correct. The moment it happens, it gets recorded in this book."

"Christmas Eve? We were in Godric's Hallow that night. That's the night Voldemort's snake attacked us."

"That's what we need to talk to you about," McGonagall said. "We believe you two may have been soul-bonded."

"Soul-bonded?"

"We're soul-bonded?!" Hermione cried, standing up. McGonagall nodded. "How is that possible?"

"Neither of you have an idea?" she asked, looking between them. They shook their heads.

"You're kidding with us, right?" Harry asked, his voice lined with worry.

"We're really not. I already told you that I stopped someone in the Ministry trying to sell this information off. That's how I found out about it."

"I still don't understand how that's possible. Harry and I didn't consent, there was no Minister. Nothing is adding up here."

"Soul-bonds don't always happen through traditional marriage. Sometimes, very rarely, they happen in instances in which yours did," Dumbledore's painting said. They all turned to look up at it. "No matter how much you say you didn't, the both of you consented to marriage. The bond wouldn't have happened without it."

"Harry was unconscious and I was healing him. There's no way either one of us consented."

"Then something must have happened."

"Explain to us what happened that night."

Hermione told them everything that happened. McGonagall and Kingsley listened closely, trying to figure out when the bond may have occurred.

"You said the necklace stuck itself to Harry when he fell unconscious?" the painting asked again.

"I couldn't get it off. It burnt me when I tried to."

"That's when it occurred."

"What do you mean?" Harry asked.

"Minerva, Kingsley, may I speak to them alone?"

The two nodded and walked out of the office. Harry and Hermione turned back to the portrait, their hearts beating in their chests as they did so.

"The Horcrux that was inside of Harry bonded with the Horcrux inside of the necklace, which is why you were unable to remove it. I trust it left some damage behind when it did."

"There's a scar."

"I figured as much. I do believe that is when the bond may have occurred. When Hermione was trying to find a way to remove it from you, it may have linked your two souls together."

"How do we undo it?" Harry asked, his brow furrowed in confusion.

"That's just it," he started slowly, as though he were not wanting to tell them. "It can't be undone."

"What do you mean?" she asked, her voice filled with worry.

"The soul-bond is permanent."

"People get divorced all the time."

"You can get divorced, but the bond will always be there. You will always be able to feel each other even when you're divorced."

"We don't even feel each other now!"

"The soul-bond hasn't been completed. It has to be completed before the effects come in."

"But neither one of us agreed to this to begin with!"

"I understand, and I'm sorry. One more thing while you're already mad at me. Whenever a soul bond has been done, the marriage must be consummated for it to be completed."

"You're not saying what I think you're saying," Harry replied, pressing his hands against his head.

"I am. If it is not consummated, the bond will do whatever it takes to make sure it is."

"You're saying that Harry and I have to shag or else the bond will make us?"

"I'm so sorry," Dumbledore replied, and he disappeared from the portrait.

## Chapter Two:

Silence filled the room as both Harry and Hermione collapsed into their chairs. Both were too in shock to say anything. Hermione was shaking her head, unable to process everything that she has just heard.

"Hermione?" he asked, after ten minutes of silence. "Hermione, please say something."

"Say what?" she asked, standing up from the chair she was sitting it.

"Anything."

She walked around McGonagall's office, her mind going into overdrive. Harry pressed his lips together, wondering if Hermione was mad or not.

"Only us, right?" she asked, as though she were in disbelief. "Only something like this could happen to us."

"What do you want to do?" he asked her softly, standing up next to her. She shook her head.

"I really have no idea."

"Do you want to get a divorce?"

"You heard what he said!" she cried, throwing her hand towards Dumbledore's painting. "Divorce will only be in the books. We'll still be bound."

He closed his eyes, frustration building in him. She turned away from him, her mind deep in thought.

"We have to figure something out."

"What'd you do that night?"

She turned to him in shock, her eyes becoming wide while her cheeks turned a dark shade of red. He took a step back, instantly regretting saying that to her.

"Me?!" she cried, pointing her finger to her chest. "I saved your life that's what I did! I did whatever it took to make sure that you would be ok!"

"I didn't mean it like that."

"Are you blaming me for this?"

"No," he said, resting his hands on her shoulder. She instantly calmed down. "I am not blaming you for this. I just want to know what happened."

"I told you. All I did was heal you."

He dropped his eyes "What do we do?"

"I have no idea," she repeated once again. "How do we tell everyone?"

"We tell them the truth," he said softly. "Whether they believe that or not is up to them."

She nodded, stepping away from him. She started biting on her fingernail as another thought crossed her mind.

"If the bond is trying to get us to do that, why hasn't it happened yet?"

"It's already tried, remember?"

"Before that," she replied, her cheeks heating up as he reminded her of their previous activities. "We've been married for four months and nothing has happened. Dumbledore said that it would do anything to make it happen. Why didn't it happen before then?"

"Maybe the war focused our attentions in other places."

She let out another sigh and turned away from him. He closed his eyes, trying to figure out what to say to her. Eventually he stood up and wrapped his arms around her, and he was shocked as she wrapped hers around him and buried her head into his chest.

"All of this happening isn't going to change anything between us, is it?" she whispered, and he shook his head.

"I hope not. I don't know what I would do without you, Hermione."

"Is something bothering you?" Ron asked, as he and Hermione sat outside. She shook her head.

"No."

She and Harry have agreed not to tell the Weasleys until they felt that the time was right. They had left Hogwarts several hours ago, but now, as the sun was beginning to set, she felt horrible for lying to Ron.

'He deserves to know.'

"I just need to talk to Harry."

"Not me?" he asked, and, although he tried to hide it, she could detect the sound of hurt in his voice.

"I promise I'll talk to you."

She stood up before he could say another word. She quickly strode into the house and hunted for Harry, growing more frustrated when she couldn't find him. She walked up to his bedroom and pounded on the door, waiting for a minute before it finally opened.

"Hermione?" he said, and she could hear how tired he was.

"Were you sleeping?"

"I must have fallen asleep. Is something wrong?"

"We need to tell them," she said, stepping into the room when he stepped aside. "I can't take lying to Ron anymore."

"I know," he said softly, closing the door behind him. "Let's go talk to them right now."

"Thank you," she said, and watched as he grabbed his wand before leading her downstairs. "Ron's still outside."

"We'll talk to the out there. It'll be quieter."

She nodded and watched as he turned to go find Ginny. She started on the path back to Ron and rubbed her face, wondering where to begin with this.

"What's going on?" Ron asked, as Hermione walked back up to him.

"Harry's on his way out with Ginny. We need to talk to the both of you."

"About what?"

"Just wait a few minutes."

He nodded and grabbed hold of her hand. They waited for a moment before Harry and Ginny joined them.

"What's the matter?" she asked, as she and Harry sat next to them. Harry and Hermione both took a deep breath.

"We have to tell you something," she started, "and you're not going to believe it."

"Seriously, you guys, what is going on?"

"Harry and I are married."

Silence filled the air as the two siblings looked between them. Harry and Hermione waited for the outburst that was sure to come, but it never did.

Instead, laughter filled the air.

"That was a good one," Ron said. Hermione closed her eyes.

"We're not kidding! We've somehow been soul-bonded!"

Their laughter began to die down as they saw the looks on their faces. Ginny looked between them in shock.

"You're kidding, right?"

"We're not."

"Are you sure? How'd you find out?"

"Kingsley and McGonagall. That's where we were at this morning."

"Where's the proof?"

Harry gave her the book of records. They opened it, and their eyes went wide.

"You're not kidding," Ron said quietly.

"We're really not."

"How-how did this happen?" Ginny asked.

"We really have no idea. Christmas Eve Harry and I were attacked by Voldemort's snake. When I was trying to heal him, that's when it occurred. Neither one of us had an idea."

"That is, until McGonagall and Kingsley told us."

"How did they find out?"

"Kingsley spotted someone from the Ministry trying to give the information to the Daily Prophet. I don't know how they figured it out, but they did."

"You can get a divorce, right?"

"That's just it," Hermione said, turning her eyes away from her boyfriend. "We can get a divorce, but the bond will keep us together. We would always be able to feel each other."

"So what, exactly?" Ginny asked sharply. "What are supposed to do?"

"We don't know," Harry replied quietly, trying not to look at her. "We've been trying to figure out what to do, too."

"I think a divorce is the best option," Ron said, and Hermione turned towards him. "You may still be bound together but you can be with whoever you want."

"Unless the two of you don't want a divorce," Ginny said, narrowing her eyes at them.

Everyone in the group fell silent after she had said those words. Harry gave Ginny a look while Ron closed his eyes. Hermione couldn't tell if he was frustrated, mad, or just trying to figure everything out just like she and Harry were.

"Ginny!" Harry said sharply. She turned to him.

"You act like we wanted this," Hermione said, feeling hurt that Ginny thinks that she would betray her. "This wasn't our faults. It just happened."

"It just sounds a little off to me. You're just magically married and neither one of you have an idea?"

Hermione stood up, biting her lip to prevent herself from saying something that she didn't want to. She turned and walked away, and Harry turned back to Ginny.

"Why did you say that? Can't you see how hard this on us without your help?"

Ginny looked at him in shock and he stood up and followed Hermione. He caught up with her quite a way away from where they talked.

"I don't want to talk," she said, slowing her pace. He placed his hands on her shoulders and turned her back towards him.

"Let's get away for the night and talk. I think we need to figure something out."

"And go where, exactly?"

"Grimmauld Place."

"Do you really think that's a good idea?"

"Clearly we don't need to be around either one of them right now until we sort this out. Let's get away for the night and cool down and we can talk."

She nodded, averting his eyes. They went back into the house and packed an overnight bag before they took off to Grimmauld Place.

"It's not any different," she said, looking around. He dusted himself off and nodded in agreement.

"I'm still trying to figure out what to do with it."

"What do you mean?"

"It's mine. Sirius left to me. I gave it to the order, but now that the war's over its mine again."

'You'll think of something," she said. She plopped onto the couch and let out a frustrated sigh.

"It could have been worse."

"I guess it's a good thing we didn't tell them about all of it," she said, wrapping her arms around herself.

"Do you want a divorce?"

She looked up at him and thought about it for a minute. She then closed her eyes as she made her decision.

"Yes," she said quietly, and he nodded in agreement. "I think it is the best option."

"Then we'll file for divorce."

"Thank you," she said, wrapping her arms around him.

"Only we could get ourselves into something like this," he joked, and she laughed in response.

"That's way too true."

"We can go to Kingsley tomorrow morning and ask him what to do."

She nodded, resting her head on his shoulder. He had one arm wrapped around her waist, while his other hand rested on the back of her head.

"I still need to get my parents."

"I'll go with you," he whispered, and she pulled away to look at him.

"You don't have to."

"I want to."

She pulled back to look at him and smiled softly as she saw the look in his eyes. His hair was sticking up in every direction, and she noted that he had to be at least six-foot-tall by now.

And she couldn't figure out why she was looking at these things, but she was.

"Are you hungry?" he asked, and she nodded in agreement.

"Yeah. I didn't have a lot for dinner."

"Let's see if there's anything to eat," he replied, and they took off towards the kitchen. They spent the next few minutes looking around but was unable to find anything to eat.

"There's a muggle store not far from here, but I don't have any money."

"I have some," she said, reaching into her bag. "It should be enough."

"You're brilliant," he said, grinning at her.

"I didn't know you could cook," she said, watching as he worked at the stove.

"Picked it up along the way, I guess."

She laughed slightly as she mixed the salad together. She then put some onto the two plates and watched as he put the chicken onto the plates before they moved to the table to eat.

"This is delicious, thank you," she said, cutting into her piece.

"How are you doing with all of this?" he asked. She shrugged her shoulders, taking a bite of her salad as she did so.

"I've been married to my best friend for four months while falling for my other best friend. I'm doing great with this."

"I'm sorry, Hermione."

"You act like it's your fault. Neither of us did anything wrong. It was just a bizarre incident."

"We'll get the divorce and we can live our lives."

"Thank you," she said, taking another bite of her food. "Dumbledore said that we would be connected if we completed the bond."

"Yeah, so? We're not going to complete it."

"What if we're already connected? What if we have been and it just hasn't shown yet?"

"It's possible," he replied, dropping his fork on his plate. "Anything's possible."

"I'm sorry I'm just trying to figure this out."

"That's why we came here, right? To figure all of this out."

"Yeah," she said, playing with her food. "So, is it wrong to refer to you as my husband now?"

"Sounds weird," he laughed, and she laughed back. "I guess you're my wife now."

"Until we get the divorce, anyway."

"Then you'll be my ex-wife."

"That sounds nice," she said sarcastically, rolling her eyes as she did so. He grinned at her.

"Come on. You don't want to be known as the ex-Mrs. Potter?"

"Why do you assume I would take your name? What if I made you take mine?"

"I would take it."

"Really?" she asked, nearly dropping her fork. He nodded.

"If that's you would have wanted, I would have become Harry Granger."

"That sounds so weird," she laughed. "I think Hermione Potter does sound better."

He laughed again and shook his head. She laughed as well, feeling more and more comfortable with Harry as the time went on.

They finished their dinner and retreated to the living room. Hermione was feeling exhausted. She had barely slept the night before as she was up all night worrying about the talk with McGonagall.

She glanced over at Harry and saw that he was falling asleep as well. She let out a small laugh and shook him awake.

"I think we should go to bed."

He nodded, and they both retreated upstairs. Hermione closed behind her and put her pajamas on, her mind reeling from the night she had spent with Harry. She laid on her bed and stared up at the ceiling, suddenly feeling wide awake.

'How is this possible?'

She sighed as she got under the comforter before she turned to look out the window. The moon was shining through the glass as the stars twinkled in the dark sky. She closed her eyes, hoping to fall asleep.

No such luck.

She let out a frustrated groan as she threw her covers off and got out of the bed. She walked to the room next door and began to knock on the door before she hesitated, wondering if Harry was still awake or not. After a moment she knocked, and she heard his call of "come in" through the door.

"I'm sorry if I woke you," she said, as she closed the door behind her. "I can't sleep."

"Me, either," he said, closing one of his books. "I don't understand how I was so tired downstairs and so awake right now."

"My mum always told me that, when I couldn't sleep, it was because I was thinking too much. That might explain why we're both awake right now."

"I always figured it was because Voldemort was breaking into my head again," he said with a shrug. She laughed, shaking her head as she did so.

"At least you don't have to worry about that anymore."

"Thank Merlin."

He patted the seat next to him and she sat, resting her head against the backboard as she did so. He stretched out, flexing his muscles as he did so.

And she couldn't seem to look away.

"Have I ever said thank you?" he asked, turning to her.

"For what?"

"Everything. I wouldn't have gotten past this war without you. I know I tried to turn you away, and that was wrong of me. I was afraid of something happening to you or Ron."

"And we were afraid that something would happen to you, too. You need to realize that you don't need to do everything alone. I know that's hard to get through this thick skull of yours."

He laughed, and she couldn't help but to smile back.

"You're a great friend, Harry."

"You're a better one. Everything you have done you did for me. I should have listened to you more."

They stared at each other, unable to turn away. Something was pulling them towards one another, and they couldn't seem to break away. She reached her hands up and pressed them against the side of his face, staring deep into his green eyes as she did so.

They both leaned in until their lips met. It was slow at first, but after a few minutes her arms flew around his neck, and his hands settled on her waist. The need for oxygen broke them apart, and he moved his lips to her neck.

"Harry!" she moaned, running her hands through his hair. His mouth moved to her ear, and she shivered.

"What do you want?" he asked, his voice husky with desire. He rocked his hips against hers, and she let out a gasp of pleasure. She threw her leg around his waist to pull him in closer.

He pulled away from her neck and she stared at him. His green eyes were dark with lust, and his face was flushed. His hair was messier than normal from running her hands through it.

It was clear that he wanted her just as much as she wanted him.

"I want you," she whispered, pulling him back to her lips.

He flipped them around so that he was on top and she was laying underneath him. She struggled to remove his shirt, while his hands moved all over her body. Neither had control of their thoughts as arousal and desire took control of both of their bodies.

"You're beautiful," he whispered after he threw her shirt to the ground. Her chest heaved as his hands moved over her body.

"Make love to me," she said, and he did what she asked for.

## Chapter Three:

The morning sun lit up the bedroom causing Harry to stir, and the first thing he realized was that someone was sleeping on his chest. He grabbed for his glasses and looked down and saw the patch of brown hair sprawled all over. He closed his eyes and let out a deep breath, wondering if their friendship would officially be ruined after this.

‘And the bond wins,’ he thought, pressing his arm against his eyes. ‘I wonder how she’ll feel about this.’

He tried not to move, as he wanted her to sleep for as long as she would. He kept his eyes closed as he tried to gain a few more minutes of sleep before he felt her move, and he braced himself for what would come next.

Hermione stirred and sat up, looking down at Harry in worry. He stared back up at her before he reached his hand up and pressed it against her cheek, and she closed her eyes at his touch.

“Hi,” he said quietly.

“Good morning.”

They stared at each other for a moment before they leaned in and captured each other lips. This kiss was very different from the one last night. It wasn’t sexual, it wasn’t rushed. It was two people kissing. Nothing more, nothing less.

But neither found they could break away from one another.

“You’re not upset, are you?” he asked a short time later, as he stood up to put his boxers back on. She shook her head and looked away.

“What do we do now?” she asked, as she sat on the edge of the bed and clutched the sheet to her chest. Across from her Harry sat in the chair that he had pulled up to the bed.

“I don’t know. There’s no going back from this.”

She threw her head back and closed her eyes, wondering what will happen next. Harry rubbed his hands on his knees.

He was feeling something. He was feeling fear. He knew he wasn’t scared.

But she was.

He was feeling her.

Shock and amazement coursed through him. They had been told about this, the connection they would receive had they completed their marriage. He had no idea, however, that he would feel her.

Then again, he never thought he would get this far with Hermione. That thought never crossed either one of them.

“There’s nothing to be scared of,” he said softly, grabbing for her hands. She looked up in shock before she smiled sadly.

“We’re officially bonded.”

“We are.”

“I’m just-I’m worried that things will change for good, Harry. You’re my best friend and I can’t lose you.”

He squeezed her hands and smiled at her. “You will never lose me. I promise you that.”

He put both of his hands on the side of her face and leaned in to kiss her again. She wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him in closer to her, breaking it off before they went any further.

“I’m going to take a shower,” he said, and stood up. He walked out of the room, and she closed her eyes and took a deep breath.

Did last night mean something to her?

They had both wanted it. There was no denying that. They were very into it. Closing her eyes, she could picture the entire night in her mind. Their moans of pleasure, the feel of him inside of her-she shivered. It hurt, but it felt right.

‘It was amazing,’ she thought.

Then the look on his face when he released. There was something there, she knew there was. Her mind went into overdrive trying to figure out what it could have meant.

Not feeling like herself anymore, she stood up and put her robe on and waited outside of the bathroom door. A few moments later the water turned off and she closed her eyes, waiting for him to leave it.

“Hermione?” he asked, looking at her in shock. “Is something wrong?”

“Be quiet for a minute,” she whispered, and pressed her lips against his. He let out a moan and wrapped his arms around her waist, pulling her as close to him as he could. He pushed her back and pressed her up against the wall, and she let out a moan of pleasure as her back hit the wall.

His towel fell off his waist, and she felt desire course through her as she pulled away and looked down. He stared at her, as though hesitant to continue. She wrapped her arms around his neck and pressed their lips together again, reassuring him.

“Is there something you wanted to talk about?” he asked, as his lips trailed across her neck.

“Not right now,” she said, wrapping her legs around his waist.

Harry’s hand moved across Hermione’s back as they once again laid in his bed. Neither have said a word since their latest activity. In the back of Hermione’s mind something was nagging at her, and she knew without a doubt that she and Harry needed to talk about what’s going on.

‘Where do we begin?’

He was her best friend. The one that was always with her no matter what. The one he let cry on when she was upset about Ron. The one who asked her to dance with him in the tent. The one who took her with him to rescue Sirius.

She had shagged him-twice.

She closed her eyes and pressed her head into his chest, trying ahead of time to stop the headache that was sure to form. Harry’s hand moved from her back to her hair, and, oddly, she was feeling much better.

She felt calm, because he felt calm.

‘This bond is stronger than I thought.’ She sat up in the bed and stared at the window, trying to keep her thoughts in check. She felt him sit up behind her, and she turned her head towards him.

“Harry, we have to talk about what’s going on,” she said softly, clutching the sheet to her chest. Behind her, he sighed.

“This is so complicated.”

“Did this mean anything to you?” she asked him sharply, turning around to face him.

“Of course it did,” he replied, wrapping his arms around her. She let go out of the sheet and rested her hands on his arms. “You know I would NEVER hurt you like that. I’m not that kind of guy.”

She saw the look in his eyes, and her heart melted. No, Harry would never use her. He had even hesitated for a moment earlier, and she knew that he would have stopped right then and there had she told him to.

Harry cared way too much about her.

“When did everything get this complicated?” she said quietly.

“You’re married to me, and my life is complicated.”

She laughed and leaned forward to rest her head on his shoulder. He kissed her head.

“This meant a lot to me, too,” she said softly.

“What are we going to do?”

“I don’t know,” she said, staring at the wall ahead of her. “We just made everything so much more difficult.”

“Twice,” he joked, and she rolled her eyes.

She pulled back, and they stared at each other, just as worried as the other was. Neither wanted their friendship to end, because they both care about the other way too much.

“Are we making this more complicated than it needs to be?” he asked softly. She shook her head.

“Do you want this?” she asked, staring straight back at him. “Do you want for us to be together?”

He rubbed his eyes, unsure how to answer her question. Unknown to him, neither did she. She dropped her head, hating the silence that suddenly filled the bedroom.

“What I want is to not lose you,” he replied, not skipping a beat. “Whatever that may take.”

He held his hand out to her, and she grabbed for it, smiling softly at him. Their lips connected briefly once again before she grabbed for her robe, turned and walked out of his room, pressing her body up against the wall.

She had no idea where their friendship-relationship-whatever this was would go now.

“Where do you think they are?” Ginny asked, as she stared out the window. Ron shrugged.

“It’s their business.”

“I feel horrible,” she replied. “I shouldn’t have said what I said.”

“You were in shock. We all were. What’s done is done. We just have to wait for them to return.”

The door opened and Harry and Hermione stepped through. Ron and Ginny turned to them.

“We’re really sorry,” Ginny said, looking between them. “We were shocked, and I guess I overreacted.”

“It’s fine, really,” Hermione said softly, smiling at her. “Harry and I actually have an announcement.”

She gestured towards the table and they all sat around it. She and Harry looked at one another before they started to talk.

“Hermione and I have had a lot to think about, and we’ve made a lot of decisions. We’ve decided that we’re not going to be with anyone for quite a while until we get this figured out.”

“What?” Ginny asked in shock. Ron turned to them.

“Are you serious?” Ron asked.

“We are.”

“Things are just too complicated with us right now to try to be with other people,” she replied. “We’re so sorry.”

Ginny didn’t say another word, but she stood up and left the kitchen. Ron kept his head down, refusing to say another word.

“We’re so sorry, Ron,” Hermione said, reaching over to grab his hand. He snatched it away from her.

“So Ginny was right? You two don’t want the divorce.”

“Its way more complicated than you think,” Harry said, looking at his best friend with sympathy. “There’s still so much that we don’t even understand.”

“I get it,” he replied, and followed his sister out of the room.

Harry turned and looked at Hermione, who had tears in her eyes. He knew that she was upset; he didn’t need the bond to tell him that. He gently tugged her up and turned her to face him.

“Let’s stay at Grimmauld Place for a while,” he said, and she nodded in agreement.

“Do you think we may have made a mistake? Not filing?”

He stared at her for a moment before he wrapped his arms around her waist. She buried her head in his chest.

“I just want you to be happy,” he said, placing his cheek onto her head.

“The same goes for you,” she said softly, moving herself to wrap her arms around his neck.

“Where have you two been?” Molly asked, as she entered the kitchen. She looked at them in concern, and they suddenly felt bad for leaving in such a hurry.

“We stayed the night at Grimmauld Place.”

“Why?”

“It’s complicated,” Hermione said. “We’re sorry. We should have told you where we were going. We just wanted some time alone.”

“Are you two together?” she asked in shock.

“We’ve been soul-bonded, Molly, and we don’t know how.”

She put her hand over her mouth and stepped back. The two teenagers dropped their eyes.

“Are you for sure?”

“Very sure,” she replied quickly. “We found out yesterday morning.”

“What are you going to do?”

“We’re going to try to sort this out, and I’m sorry, Molly, but we’re going to live at Grimmauld Place until we do.”

She didn’t say another word but dropped her head and pushed past them. They turned back towards each other before they went upstairs to collect their stuff.

“That went well,” Hermione replied, as she put her bags onto the floor. Harry gave her a look, feeling bad for everything that was happening.

“Do you still want the divorce?”

“I don’t know,” she sighed, collapsing onto the couch. “Before I did. Now that we’ve shagged, things have taken a different turn.”

Harry was about to talk to her when the fireplace roared to life and Kingsley stepped through. He dusted himself off before he smiled at the two teenagers.

“How are both of you doing?” he asked, looking between the two of them.

“We’re dealing with this,” Hermione said, looking towards Harry. He nodded in agreement.

“I came for a different reason, and it involves you, Harry. I would like to talk to you.”

“About what?”

“Becoming an Auror.”

“I never finished Hogwarts.”

“You don’t need to. I’m allowing anyone who fought in the war to join without their N.E.W.T.s.”

“When would I start?”

“As soon as possible. I need aurors.”

“That’s a wonderful opportunity.”

“It’s an excellent one. As for you, Hermione, I would love to have you as well.”

“Thanks for the offer,” she said softly, smiling at him, “but I can’t see myself as an Auror.”

“I didn’t mean as an Auror. I would love to have you anywhere in the Ministry you’re willing to be.”

She widened her eyes at him. Harry turned to her and smiled.

“The Ministry and Minerva McGonagall are allowing students who skipped the previous year to return to finish their education. It’s entirely your decision, though. You must have your N.E.W.T.s to work in any department with the aurors’, though.”

“It’s a lot to think about,” Hermione replied, turning to Harry. He nodded in response.

“It really is. I’ll leave and give you two some time to think about it. Let me know when you have made your decisions.”

They nodded and watched as Kingsley stood up. He was just about to leave before he turned back to them. “By the way, neither of you have told us what you’re going to do about your bond.”

“We’re working on it,” Harry said, and Hermione nodded in agreement.

“If I may, you two make a great couple,” he replied, tipping his hat to them.

“Thanks,” they replied, both blushing furiously. They watched as he disappeared through the flames of the fireplace before Hermione stood up.

“I’m assuming you’re going to take the job.”

“I can’t give that up,” he said softly. “And I’m assuming you’re going back to Hogwarts.”

“I planned on it.”

He nodded, shaking his head as he did so. “I don’t think the bond would like that very much, would it?”

She laughed nervously. “Probably not.”

“I really want this job, Hermione,” he said, patting the seat next to him. She hesitated for a minute before he tugged onto her hand and she sat next to him.

“You need to take it,” she said, pressing her hand against his cheek. “You also need to shave.”

He laughed as she ran her hand across his stubble. “I’ll shave tonight.”

“I like a little stubble,” she replied, putting her other hand on his other cheek.

She stared at him for a moment before she pulled her hand away, realizing what she was doing. They awkwardly turned away from one another, having no idea what to say or do.

“I want you to go back to Hogwarts,” he said, and she looked back up at him. “You need to go.”

“What will I do without having to watch over a troublemaker?”

His mouth curved into a smile. “You’ll actually learn something.”

She looked towards the fireplace, closing her eyes as everything came back into focus. “Everyone always thought we should be together. Remember our fourth year when everyone thought I was dating both you and Krum?”

“That year was a nightmare,” he said, turning towards her. “You’ve always been by my side even when you were insulted. You were the only person who believed me when I said that I didn’t put my name into the cup. You helped me get through the tournament even though I didn’t ask you to.”

He looked away from her, trying to sort everything out as he did so. All their years of Hogwarts flew through his head. The train ride, the troll, the Chamber of Secrets, Sirius’ rescue, the tournament, the Battle of the Ministry, the Battle of Hogwarts. She spent most of her time at Hogwarts helping him, whether it being by his side or in the library.

And of course, the last nine months.

She was always there. Always keeping him in check. Helping him whenever he needed it. She stayed by his side even when Ron had left them once again. She cried over him, but she stayed with Harry until the end. She was tortured helping him with the Horcrux hunt. She went through months of starvation, frustration and being homeless to help him. She went nearly a year without seeing her parents.

All for him.

“I think we should give it a chance,” he said, and she turned back to him.

“Give what a chance?”

“Us,” he said quietly, grabbing for her hand. She looked at him in shock. “Everyone said we should be together. Maybe we should try it.”

“Is this your way of asking me out?”

“You know I’m terrible at this dating thing,” he replied with a grin. She laughed. “I’m serious, Hermione. This bond happened for a reason, and it’s not going away regardless if we get a divorce or not. You have always been there for me. We’ve already shagged-twice. We’re married. I want to try this, Hermione, if you’re willing to.”

She continued to stare at him in shock for a moment, unsure of what to say. The same thoughts that swirled through his head just moments before swirled through hers, and she closed her eyes as she thought about it. She reopened them before she nodded, smiling at him. “Let’s do it.”

She wrapped her arms around his neck and pressed their lips together. He poured everything he could into the kiss, trying to prove to her that he wanted to be with her.

“What if we don’t work?” she asked, pulling away from me. He pressed his hands against the sides of her face and kissed her head.

“Let’s cross that path if we come to it.”

## Chapter Four:

Harry finished his pumpkin juice as he read through the Daily Prophet, rolling his eyes at the articles in it. He threw the paper into the trash and placed the glass in the skin, stretching his arms out as he did so.

He and Hermione had decided to get together two days ago. While she seemed to be happy about that, something else seemed to be bothering her, and he figured out almost immediately what it was.

She was missing her parents.

He knew that she was feeling more and more guilty as the days went on, and he wondered briefly how her parents would react when they found out that their daughter was married. She was very close to both of her parents, and he wanted more than anything to help her bring them home.

‘They’ve been there long enough,’ he thought, walking up the stairs from the kitchen. He went into the living room and saw Hermione stretched out on the couch, reading from one of her books.

“Pack your bag,” he said, sitting across from her. She dropped the book she was reading.

“You’re getting rid of me already?”

He chuckled. “We’re going to Australia.”

“Really?”

“Really. I can tell you’re missing them, and I think they’ve been there long enough.”

“You mean it?” she asked, sitting up on the couch.

“I do. We need to bring your parents’ home.”

“Oh, Harry,” she said, wrapping her arms around him. “Thank you.”

He nodded, pulling away from her. “Should I be scared meeting my in-laws?”

“How do I even begin to tell them?”

“We tell them together,” he replied, grabbing for her hands. “We explain everything. They’re your parents; they will not blame you.”

She rubbed her head, shaking it as she did so. “This is going to be so difficult.”

“I’m here.”

“Thank you.”

“Whenever you want to leave.”

“So, we still have some time then?”

“I guess. What are you suggesting?”

She grabbed his hand and pulled him down onto the couch before she crashed their lips together. He grinned against them.

“Now I’m ready to start packing,” she said, pulling away. He stared at her in shock as she turned and walked up the stairs, then narrowed his eyes at her.

‘Minx!’ He got off the couch and followed her up the stairs. He entered their bedroom and saw her sitting on their bed, clearly waiting for him.

“Are you looking for me?”

“Minx,” he breathed out, closing the door behind him. She giggled before he pressed their lips together.

“Are you ready?” Harry asked, as Hermione came down the stairs.

“Ready,” she replied, handing him her bag. He shrunk them and put them into his pocket, put on the invisibility cloak and he grabbed hold of her hand. She closed her eyes and thought of where she wanted to be, and before she knew it, they had landed on the ground.

“I hope this is the right place,” she said, turning to Harry. He made sure no one was around before he removed the cloak from them.

“We’ll find them,” he reassured her. She wrapped her arms around his waist and buried her head into his chest. “Do you have any idea where they may be?”

“They may be around the beach. They love the beach. It is a weekday so they could be working as well.”

“We have a lot of looking to do then.”

They grabbed hands and took off towards the busy street. The sun had already set in the distance, and Hermione cursed herself that she had forgotten to factor in the time difference before they left. She led the way, and Harry wondered if she had been here before.

“Do you see them?” he asked, as they advanced onto the beach.

“Not yet, but this is a long stretch of beach.”

“Might as well enjoy it, then,” he replied, taking off his shoes. She let out a smile and did the same.

“Remember back in our first year when the worst thing we had to worry about was Snape?”

He laughed, shaking his head as he did so. “And we thought we had it rough then.”

“I will never understand how Ron was able to get past that giant chessboard.”

“I don’t think he’s ever lost a game.”

“Reminds me of you and Quidditch,” she replied with a smile. He smiled back.

“I can’t explain it,” he began, staring off towards the distance. “I enjoy it.”

“That’s how I feel about my books. It may be boring to you, but I love reading them.”

“And I don’t think I would be here if you didn’t,” he said with a grin. She shook her head, smiling once again.

“You do have a habit of getting yourself in trouble.”

“I’m here, aren’t I?”

She didn’t say a word, and Harry suddenly felt as though he said something he shouldn’t have.

“You died,” she replied, so quietly so no one could hear them.

“I had to.”

“You didn’t even tell us where you were going. You left us there.”

She continued walking, but he grabbed for her hand and pulled her back. He placed his hands on the sides of her face and pressed their lips together, pulling her in closer when she wrapped her arms around his neck.

“I will explain everything to you,” he said, pulling away.

“There they are,” she said, spotting her parents packing away their beach equipment. She grabbed hold of Harry’s hand, and they kept their distance as they followed them before they disappeared into a house.

“Are you ready to do this tonight?”

“Yes,” she said, feeling the nervousness set in.

“I’m right here,” he reminded her, and she gave him a quick kiss before she walked up to the door and knocked on it. It opened, and her mother looked between them.

“Can I help you?”

“My name is Hermione, and this is my husband Harry. We just moved in next door and we’d like to know our neighbors.”

Harry stared at Hermione, shocked that she came up with a lie that quickly. Behind the door, her mother smiled.

“Why of course. Come on in. I’m Monica, and this is my husband Wendall.”

Her father stood up and smiled at them. “It’s nice to meet you.”

“I’ll go make some tea,” her mother said, and she took off towards the kitchen. Harry suddenly felt very guilty and sad, and he grabbed for Hermione’s hand.

“Please, have a seat,” her father said, and they sat down on the couch. “Newlyweds?”

“We’ve been married for four months.”

“Congratulations. I’ve been married to Monica for twenty years. Every day is a new journey with her.”

“Sounds like you’re really happy,” Harry replied quietly.

“We are, as I’m sure the two of you are as well. You look quite young to be married, though.”

“We’re eighteen,” Harry replied quickly. “We did marry quite young.”

‘You liar,’ Hermione thought, smiling towards Harry. She knew he did that so her father wouldn’t ask any questions.

“Here we go,” her mother said, returning with a tray of teas.

“Harry and Hermione have been married for four months.”

“Really? Congratulations.”

“Thank you,” they replied together.

“Nothing is better than being with the person you love.”

Hermione turned to Harry, and she let out a deep breath. “We actually have a confession. We’ve been lying to you. My name is Hermione, and I’m your daughter.”

Her parents looked at each other, confusion and fear filling their faces.

“We don’t have a daughter.”

“Yes you do, and I am her. Your names are also not Monica and Wendall. You’re Dr. Melinda Granger and you’re Dr. Joseph Granger. I promise that I will explain all of this- “

“I want you to leave!” her father said, standing up and pointing to the door.

Harry saw tears fill Hermione’s eyes, and he stood up as well. “This is your daughter.”

“You both need to leave!” her father warned again, moving towards the phone. He suddenly fell unconscious, and Harry turned to Hermione, who had her wand pointed at him. Her mother cried out in fear before she fell as well. Hermione dropped her wand and fell to her knees, crying as she did so.

“It’s over,” Harry replied, joining her. He wrapped his arms around her, and she buried her head into his chest, sobbing into his shirt. “You never have to do this again.”

She pulled away and lightly pressed their lips together, so glad that Harry was here with her. He wrapped his arms around her and kissed her head.

“You need to do the memory charms before they wake up,” he whispered, and she nodded in agreement. She picked her wand back up and performed the charms before she revived her parents, joining Harry back near the couch. Melinda and Joseph both groaned before they picked themselves up off the floor.

“Mum?” Hermione called.

“What happened?” Melinda said, grabbing for her head.

“Sit down,” she said, and gestured her parents towards the couch. “I have a lot to explain to you.”

“Where are we?”

“You’re in Australia,” Harry replied quietly, giving them their two cups of tea from earlier.

“You remember Harry?” she asked softly. They nodded in agreement.

“Why are we in Australia?”

“It’s a really long story. Give me some time, and I promise I will explain everything.”

“You can tell us, darling,” Melinda said, grabbing her hand.

“About ten months ago, I wiped your memories and I made you believe that you were different people who no children. You see, there was a war in the wizarding world, and Harry was the key to stopping it. Because I’m friends with Harry, they were after me, too. So I hid you here to try and protect you. The war is over, now, and I want you to come home.”

“Hermione,” Joseph said, smiling softly at his daughter, “You are the greatest daughter I could have asked for.”

“You’re not mad?” she asked, wiping the tears off her face.

“Why would we be mad? Everything that you have done you did to protect us. We love you so much.”

“There’s more,” she said, grabbing for Harry’s hand. “Harry and I are married.”

Her parents stared at her in shock, and the look on their faces made a heart hurt. Harry reached over for her hand.

“You’re married?” Joseph asked, and her eyes closed at the sound of his voice.

“It’s very complicated.”

“We didn’t even know you were dating.”

“We weren’t.”

“I’ll explain,” Harry said, and Hermione felt immensely better. “In the wizard world, we have these things called soul-bonds. Although rare, they do happen. One night during the war, I was injured, and Hermione was trying to heal me. Somehow, out of that, we became bonded.”

“What does that mean?”

“It means that Hermione and I are together magically. Bonded forever. Our souls are connected. We can feel each other no matter where we are. The bond can only be done through marriage, so when it happens, it counts as a marriage.”

“It seems like neither one of you knew.”

“We didn’t,” Hermione replied softly. “We just found out about a week ago.”

“How did you not know if you’re supposed to be connected?”

Harry and Hermione looked at each other and blushed furiously. Melina and Joseph stared at them in confusion.

“What’s going on?”

“The marriage had to be completed for us to bond.”

“What do you mean by that?” her father asked, although he already knew the answer.

“They’re married, Joseph,” Melinda replied calmly. “I think we can figure it out.”

“Harry and I have scrambled trying to figure out what to do. We were given the option of divorce, but we would still feel each other if we got divorced.”

“So we’ve decided to start dating.”

There was silence for several minutes as her parents looked between them, as though determining something in their minds. Hermione clutched Harry’s hand.

“Are you happy?” Joseph asked the two teenagers. They nodded.

“Your daughter and I have been best friends for nearly seven years. She is the only person I know who has stuck by my side after everything that has happened with us. I know as her parents you don’t want to hear this, but she has fought with me, trained me, put her life out there for me on several occasions. She hid the both of you here in Australia so she could come with me to stop the war. If this bond had happened with anyone else, I wouldn’t be as happy, because they don’t mean as much to me as Hermione does.”

Hermione turned to look at him as his words sunk into her. She closed her eyes and let out a small smile, feeling the exact same way about Harry as he felt about her.

“This has been a very long night,” Melinda replied, placing her hands on her knees. “I’m assuming you don’t have a place to stay.”

“We don’t.”

“Stay with us. We have a guest bedroom here.”

“Thank you,” Harry said quietly.

“And we’re assuming you’re just as hungry as we are. Let’s all go out to dinner. It’ll be nice to get to know our new son-in-law,” Joseph said.

Hermione sighed as she looked down at Harry, who was fast asleep underneath the covers. She carefully lifted the covers up and slid out of the bed, looking back down at him to make sure she didn’t wake him. She quietly walked out of the room and to the living room. She then sat on the couch and turned on the television.

“Can’t sleep?” her mother asked, after she appeared in the living room about ten minutes later.

“You always seem to know when I can’t sleep,” she replied with a small laugh. Melinda went into the kitchen and returned a few minutes later with two cups of hot chocolate.

“You are my daughter,” Melinda said, giving her the cup. “What’s on your mind?”

“Everything,” Hermione said, taking a sip of her drink.

“You and me both. This morning I woke up thinking I was Monica, and I discovered that my daughter had wiped my memory, was involved in a war, and is accidently married to her best friend.”

Hermione laughed, shaking her head. “Is it bad that I don’t find that more messed up?”

“What do I always tell you?”

“Everything happens for a reason.”

“Including this bond. Harry mentioned to me earlier that everyone in Hogwarts thought you were dating for quite a while now.”

“There were always rumors about us.”

“Looks like they’ve come true.”

Hermione remained silent, deciding to stare at the TV in front of her but not watch it. Melinda put her cup onto the table and wrapped her arm around her daughter’s shoulder.

“It must be hard to be married without realizing that you were.”

“We’ve been married for almost five months. In a matter of three days, we might have lost two friends and we became a couple.”

“Is there something wrong with being a couple?”

“Harry and I haven’t talked about anything really. He suggested we start dating.”

“But?”

“But it’s killing me not figuring out what is happening between us.”

“I understand that. I also understand there is a man in that room who has not left your side since all of this has started. According to him, you’re the most important person in his life.”

“You caught that, too, huh?”

“That sounded to me like that was his declaration of love.”

“You really think he’s in love with me?”

“I think he’s beginning to figure it out. You know Harry better than I do Has he ever said anything like that before?”

“Not once. He’s never really expressed his feelings before. He dated two girls before me. One he really liked, but she had betrayed him, and he admitted that it was a crush and nothing more after that. Then he dated Ginny, and never once did he mention that he had feelings for her. I figured it out by the way he looked at her.”

Melinda pressed her lips together, wanting her daughter to figure this mystery out herself. “I think you need to figure out how you feel about him.”

“Me?”

“I don’t think you know how you feel about him yet. Maybe that’s why it’s bothering you so much. Talk to me. How do you feel about him?”

“I really care for him.”

“Do you love him?”

“I think I do.”

“Morning,” Harry said groggily, sitting up in the bed.

“Good morning. Sleep well?”

“Really good. You don’t look like you did, though.”

“I just have a lot on my mind.”

“Want to talk about it?”

She was about to open her mouth to speak when there was a knock on their door. She stood up and opened the door, revealing her mother.

“I’ve made some breakfast, and your father and I have something we wish to tell you.”

“Ok,” she said, and shut the door so they could quickly change. They walked downstairs and saw her parents sitting at the table drinking their coffees.

“Sit down,” Joseph said, smiling at them. “Your mother and I have something we wish to talk to you about.”

“What is it?”

“I have always wanted to walk my daughter down my aisle, and now I find out I can’t,” he started again, and Hermione let out a sad sigh. “The two of you mentioned that you were offered divorce and decided not to take it. That tells us that you’re willing to make your marriage work.”

“That’s what we’re trying for,” Harry replied, and Hermione nodded in agreement.

“Your father and I talked a little this morning and we want the best for the both of you.”

“Your mum and I are going to start packing up to return home. While we’re doing that, we want the two of you out.”

Hermione stared at him in shock as he pulled an envelope out and pushed it up to them. She picked it up, and her eyes widened.

“Money?”

“This is our wedding present to the both of you. Go enjoy Australia.”

## Chapter Five:

"Mum, dad, we can't accept this," Hermione said, pushing the envelope back towards her father.

"You're going to. You both deserve some time away from everything."

"Dad," Hermione sighed, grabbing the envelope. "You shouldn't have."

"We did. Go enjoy yourselves."

"Thank you," Harry said in defeat, smiling at his in-laws.

"You're welcome. May I have a word with you, Harry?"

Harry nodded, and followed Joseph out of the kitchen. He opened the door to his office and closed it behind Harry.

"I wanted to say something," Harry began, and Joseph nodded his head. "I know all of this is probably killing you and your wife. Since this all started, I have wanted nothing more than Hermione to have the life she wants. I feel horrible that you didn't get to see your daughter get married."

"This isn't your fault, son. It's not like the two of you went out and eloped."

"I just want you to know that I will do whatever she wants. If this does work and she does want a wedding, she'll get one. I just want for her to be happy."

He stared at his son-in-law for a moment, as though determining something in his mind. He then smiled at him.

"You know I brought you in here to ask you some questions, but I think you just answered all of them. I want someone who is going to make my daughter happy, and you are that person. Promise me one thing, though."

"Anything."

"You took good care of her for me."

"I will."

"I know you will," Joseph replied, clapping Harry's shoulder.

"Did you plan this?" Hermione asked her mother, holding the envelope up to her as she did so. Melinda smiled.

"I spoke with your father this morning, and we both agreed that you both need some time to work things out."

"And he was ok with that?"

"It took some convincing," she replied with a laugh. "You are his daughter, after all, but I was able to get him to agree as well."

"You shouldn't have done this."

"From what I understand, you and Harry need this more than anyone. I am telling you now: go on the honeymoon you never got to have."

"Mum," she replied, wrapping her arms around her mother. "Thank you so much."

"You're welcome, Hermione. When we all return to England, we'll talk more."

Hermione nodded. "You have no idea how happy this makes Harry and I."

"Glad to hear that, sweetheart," Joseph said, as he and Harry returned to the kitchen, "but I believe the both of you have some packing to do."

"This hotel is beautiful," Hermione said, looking around. Beside her, Harry nodded in agreement.

They checked into the hotel before they traveled up to their room. Harry unlocked the door, and Hermione's eyes widened as she looked around the room.

"Look at the view," she said, looking out the window.

"Look at us living like muggles."

"Well, we were raised in the muggle world."

He grinned at her as she wrapped her arms around his neck. "Really? I had no idea."

She pressed her lips together. "Do you want to go to the beach?"

He smiled and nodded. They changed into their bathing suits before they started on the path towards the beach, remaining silent as they did so.

They walked onto the sand, and they took off their clothes. Harry turned to Hermione and his breath caught in his throat. She was wearing a two-piece aqua bathing suit, and he couldn't believe how perfect her body looked in it.

"You look great," he said out loud before he even realized he was saying it. She turned to him and smiled slightly.

"Why thank you, Harry. I think I am going to love this suit on you," she replied, running her hands across his chest. He grinned at her.

"I still haven't told you what happened at the battle, exactly."

He pulled away and stared at the distance, thinking about how he was going to tell her. She grabbed for his hand, and he knew exactly where to begin.

"I went to Dumbledore's office to view Snape's memories. What I saw shocked me."

"What did you see?"

"Snape was in love with my mum."

"What?" she asked in shock. Harry nodded, still trying to process that information.

"He loved my mum. They knew each other since before Hogwarts. After she got together with my dad, he kind of lost it. He became a Death Eater. Snape was the one who told Dumbledore that Voldemort was planning to attack. After they were killed, Dumbledore convinced Snape to protect me. He convinced him to help look after me. Snape found out that I was the final Horcrux."

"I knew it," she whispered, shaking her head. "I knew you were!"

"Snape was pretty mad when he found out. He sent the patronus to help us find the sword."

"It was Snape?"

"It was Snape. He was working from the inside."

"Wow," she whispered. "How are you feeling about of this?"

He shrugged, unsure how to answer her question. "I really don't know. How do you feel when you find out the man you hated saved your life?"

She rubbed at his back. "Your parents had a lot more history than you knew."

"There's more," he replied quietly. "When I was going to the forest, I found the resurrection stone."

"You found all of the Deathly Hallows?"

"It was in that snitch Dumbledore left me."

"I open at the close. It opens at death."

"My parents, Sirius and Remus reappeared."

She felt her eyes water as she listened to his story. "I bet that was hard for you."

"They followed me all the way to Voldemort. I asked my mum to stay close to me, and she did until it was over."

"I don't even know what to say," she whispered once again. He let out a chuckle.

"Tell me about it, and I'm still not done."

"There's more?"

"When I died, I met Dumbledore, and I was given the choice to either move on and be with my parents again or return to everyone and finish the war."

"What made you decide to come back?"

"I couldn't leave everyone behind, no matter how much I wanted to. It was my responsibility to finish him, and I was going to make sure that I would."

She let out a nervous laugh, wiping her face as she did so. "I said this before, and I'll say this again: only stuff like this could happen to us."

He laughed as well, reaching up to wipe her face off. "Then I come back and find out I'm married to this wonderful girl who happens to be my best friend."

"When you offered the divorce, did you want it as well?"

"Yes, I did. Then you and I started hanging out more and more, and I'm glad we're trying to make this work."

"I think all that time we were alone in the tent changed everything between us. When Ron left, something changed between the two of us, didn't it?"

"I think we realized that we were there for each other, but no one else was there for us. It made us very different."

She put her hands on his cheeks and pressed their lips together, trying to show Harry how much she loved him through the kiss. He wrapped his arms around her waist and pulled her in closer before he broke it off shortly after.

"So, Mrs. Granger, what would you like to do?"

"I don't know. I'm actually enjoying laying here in the sand."

He stared at her for a moment before he picked her up. She squealed and started to lightly punch him. He leaned down and pressed their lips together before he felt his legs hit the water. He then put her down and moved out further into the water.

"I'm not getting in," she said, turning to move. He grabbed hold of her hand and pulled her in, grinning from ear to ear as she fell under the water.

"You arse!" she cried when she came back up. She splashed him with the water, and he was glad that he had charmed his glasses before they left the hotel.

"Didn't like that, did we?"

She glared at him as she sent another wave of water towards him. He wiped his face off and chuckled.

"You are so mean," she said, wrapping her arms around his neck.

"Thanks," he replied, wrapping his arms around her waist. She buried her head into the crook of his neck, feeling happier than she ever has before.

The feeling of fear running through her body immediately awoke Hermione. She sat up in the bed and turned to look at Harry, who was shivering and sweating next to her.

"Harry!" she whispered, shaking him. He grabbed her hand and awoke.

"Hermione?"

"I'm here," she said, using her other hand to rub his head. He blinked a few times before he sat up, letting go of her wrist as he did so. "What's the matter?"

"I just had a bad dream. Go back to sleep."

"Talk to me."

He reached his hand behind his head and rubbed the back of his neck, letting out a sigh as he did so. "He had you."

"Who had me?"

"Voldemort did. He had you and he was hurting you."

"Harry," she whispered, pressing her hands against the sides of his face, "Voldemort is gone. You have nothing to worry about anymore."

"That's not true," he replied quietly, moving his head up to stare into her eyes. "I have much more to worry about."

She leaned in and kissed his scar, lingering for a minute before she pulled away. He clutched at her waist.

"Voldemort is gone, thanks to you. We never have to worry about him again."

He closed his eyes, and she could see the exhaustion that filled them. She lightly pushed him back down onto the bed and gave him a soft kiss, reminding him that she was still there.

"Try to get some more sleep," she said, pushing his hair out of his eyes. He smiled up at her.

"You, too," he said, pulling her down so that she was laying on his chest. He ran his hand across her bare back and kissed her head.

"This is such a beautiful country," Hermione remarked, as she and Harry walked through the Adelaide Hills. They had decided to spend the day in the city of Adelaide today. The first two days were spent in Glenelg, which is where their hotel-and Hermione's parents-were at.

"I agree."

"Hey," she said, stopping him. He turned to her, "thanks for spending some of your money, too. I would feel horrible if I spent most of my parent's money."

"I didn't want to use all of their money, either. I like that they allowed this to happen for us."

"Me, too, but you didn't need to spend your money, either."

"I have way more than you could imagine. I had a lot before Sirius left me his. I'm going to use it for the right reasons."

"Thanks again," she said, kissing his cheek.

She was very grateful that Harry had returned to England to grab some of his own money from his vault. She briefly wondered how he had gotten past the goblins after their break-in, but she didn't dare to ask him.

And as much as she tried to not let him do it, she knew Harry would have regardless. He liked taking care of himself.

'After he has been his whole life, I guess I can't blame him.'

"Ready for lunch?" he asked, and she nodded.

They went to lunch before they went to Port Adelaide for the rest of the afternoon. They decided to go kayaking along the Port River first, and Hermione couldn't help but to let her mind drift off to their relationship as they began to paddle out into the ocean.

"What's on your mind?" Harry asked, and she turned back toward him.

"Everything, I guess. I'm still trying to wrap my head around all of this."

"You and me both," he laughed, and she laughed as well.

"What'd you and my dad talk about?"

He smiled at her. "That's between us."

"Come on!" she cried, giving him a pout. "Tell me."

"We talked about you. He was concerned that you wouldn't be happy."

"What'd you tell him?"

"I told him that I would do whatever it takes to make sure that you would be."

She shook her head, smiling at him as she did so. "Of course you would."

"And I meant it," he continued. "I just want to make sure that you're happy."

"The same for you," she said, staring straight at him. "I know you were in love with Ginny and all of this messed everything up."

He shook his head, turning to look to his right. "I don't think I was. Ginny was great, but I'm having more fun with you than I ever did with her. I know she and I only dated for a few weeks, but you and I have dated not even a week and I'm having more fun with you than I did with her."

"You mean that?" she asked, and he nodded.

"I do. Now, I have a question for you."

"Fire away."

"Did I ruin things between you and Ron?"

"What things?" she laughed in disbelief. "We kissed once."

"If you and I weren't married, would you have gotten together with him?"

"Probably," she admitted. "Would you have gotten back together with Ginny?"

"Probably," he mimicked.

She rolled her eyes but smiled at him. "Are you upset that this happened?"

"Not by any means," he replied wholeheartedly, and she looked up at him. "We make sense, Hermione. We always have. Ginny was great, but I don't appreciate what she said to you. She made it seem like all of this was your fault."

"Do you think they're still mad at us?"

"I'm sure they are, but they'll come around."

She nodded in agreement. "I just want to say that this has been a great honeymoon, Harry."

"Ditto," he grinned. "It really has been nice getting away for a while."

The next four days seemed to fly by, and both Harry and Hermione realized that their "honeymoon" was almost over. While they both enjoyed their week away, they knew that they had other things that they needed to return home to do.

And Hermione knew they had some things to work out.

They were packing their bags when she suddenly stopped and turned to him. She stared at his back for a moment before she called out his name, feeling more nervous as he turned to face her.

"Something wrong?"

"Can we talk?" she asked, and he nodded in agreement.

"About what?"

"Us," she said, and grabbed his hand. They moved over to the bed and sat down. "We have not talked about what is going on with us."

"What is going on with us?"

"You said something the night we went to get my parents that caught everyone's attentions. It sounded like you were telling me that you were in love with me. Is that true?"

He looked away, pressing his lips together. He reached over and grabbed for her hand, squeezing it lightly as he did so.

"I honestly don't know. I don't know what love is."

She pulled back in confusion for a moment before the realization dawned on her. She closed her eyes as pain flowed through her body, unable to stop herself from thinking about Harry's past. She dropped her head for a moment before she picked it back up.

"I understand why you're struggling," she said quietly. "You've never been loved before."

"What are you talking about?"

"Your aunt and uncle didn't care about you. With the way you were raised, I can imagine how hard it would be for you to reveal your feelings."

"I know that I have never felt love before," he said softly, after a few moments of silence, "and this may sound odd, but I feel so different with you. Around you. I always have. I guess what I'm trying to say is this: I think I am in love with you, Hermione Granger. I think I always have been."

She smiled at him, feeling happy that she and Harry were finally talking. She reached up and pressed her hand to his cheek before she pressed their lips together.

"I love you, too, Harry James Potter."

He smiled at her before he pressed their lips together again. She wrapped her arms tightly his neck and pulled him until her back hit the bed, and she moaned out in pleasure as Harry grinded her hips against his.

"Harry, please," she whispered when he moved to her neck. She felt him smile against it, and desire flew through her body.

Pleasure flowed through them as they made love. Their cries and moans became louder with each thrust until they came together crying out the other's names. Harry collapsed onto Hermione's chest, while she laid beneath him, running her hand through his hair.

"I feel you," he said between breaths. "You really enjoyed that."

"I think that's the best we've had," she whispered into his ear, and he smiled against her chest. He rolled off of her and pulled her into his arms, kissing her head as he did so.

"I love you, Hermione."

"I love you, too, Harry."

He stared at her for a moment before he pressed their lips together once again. It was slow, but they both poured everything they could into the kiss. He broke away a few moments later and pressed their heads together.

"I'm not going into the auror's program," he announced, and she stared at him in shock.

"What"

"I'm going back to Hogwarts."

"This is your dream, Harry. You can't give that up."

"It'll still be there when I graduate. If we're going to make this marriage work, then I need to be with you. I am not ready to enter the program yet, and I believe that completing Hogwarts is the best thing for the both of us."

"You're willing to give up your dream job that you can get into right away to come to Hogwarts with me?"

He nodded, turning to smile at her. "You're my wife. Where you go, I go."

"Harry," she sighed, smiling softly at him. She wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed his cheek, feeling happier than she ever has before.

Harry was going to Hogwarts with her.

## Chapter Six:

"Thanks for bringing us home," Melinda said, as Harry and Hermione apparated her and Joseph back home from Australia.

"I brought you there. It only makes sense for us to take you home."

"Hermione," Harry said, noticing the front door, "look at the door."

"Oh, no," she whispered, stepping ahead of her parents.

She pushed the broken door aside and stepped inside, lighting her wand as she did so. Behind her, Harry did the same.

"What happened to the house?" Joseph asked, looking at the damage.

"My guess is that Death Eaters destroyed it trying to find Hermione," Harry replied, carefully stepping through the damage.

"I'm glad I sent you to Australia now," she remarked, bending down to look at a broken picture.

"My house," Melinda said, as tears began to feel her eyes. Joseph wrapped his arm around her shoulder and kissed her head.

"Don't worry, Melinda, Hermione and I will repair everything."

"We will, mum," Hermione said, pressing her hand to her mother's arm. "Just give us some time."

She and Harry moved around repairing everything they could. Melinda and Joseph followed right behind them, putting everything back into its place.

"Looks so much better," Melinda said, looking around her downstairs. "Thank you both."

"I caused all of this," Harry remarked, and Hermione gave him a look.

"It's over, Harry."

"It feels good to be home," Joseph remarked, plopping onto his couch. "Where are you two staying?"

"At Harry's house."

"You have a house?"

"Technically, yes. It was my godfather's. He left it to me when he died, but I don't plan on staying there."

"Harry and I will go upstairs and fix everything," Hermione said, changing the subject. He nodded and followed his wife up the stairs to repair everything.

"None of this was your fault," she remarked, turning to him.

"They tried to attack you because you are friends with me. That's why the house was destroyed."

"It's over now. Let's clean up and move on."

He nodded and finished repairing what was left. After they finished, she moved into his arms and rested her head on his chest.

"Is there anything you want to grab from here?"

"No," she replied quietly. "If I need something I'll come back."

"As much as I loved our honeymoon, it's good to be back home."

"Tomorrow let's go talk to McGonagall."

"Kingsley, too."

"Harry, Hermione," McGonagall said, as her two former students walked into her office. "How can I help you?"

"I've made the decision to come back to Hogwarts."

"I figured you would go straight into the program," she replied, looking at Harry with interest.

"Hermione and I are going to make it work. We're going to stay together."

"Congratulations. I knew the two of you would."

"We understand that going to Hogwarts while married is not a normal thing, and we want to try to keep this as quiet as possible."

"You don't know?" she asked in shock. They looked at each other before they turned to look back at her.

"We've been in Australia for the last week. What's going on?"

"You might want to look at this," she said, handing them a paper. Harry looked at her before he opened the paper, closing his eyes as he read the headline.

Harry Potter married!

"When was this published?"

"A few days ago."

"You've got to be kidding," Hermione said, shaking her head.

"I'm sorry, Hermione."

"Once again this is not your fault. Professor, do you know who told?"

"I don't. Kingsley has said he's trying to figure it out, but we may never know. He is going to issue out a law concerning both of you and Mr. Weasley. No one will be allowed to publish about your personal lives."

"That would be great," Harry said, reading the article. "So everyone knows now."

"I'm so sorry."

"What's the rule for a married couple at Hogwarts?"

"Same as everybody else."

"And everybody knows," Hermione sighed, clutching at the chair.

"How long will it take Hogwarts to be rebuilt?"

"At least a month, if not longer. Depends on the amount of help that comes."

"Count us in."

"Some have already started to help. Longbottom and Lovegood had stayed at the castle and have done quite of bit of repairs. If you would like to see them, I'm sure they're around. When the school is repaired, I'll be sending out more information about classes."

"Thank you, professor," Harry said, nodding to Hermione. They turned and walked out of the office, walking slowly down the staircase as they did so.

"I'm really happy you're coming back to Hogwarts," she said, turning to face him.

"I am, too. I've missed this place. Although, I think I'm going to miss sleeping next to you."

"That's all you're going to miss?" she asked, cranking her head to the side. He smiled.

"I'll miss our shags, too."

"Prat," she said, pushing his chest. He chuckled and kissed the top of her head.

"Love you."

"Love you, too," she whispered back, kissing his cheek.

They traveled up to Gryffindor Tower and entered the common room, seeing the few students that stayed behind at the castle. Neville immediately spotted them and stood up, smiling as he did so.

"This is a surprise."

"Well, I've made the decision to come back to Hogwarts and we just came from seeing McGonagall."

"That's wonderful," he replied, clapping Harry's shoulder. "I read The Prophet. Is it true?"

"It's true," she said, nodding her head. "We've been married since Christmas Eve."

"Congratulations!"

"Thank you."

"I didn't even know you were dating."

"Actually, we were soul-bonded," Harry said.

"Really? How'd that happen?"

"We don't know."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"We've started dating," he replied, and she nodded in agreement.

"I'm happy for you two."

"We're happy, too," she said, resting her head on Harry's shoulder.

"How are Ron and Ginny taking it?"

"They didn't take it well."

"They'll come around," he said softly. "They just have quick tempers."

"Well, they also don't know that we've decided to make it work. We don't even know how to tell them."

"They're your best friends. Regardless of the situation, they're still there for you. You have to tell them."

"We know," Harry sighed. "We're just not sure how they'll take it."

"They'll understand, I promise you."

"Where is Luna, Neville?"'

"She went back home for a while to be with her father."

"We'll be back soon to help rebuild."

"We've done a lot already," he replied. "The dungeon is repaired, and we've started working on the first floor. McGonagall is planning on adding another Great Hall and making the current one a memorial to all the lives lost in the battle."

"Where are they going to put it?"

"Not for certain yet."

"I think that's a brilliant idea," Harry said softly. Hermione nodded in agreement.

"You're not here to hurt me, are you?" Kingsley asked, throwing his arms in the air. They laughed at him.

"We were actually on our honeymoon when the article was published."

"Honeymoon, huh? So I'm assuming you're staying together?"

"We are," Hermione said, and Harry wrapped his arm around her waist.

"Congratulations."

"Thank you."

"As for the article, I do apologize. I have been trying to figure out who leaked, but I'm afraid we'll never know."

"It's not such a big deal," Harry said with a shrug. "People were bound to find out sooner or later."

"Still, I am setting a law into place forbidding any personal information about the two of you and Ron as well. The three of you have done enough without any pesky reporters bothering you."

"We appreciate that."

"Now, if you are staying together, then you have some paperwork that you need to fill out."

He left his office for a moment before he returned with some pieces of parchment. They filled it out, Hermione making sure to go second, before he collected them, catching Hermione's eyes as he did so.

"Also, Kingsley," Harry started nervously, not sure how he would tell him, "I've decided to go back to Hogwarts."

He nodded in understanding. "I am disappointed, but I can't second-guess your decision. If you are choosing to go back to Hogwarts, then I will support you. I expect to see your application after you graduate, right?"

"Right, sir," he replied with a nod. Hermione smiled and clutched at his hand.

"If you wouldn't mind, I'd like to speak to Hermione for a moment."

"No problem. I'll be right outside."

He waited until Harry left his office then he turned to Hermione. "I see what you did."

"I want to surprise him."

"Then you need to fill this out as well, and that's it. He won't know until you tell him."

She grabbed the parchment and signed her name. He took it back and smiled at her.

"Congratulations."

"Thank you."

"I also want to talk to you about something else. I really want you in the Ministry, Hermione. Anywhere you want to be."

"I don't know where I want to be, though."

"You want to make a change-we all do. I could really see you in Magical Law."

"As part of the Wizengamot?"

"If you would like to be. You would work alongside your husband."

"I like that idea."

"Then you need to talk with McGonagall and figure out what classes you will need."

She nodded, thinking it over. "Thanks, Minister."

"Please call me Kingsley. Also, this belongs to you and Harry.”

He handed her an envelope, and she stared down at it, wondering what it was. She then looked back up at him and nodded.

"Do you think they're ready to talk?" Hermione asked, as she and Harry walked up to The Burrow.

"I hope so."

They saw Ron near the garden, and they turned and looked at each other before they walked up to him.

"Hi, Ron," Hermione said, and he looked up.

"Hi."

"Can we talk?"

He nodded, and they walked over to the table. Ron pressed his lips together.

"We know you and Ginny are upset, and Hermione and I have definitely not planned this. We've spent the last week in Australia and we had a great time. We've decided to stay together and see if we can make this work."

"I get it," he replied quietly. "There's always been something with the two of you. We've all guessed it at some point."

"Ron!" Ginny called as she walked up to the table. She stopped dead in her tracks as she saw Harry and Hermione.

"Hi, Ginny," Harry said, nodding to her. She sat down next to Ron.

"Hi."

"Listen," Hermione started, looking between them, "we didn't want to hurt either one of you two. When we found out this happened, we decided to try and figure things out. We just spent the last week in Australia and we ended decided that we want to stay together."

Ginny nodded, unsure of what to say. "You two do make a cute couple."

"We're really happy," Harry said, avoiding their eyes.

"I'm most upset by the fact that the two of you went to Australia without me," Ron said, glaring playfully

"We're sorry, Ron," Hermione replied, rolling her eyes at him. Harry chuckled.

"You should be. I'm heartbroken."

"What do you say? It's a nice day for a game of Quidditch."

"You're so on," Ginny said, standing up to grab her broom. Ron followed behind her. Hermione shook her head and smiled.

"Go have fun," she said to Harry, who grinned at her in response.

"One of these days I'm going to get you on a broom."

"You already have," she said seductively, smiling at him. He narrowed his eyes at her.

"You're such a tease."

"Come on, Harry!" Ron called. Hermione pushed on his arm and they walked towards the two siblings.

They spent the next hour playing while Hermione watched from the grounds. She smiled up at Harry, who seemed to be enjoying himself. Only when the sky began to darken, and the smell of the rain occurred, did the teenagers return to the house where they ran into Molly.

"Hi, Molly," Hermione said, as Molly wrapped her arms around both.

"Where have the two of you been?"

"In Australia. We went to find Hermione's parents."

"You had me worried. I thought something had happened."

"We're sorry. We should have told you where we went."

"You don't think I'm mad at you, do you?" she asked, looking between them.

"We thought you were."

"I am not mad. I am quite worried. Soul-bonds are very tricky situations. You're stuck with this person forever even if you get a divorce."

"And I'm glad it happened with Harry," Hermione said, smiling at her husband. "We've always been by each other's side. If I had to be stuck with someone my whole life, I'm happy that it's him."

He smiled back at her. Molly looked between them and nodded her head.

"I have said some things that I shouldn't have said to you," she said to Hermione. "I am so sorry."

"It's ok," she replied, grabbing for Harry's hand underneath the table.

"Harry, Andromeda has contacted us. She's wanting to know if you want to meet Teddy."

Harry pressed his lips together and nodded, turning to look at Hermione as he did so. She squeezed his hand, reminding him that she was there.

"We'll go see him right now, if she allows it."

Molly stood up and walked to the fireplace. Harry and Hermione followed behind her. She lifted her head back up a moment later and turned back to them.

"She says you can go over there."

"Thanks, Molly," Harry said, and handed Hermione the floo powder. She stepped into the fireplace and said the address that Molly gave her before she disappeared into the green flames. She reappeared in a different living room.

"You must be Hermione," Andromeda said, shaking her hand.

"Nice to meet you. Harry should be right behind me."

As soon as she said that, the fireplace roared to life and Harry stepped out. "Andromeda."

"Hello, Harry. How are you?"

"I'm good. How are you doing?"

"It's hard sometimes," she replied with sadness in her voice. "It's hard to believe that I won't see my family again."

"They're heroes, Andromeda," he replied, placing a hand on her arm. She nodded in agreement.

"I fear for this one," she replied, placing her hand on the bassinet. Harry and Hermione moved in and saw a small child sound asleep. The first thing that he noticed was that his godson's hair was blue.

"Even though he's a metamorphmagus, he looks like Remus," Hermione said, smiling down at Teddy.

"He really does."

"They've already buried everyone who's being buried at Hogwarts, and they're having a funeral for everyone. It's tomorrow morning, if you would like to go."

"We'll be there," Harry replied firmly.

As soon as he had said that, Teddy started crying. Harry instinctively bent down and picked him up, rocking him slightly in his arms. His crying stopped, and his green eyes stared up at his godfather.

"He's probably hungry. I'll be back in a moment."

Andromeda disappeared into the kitchen. Harry smiled down at Teddy as he moved to the couch and sat down.

"You're a great godfather," Hermione said, sitting next to him.

"You think so?"

"I know so. He looks so happy with you."

"Why did this have to happen to him?"

"They fought to give him a better future. He'll understand that."

"It's just too familiar," he replied, brushing Teddy's hair with his thumb.

"You were thrown into a world where no one cared about you and you had no idea how your heritage. Teddy isn't. He has a grandmother and a godfather who will make sure of it."

He looked back down at his godson and nodded in agreement. Yes, Teddy was an orphan just like him. There was no changing that, but Teddy had something that Harry hadn't had. He had a family that would look after him. A family who would tell him about his parents. A family who would help him with his magical side.

And Harry would always have Hermione to help him out. Teddy's godmother.

"And a godmother," he said with a smile, giving Teddy to her.

"He'll be well protected," she replied, kissing Teddy's head. "Won't you, little guy?"

"Here we go," Andromeda said, handing Hermione a bottle. She repositioned Teddy and started to feed him.

"He seems like a good baby," Hermione said, smiling down at Teddy as he drank from his bottle.

"He's very good. He rarely ever cries."

"If you ever need anything, Andromeda, don't hesitate to ask."

"The same for the both of you. If you ever want to have Teddy for a couple of nights don't hesitate to ask."

"That went better than expected," Harry said, as he and Hermione apparated into Grimmauld Place. Hermione smiled at him as she wrapped her arms around his neck.

"Everybody knew we be together someday. I don't think anyone is surprised that we decided to stay together."

She broke away from him and moved to the couch. He sat next to her and stretched his arms over his head, letting out a yawn as he did so.

"I wonder why I haven't gotten much sleep this past week," he joked, winking at her.

"Well, if you would like sleep tonight that can be arranged," she replied, and he sat up on the couch.

"That's cruel," he replied, kissing her neck.

"I have a surprise for you," she said, handing him an envelope. He looked at her.

"What is this?"

"Just open it," she said, smiling at him. He gave her another look before he popped the seal open and pulled out the parchment.

"Our marriage certificate?"

"Kingsley gave to me this morning. It's the legal document."

"You signed it Hermione Potter," he said, as he saw her name. He looked up at her, and she nodded.

"I did."

"You took my last name?"

"Yes, I did."

"Are you sure?" he asked, pressing his hands to her arms. She nodded again, smiling brighter than he has ever seen her before.

"I'm positive. I want nothing more than to become a Potter."

"I love you, Mrs. Potter," he said with a grin.

"I love you, too, Mr. Potter," she said back, reaching up to press their lips together.

## Chapter Seven:

Harry held Teddy in his arms as McGonagall's speech flowed in the air. Behind her sat the area of the grounds that was deemed the graveyard where everyone who died was now resting. Including Remus and Tonks.

Beside him, Andromeda wiped her eyes, trying not to lose it. Hermione sat on his other side, her eyes watering and cheeks wet.

Teddy started crying, and he stood up and walked away from the crowd. He started to gently rock him in his arms, trying to soothe his upset godson.

"I am so sorry, Teddy," he whispered. "You deserve to get to know your parents, and now you never will. They loved you very much; I know they did."

He looked out towards the lake, still rocking Teddy in his arms as he did so. He smiled a moment later and looked back down at his godson, whose green eyes stared back up at him.

"I want to promise you something," he said quietly. "I want to promise you that I will be here whenever you need me. Hermione and I both will be. You may have lost your mum and dad, but we are still here for you. We will protect you. We will raise you like they wanted us to. You will never be alone."

He stared down at Teddy, sadness coursing through his body at the thought of him being an orphan. It all disappeared, however, when he saw the little boy smile up at him, as though understanding what Harry was telling him.

Tonks' smile. "Always," he said, as his mother's voice rang in his head.

"Harry?"

"He was fussy," he told Hermione, turning towards her.

"Are you ok?" she asked, placing her hand on his arm.

"I'm alright."

"He'll be ok," she said, rubbing the top of Teddy's head. "We'll remind him of Remus and Tonks."

"I wish they could be here with him."

"I know," she said, rubbing his back.

Teddy started crying again, and Hermione took him from Harry, bouncing him lightly in her arms. She stared humming, and Teddy quieted down once again.

"I think he's getting hungry," she said, and he nodded in agreement.

"Let's take care of him today and give Andromeda some time."

She nodded in agreement, pulling the baby closer to her chest. They turned back to the crowd and saw that everyone had left their seats and were moving among the various tombstones. They walked back to Andromeda, who was dabbing at her eyes once again. Harry looked down at noticed that they were standing at Remus and Tonks' graves.

"Let us take care of Teddy tonight," he said to her, placing a hand on her shoulder.

"I couldn't ask you to do that."

“We want to," Hermione said.

"He might be getting hungry," she said, handing Harry the diaper bag. "Thank you."

She dabbed her eyes again and walked away. Hermione took the bag from Harry.

"I think we need to head home."

"Go home. I'll be there in a minute."

She nodded and kissed his cheek before she turned and walked away. He bent down to stare at the headstone, dropping his head as he did so.

"Teddy is in good hands," he started, raising his head again. "You both have my word. Hermione, Andromeda and I will raise him to be the best he can be. We'll make sure he knows what his parents fought and died for. Like you asked of me, Remus."

He closed his eyes, and the night of the final battle came back into his mind. He saw Remus' ghost standing before him, telling him that others would tell Teddy of why his parents died. He reopened his eyes and stared at the stone again, taking a deep breath as he did so.

"You help me with my parents, and I will help Teddy with his. The both of you were great to me, and I'm glad I got to know you."

"Harry?"

He turned his head slightly. "Luna?"

"Hi," she said, helping him stand back up.

"How are you?"

"I'm good. I just got back from visiting my father."

"How is he?"

"He's doing better. They released him from Azkaban the day after the battle, and he's been at home ever since. He wanted me to send his apologies along for what happened."

"I would have done the same if I was in his shoes. Don't worry about it, Luna."

"Is this Professor Lupin?"

"Him and Tonks, yes."

"I'm sorry you had to lose them."

"Me, too."

"That baby that Hermione was holding-that's Teddy, isn't it?"

He nodded. "He's my godson."

"Everyone thinks he's yours."

"I'm sure," he replied dully. "I don't care what they think. He is mine; just not biologically. I promised Remus and Tonks that I would take care of him and I am going to live up to that."

"You'll be a great father," she said with a smile.

"I wanted to thank you for helping me out with the diadem. Without you, I would have never found it."

"What are friends for?" she asked, and he turned to smile at her.

"Teddy, please go back to sleep," Harry begged, bouncing his godson in his arms. Across from him Hermione sat in their bed, rubbing her eyes as she did so.

"Maybe he needs changed."

"I've fed him, changed him and tried to burp him. He's still crying."

"Let me see him," she said, and took him from Harry. He sat next to her on the bed as she rocked him back and forth in her arms, singing softly to him as she did so.

"Hush little baby

Don't say a word

Papa's gonna buy you a mockingbird

And if that mockingbird won't sing

Papa's gonna buy you a diamond ring."

Teddy's brown eyes began to slowly close. She sang the verse again, and he was soon fast asleep on her chest. She carefully stood up and put him into the bassinet.

"You have a pretty voice," Harry whispered, when she climbed back into the bed with him.

"My parents used to sing me that when I was a baby. I guess I still remember some of it."

"I don't know what I would do without you," he whispered again, pressing their lips together. She smiled.

"Try not to focus on that."

"Let's get to bed before he wakes again."

"This is going to take a while," Ron remarked, looking around at the damage. Harry and Hermione nodded in agreement.

"Have you made the decision to return yet, mate?"

"If you two are then I might as well."

"You know you'd miss us," Harry replied, grinning at him.

"Yeah, yeah, sod off," Ron replied, rebuilding a wall. Harry went over to help Hermione, who was struggling on her own to rebuild a part of the roof.

"Let me help," he said, raising his arm up. The roof repaired itself, and she turned to smile at him.

"My hero."

"Here to help," he said with a grin.

"It's looking so much better," she replied, looking around.

"Shouldn't be much longer now," Ron replied, repairing the bench. He then took a seat on it earning a look from Harry and Hermione. "What?"

"You just started and you're already tired?"

"I've done a lot," he replied, resting his head against the wall. Harry shook his head and chuckled before he turned back around to continue rebuilding.

"Hello, Ronald," a soft voice said, and he turned around to see Neville and Luna standing there.

"Luna, Neville," he replied, nodding his head at them.

"Hello, Luna," Hermione said, giving her a hug. "How's your father?"

"Oh, he's doing much better. Congratulations, by the way," she said, looking between Harry and Hermione.

"Thanks," they said together.

"How have you been, Luna?" she asked.

"I've been good. It was good to see my dad again. Our house is repaired now."

"Sorry about that," Ron said.

"It's wasn't your fault."

"Need some help?" Neville asked, looking around at all the damage.

"I can't believe how much damage the school took," Hermione remarked. "Neville, has there been any update on the Great Hall?"

"McGonagall is adding a second Great Hall," he replied. "It'll be on the first floor. She's calling in everyone to help build it later on."

"It'll be fun," Luna remarked.

"Sure it will," Ron said, glancing at her.

"We'll be there," Harry said, turning his head towards Ron.

"There you are," Ron remarked, when Ginny walked up to them. "Where have you been?"

"I've been talking to McGonagall, not that it's any of your business."

"Hi, Ginny," Neville said, and Hermione noted that he sounded a little nervous.

"Hi, Neville, Luna."

"How have you been?" he asked, placing his hand on her shoulder.

"I'm doing better. I miss him like crazy."

"He didn't ask how I was doing!" Ron whispered, and Hermione rolled her eyes.

"Ronald," she sighed, shaking her head. Harry chuckled beside her.

"Let's give them a minute," he said, and she nodded in agreement. They pulled Ron's arm and dragged him further down the hallway.

"Help us fix this, would you?"

"Fine," he groaned, repairing the columns. Harry and Hermione started working on the walls.

"Potter," McGonagall said, walking up to them. They both turned around. "Sorry. Harry, I need to speak with you."

"Be back soon," he told Hermione, and started following McGonagall down the corridor. They went to the staircase and walked down to the first floor, stopping at a blank wall.

"What is this?"

"This will be the new Great Hall."

"So this is where you want it?" he asked her.

"That's right."

"Shouldn't be too hard," he remarked, running his hand across the stone. "We'll get started on it right away."

"Actually, Potter, I require your assistance in the Memorial Chamber."

"Is that the new name?"

"Yes. Follow me."

He followed her down to the chamber before he pushed the doors open and looked around. The hall was still plenty damaged, but all Harry could see was the several bodies that lined the floor.

He blinked, and they all disappeared. All he could see now was the wreckage.

"I'm glad you're moving it. I couldn't imagine eating in here every day."

"I want you and a few others working in here. Get this place fixed up for me, and we'll move forward from there."

"Of course, professor," he replied with a nod, and sent a patronus off to Ron and Hermione. She nodded her head at him and walked out of the chamber. Harry let out a sigh and began to repair the outside wall of the school.

"What's the matter?" Hermione asked, as she, Ron, Neville, Ginny and Luna entered.

"McGonagall wants us to repair the hall."

"We better get started then," Hermione remarked, and they all nodded in agreement.

It didn't take them long to repair the hall with all of them working efficiently. Within a few hours the entire hall was fixed with no reminder that a war had been fought there at all.

Except for everyone who was in the battle.

Hermione let out a sigh as she looked around, wondering what McGonagall had in store for the former hall.

"You would think it wouldn't look any different, but all I can see is everything that happened in this hall that day."

"It will take a long time to move on from this," Harry remarked, standing in the exact same spot that he had defeated Voldemort at. He closed his eyes, and he could see the beams of light that connected the two wands together.

"Looks better," McGonagall remarked, as she walked into the hall. "Great work."

"Now what?"

"When the new hall is complete, we will move the tables over and start the memorial. I have all the names of the people who died in the battle, and we will make sure they are honored. Kingsley and several members of the Ministry are working on memorial plates to be placed around the hall. As for you all, you have done enough today. Go home and get some rest."

"We'll be back tomorrow, professor," Hermione said, nodding her head.

She nodded, and they all walked out of the hall. They all turned to each other.

"I'm staying here tonight," Ginny remarked to Ron, who raised an eyebrow at her.

"Mum and dad know?"

"Of course they know, you dolt."

"I'm assuming the two of you are heading back to Grimmauld Place."

"That was our intention," Hermione remarked.

"Married couples," he groaned, and Harry shoved his chest.

"Sod off. Are you wanting to do something?"

"Wizard's chess?"

"Sure."

"Boys," Hermione murmured, and Harry kissed her cheek.

"This is a lot harder than I thought it would be," Harry replied, sitting on the bench. Hermione sat next to him.

"It's probably because we don't have as much muscle as we use to," she replied, rubbing his forearms.

"That's probably why McGonagall doesn't want us to build the new hall," Ron replied, sitting across from him. "She probably thinks that we're not strong enough yet."

"Which gives us more of an opportunity to help around the rest of the castle," she said, turning to Harry.

"I think I'm going to rest for a few minutes," he said, leaning his head back again the wall.

"I'm going further down the corridor. Meet me down there when you feel like it."

He nodded and she took off. She moved to the back wall when voices began to carry over. She stopped working when she heard her name.

"Can you believe that Harry married Hermione?"

"Of all the people!"

"She's not even pretty," Romilda Vane said, and Hermione closed her eyes. "What would be possibly see in her?"

"I thought he'd marry Weasley for sure."

"He was probably desperate," she replied again. "Maybe he feared that he wouldn't live past the war."

"He probably wouldn't be with her if he knew he would make it past."

Hermione walked away and wiped at her eyes, running into a quiet part of the castle where she could get some space for a while.

"Ron, have you seen Hermione?" Harry asked, as he immediately felt sad. Ron shook his head.

"I haven't seen her in quite a while, actually."

"I think something's wrong," he replied, furrowing her brow.

"Why do you think that?"

"She feels sad or upset or something."

"You can actually feel her?"

"Yes. We are bonded, you dolt. I need to find her."

"If only you had a map that told where everybody is at Hogwarts."

"Right!" Harry replied, shaking his head. He pulled the Marauder's Map out of his pocket and activated it, hoping that he could find Hermione on it.

"She's in Gryffindor Tower," Ron replied, spotting her immediately. "No one's up there right now."

They rushed upstairs and entered the common room. Hermione was sitting on the couch staring into the fireplace.

"What are you two doing here?"

"What are you doing here?" Harry asked, sitting on the coffee table opposite her.

"I just came up here to think."

"About what?"

"Nothing," she replied quietly, putting her head down.

"What's going on, Hermione?"

"I overheard Romilda Vane talking about us."

"So?"

"She wondered why you chose me."

Harry sighed and turned towards Ron, who nodded in understanding. "I'll head to the seventh floor and help out there."

"Thanks, mate," he said, turning back towards his wife. He waited until Ron left the common room before he grabbed hold of her hands.

"Why do you care what they say?"

"Because it makes me wonder!" she said, standing up. "We both know you would have ended up with Ginny had the bond never happened! Now you're forever stuck with an ugly woman who may mean nothing to-"

He cut her off when he stood up and pressed their lips together. She moaned into his mouth and wrapped her arms around his neck. He pulled away a moment later and placed his hands on her cheeks.

"You have been by my side for the last seven years. You have never turned away even when everyone else did. You went on the run with me and were tortured because of it. You took my name even though we've only been dating for about two weeks. There is no other woman in this entire world who is as loyal to me as you are.

"I told you that I love you and I meant it, Hermione. I love you. I don't care what would have happened if the bond never did. I'm happy that it did. I don't think of you as ugly. I never have. I don't know if you saw my reaction when I saw you walking down the stairs the night of the Yule Ball, but I couldn't take my eyes off you. You looked beautiful. You will always look beautiful to me. I don't care what anyone says."

"Harry," she sighed, wrapping her arms around his neck.

"You know me. If I didn't want to be with you, I would have filed for divorce already. I'm enjoying this. I love being with you. The week in Australia was the best week of my life."

"It was a really fun week," she replied, laughing slightly at her stupidity. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have let them get into my head."

"Who cares what they say. They don't know what's going on with us. As long as we're happy that's all that matters."

She smiled at him. "I love you."

"I know," he replied, pressing his lips to her head.

She buried her head into his chest and smiled against it. Yes, they've only been dating for a few weeks, but they've been friends for seven years. They spent those long few months in the tent together, unsure of the future, and scared of the now.

That's when, she believed, they really became close. Maybe had even fallen in love.

The night he asked her to dance with him would forever be burned into her mind. It was the first time she ever let go of her mind and focused on enjoying herself. No one had been able to do that before.

Except Harry.

"You felt me, didn't you? That's how you knew I was upset."

"I have my ways," he said with a grin, and she rolled her eyes but smiled at him. "Next time someone causes you trouble you let me deal with them."

"Fine," she sighed.

"I mean it."

"I know," she said softly, pressing their lips together.

"Have you seen this?" the man asked, throwing the paper onto the table. The other man in the room turned back towards him.

"Yes, I've seen this rubbish. Potter got himself a girl, did he?"

"The mudblood."

"Typical."

"Snider, we're running out of time. If we're going to do something, we need to do it and soon."

"Relax," Snider replied, brushing his fingertips across the table. "We have all the time in the world. We will have our revenge, don't you worry."

"What's your plan?"

"This," Snider said, pushing the paper back towards the man. "We use this to our advantage."

## Chapter Eight:

Hermione blinked her eyes as the sunlight hit them. She reached down and felt Harry's arm wrapped around her waist and she smiled, always feeling content in his arms.

She rolled over and stared at him; his soft breathing was the only noise in the room. He rolled onto his back, and she chuckled, knowing that he preferred to sleep that way. She sat up in the bed and leaned down to lightly press their lips together.

"Wake up, Harry," she whispered as she pulled away. He groaned and opened his eyes.

"That's a great way to be woken up," he said with a grin, reaching over to grab for his glasses.

"Good morning," she replied, rolling over to straddle his lap.

"Morning."

"We have to head back to Hogwarts today."

"You sound upset about that."

"I'm not. You see I have an amazing husband. If I'm feeling sore, I know he'll give me an amazing massage."

"Better yet," he replied, pushing a piece of her hair out of her face, "if you're feeling sore when we come home tonight, I will draw you a bath."

"Draw us a bath?" she said with a seductive voice.

"Of course."

She leaned down and pressed their lips together again, moaning as Harry put his hand on the back of her head and pressed her closer to him. She straddled his lap and ground their hips together, letting out a moan of pleasure as his lips moved to her neck. He broke apart and grinned up at her.

"It's a good morning indeed."

"Just shag me," she breathed out, pressing their lips together again.

"This is the new Great Hall?" Hermione asked, looking around. Neville and Luna nodded in agreement.

"We finished it last night. What do you think?"

"It's amazing," she said, looking at all the distinctive features. They managed to replicate the old hall while bringing the design to modern times. It was the perfect clash of old and new.

"Now we just have to move everything over and it's done."

"Then we finish the Memorial Hall?"

"Correct," Luna said. "The Ministry sent everything over this morning."

"We're moving down to the Quidditch Pitch tomorrow."

"I'm sure you can count Ron and Harry in for that," she laughed, shaking her head.

"Where are they, anyway?"

"They're outside repairing. I'm going to join them in a minute."

"We'll go with you."

They turned to walk out of the hall and traveled down the stairs to the Entrance Courtyard. They immediately spotted Ron and Harry and walked up to them.

"There you are," Harry said, giving her a quick kiss.

"The new hall is done."

"Really? I'll have to go check it out."

"How's it going out here?"

"We're doing great. There's a lot of damage so it will take us quite a while."

"Harry!" Ron called out for help. He ran over to him and helped him repair one of the columns. "Thanks, mate."

"No problem."

"Hello, Harry."

"You've got to be kidding me," he muttered, turning to Romilda. "Hi."

"How are you doing?"

"I was doing well."

"Maybe I could help you out," she said, putting her hand on his arm. He moved away from her.

"No, thanks."

"If you ever need anything," she said, winking at him.

"If I ever need anything, I'll call my wife," he said sternly. She narrowed her eyes at him.

"I had no idea you were married."

"Romilda, stop lying. Hermione overheard you the other day. Next time you insult her, you'll be answering to me, and you're not going to like it. She's twice the woman you are and will ever be."

He turned and walked away from her, ignoring her shocked face as he did so. He saw Hermione looking at him and grinned slightly.

"What was that about?"

"Just reminding Romilda what'll happen when she messes with us."

"You're the best," she said with a laugh.

"She doesn't look happy," Ron remarked, walking up to them.

"She'll get over it," he replied.

"Mum's making dinner tonight and she asked me if you two would come. What do you say?"

"Sure," they replied, nodding their heads.

Not far away, Ginny was struggling to rebuild a support structure. Neville quickly noticed and ran up to her, helping her rebuild the building.

"Thanks for the help," she said, sounding out of breath.

"Anytime."

"Hey," she said, and he turned back to her. "My mum is making a big dinner tonight. I've asked Luna if she would like to come, would you like to as well?"

"I'd love to," he replied, throwing her a small smile.

"Great," she said, turning away from him.

He stared at her, as though he were wanting to say something more but couldn't. Ron then called out for him to assist him and Harry, and he turned away from Ginny. She stared at his back, biting her lip as she did so.

"Dinner was delicious, mum," Bill said, kissing his mother's cheek.

"Thanks, Mrs. Weasley," Neville said.

"I'm glad you all enjoyed it," she said, as she and Arthur began to clean up.

"Zo, Hare, Hermione, how iz zhe married life?" Fleur said, and Harry was impressed with how much her English has improved.

"It's great. We've never been happier," she said, grabbing for Harry's hand.

"How wonderful," Bill said. "I can't imagine being thrown into a situation like that."

They nodded, unsure of how to respond. Ginny got up and walked into the living room, and Neville followed right behind her.

"How are you doing with all of this?" he asked, placing his hands on her arms.

"Still adjusting. I'm happy for them."

"It's me, Ginny. You don't have to lie."

She shrugged. "All my feelings for Harry are gone. It was meant to be. I can argue that all I want but, in the end, it was Harry and Hermione. Everyone knew it already, and it happened."

"If you ever need to talk, I'm here," he said softly, unsure of what to say to her. She smiled at him.

"Thanks, Neville."

He nodded, looking down at the floor as he did so. She looked away as well, trying to figure out when she became this awkward around him.

'Maybe the year at Hogwarts had something to do with it,' she thought, and closed her eyes.

"Is something wrong?" he asked, noticing her expression.

"No," she said, shaking her head. "I'm just thinking."

He nodded. "I've been doing that a lot lately, too."

She looked away again, unable to handle the awkward conversation they were having. Ron called out from the kitchen, suggesting a game of Quidditch in the backyard.

"You should go play," he said.

"In just a second," she said, unable to look away from his face. His blue eyes were sparkling, and she found herself unable to look away.

And before she realized, their lips were pressed together.

"I'm sorry," he said as he pulled away.

"Don't be," she whispered, pressing their lips together again.

Hermione sat on the blanket, staring up as Ron, Bill, Charlie and Harry flew around above, enjoying their current game of Quidditch. Ginny sat next to her, oddly quiet.

"Why aren't you playing?"

"I just decided not to, I suppose."

"Is something wrong?"

"Neville and I kissed."

"Wow," she said, her eyes widening. "Are you guys together?"

"I don't know. There's a part of me that wants to be."

"Ask him out, then."

"What if it doesn't work? He's one of my closest friends."

Hermione was about to speak when all the men suddenly flew down. Harry walked up to her and gave her a quick kiss.

"Great game," she said, smiling at him.

"You haven't lost your touch, mate," Ron said, clapping Harry's shoulder.

"Neither have you."

"I have to say," Charlie started, walking beside Harry, "it was an honor to play with you. I've heard you're quite the flyer, but that was an intense game."

Harry began to talk with Charlie, and Ron walked over to the table, plopping onto it as he did so. He didn't notice Luna walk up to the table.

"Great game," she said, sitting next to him.

"Thanks," he said, stretching his arms.

"That was the fastest I've ever seen you fly."

"It's been quite a while. I doubt I was that quick."

"Oh, I think you were. It was hard to keep an eye on you sometimes."

"You think so?" he asked, and she nodded in agreement.

"Yeah. It's always fascinating to watch you play. You're an excellent keeper."

"Thanks," he repeated, staring at her in shock. Neville walked up to them.

"It's getting pretty late, Luna. We should probably be heading back to Hogwarts."

"You're right," she said, standing up. "I think you should play Quidditch again when you return to Hogwarts."

"I planned on it," Ron replied. She and Neville started to walk back into the house.

On the other side of the backyard, Hermione turned back to Ginny. "I still worry about Harry and I not working, and what would happen afterwards, but I love him so much. Just because you're worried about a possible outcome doesn't mean that you shouldn't give Neville a chance. You should go ask him out."

Ginny dropped her head, nodding it. "You're right. I'm going back to Hogwarts tonight and we're going to talk."

"Are you about ready to go, Hermione?" Harry asked, walking back up to her. She nodded and grabbed his hand so he could pull her up. They said their goodbyes to the rest of the family, and Hermione noted that George disappeared right after dinner. Harry then handed her the floo powder, and she stepped into the fireplace, disappearing in the emerald flames until she was back at Grimmauld Place. Harry appeared a minute later.

"Home sweet home," she said, plopping onto the couch.

"You're not hungry, are you?" he asked with a grin. She laughed.

"Definitely not."

He saw her rub her shoulder, and the corners of his mouth curled into a smile. "I'll be right back."

"Ok," she said, watching as he walked away. She rested her head on the back of the couch, feeling tired now that she was back at home. Harry reemerged a few minutes later.

"I have a surprise for you," he said, grabbing hold of her hand. She narrowed her eyes at him.

"What is it?"

"If I told you, it wouldn't be a surprise, would it?"

"Fine," she laughed. She followed him upstairs to the master bathroom, and her mouth opened. "What is this?"

"As promised, I drew you a bath."

"Harry," she sighed, unable to take her eyes away from the tub.

"I hope you enjoy it."

"I thought you promised to draw us a bath," she replied, putting her hands onto his chest. "There's a bottle of firewhiskey in the kitchen. Why don't you go grab that and meet me back up here?"

He stared at her, and she could swear his mouth flickered for a moment before he turned and walked out of the bathroom. She turned back to the tub and began to remove her clothing. She then lifted her foot up and put it into the water to test the temperature before she climbed in, letting out a moan of contentment as she did so.

"Feel good?" Harry asked, returning to the bathroom with the bottle and two glasses. He filled the glasses and put the bottle by the tub. He then handed her one of the glasses and began to remove his clothing, stepping in the tub opposite her.

"We've officially been married for five months," she said, after taking a sip of her drink.

"Really? Feels like it's been a month," he replied with a grin. She laughed.

"I want to make a toast," she said, raising her glass. He raised his as well. "I know I have said this time and time again, but I'm glad the bond happened. This has been the most amazing month, and I hope there will be many more."

He smiled. "Not months, years."

They clinked their glasses together before taking a big gulp. Hermione leaned her head back against the tub and closed her eyes.

"I don't think I've ever seen you so relaxed," he said, and she smiled.

"This just feels amazing."

"Come here," he said, and she moved to sit between his legs. She rested her head on his chest while his hands moved to her shoulders, massaging them.

"I can't believe how crazy this last year was."

"I'm just glad it's all over," he replied, squeezing her shoulders.

"So you can no longer give me a heart attack, right?" she asked, looking up to his face. He chuckled.

"I will try my hardest not to give you a heart attack; you have my word."

"That includes Quidditch," she said with a grin, turning to face him.

"You act like I get injured all the time."

"You do seem to be in the Infirmary all the time."

He narrowed his eyes at her, but the corners of his mouth flickered again. "Technically, the times I was in the Hospital Wing were never my fault. The last time I was in that place, your former date to Slughorn's party knocked me unconscious."

She laughed, shaking her head. "I had one friend in the hospital after being poisoned and another because of a horrible person. That was such a mistake to go to the party with him."

"I should have asked you to go," he said softly.

"Next time will you ask me?"

"Only if you ask me," he replied, and she smiled.

"Deal."

"You know, you've had quite the picks of ex-boyfriends."

"Me? Do you not remember Cho?"

"Of course I remember," he replied, rubbing the bridge of his nose. "That was such a mistake."

"Cormac was never a boyfriend anyway. I just used him to get Ron jealous."

"Trust me, it worked."

"I know you really liked Cho," she said softly, placing her hand on his cheek.

"Nah, not really. She was pretty-that was it. She cried all the time. We never really got along. When she took Marietta's side that was the final straw."

"Viktor was great and everything, but I didn't see it as anything more than a short relationship. I was also dealing with dating two guys at once by both Molly and the rest of the wizarding world."

He shook his head. "That year was such a disaster."

"I'm glad that Kingsley ordered that law. At least we won't have to read about the rumors now."

"We should have known back then," he laughed. "Everyone knew before we did."

"It just took some convincing. A week in Australia may have helped."

"Sure did," he replied, nuzzling her neck. She gently pulled his head back and pressed their lips together, spending the rest of the time in the bathtub just kissing. It was one of the rare moments of intimacy that she loved.

"About time you two showed up," Ron remarked, when Harry and Hermione finally made it into Hogsmeade village.

"We're right on time, actually," she said, as Harry looked at his watch.

"Hogsmeade doesn't look that bad," Harry said, looking around.

"They've got it most of the way repaired. Death Eaters sure left this place in ruins."

"We want to thank you for joining us, Ron. I know since all of this started there hasn't had much time with just the three of us."

"Harry, have you applied for your apparition license yet?"

"I knew there was something I forgot to do," he said, shaking his head.

"How'd you get here?"

"Hermione has hers."

"Right," he said, shaking his head.

"Shall we go to The Three Broomsticks?" she suggested, and they nodded in agreement.

They walked to the Three Broomsticks and ordered three butterbeers. There was silence for a few moments before the drinks arrived.

"I'll be glad when all of this mess is over with," Ron stated, leaning back in his chair. "When everything is cleaned up and things go back to normal."

"One problem with your statement, mate," Harry said, grinning. "Our lives are not normal."

"Fair point," he said, nodding his head. Hermione laughed.

"What's the matter with you?" she asked her husband, as she felt how nervous he had become.

"Something doesn't feel right."

"What do you mean?"

"I don't know. Something just feels off."

"It's probably just your nerves being back here. Nothing is out there."

"I'm still a little on edge being here," Ron said, looking around.

"Everything's ok," she said, grabbing hold of Harry's hand. "Both of you."

"Seven years later and she's still telling us what to do," Ron said, shaking his head.

"And I'm married to her," he grinned, causing Hermione to roll her eyes.

"I can go get the divorce papers."

"Harsh," he replied. "Hey, I'm going to check something out. I'll be back soon."

"Where are you going?"

"I'll be back soon," he said, giving her a quick kiss.

"We'll just be walking around Hogsmeade," Ron said, and Harry nodded in agreement.

He then turned and walked out of the building. Hermione turned back to Ron.

"Do you know what that was about?"

"No idea."

She stared at him, knowing that Ron was lying, but choosing not to call him out on it. She took another sip from her drink, wondering where to begin with him.

"Is it just me, or has Luna changed a lot since the war ended?"

His statement nearly caused her to choke on her drink. She put the mug down casually and stared at him, wondering how much information she could get out.

"Why do you say that?"

"She just doesn't act like she used to. I can't figure it out."

'Typical,' she thought, shaking her head. "I can say for certain that she hasn't changed."

"Odd," he thought, finishing the rest of his drink. She rolled her eyes and finished her drink, very curious to see where Ron may be going with this new thought of his. She then paid for their drinks and they walked out slowly, exploring the village as they did so.

Her mind began to drift as she wondered what Harry was up to. No doubt something to surprise her, as he always wanted her to come with him. She knew that, whatever he was planning, that Ron at least had an idea of it. Both were as stubborn as her, and she knew that she wouldn't be able to get the answer out of him.

And no matter how much that drove her nuts, she would always smile out of it. Her boys always made her happy

"You seem happy," he remarked, watching the smile that grew on her face. She shook her head.

"I'm trying to figure out exactly what my husband is up to. Any thoughts?"

"Even if I knew, I wouldn't tell you. I honestly don't know what he's doing."

They walked up to the Shrieking Shack and stopped to stare at it. She turned back to Ron, who was staring off into the distance.

"Is something wrong?"

"Just not focusing, I guess," he said with a shrug.

"Aren't you beautiful," a man said, walking up to them. They both turned to face him.

"Can we help you?" Ron asked, inching in closer to Hermione.

"I'm looking for your husband," the man said again. He walked up to her and pulled his sleeve up, and her heart stopped when she saw the Dark Mark.

"What do you want?" she asked, grabbing for her wand.

Ron was suddenly knocked unconscious, and she turned around in panic. Another man was standing behind Ron, as though appearing out of the shadows.

"Revenge. Potter took something from us, so we'll take something from him.”

## Chapter Nine:

Harry smiled as he walked out of the shop, not even caring who saw him. He was in such a good mood that he didn't care. He just wanted to find Hermione.

He was halfway back to The Three Broomsticks when fear began to course through his body. He stopped dead in his tracks as he realized that it was coming from Hermione.

He started running, trying his hardest to find his two best friends. He passed by the people, who were staring back at in confusion. His heart was racing, fearing that something bad was happening to his wife.

Unable to find them in The Three Broomsticks, he closed his eyes and focused solely on her, and where they could be, and nearly smacked his head when he realized where they were at.

'Shrieking Shack. Of course they'd be there!'

"Why am I not surprised that Potter married the mudblood?" the man asked, pressing his wand underneath Hermione's chin.

"You're going to regret this decision," she said, turning her head to look at him.

"No. We don't regret anything."

"Your husband is going to regret killing the Dark Lord," the other man hissed into her ear.

Hermione was feeling something, something she couldn't figure out. She felt angry, and she was positive that it was coming from Harry, and she was sure he at least had an idea of what happened. It took her a moment to figure it out, then she realized what it was

She was feeling much more powerful.

It was almost like she was drawing power from him. She was feeling more powerful than she ever felt before.

And at that moment, she knew what she needed to do.

Her wand burned into the Death Eater that was holding her, and he cried out in pain. She quickly shot a spell off at the other and he fell unconscious. She then turned back to the one that held her and knocked him unconscious as well.

"Hermione!"

She turned around and saw Harry running up to her. She wrapped her arms around him and buried her head into his chest, feeling much safer now that he was there.

"Did they hurt you?" he asked, pulling away to look at her. She shook her head.

"I'm fine."

"What do they want?"

"They want you," she whispered, placing her hand on his cheek. "They want revenge."

"I'm so sorry," he said, burying his head into her hair.

"Harry," she said, pushing him away slightly, "something happened."

"What do you mean?"

"When they had me, I was feeling different. I've never felt so powerful before."

He stared at her in worry before he lightly pressed their lips together. "We'll figure it out. Come on let's get Ron."

They walked over to Ron and revived him. He groaned as he sat up.

"What happened?"

"Death Eaters attacked Hermione."

"Are you ok?" he asked in worry. She nodded.

"I'm fine."

Several pops were heard, and Kingsley ran up to the trio. Two Aurors behind him began to take care of the fallen Death Eaters.

"Are you all ok?"

"We're fine," Harry said, clutching Hermione's hand.

"That's a relief. I have Aurors taking them into custody now. Do you have any idea why they were here?"

"They said they wanted Harry. That was it."

"We'll interrogate them more back at the Ministry. All of you go home and get some rest. You need it."

"Kingsley," Harry called out, as the man walked away, "please update me when you find out anything."

"Harry, this is a Ministry matter."

"My wife was attacked! My best friend got hurt! They're coming after me, and they'll use them to do it. You will keep me updated, Kingsley, or I will find these men myself."

He nodded. "I'll do whatever it takes."

"Thank you," he said, and Kingsley nodded his head and disappeared with a crack. He then turned back to Hermione, who was still shaking on the ground.

"Ron, go on home. Hermione and I are going to Hogwarts."

He was about to protest until he saw the look from Harry, and he nodded. "I'll meet you at Grimmauld Place in a few hours."

"Thanks, mate," Harry said, and he helped Hermione up. He wrapped his arm around her shoulder, and they started on the path back to Hogwarts. When they arrived back at the castle, they immediately ran to McGonagall's office, hoping to find some explanation.

They entered the office and found it empty, but Dumbledore was fast asleep in his portrait. Harry called out his name, and he immediately awoke, smiling down.

"How can I help you?"

"Hermione was just attacked by Death Eaters."

"I'm sorry to hear that. Revenge, I would assume."

"Something happened with her."

"What do you mean?"

"I've felt more powerful than I ever have before," she said softly, looking up at the portrait.

"There's something I never told you about the bond, because I figured you would not need it. Since the situation has come up, it's time to talk about it."

"About what?"

"The connection between the two of you is stronger than you may believe. After a while together, the bond will start to pull you two closer together enough for you to be almost one person."

"What does that mean, exactly?"

"It means that you will more powerful than you can imagine. The other half is protecting you."

"So if Hermione and I were to work together-"

"-Harry, what have I told you before about love?"

"It's my greatest strength, and Voldemort's weakness."

"Hermione is making you stronger, as you are to her. The bond made you one."

"This just gets weirder and weirder," she replied, rubbing her head.

"If you work together, you could be unstoppable. Couples with soul-bonds are known to be some of the most powerful witches and wizards in the world."

Harry saw Hermione's frazzled look, and he gently wrapped his arm around her waist.

"Let's get you home, Hermione," he said, rubbing her arm.

"Wait. Professor, I believe you owe Harry and I an apology."

"For what?"

"I did some research about soul-bonds, and you lied to us about it. You said it would force us to shag. It wouldn't have."

Harry turned back to the painting in shock. Dumbledore stared at them for a moment.

"It would have influenced you, but nothing more."

"Why would you tell us that?" Harry asked in shock.

"I figured you needed the push."

Harry shook his head, laughing slightly. "You had us all up in worry over nothing."

"I apologize, but are you not happy now? I don't believe I have ever seen the both of you so happy before."

Harry went over to the fireplace and grabbed the floo powder. He then held it out to Hermione, who stepped into the fireplace and grabbed a handful, disappearing into the flames. He then turned back to the portrait.

"Thank you."

"Don't be so worried about Hermione. You will always protect her even without realizing it."

"How's Hermione?" Ron asked Harry in the living room of Grimmauld Place.

"She's doing better. She went to go lay down."

"Do you really think there's more out there?"

"A select few," he replied, shaking his head. "There's a few who think I should suffer."

"They're bloody buffoons if they think they can mess with you. You took down Voldemort."

"I'm worried about her, mate. I don't want her to get hurt."

"We'll protect her."

"She doesn't deserve this."

"Harry," Ron said, placing his hand on his shoulder, "we will keep her safe. I promise you."

"She won't be safe until they're in Azkaban."

"That's not true," he said, shaking his head. "She has you."

"And I left her," he said bitterly. "I left her to get hurt."

"You had no idea they were going to do this. Do not blame yourself."

He bit his cheek and turned away, unsure of what to say. The fireplace roared to life and Kingsley stepped out, dusting himself off as he did so.

"Please tell me you have something."

"We've interrogated the two Death Eaters. Their names are Ramirez and Stephens. Apparently, they work for a man named Snider who used to be one of Voldemort's top men."

"If we find Snider, this is all over?"

"Not we, the Aurors. You have done enough, Harry."

He turned his head away again. "I can't let them hurt her."

"We were able to get the two to talk. Hermione foiled their plan. They were supposed to take her to Snider."

"Is he working alone now?"

"He is indeed. They were unable to get any further Death Eaters who are still out to join. Apparently, they don't want to take on Harry Potter."

"Aren't they smart," he replied bitterly. "Do you have a lead on Snider?"

"We do, but the other two told us that he most likely left. I have Aurors checking out the place now."

Harry let out a breath of relief, glad that most of them were now captured. "Please, Kingsley, keep me updated."

"I will. Stay with Hermione and summon if you need any help."

Harry nodded, and Kingsley disappeared in the flames of the fire. Ron smiled slightly at Harry.

"Not as bad as we thought."

"There's still one out there. I won't feel better until he is in Azkaban."

Hermione stirred, tossing her head back and forth a few times. She let out a moan and sat up, looking around the bedroom for a moment before reclosing her eyes. The bedroom door opened, and Harry stepped through, smiling softly.

"Feeling better?"

"A little," she said, watching as he sat opposite her. "Have you heard anything?"

"The two men that had you are working for a man named Snider. They want revenge against me. It's only the three of them. They tried to recruit more but those that remain refused."

"That's a relief," she said.

"I'm proud of you," he said, and she looked at him.

"What do you mean?"

"You fought two well trained Death Eaters off on your own."

"I had some help," she said, grabbing for his hand.

"I am not going to leave you alone again."

"Where did you go?"

He hesitated, dropping his eyes as he did so. He then squeezed her hands and ran his thumbs across them.

"I want to tell you, but now is not the time."

"What is it?"

"It's not the time. I promise I will tell you at a better time."

"This will all be over with soon," she said softly.

He leaned in and pressed his lips to her head. "I thought I promised to not give you a heart attack."

She laughed. "I guess it goes both ways, huh?"

"I guess it does."

"I know what you're thinking."

"What am I thinking?"

"This is all my fault. I left Hermione and I got her hurt even though she's not hurt all because these men wanted me."

"That's not what I'm thinking," he replied, narrowing his eyes. She smiled slightly.

"Sure it's not. I know what goes on in that thick skull better than you do."

He chuckled. "Are you hungry?"

"Very."

"I have dinner going downstairs."

"I'll come with you," she said, getting out of the bed. They walked downstairs to the kitchen and began to prep for dinner, staying awfully silent.

"You're awfully quiet."

"I don't really know what to say. I thought all of this was over with."

"It will be. They'll find Snider and he'll be sent to Azkaban."

"What if this continues on? What if, in the future, our kids get targeted?"

She turned her head to look at him. "Kids?"

He closed his eyes as he realized what he said and placed his hands over his mouth. "I shouldn't have said that-"

"-Harry," she said, placing her hand on his chest, "it's not a bad thing for you to want kids."

He didn't say anything, but he looked completely embarrassed. She leaned up and pressed their lips together, trying to sooth him.

"I think it's really sweet. I want kids as well; just not anytime soon."

"We've only been together for a month."

"We're married, and we want to stay married. It's not such a bad thing to talk about our lives after Hogwarts."

He nodded and wrapped his arms around her waist, kissing the top of her head as he did so. "I love you."

"I love you," she replied, pecking his lips. "How many kids do you see us with?"

"I don't know," he replied. "Three? Four?"

"Four kids?" she laughed.

"Too much?"

"Just remember who's giving birth to those kids," she said with a smile, tilting her head to the side. He chuckled.

"Decide later on?"

"Agreed," she said, pressing their lips together again. They turned back to the stove and finished making dinner, and Hermione's mind began to drift.

"You ok?" he asked, wrapping his arms around her waist. He leaned down and pressed a kiss to her neck.

"Just thinking."

"Dinner's about ready."

"I'll get the plates down," she said, reaching up into the cabinet. She then bit her lip and turned back to Harry.

"You told my dad that you didn't want to stay here."

"I don't," he said, taking the plates from her.

"What if we were to find another place?"

"Like what?"

"I don't know," she replied, shrugging her shoulders. "An apartment or a house."

"I definitely don't want to stay here, but I think we should wait until after Hogwarts. It would be foolish to find a place and leave it."

"Are you ok with staying here?"

"It's not one of my favorite places, but it'll do until we can find our own."

"I know this has a lot of bad memories on you."

He dropped his eyes. "I don't want to talk about that."

She nodded. "Let's eat."

"I can't believe there are still people out there," Ginny said, shaking her head. "After everything, you would think they would leave you alone."

"Harry's all in a mess," Hermione said, taking a bite of her sandwich. "He's afraid something is going to happen to me."

"I can imagine," she replied. "How are you doing?"

"Better than I was."

"They'll find him," she said, squeezing Hermione's hand.

"I know they will. How are things with Neville? Did you talk to him?"

"We talked, and we snogged."

"Going to make it work then?"

"We're going to try."

"When did you realize you had feelings for him?"

"I don't know. I think this last year with us being trapped in the castle changed a lot of things between us."

Hermione nodded in understanding. It was, she believed, how she and Harry became closer. "It's crazy how feelings can change when you fear for your life. Before I forget to ask, has Luna mentioned anything about Ron?"

"Not really. Why?"

"Maybe this sounds crazy, but I think he's falling for her."

Ginny looked at her before she started to laugh. "Ron fall for Luna?"

"I know, but yesterday we were at The Three Broomsticks, and he started to ask about her."

"No kidding?" she asked in shock. "I wonder when that started."

"I don't know," Hermione replied with a laugh. "I'm just as confused as you are."

"Of course my brother is too daft to realize it, either," she said, shaking her head.

"Ladies," Harry said, sitting next to them.

"Question for you."

"Ask away."

"Does Ron like Luna?"

He stared at his wife in shock. "Ron likes Luna?"

"I'm pretty sure he does. He was asking me about her."

"Odd," he said, taking a sip from his drink. "I really had no idea."

"You need to find out," Ginny said. Harry shook his head.

"No way. I'm not going there again. Last time that happened Ron ate my chocolates filled with love potions. I had to listen to how beautiful Romilda Vane the entire trip to Slughorn's office."

Hermione laughed behind her hand. Harry gave her a look.

"Of course you would be laughing," he replied, narrowing his eyes at her. "You didn't have to put up with him."

"Can you try?" Ginny asked again.

"Even if I did, Ron wouldn't come out and say anything."

"I guess I'll have to try," she sighed in defeat.

"What are you all talking about?" Ron asked, sitting next to them.

"Nothing," they answered.

"Ok then," he said, reading from his magazine. Ginny stared at him for a moment.

"So, Ron, have you talked to Luna?"

"Not recently. Why?"

"Just curious. She was asking about you."

"Ok?" he asked again, giving her an odd look. She glared at Harry when he chuckled from behind his glass.

"Should you be talking to her again?"

"I will when I see her."

Ginny let out a disgruntled groan, while Hermione smiled. Ron shrugged and continued to read from the magazine.

Harry stared into the fireplace, unsure of how he was feeling now. He was still angry with himself for leaving Hermione and almost getting her kidnapped.

And, despite what she said, nothing seemed to want to make him stop kicking himself. He had no idea what he would have done if he allowed her to get kidnapped.

He could still hear her screams from when she was tortured in Malfoy Manor.

He shivered. He didn't want to think about that. She was hurt because of him, and now she is targeted because of him.

He closed his eyes, trying to stop her screams from playing over and over in her head. Two hands touched his shoulders, and he jumped in shock.

"Harry?"

"I thought you were asleep."

"It's hard to sleep when my husband is worrying about something," she said softly, moving to sit on the coffee table. "I thought you were coming to bed."

"I didn't want to wake you."

"That worked out so well," she said with a laugh. "You're still worrying about me, aren't you?"

"I'll always worry about you," he replied, grabbing for her hands.

"You worry too much."

"They were going to kidnap you. The plan was to take you to Snider."

She squeezed his hands. "They didn't, because of you."

"Because of the bond, not because of me," he growled, standing up. "I had left you."

"You're allowed some personal time. I don't have to be by your side every minute of every day."

"I didn't leave because I wanted personal time."

"Then where did you go?"

"I told you it's not the time."

"When is it the time?"

He stared at her, still debating in his mind what he should do. He lightly pressed their lips together and pulled something out of his pocket.

## Chapter Ten:

"I wanted the timing to be better for this," Harry said, breaking away from Hermione. She stared at him in confusion.

"What are you talking about?"

Harry unclenched his hand and showed her the diamond ring. Her eyes went wide as she stared at it.

"What is this?"

"I didn't get a chance to ask you to marry me, and you didn't get an engagement ring."

He got down on one knee, and her breath caught in her throat. "Since I can't use this as an engagement ring, I am going to use this as a promise ring. Hermione Potter, I promise to be the best husband to you that I can be. I promise to love you, cherish you and protect you. One day in the future I promise to be a great father to our four children," he said with a grin. She lightly shoved his chest. "I love you, Hermione."

She bent down and joined him on the floor, grabbing for his hands. "Oh, Harry."

"One more thing. Will you marry me again?"

She shook her head. "No, for one reason. I love the how we got married. I don't want to have a wedding unless you want one. We're already married, and we've been on a honeymoon. It's perfect."

She moved her hands to the sides of his face. "Harry James Potter, I am going to make you a promise. I promise to be the best wife I can be to you. You said you are going to protect me, and I am going to do the same for you. I still remember the day you saved me from the troll. You became my best friend and more that day. I know all of this happened unexpectedly, but I'm happy that it did. I can't wait for our future together. I love you so much."

He smiled as he reached up to wipe her eyes. He then grabbed for her left hand and gently slid the ring on her ring finger, smiling even more as it fit perfectly. She stared down at it, marveling its beauty. It was a silver band with a princess-cut blue diamond in the middle. There was a small diamond resting on each side of the stone.

It wasn't overly extravagant, but it was beautiful.

It was Harry.

"It's beautiful," she whispered, unable to take her eyes away from it.

"I saw it in the store, and all I could picture was you. It's the perfect ring for you."

"Blue is my birthstone," she whispered, looking back into his green eyes. "Well, sapphire, but that's blue.

"Did you know that today is our six-month anniversary?"

"We've been married for six months?" she asked in amazement. He nodded.

"I wanted to do this on our six-month anniversary."

"I should have guessed," she said with a laugh. "I love you."

"I love you, too," he whispered, pressing their lips together again.

They started off slow, but soon the kiss heated up. Hermione's hands began to unbutton Harry's shirt before she pulled away, biting her lower lip as she did so.

"I have a surprise for you as well. Meet me upstairs in a few minutes."

His eyes grew dark and he nodded. She stood back up and traveled upstairs, pulling the surprise out of the closet. She then went into the bathroom and changed into it, staring at herself in the mirror.

The emerald gown went all the way down to her ankles and hugged her curves perfectly. She smiled to herself as she saw the green reflecting back at her. She had chosen this color for a reason. She had bought this in Australia when she and Harry had gone shopping and has never used it before. She was wanting to save it for a special occasion.

And a special occasion it was.

She opened the bathroom door and told Harry to close his eyes. She then walked out the door and walked over to her husband, biting her lip once again. She then climbed onto the bed and straddled Harry's lap, telling him to open his eyes.

"Wow," he breathed out, unable to find his voice.

"You like it?"

"I love it," he said, capturing her lips again.

This kiss was much more passionate than the one downstairs. Their lips were moving furiously against one another, craving each other. His hands moved across the gown, enjoying the feel of the silk against her skin.

"You're beautiful," he whispered, reaching up to push a piece of hair back behind her head. She ground their hips together and captured their lips together again.

And they had spent the rest of the night showing the other how much they love one another.

The feeling of a pair of lips on her head awoke Hermione. She let out a smile and stretched out, opening her eyes to see Harry lying next to her.

"Good morning."

"Morning," he said, smiling at her.

"I can't stop staring at it," she said, pulling the ring into her view.

"I'm so glad you like it," he said, kissing it.

"What made you decide to do this?" she asked, flipping onto her side so she could see him.

"You deserve the best," he said, placing his hand on her cheek. "We're married, and you deserve to have a ring on your finger."

"Are you saying that you would like wedding rings?"

"Soon," he said, nodding his head. "This marriage is already so different than normal marriages are and we both deserve to have some normal things."

She laughed, lightly pressing their lips together. "Things will never be normal with us."

"That's the joy of being married to me."

"It is a joy being married to you," she whispered, running her hand through his hair. He smiled.

"We're meeting your parents for brunch."

"I forgot," she said, shaking her head. "We better get ready then."

"Beat you to the shower," he said with a grin.

"Harry," she said, stopping him. He turned back to her. "Don't tell my parents about everything that's happened. I don't want to them to worry."

He nodded in understanding. "Of course. They've had enough to worry about without this being added on."

"Thank you," she whispered, wrapping her arms around his neck.

They quickly showered and changed before they started off to her parents' house. They knocked on the door and smiled at Melinda as she opened it.

"Good morning," she said, hugging each of them.

"How are you, Melinda?" Harry asked, breaking away from her.

"Good as always," she said with a smile. "Joseph will be down in a minute."

"Everything smells so good, mum," Hermione said, sitting on the couch. Harry sat next to her.

"It's just about ready. What is that?"

Her eyes darted to Hermione's ring, and Hermione smiled as she held her hand out to her. "It's an engagement and promise ring from Harry."

"How beautiful," she said, looking at the ring.

"I love it," she replied, smiling at Harry.

"I'm so happy for the both of you," her mother said, smiling between her children. Joseph walked down the stairs.

"Hi, pumpkin," he said. "Hello, Harry."

"Joseph," he said, nodding his head.

"Look what Harry got Hermione," Melinda said, gesturing to Hermione's hand. She held it out to her father.

"Beautiful," he said, staring at the stone. "Engagement ring?"

"Sort of. It's more of a promise ring than an engagement ring."

"Congratulations, pumpkin."

"Thanks, dad."

"I'm going to check on the food," Melinda said, getting up. Hermione followed her mother into the kitchen.

"Need any help?"

"Do you want to set the table?" she asked, and Hermione nodded. She reached up and pulled four plates down and set the table. "How are you and Harry doing?"

"Great," Hermione replied with a smile. "He's amazing."

"I'm so happy for you," she said, patting her daughter's cheek. "The both of you."

"We're happy, too," Hermione said, and Melinda saw the biggest smile that she has ever seen from her daughter.

"Go get them. Brunch is ready."

"I heard what happened to Ron and Hermione," Neville said, as he and Ginny traveled around the school. "Are they ok?"

"They're all right. Hermione said that Harry's not thinking straight."

"I can imagine. I still remember what happened after she was petrified in second year."

Ginny suddenly broke away from him, and he could see the fear that was etched onto her face. "Did I say something?"

"I trust you more than you could ever imagine."

"What are you going on about?"

"You cannot tell anyone what I am about to tell you, and the reason I am telling you is because I would like for you to not bring it up again."

"You can tell me anything."

"Not here," she said, looking around at all the students. "Let's to go the Quidditch Pitch."

He nodded, and they took off down towards the pitch. His mind was going into overdrive trying to figure out what she may be ready to tell him.

They arrived outside of the pitch, and she conjured a blanket. They remained silent for several minutes while she still debated in her mind if she wanted to tell him this or not.

"You're scaring me," he said softly, grabbing for her hand. She closed her eyes.

"I trust you with everything I have, and I hope that I can, because I have an extremely hard time trusting people."

"You know you can trust me."

"Everyone assumed Harry opened the Chamber of Secrets because he was a parselmouth, but he didn't. I did."

"You opened it?"

"Let me explain," she said, and he nodded in agreement. "In the summer before first year, we all went to Diagon Alley to get our school supplies. We were in Flourish and Blotts where we ran into the Malfoys. We got into a fight, and Lucius Malfoy took one of my books and switched it out for Tom Riddle's Diary."

"Who?"

"Voldemort. That was his real name. Anyway, when I arrived at Hogwarts, I discovered the diary. I started writing in it, and it talked back to me."

"It talked to you?"

"It was controlling me. I don't know how, but he was. I trusted him, as stupid as that was. I thought he was my friend. I told him everything. Then, after some time, I wasn't myself anymore. I can't remember most of that year, Neville. Every one of those things that had happened was because of me. I wrote on the walls, I petrified the students, including Hermione. I did all of that because I made a very stupid mistake.

"I tried to get rid of it, then I discovered that Harry had found it. I panicked. I was afraid that Riddle would tell him that I did it. So, I trashed the dormitory and stole it back from Harry. After I did that it all went dark again. The next thing I remember is Harry saving me from the chamber.

"To this day, I still have nightmares about it. I can't sleep sometimes because he's always in my head. It's like he'll never leave. When you brought that up, it scared me. It made me think of that year all over again. I-"

Tears formed in her eyes, and he immediately wrapped his arms around her. She cried into his chest, hating herself for letting out so much emotion, but glad that she was finally talking to someone about what had happened. He rubbed her back and kissed her head, trying his hardest to comfort her.

"You didn't do anything," he whispered into her ear. She pulled back and wiped her eyes.

"What do you mean?"

"You didn't do anything. Riddle did. He ordered you to do all those things. You would never hurt anyone."

"But I did-"

"-You didn't," he interrupted her, pressing his hands to her face. "He did."

She closed her eyes, and he wiped the remaining tears from her face. She wrapped her arms around his neck and cried into his shoulder, thankful for his support.

"I will never tell anyone," he whispered, "but I think Harry, Ron and Hermione know more about this than they're letting on. Maybe we should go talk to them."

"Your mum is a good cook," Harry said, as he and Hermione apparated back into Grimmauld Place. She let out a laugh.

"I miss her cooking sometimes. Of course, after not eating anything this past year, everything probably tastes amazing to us."

He nodded in agreement. "That's the truth."

"Probably not that much different for you with the way you were raised," she remarked, and he bit the inside of his cheek.

"I know you worry about that."

"You know me too well, then," she said, and walked down the steps to the kitchen. She stopped in her tracks when she saw Neville, Ron and Ginny sitting at the table. "Hi."

"Hermione, I need to talk to you and Harry," Ron said, grabbing for her hand. They walked back up the steps and called for Harry, who appeared a moment later.

"What's the matter?"

"Ginny told Neville about everything that happened with the Chamber of Secrets, and he believes we know way more than we've originally told Ginny. I have no idea what to tell them."

"If Ginny told Neville, that means that it is still bothering her, and she is hoping that he will help her through it," Hermione said, turning to Harry. "I think she deserves to know."

"Do you really think it's a good idea to tell them?"

"Hermione's right," Harry said, lifting his head back up. "Ginny deserves to know the whole story."

"It won't help her get through it."

"But she'll understand how and why it happened. I owe her that much. She was targeted because of me. We're telling her."

He moved past Ron and Hermione and started back down to the kitchen. He pulled out a chair and sat opposite of Neville and Ginny.

"Ginny, there is more to the story than you know."

"What do you mean?"

"We have kept this hidden because we had to, and we expect the two of you to keep this quiet as well. Ron, Hermione and I were missing for nine months because we were hunting for Voldemort's Horcruxes."

"What are those?"

"A Horcrux is made when some kills another and puts a piece of their soul into an object. While a Horcrux is out in the world, that person is immortal. We discovered that Voldemort made seven," Hermione said slowly.

"Seven? That's what you were doing?"

"One of them was Riddle's diary. It's what alerted us to the Horcruxes."

"What are you saying?" she asked, furrowing her brow.

"Riddle used you. When I was down in the chamber, he told me everything. He told me how you poured your soul to him, and he started to take over yours. He took over you and ordered you to open the Chamber of Secrets and do everything that you had done. He possessed you and used his Horcrux to do it."

"That's how all of this happened?" she asked, pressing her hands against her head. He nodded.

"I'm so sorry."

"Don't be," she said, shaking her head. "I shouldn't have written in the diary."

"He tricked me, too," Harry said, and Hermione reached over and clutched his hand. "He was a master of that, Ginny. Don't ever blame yourself for what happened. You didn't do anything."

"We thought that maybe, knowing the truth, it might help you forever get past what happened in the chamber," Ron said, placing a hand on her shoulder.

She nodded. "When Neville started to talk about the chamber, it brought everything back and I freaked out a little."

"You went through a lot."

"So did all of you, and I don't see you freaking out."

"Trust us, we all have in some way, shape or form," Hermione said, and Ron and Harry nodded in agreement.

"The good news is that it's all over. We never have to worry about Voldemort or his Horcruxes again."

"What were the rest of them?" Neville asked, and the trio proceeded to tell them about everything that occurred during their mission.

"Hi, Luna," Ron said, walking up to her. She turned around and smiled at him.

"Oh, hi, Ron. What brings you to the Quidditch Pitch?"

"I came here to see if you needed some help."

"There's plenty to do," she replied, looking around at the destruction "You can help me with this part of the destruction."

He nodded, and they started to rebuild one of the seating areas to the pitch. They remained silent for a few moments before he turned back to her, unable to form any words in his mouth.

"Is everything ok?"

"Yeah. I was wondering, er, how your dad's doing."

"Oh, he's doing much better. I haven't spoken to him much lately, but he's gotten back into his writing."

"That's good," he replied, rubbing the back of his head.

"You have something on your mind. The nargles are all over the place."

He stared at her, unsure of how to respond. "Don't we all?"

"I suppose," she replied, putting one of the banners back into place. "You just act like you have a lot on your mind."

He shook his head, still unsure of why he had come to talk to Luna in the first place. "Just all this mess we have to clean up."

Off in the distance, Ginny, Neville, Harry and Hermione were repairing a different part of the pitch when Ginny suddenly stopped and turned to look at them.

"I swear, I am going to use a love potion on him."

"No, you're not," Harry said. "I'm not going through that again."

"It's clear that he likes her. Why doesn't he just ask her out?"

"Because my brother is too daft for that," Ginny remarked, turning to Hermione. It was then that she noticed the ring that was glistening on her finger. "What is this?"

"Harry gave it to me the other night," she replied with a smile. "It's a combination of an engagement ring and a promise ring."

"It's beautiful," Ginny said, studying it. "So, are we expecting to hear wedding bells in the near future?"

## Chapter Eleven:

Hermione stirred and rubbed her eyes, trying to force herself to stay awake. She then attempted to sit up the bed but found Harry's arm wrapped tightly around her waist. She smiled slightly as she carefully lifted his arm and removed it from her waist, laughing behind her hand when he grunted and rolled over to his other side.

She got out of the bed and put her slippers on before quietly stepping into the bathroom. A few moments later she walked out of the bedroom and walked down to the living room, picking up the book she had started last night.

'Might as well enjoy some leisure time before Harry wakes,' she thought, opening the book to where she had left off.

An owl pecked at the window, and she dropped her book to open it. The owl flew inside and dropped a package on the couch. She handed the owl a treat and watched as it flew back out the window. She then picked the box up and smiled, knowing exactly what it was.

'Finally here.'

She could barely contain her enthusiasm as she waited for Harry to wake. She put the box back onto the table and picked her book back up, opening to where she left off. Twenty minutes later he walked into the living room and collapsed next to her, looking as though he were still trying to wake up.

"Why didn't you wake me?"

"You looked peaceful."

"Is it here?" he asked, noticing the package. She nodded.

"I didn't want to open it without you."

He tore off the wrapping and ran his hand over the black velvet box. He then handed it to her, and she opened it, smiling at the two silver rings resting inside of it.

"Beautiful."

She took the rings out of the box and held them in her hand. He took the ring that belonged to her and held it in his hand, thinking something over in his mind.

"I think I want a wedding."

"Really?" she asked, looking up in shock. He nodded. "I've been thinking about it, too. I know I said that I didn't want one because we're already married, but I think we should."

"Give me your engagement ring."

"I like this ring."

"Give it here," he said with a laugh. She took her ring off and handed it to him. He got down on one knee and displayed the ring out to her. "I guess I can use this as an engagement ring now. Hermione Potter, will you marry me?"

"Yes," she said with a laugh, pulling him back up. She pressed their lips together.

"I guess third time's a charm," he said with a grin.

"You only asked me twice, sir," she laughed again. He bent down and picked up the velvet box.

"I believe this is yours."

He pulled the smaller silver band out of the box and put slid both of her rings onto her finger. She then pulled his out and slid his onto his ring finger.

"I am officially a married man," he said, kissing her head.

"It only took us six months."

"Better late than never," he said with a grin. "I can't wait to see you walking down the aisle."

"Do you think we could do it on Christmas Eve? I know what day it is, but I think it would be odd to not have our wedding the same day as we got married."

"That would give us plenty of time to prepare, too. Something small; maybe we have it at The Burrow?"

"A winter wedding," she said. "That would be beautiful."

"We have a date then."

"Thank you, Harry," she whispered, wrapping her arms around him. "My father will be so happy. He was so upset when he found out I was married. I should have said yes in the first place."

"I think I caught you a little too off guard."

"You definitely surprised me," she said into his chest.

"We need to get to Hogwarts soon," he said, looking at his watch. "McGonagall said that she wants to talk to everyone who helped with the cleanup."

"I suppose we need to get then ready then," she remarked, looking down at her pajamas. She then looked up at Harry, and her heart melted as she realized that he was only wearing bottoms. She pressed her hands to his chest, loving how muscular he was. Her hands then stopped at the scar near the middle of his chest.

"Like what you see?" he asked with a grin.

"What?" she asked, pulling away. His grin grew wider. "What can I say? My husband is incredibly sexy, especially when he goes to bed without a shirt on."

"I have known you for seven years, and I never once thought I would hear you talk like that."

"You must bring it out in me," she said, and her eyes sparkled. The corners of his lips curled.

"We need to get going," he said, and she nodded in agreement.

They had a quick breakfast, showered and changed before they took off towards Hogwarts. They met the rest of their friends in the Great Hall shortly before McGonagall took the podium.

"I want to thank all of you for the tremendous help," she started to the large crowd that has gathered in front of her. "Without all of you, there is no way the school would have been ready before the next term. Not only did we rebuild the school, we also built onto it by adding the Great Hall and turning the former hall into the Memorial Chamber.

"For those of you planning to return, you will need to meet with your Heads of Houses, which have changed for Gryffindor and Slytherin. For Slytherin, Professor Slughorn will take over. For Gryffindor, Professor Sinistra will oversee you. This needs to be done before July 15th. For those of you wishing to take Muggle Studies, I am currently in the process of finding a new professor to teach the course, and it may not be offered this term. I will keep you all updated.

"Once you have met with the one of the professors, you will receive the usual letter in the mail no later than July 31st, as always stating what you will need for the courses. If you believe there is an error, please contact us right away. We are in a tight crunch to do this as quickly as possible.

"You all are now free to enjoy the rest of your break. Thank you all for the help, and please remember to get scheduled by the 15th. I look forward to seeing all of you again September 1st."

"Too bad you're not old enough to teach Muggle Studies," Harry said, wrapping his arm around Hermione's shoulder. She let out a laugh.

"I can't see myself as a professor," she replied, as they walked out of the hall.

"What is this?" Luna asked, seeing the silver band on Harry's left ring finger. He and Hermione smiled.

"We got our wedding bands this morning."

"No wedding then?" Ginny asked in shock. Harry and Hermione turned to look at each other.

"We are going to have a wedding, and all of you are invited."

"Congratulations," Luna said, giving both a hug.

"First, we need to get ready for Hogwarts," Hermione said, turning to Harry.

"Granger," McGonagall said, walking out of the hall. She then shook her head. "Potter, my apologies. That's going to take some time."

"What do you need, professor?"

"Kingsley has informed me that you're interested in joining Wizengamot. If you are, I will need to speak with you."

"I think that's what I want to do," she said, and Harry turned to her.

"You never told me that."

"I must have forgotten."

"Why don't you and I talk in my office," she replied, pressing her hand to the small of Hermione's back. "Potter, Weasley, I'm assuming the two of you still wish to become Aurors."

They nodded. She continued. "Then you will need to make an appointment with Professor Sinistra. She will inform you of the classes that you will need for your next term."

"Better go talk to her," Harry replied, watching as Hermione and McGonagall turned and walked away.

"I have to go talk to Professor Flitwick," Luna said.

"I'll go with you," Ron said, and Harry gave him a look.

"That will be quite fun," she replied, and they took off towards the Grand Staircase. Harry, Neville and Ginny stared at them in confusion.

"So everyone leaves me then," Harry said, looking around.

"What are we? Chopped liver?" Ginny asked.

"Let's get to Sinistra's office," he replied, turning towards the staircase.

"So, Harry," Ginny started, walking up beside him. He turned his head and gave her a look, "you have decided to have a wedding."

"We have," he replied.

"And you got Hermione an engagement ring and the both of you wedding bands."

"Where are you going with this?"

"You really love her."

"Of course I do," he replied without skipping a beat.

"She loves you, too," she said, smiling at him. "I've never seen her act like this before even when she was going after Ron. The both of you just seem to bring out a different side to one another."

He didn't say anything until they reached Sinistra's office. He was about to knock on the door when he noticed a piece of parchment beside her office door.

"Appointment times," Neville said, picking up the quill. He dabbed it into the ink and signed his name onto one of the lines before handing it to Ginny.

"Hermione's name is on here," she said, looking at the small name. Harry moved in to look.

"McGongall must have put it up there. Thankfully, there's a spot right underneath," he replied, taking the quill from her. He signed his own name underneath hers.

"I can't believe the school is finished," Neville remarked, looking around the building. "I thought we'd never get this place cleaned up."

"It took a lot of time," Ginny said, grabbing for her boyfriend's hand, "but we did it."

"How are you and Hermione going to handle not being together every night?" Neville asked quietly, as though hesitant to ask the question. Harry shrugged.

"We've talked about it, and we'll try to make it work."

"So broom closets then?" Ginny said with a grin. Harry stared at her.

"It's going to be harder than you think, mate," Neville said. She nodded in agreement.

"It's for one year. I think we'll be ok."

"Best of luck to you," she said, giving him a look.

"I'm going to wait on Hermione," Harry said, looking down at his watch. "She shouldn't be much longer now."

"Ginny and I are going to Hogsmeade," Neville said, wrapping his arm around her shoulders. "Should we be concerned about anything?"

"They only want me," he replied. "You'll be fine."

"I was just kidding," he said, placing his hand on Harry's arm. "They'll find him."

"I should be going," Harry said, and turned on his heel to go back down to McGonagall's office. He sat on the bench and stared out into the courtyard, thinking of what he and Hermione were going to do after they went to Hogwarts.

He could deny it all he wanted to, but he needed her. He couldn't sleep without her. He had grown so accustomed to having her by his side that he couldn't even imagine not being able to lay next to her.

And since he started sleeping with her, he slept the entire night.

He had never been able to before. He would wake up quite a few times in the night-especially in their Hogwarts years-and only sleep for a few hours. Since they had gotten together, he slept the entire night without waking up. He couldn't figure it out, but he was not complaining.

"What are we doing?" Hermione asked, snapping him out of his thoughts.

"I'm waiting on you."

"Aren't you sweet," she said with a smile, grabbing his hand to help pull him up. "What's on your mind this time?"

"What are you talking about?"

"I have known you for seven years, Potter. I know when you're deep in thought."

"Since when do you call me Potter, Potter?" he asked with a grin. She laughed.

"What's going on?"

"When we get here, we won't be able to sleep next to each other, and I have to be honest, this is the best sleep I have ever had. I'm just trying to figure out how it's going to work."

"Harry," she sighed, wrapping her arms around him, "I don't know what we're going to do."

He was about to speak when someone caught his eye. Grinning, he gestured his head towards Hermione, whose eyes went wide as she noticed.

"Is that Ron and Luna?"

"Sure is," he remarked, still grinning.

"He needs to snog her for Merlin's sake. It's getting hard to watch."

"It took him seven years to snog you. I'm not anticipating this anytime soon."

Right as he said that, Luna reached up and pressed her lips to Ron's, and Harry and Hermione's mouths fell open.

"I have no comment," he replied, still in shock.

"We shouldn't watch this," she said, pulling on his hand.

"He's growing up so quickly," Harry remarked, shaking his head. Hermione rolled her eyes.

"At least someone is."

"Hey now," he said, stopping her, "I am a happily married man."

"And you're a good husband," she replied, wrapping her arms around his neck.

"What'd you and McGonagall talk about?"

"The classes that I need to join Magical Law. I have to speak with Sinistra to schedule for them, but I'm on good course for it."

"What are you taking?"

"Normal classes. Transfiguration, Charms, Defense Against the Dark Arts, Potions, Herbology, History of Magic, Arithmancy and Ancient Runes."

"Since when have you decided to do Magical Law and work in Wizengamot?"

"Kingsley suggested it the last time we saw him, and I thought it was a great idea. I want to make changes."

"We both do," he replied, grabbing for her hand. "Especially in the way Muggle-borns are treated."

"Do you think I can do it?"

"We can do it," he emphasized, staring directly into her eyes. "My mother was a Muggle-born and so is my wife. They will be treated so much better than they have been."

"I have a feeling that certain people aren't going to like us in the Ministry," she replied with a smile. He smiled back.

"We'll be unstoppable."

"Ready to go home?"

"I need to stop by Sinistra's office."

"McGonagall already signed your name, and I signed right underneath yours. It's for Friday at one and one-thirty."

"Perfect. I guess we can go home then."

"Dinner was delicious, mum," Bill said, helping his parents clean up the table. Harry and Hermione stood up in their seats and began to help as well.

"Relax, we have this," Bill said, as he and Fleur cleaned the table. Beside him, George nodded in agreement. "I believe Ron is outside."

They nodded and took off towards the backyard. Hermione went to talk to Luna, while Harry went to pour himself a glass of firewhiskey.

"What are you grinning about?" Ginny asked Harry as she walked up to him.

"Luna snogged Ron."

"Are you serious?"

"Completely. Hermione and I caught them earlier," he said, taking a drink of his firewhiskey afterwards.

"Oh, this is brilliant," she replied with a grin on his face. "Time to go talk to Luna. Excuse me."

"What did you tell her?" Hermione asked as she walked up to her husband.

"Nothing."

"You're horrible," she said, shaking her head. She closed her eyes as Fleur walked up to them.

"I hear zou decided to have za wedding," she said, and they nodded.

"We're having it on Christmas Eve."

"Congratulations," Bill said, walking up next to his wife. "I know this has been a difficult situation for the two of you."

"We're happy," Harry said, kissing Hermione's head.

"And that's all that matters," Bill said, clinking Harry's glass with his own. "We wish the both of you the best."

"Let ze know if zou need help," Fleur said, and Hermione nodded.

"I probably will closer to the date. With Harry and I going to Hogwarts, it'll be hard to plan for it."

"Let us know if you need any help. If you would like to, you could have the wedding out at our house."

"Really?"

"If you would like. We're offering it to you."

"We really appreciate that."

"Just let us know what you would like to do."

They nodded again and watched as Bill and Fleur walked away. Hermione turned back to Harry.

"A wedding by the sea in the middle of winter?"

"I'm happy as long as you're happy. If that's what you want to do, then we'll do it."

"It's a lot to think about," she replied, wrapping her arms around herself.

"We still have plenty of time."

She nodded, laying her head on his shoulder. She took his glass and drank a sip of it, grimacing as it burned her throat.

"That stuff is so strong."

"It's not my favorite, but it's nice to have occasionally.

"I'm going to get some butterbeer," she replied, but he stopped her.

"I'll get some," he said, giving her his glass. He walked over to the table and poured two glasses before Arthur walked up to him.

"Couldn't help but to notice," he said, referring to Harry's ring. "Congratulations."

"Thank you."

"How are you and Hermione doing with all of this?"

"We're doing great," Harry replied, smiling. "We've changed our minds about having a wedding and we're going to try to get through Hogwarts like this."

"Glad to hear that," he said, grabbing a glass of his own. "I'm very proud of you, Harry."

"For what?"

"Everything. Especially the way you treat Hermione. You have become quite the young man, and I know you father and Sirius would be proud."

Harry nodded, unsure of what to say. Arthur clapped his shoulder.

"Do you have any advice?"

"Tons," he said, nodding his head. "The best thing I can tell you as of right now is this: you and Hermione are in the "honeymoon stage". Everything is perfect. You'll fall out of that soon, and I'll tell you, it's more magical than the honeymoon stage is. I believe you really get to know the other. You'll have fights, but that's marriage."

"Thank you."

"Marriage is all about being happy with the one you love. You and Hermione unfortunately got thrown straight into the marriage without getting to date first, but I must say you are handling it well. You're balancing your dating life and the marriage life. That's impressive."

"We're doing whatever it takes to make it work."

"And that right there proves that you want to be with one another."

Harry smiled. "Thanks for everything, Arthur."

"Anytime."

He bid his head goodbye and walked back over to Hermione, who gave him a look.

"That took you a while."

"I was talking to Arthur."

"I see," she replied, taking a sip of her drink. "This was a nice dinner. It's so beautiful outside tonight."

Harry lips curled into a small smile, and he tugged on Hermione's hand. "Come with me."

"Where are we going?" she asked, laughing slightly. He led her to a part of the yard that was very secluded and pulled something out of his pocket. "What are you up to?"

"I wanted to take you flying."

"No," she said, backing away.

"Do you trust me?"

"Of course I do," she said shyly, "but I am not getting on that thing."

"We won't go high."

"Harry-"

"-Hermione," he said, pressing his hands against her face, "nothing is going to happen to you."

He enlarged his broom and sat on it, waiting for her to join him. She gave him another look before she let out a disgruntled sigh and sat behind him, wrapping her arms tightly around him. He started to take off, and her grip around him tightened.

"Relax," he whispered, turning his head back towards her. She let out another breath and rested her head on his shoulder, feeling more and more relaxed as he flew higher. She looked around and smiled at the view, now understanding why Harry loved it up here so much.

He paused in the sky and turned back to face her. "What do you think?"

"You were right," she said, looking around at the view. "It's amazing."

"Sometimes you just need to let go of your fears," he said, and she nodded in agreement.

"Thanks for making me do this."

"Maybe you can play Quidditch with me this year," he said with a grin, and she shook her head.

"No, but nice try."

They hovered in the air for a few more minutes before he took them back down to the ground. She got off the broom and attempted to gain her balance, and Harry chuckled as he reshrunk his broom and wrapped his arms around her waist, balancing her in his arms.

"The first ride is always the best."

She laughed, pressing her head into his chest. She then lifted her head back up and pressed their lips together, loving her husband more and more as the days went on.

## Chapter Twelve:

"Harry, Hermione," Sinistra said, smiling to the couple who sat outside of her room. "Why don't the both of you come in together, and we'll get you scheduled."

They stood up and walked into her office, sitting down at her desk as they did so. She pulled out two files and sat behind her desk, looking over them as she did so.

"Potter and Potter, I don't know if I can get use to that," she said with a smile. "Congratulations, by the way."

"Thank you," they echoed.

"I figured since you're married, we can just schedule the both of you together. I want to start off by saying that the courses may be more difficult for you since you were here the previous term."

"Did anyone learn much the previous term?"

"Unfortunately, not as much as they should have. This term will be hard for everyone around." She pulled one of the charts up and opened it, scanning through it. "Hermione, I see you and the Headmistress have talked about joining Magical Law."

"She told me I would need the normal classes, and then Ancient Runes and Arithmancy."

She nodded. "Your O.W.L. results are excellent, and your grades at the end of you previous term are just as great. You can easily get into your classes. Let's sign you up for Transfiguration, Ancient Runes, Charms, Defense Against the Dark Arts, History of Magic, Herbology and Potions. Sound good?"

"Sounds perfect, professor," she replied with a nod.

"Will you be able to handle all of these courses? This is a lot."

"I can, but McGonagall said I would take Arithmancy as well."

"It is being offered the same time as Ancient Runes, and I would prefer for you to have that."

"Hermione," Harry said, turning his head towards her, "you remember the last few times you tried this, right?"

"I can do it, Harry," she said, grabbing for his hand.

Sinistra wrote in her chart and pushed it to the side before picking Harry's up and glancing over it.

"Harry, Harry, Harry," she said, reading through the chart. He dropped his eyes, having trouble remembering his exams. "Still your wish to become an Auror?"

"It is," he replied quietly.

"O.W.L. results were good. Your grades from the previous term were as expected, except your grade from Defense Against the Dark Arts dropped."

Harry didn't say anything but knew the real reason why his grade dropped. "I received an outstanding on my O.W.L. Defense Against the Dark Arts is my best and favorite class."

She nodded, as though understanding what he was trying to say. "Definitely put you into Defense Against the Dark Arts, Transfiguration, Potions, Charms and Herbology. These are the same courses you had when you were here last."

He nodded, dropping his head once again. She wrote in his chart and put it on top of Hermione's before she picked her head up and looked between them.

"I want to talk personally to the two of you. It is not normal to come to Hogwarts married. Minerva said you were trying to keep it quiet, and it unfortunately got out there. I understand you are married, but I am telling you right now: if there is any type of rule breaking going on, you will both be punished. The same rules apply to married students as they do to non-married students."

They nodded. "We understand, professor."

Hermione woke up early the morning of the 31st. She was very excited to celebrate Harry's birthday with him for the first time as a couple. She thought she was more excited about his birthday than he was.

She got out of the bed and smiled as she saw the sleeping form of her husband. Quietly stepping out of the room, she quickly rushed downstairs to the kitchen to prepare breakfast before he woke.

She stopped by the living room to grab his gift when she noticed two envelopes sitting on the coffee table. She picked them up and continued down to the kitchen, unable to stop herself from smiling.

She made the muffins and put them into the oven before she started to cook the eggs, pancakes and bacon. She wondered how long it would take for him to wake and knew without a doubt that he would wake soon.

He seemed to wake shortly after she did.

Back upstairs, Harry was beginning to stir in his bed. He reached his arm around for Hermione but found the bed empty once again. He blinked his eyes a few times before he sat up in the bed, rubbing them with the palms of his hands as he did so. He reached over and grabbed his glasses before summoning his pajama bottoms. He put them on and used the loo before venturing downstairs.

As soon as he got to the bottom of the stairwell, he could smell Hermione's cooking.

He smiled to himself. He loved her cooking.

He entered the kitchen and saw her standing at the stove, cooking the eggs and humming to herself. He walked up behind her and wrapped his arms around her waist, planting a kiss to her neck as he did so.

"Harry birthday," she said, turning around to wrap her arms his neck. "I've made you breakfast, and I have your present in the living room."

"Already a great day," he replied with a grin.

"Molly and Arthur are hosting a dinner for you tonight, and they said I could bring my parents, too, so we could all celebrate together."

"So it's just you and I for the day, right?"

"Of course," she said with a smile. He smiled back.

"When do I get to open my present?"

"Breakfast first," she said, tapping his chest. He let out a playful sigh. "Don't like my cooking?"

"I love your cooking," he said, kissing his head. "I can't stop eating your cooking."

The oven timer went off and she pulled the muffins out. She then put them into a bowl and placed them on the table. He attempted to help her, but she slapped his hand away.

"It's your birthday. You're not doing anything."

"Now this is not fair," he said, sitting at the table. She gave him a look.

"What do you mean?"

"We'll be at Hogwarts on your birthday. I won't be able to do anything for you."

"How about this," she started, grabbing for his hand. "The last week we're here before school starts, we celebrate my birthday. Is that a deal?"

"Deal, but no presents until your actual birthday."

"Fine," she said with a smile, leaning down to peck his lips. "Breakfast is ready."

He stood back up and filled his plate to the max. She let out a laugh as she filled hers and saw him give her a look out of the corner of her eye.

"What are you laughing about?"

"I don't know how you can eat that much."

"I'm hungry. I did get quite the workout last night," he said seductively, and she bit her lip. They moved to the table and sat down, beginning to eat their food.

"Happy birthday," she said, grabbing for something underneath the table. He gave her a look as she handed him a wrapped package.

"I thought you said it was in the living room."

"I lied," she replied with a smile. "Open it."

He tore the wrapping off and opened the box, smiling softly as he picked up the pair of dragon hide gloves.

"I know it's not much, but I figured they could help you with your Auror training. Do you like it?"

"I love it," he said, giving her a hug and a kiss on the cheek. "Thank you."

"Happy birthday."

"Best birthday ever. Breakfast, gifts, and shags."

She shook her head and let out a smile. She then turned back to her breakfast and finished it. When he finished his, she pulled two heavy envelopes out and handed him the one that was addressed to him.

"Hogwarts letters?"

"I didn't want to open them without you."

The opened the parcels and unfolded the parchment, two badges falling out of both of theirs. They looked at each other before they bent down to pick them up, and their eyes widened as they saw what it is.

"I'm Head Girl!" she cried, showing him the badge. He smiled at her before he flipped his around, and her breath caught in her throat.

Head Boy.

"Oh, Harry," she whispered, standing up to wrap her arms around him. She pulled away and smiled at him. "You know that the Head Boy and Girl have their own dorms, right?"

"So that solves our sleeping issue," he said, grinning at her. "I'm proud of you."

"I'm proud of you, too. You definitely deserved this."

He was looking at her, and she couldn't figure out what he was thinking.

"What?"

"Just thinking about this last year. I can't believe how much everything has changed. We destroyed all of the Horcruxes, took down Voldemort, and found out I was married to this beautiful girl who happens to be my best friend."

She smiled and reached over to grasp his hand. "What a year it's been."

"I love you," he said softly, kissing her hand. "Thank you for everything you've done."

"You don't have to thank me."

"I can't thank you enough."

The radio played in the distance, and the corners of his mouth curled into a smile. He grabbed for her hand, and she smiled when she realized what he was doing. She wrapped her arms around his neck while his settled on her waist. He then swayed slowly to the song, and she followed suit, resting her head on his shoulder.

It was like the forest all over again, except this time there was no unwanted sexual tension building between them. There was no one out trying to kill them. They weren't left alone. They were together.

They swayed slowly to the song, and she couldn't help but smile. She was enjoying herself like she did the previous time they danced. She let out a sigh of contentment and closed her eyes, enjoying the feeling of being in his arms. He kissed her head and whispered in her ear, and she let out a small laugh.

And while he would never come straight out and admit it, he was enjoying himself, too.

She pulled away and stared into his eyes. They stared at each other, unable to pull away. Brown met green, and it was as though they were communicating to each other. She then leaned forward and pressed their lips together.

They kissed slowly before things began to heat up. She moaned into his mouth as his hands began to run over her body. She jumped up into his arms and wrapped her legs around his waist, and he moved her to the table and sat her down on it, moving in-between her legs to get closer. His hands moved up her thighs and settled on her breasts, while hers ran over his bare chest, enjoying his muscular body.

His lips moved to her neck, and she let out a breath of excitement. Her hands ran through his hair and she tugged at the strands, earning a moan of pleasure from him.

"Merlin, you drive me crazy," he whispered huskily into her ear. She smirked, loving the power she had over him. He then lifted her up and took her up the stairs, trying to stay focused as her mouth kissed his neck.

"Happy birthday," Melinda said, giving Harry a hug.

"Thank you."

"Happy birthday, son," Joseph said, clapping his shoulder.

"Thanks."

"What time is the party?"

"About six. Molly wants to have a dinner for him."

"Then we have some time to talk," Melinda said, gesturing towards the couch. They sat down on the couch while Melinda and Joseph sat in the chairs. "We're so happy that you have decided to have a wedding."

"We're happy, too."

"If there's anything we can do, we'll do it. You're our daughter, and the only one we have. We want to make this special for you."

"Dad," Hermione said, wrapping her arms around her father's waist. "Thank you."

"Have you picked a date yet?" Melinda asked, as Hermione sat back down on the couch.

"Christmas Eve; our one-year wedding anniversary."

"A winter wedding," her mother said. "How beautiful."

"We do plan on having it outside, but we'll put a heat barrier around everyone, so our guests feel comfortable and not cold during the ceremony."

"Have you gotten your dress yet?"

"Not yet. Ginny, Luna and I will go sometime before Hogwarts."

"There's a great bridal shop not far from here. If you would like, I could take you and your friends shopping."

"I would love that. Thank you."

"It's going to be very small. Just the both of you, the Weasleys and a few other friends."

"We didn't have a big wedding, either. It was really nice."

"I'm not certain what my parents had. It was probably a small wedding, too."

"I'm so sorry you had to lose them."

Harry nodded, unsure of what to say. Hermione gently grasped his hand.

"We should probably be going," she said, standing up. She walked over to her mother and grabbed for her hand, while Harry did the same for Joseph. With a crack they all disappeared and reappeared in the backyard of The Burrow.

"That's horrible," Joseph said, grabbing for his stomach.

"You get used to it," Harry replied, gently patting his back.

"There you are," Molly said, giving Harry and Hermione a hug.

"You remember my parents?"

"Of course," she said, smiling and shaking their hands. "It's nice to see you again."

"You as well."

"You made it," Ron said, as he and Ginny walked up to them.

"It is my party," Harry said sarcastically. Ron glared at him.

"I've been made Quidditch Captain," Ginny said, beaming with pride.

"Congratulations!" Hermione said, wrapping her arms around her.

"Well deserved. We wouldn't have won the cup if it wasn't for you."

"I've been named Prefect again."

"Also well deserved," Hermione said, smiling at him.

"Let me guess: You're Head Girl."

"I am, and that's not the best part."

"What's the best part?"

"I've been named Head Boy," Harry said quietly, wrapping his arm around Hermione's waist.

"That's wonderful!" Ginny said, smiling between them. "The Heads do get their own rooms, you know."

"We know. We're very excited."

"As you should be."

"Are Neville and Luna here?"

"They're around. I finally got Ron away from Luna long enough to talk."

"We were not snogging!"

"No you definitely weren't. You are lucky mum and dad didn't catch what the two of you were doing."

Harry and Hermione gave Ron an interested look. He blushed and looked down, unable to form any words. She laughed and turned to Ginny.

"Ginny, when are you and Luna free?"

"Whenever."

"My mum wants to take me dress shopping in a muggle store. Do you feel like helping me find a dress?"

"Of course."

"Wedding planning already, huh?" Ron asked, as the girls disappeared. Harry nodded.

"It's almost planned out, to be honest. We're not having anything big."

"Where is it?"

"At Shell Cottage."

"That will be a nice wedding."

Harry nodded in response. Arthur called out that dinner was ready, and everyone filled their plates. Harry sat next to Hermione and smiled at her, wondering what she would look like in her wedding dress.

He was quiet as he ate. Looking around, he noticed Arthur talking to the Grangers, and he smiled, glad that they got along so well. Ron was chatting with Luna, and while they haven't officially announced it yet, he knew for a fact that they were dating now. Ginny and Neville sat next to each other, talking quietly amongst themselves.

"Something wrong?" Hermione asked, turning towards him. He shook his head.

"Just thinking."

"How does it feel to be eighteen?" Bill asked, clapping Harry's shoulder. He shrugged.

"Feels no different, I guess."

"It probably will be for all of you since you're returning to Hogwarts late."

"Hello, Harry. Happy birthday" Andromeda said, bouncing Teddy lightly in her arms. He held out his arms and took him from her, smiling at his godson as he did so.

"How are you doing, Andromeda?"

"Just fine. He's starting to sleep more throughout the night."

"Thanks for letting us have him tonight," Hermione said, playing with Teddy's small hand.

"I told you both that you can have him anytime you would like.”

"Who is this little guy?" Joseph asked, as he and Melinda walked over to Hermione.

"Andromeda, these are Hermione's parents, Melinda and Joseph Granger. Melinda, Joseph, this is Andromeda. She's Teddy's grandmother."

"Teddy's your godson, correct?"

"Right. I'm sorry we haven't gotten him to you yet."

"You've been busy. We understand. Do you mind if I hold him?"

"Sure," Harry said handing Teddy off to Melinda. She bounced him in her arms and smiled as he let out a small squeal.

"I'm so sorry for your loss," Joseph said, smiling sadly at Andromeda. She nodded.

"Thank you. It's going to take some time, but I have Harry and Hermione to help me with Teddy."

"I know we're-Muggles?" he asked, looking towards his daughter. She nodded. "-but if any of you ever need any help, we're more than willing. He's like our grandson."

"We appreciate that," Harry said.

"Thank you," Andromeda repeated. Molly called out for her, and she turned and walked away.

Hermione smiled as her parents walked off, playing with Teddy as they did so. She laid her head on Harry's shoulder and closed her eyes, exhaustion beginning to feel her. He wrapped his arm around her shoulder and kissed her head.

"Thank you for this amazing day."

"You deserve it."

"Now I have to figure out how to make your birthday amazing," he said with a grin. She laughed slightly.

"Knowing you, it'll be perfect."

"You think?"

"I know.”

"Do the two of you have to do that everywhere you go?" Ron asked, gagging as he and Luna walked up to them.

"Talk?" she asked in confusion.

"Talk the way the two of you are talking."

They furrowed their brows but shook their heads. Beside Ron, Luna laughed.

"He has no sense of romance, does he?"

"You're only just starting out," Hermione replied, and Ron glared at her.

"Can the both of you just come out and admit you're together?"

"We are together," Luna said in a delighted voice. Ron didn't respond.

"No answer, mate?"

"We're together," he muttered, and Harry and Hermione leaned in to hear.

"What was that? I didn't quite hear you."

"We're together, you arse" he said a little louder. Harry grinned.

"Was that so difficult?"

"Yeah, yeah," he replied, rolling his eyes.

Harry sat on the couch with Teddy, bouncing him lightly in his arms. He and Hermione had given him a bath shortly before this, and now he was dressed in his sleeper. She had gone to prepare his bottle a few moments ago, leaving just the two of them in the living room.

"Can I tell you something?" he asked, watching as Teddy blinked up at him. "This has been the best birthday I have ever had. Hermione and everyone else made it amazing. Then getting to spend the night with you is making it even better."

"I'm glad you had such a great day," she said, handing him the bottle. He repositioned Teddy in his arms and started to feed him. "I think we should go see your parents again."

He nodded. "I think so, too."

She leaned her hand over and started to rub Teddy's hair. Safe and warm in his godfather's arms, Teddy's green eyes began to close, and after a few moments he stopped sucking on the bottle. Harry quickly burped him before Hermione stood up and took him in her arms, humming softly.

"I'm going to put him in the bassinet."

He nodded, and she quickly went upstairs to put him in the bassinet. She stared down at him for a moment before she felt Harry's arms wrap around her waist.

"We work great together," he whispered. She nodded in agreement.

"We do."

They stared down at their godson, smiling down at his sleeping form. Harry leaned down and kissed Hermione's head, feeling the happiest he was ever felt before.

## Chapter Thirteen:

"Hermione, you look so beautiful," Ginny said, as Hermione stepped out of the dressing room. Hermione took a deep breath and looked in the mirror, loving the dress that she had picked out.

It was a simple, plain white strapless wedding dress. The dress flew all the way down to her feet and hugged all her curves perfectly. She couldn't seem to take her eyes off the mirror.

"I feel really weird," she said quietly, her eyes moving up and down the mirror. Melinda walked up to her daughter.

"Why is that?"

"I don't know. I just feel weird being in this dress."

"I bet you won't when Harry gets a look at that dress," Ginny remarked, and Luna nodded in agreement.

Hermione didn't say a word, but smiled as she imagined their wedding day, and the look on Harry's face when she walked down the aisle. She turned back to her mother and friends and couldn't help the smile that was now plastered over her face.

"I love this one."

"It looks great on you," Luna said, and Ginny nodded in agreement.

"Thank you, mum," Hermione said, wrapping her arms around her mother.

"I'm so happy for you."

"What do you think about these for the bridesmaid dresses?" Ginny asked, showing her the light blue dress. She took a good look at it and smiled slightly.

It almost reminded her of the dress she wore to the Yule Ball.

"I love it," she said, running her hand over the fabric.

"I thought you would."

"Do they fit you?" she asked, looking between them.

"We've tried them on. They're a perfect fit."

"Then we're done," she said, turning back to the mirror to look at her dress. She felt very apprehensive, and couldn't figure out why, but all of that seemed to disappear when she thought of how Harry would react.

And a smile formed on her face.

"How was your day?" Harry asked, handing her a butterbeer before he plopped onto the couch. She smiled.

"I got my wedding dress today."

"Did you?" he asked, taking a sip of his drink. "Can I see it?"

"No you may not," she replied, taking a sip of her own. He narrowed his eyes.

"So, I have to wait months to see you in that thing?"

"It's well worth it," she said, putting her drink onto the coffee table. "If I can wait four months to see you in your robes, you can wait four months to see me in my dress."

"I guess that's fair," he remarked, and she let out a laugh.

"I love you," she said, wrapping her arms around his neck.

"I love you, too," he whispered, lightly pressing their lips together. She broke it apart and rubbed at her shoulder, grimacing in pain. "What's the matter?"

"My shoulder has been hurting me all day."

"Turn around," he ordered, and she did. He put his hands on her shoulders and started to rub them, and she let out a moan of contentment.

"Harry?"

"Yeah?"

"I forgot what I was going to say," she said, throwing her head back and closing her eyes. He chuckled.

"If you remember, you know where to find me."

She let out another moan as she rested her head on his shoulder. He kissed her head and continued to rub her shoulders, his thoughts consuming him as silence filled around them.

"There's something I've never told you," he said quietly, and she opened her eyes. "Back in second year, when you were petrified, it really scared me. I was so concerned about you. Ron and I tried to be with you as much as we could be, and we discovered that you had left us help."

"How did you find the parchment?"

He smiled slightly. "I remember I was talking to you, and I grabbed for your hand. I felt something bunched up in it, so I was able to move your fingers slightly, just enough to get it out. I think it's the first time I realized you would always help me even if you weren't around."

She smiled, and around to face him. "I'll always be here for you, now more than ever."

He chuckled, and she laughed slightly. "And I will always be here for you, as well."

She reached up, put her hands to the side of his face, and pressed their lips together. His hands grazed over a piece of damaged skin and he broke away, guilt filling him.

It was the scar she had received from the Battle of the Ministry.

He had seen it several times, of course, and each time he saw it he felt worse. Because he decided not to listen to her, Sirius was killed, Ron, Ginny, Neville and Luna were injured, and Hermione nearly died.

She put her hand on top of his. "You shouldn't feel guilty, you know."

"I should have listened to you."

"You did what you thought was best. You should never feel guilty for what happened. We fight with you, not for you."

"What about Malfoy Manor?" he asked, standing up. "You were tortured because of me!"

"HARRY JAMES POTTER!" she cried, also standing up. "Get this through your thick skull! Everything that happened to me didn't happen because of you! It happened because there were some horrible people in the world! Because of you, they're gone!"

"Because of me, they happened! That's because I never listened to you!"

"Like you're not right now! You're not listening! I am trying to tell you that what happened is not your fault and you're not listening!"

Silence filled the room as he dropped his head. She looked away, unable to formulate words to say to him.

"You do realize that we just had our first fight, right?"

She smiled slightly, turning back towards him. "Our first fight as a married couple."

"We never get into fights. The only one I remember us getting into is the broomstick. I believe I didn't listen to you then, either."

"Because you have a thick skull," she said, pressing her finger against his head.

"Because I'm a dolt," he replied, wrapping his arms around her waist.

"You're my dolt," she said, pressing her hand to his chest. "And I don't always listen to you, either."

"What do you mean?"

"Malfoy. You said in your sixth year that you thought he was a Death Eater, and I didn't believe you. It turns out that he was."

He let out a small smile. "I had forgotten about that."

"It's something that we need to work on," she said, and he nodded. "We need to work on listening to each other."

"You are very wise, Mrs. Potter," he said, and she rolled her eyes playfully.

"I'm very glad to know that we can talk our fights out," she said, wrapping her arms around his neck. He nodded in agreement.

"Your shoulder still hurt?"

"Yes, why?"

"I was thinking that we could go take a bath and get that shoulder of yours feeling much better."

"I like that idea," she replied, pressing their lips together.

"How was your birthday with Neville?" Hermione asked Ginny, as they sat at the table behind The Burrow.

"It was great. He took me to lunch in Hogsmeade."

"That's so sweet." She swallowed as she thought about her next question. "Have you and Neville-you know?"

"Once. We don't get a lot of time to be alone."

"You really like him."

"I love him," she stated, not missing a beat. "We said it to each other a couple weeks ago and we've kept it quiet."

"Ginny," she said, placing her hand on her best friend's arm. Ginny shrugged.

"I can't explain it," she said, glancing over the small party that had gathered for her birthday. "I've never felt this way before."

"You feel like the whole world revolves around him," Hermione started, dropping her eyes. "Since he came into your life everything seems brighter. You're happier."

Ginny smiled slightly. "That's exactly how I feel."

"Happy birthday, by the way," she said, handing her a wrapped package. She took it from her and opened it, her eyes widening.

"Quidditch gear and a broom-cleaning kit? Hermione, you two shouldn't have."

"Harry wants you to win another Quidditch Cup. He told me that this is the way to start."

"Thank you," she said, wrapping her arms around her.

"How's it going over here?" Neville asked, moving to sit next to the two women.

"Look what Harry and Hermione got me," she said, showing him her presents.

"Gryffindor's going to win," he exclaimed with a grin.

"Gryffindor's going to win indeed," Ron said, as he, Luna and Harry walked up to the table. He picked up the Quidditch gloves and examined them. "Harry and I back on the team?"

"You'll have to tryout first," she exclaimed, taking a bite of her cake.

"You're not going to let your own brother onto the team?"

"I will unless there's someone better."

Harry chuckled behind his glass. Ron glared at him. "She meant that for the both of us."

"I know that, but I find it funny that she's telling you."

"You'll get onto the team, Ron," Luna said, grasping his hand. "I have faith in you."

"At least someone does," he replied sarcastically.

"How does it feel to be seventeen?" Harry asked Ginny.

"After everything that has happened, it feels really good."

"And I feel like we've celebrated quite a few birthdays lately," Ron said, raising his glass. Everyone laughed.

"Even though it's technically not her birthday, I do plan on celebrating Hermione's before we go back to school."

"He insisted," Hermione said with a smile.

"So sweet," Luna said.

"When did you turn this soft?" Ron asked, gagging.

"Soft?"

"I must bring out a great side to him. You should try it sometime," Hermione replied, taking a drink of her butterbeer. Harry laughed and kissed her head.

"So you have turned soft. Your wife is fighting your battles now."

"Being married doesn't change anything. I can still kick your arse.”

"I'd love to see you try."

"Let's go," Harry said, holding his arms around in defense. Ron put his glass down.

"Let's go, mate!"

"Knock it off," Hermione said, rolling her eyes.

"Yes, dear."

"Soft," Ron coughed into his hand.

"Ronald," Luna said, and he turned towards her, "Knock it off."

Harry grinned behind his glass. Ron gaped at her.

"And you say I'm soft," Harry said, enjoying the moment. Ron bowed his head, while Neville and Ginny laughed.

Summer began to wind down, and the gang quickly realized that they only had a week of break left before they had to return to Hogwarts. They had gone to Diagon Alley shortly after Ginny's birthday and picked up all their school supplies and robes, meaning that they were officially ready to return to Hogwarts.

And while Hermione was ready to return to Hogwarts, she would miss the summer-long experience she enjoyed with Harry and wondered briefly how the stress of school would play into their relationship. She loved what they had going and didn't want the stress of school to destroy it.

She was awoken one morning by the smell of bacon, and she opened her eyes to see Harry standing there, smiling down at her.

"What is this?" she asked, referring to the tray of food he was holding.

"It's your birthday."

"That's right," she said with a smile. "You made me breakfast in bed?"

"This is just the start of your day," he replied, and she looked up at him. "Your parents want to take us out for dinner tonight."

"This is delicious," she said, taking a bite of her eggs. "I have the best husband."

"Happy fake birthday," he said, and she nearly choked on her eggs as she let out a laugh.

"Thank you. I suppose you're hiding my present then, huh?”

"I told you you're not getting that until your actual birthday."

"Harsh," she replied, taking a drink of her pumpkin juice. "I guess I can wait."

"You're going to have to, aren't you?" he said with a grin.

"What else do you have planned for me today?"

He smirked at her. "It's your day."

Her eyes lit up at that statement. "So I can sleep all day? That is the perfect birthday, Harry. Thank you."

He narrowed his eyes playfully at her. "It is your birthday, after all."

"Come here, you dolt," she laughed, placing the tray to her side and crashing their lips together.

"Ready to go your parents?" Harry asked, watching as Hermione took one last glance in the mirror.

"Yes. I am starving."

"I wonder why," he growled into her ear, and she smirked.

"We need to get going."

"Mood killer," he said, and she shook her head. She grabbed ahold of his hand and felt the familiar tightness that came with apparating. They appeared in her childhood home, causing her parents to jump up out of their seats.

"I hate it when you do that," Melinda exclaimed, grabbing hold of her chest.

"Hi mum, dad," Hermione said, hugging her parents.

"Hello, Hermione. Happy early birthday."

"Thank you," she replied, watching as her parents hugged Harry as well.

"I bet Harry here has given you a wonderful day," Melinda said, patting his arm.

"It was a great day," she said, wrapping her arm around his waist. He kissed her head.

"I am so glad you found someone who makes you happy," Melinda said again, smiling at her daughter and son-in-law.

"He's a special one," she said, and he grinned.

"Married for three months now. How's everything going?"

"It's great. We really wish we could out of our house, but now is not the time."

"Don't rush things. Once you finish school, you can find a place of your own and start your lives."

"That's what I keep telling her," Harry said, and she turned and gave him a look.

"He tells me that constantly."

"He's wise," Joseph said, clapping Harry's shoulder. "Don't rush things, pumpkin. You both have a special thing going here, and you don't want to ruin it by rushing into anything."

"Your father is right," Melinda said. "Everything will fall into place when needed."

"Is everyone ready for dinner?" Hermione asked, looking between her parents and husband. They nodded.

"I'm starving. Let's go," Joseph said, and walked over to the door to hold it open for everyone.

"Today was a great day," Hermione said, as she and Harry apparated into Grimmauld Place. "Thank you."

"I'm glad you enjoyed it," he replied, wrapping his arms around her waist. She studied him for a moment.

"You're hiding something."

"No, I'm not."

"What are you up to?" she asked again, batting her eyes at him. The corners of his mouth curled.

"There's one more surprise," he said, and grabbed hold of her hand. She looked at him with a questioned look but followed him down to the kitchen, and he flicked his wand. The candles came to life, and Hermione nearly jumped back in surprise.

"Surprise!"

She clutched her chest and let out a laugh. Beside her, Harry grinned.

"You threw me a surprise party?"

"I asked your parents if we could go out to eat so Molly could set up."

"Harry," she said, wrapping her arms around him. "You shouldn't have."

"Happy birthday, Hermione," he said, kissing her head.

"Happy birthday," Ron said, handing her a glass of firewhiskey.

"Thank you, Ron."

"What did Harry get you?" Ginny asked.

"He won't tell me," she pouted, turning to him. The corners of his mouth curled.

"It's not your birthday."

"But it's my party."

"You can wait."

"Fine," she sighed, grasping for his hand.

"How was your day?" Luna asked, after Harry and Ron had drifted off to talk to Bill.

"I can tell you how her day was," Ginny said. "It was a morning full of shagging."

"It was not a morning full of shagging," she started, then changed her statement at the look she was receiving from the redhead. "Or maybe it was."

"Uh huh."

"It was a great day, though," she remarked with a smile.

Molly and Arthur walked up to her. "Happy early birthday."

"Thank you so much for putting all of this together."

"Anytime. You and Harry are our children, too."

"That means so much to us, especially Harry," Hermione said.

"We've tried so hard to be there for him, especially after what happened with Sirius."

She nodded, knowing how much the loss of Sirius affected Harry. It's still affecting him, and that's the biggest reason why she was wanting to leave Grimmauld Place.

"I really appreciate everything you have done."

"We'll always be here, for all of you," Molly said to the girls. Arthur nodded in agreement.

"I hope you have some room for dessert," Harry said, walking back up to her and gesturing her to the homemade food Molly had prepared.

"I'm so full," she laughed, looking at all the delicious food.

"You still have a birthday cake that you need to blow candles out on."

She smiled. "I wish my parents were here."

"If only wishes came true," her father's voice said, and she turned around to hug him.

"You didn't think I would forget your parents, did you? Ron and I went to go get them while you were talking to Molly and Arthur."

"Oh, Harry," she said, wrapping her arms around his neck and kissing his cheek.

"There's some food here if you're still hungry," Harry said to Melinda and Joseph.

"We're full, too, but thank you."

Hermione continued to move around and mingle with everyone, feeling happier as the night went on. After a half-hour went by Harry lit the candles to her cake, and she stood behind it, thinking about her wish. She looked at Harry and thought about it for a moment before she closed her eyes, smiling softly.

'All my wishes have come true.'

And with that, she blew out her candles.

## Chapter Fourteen:

"Are you ready?" Harry asked, peeking into the bedroom. Hermione nodded, closing her trunk as she did so.

"Packed and ready to go."

"I can't believe it's time to leave this place," he replied, looking around.

"One more year of school, Harry, and we can officially begin our lives," she said with a smile, wrapping her arms around his neck. "You will be an Auror, and I will go into Magical Law."

"And we'll have four kids."

"Are you still on this?" she asked, rolling her eyes.

"Two boys and two girls."

She shook her head. "Unless they're coming out of you, you better rethink that statement."

"Fine," he said with a playful sigh. She let out a smile. "We need to get going. Molly and Arthur are expecting us for dinner."

She nodded and grabbed hold of her trunk. He took it from her and shrunk both before placing them into his pocket. He then grabbed hold of her hand, and with a crack they disappeared from the first place they called home as a couple.

"Harry, Hermione," Molly said, wrapping her arms around them as they entered the house. "Did you get everything you need?"

"We did," she replied, taking her trunk from Harry.

"Good. Dinner is almost ready. Ron, take them up to their room, please."

"You're married and I have to chauffeur you around?" he asked, leading the two up the stairs.

"I thought that was your job," Harry said with a grin. He glared at him.

"Here's your room," he replied, showing him the first room on the stairwell. They opened the door and put their trunks into the room before closing the door behind them. "Up for a quick game of chess, mate?"

"You're on."

Hermione smiled as she followed them back down to the living room, running into Ginny as she did so.

"You're here!"

"We're here," she replied with a smile. "Neville's not here?”

"He and Luna both went back home to spend their last night with his grandmum and her father. I'm shocked you're not with your parents tonight."

"They're going to meet us at the station tomorrow. We spent quite a bit of time with them yesterday."

"At least you'll get to see them before you go."

Hermione nodded. They walked into the living room and saw the boys on the ground getting the chess set ready.

"Hermine!" Fleur said, walking into the room. Ginny held back a groan.

"Hello, Fleur."

"I just vanted you to know that everything vis set up and ready."

"Great," she replied, nodding her head. "Thank you so much."

"Zis' my pleasure."

"Dinner's ready!" Molly called from the kitchen.

After everyone went off to bed, the four teenagers stayed up for one final drink. Hermione quickly filled everyone's glasses with the butterbeer before she went to sit next to Harry, smiling as he wrapped his arm around her shoulder.

"Here's to another great year at Hogwarts," he said, holding his glass out.

"Another great year," the other three echoed, clicking their glasses.

"We should probably be getting to sleep soon," Hermione said, looking at the time.

"We're no longer dorm mates. I say we make the most of our time," Ron said, pouring some more into his glass.

"Hermione and I actually want to talk to the both of you about that. Since we have our own common room and an extra bedroom, we'll let all of you come in and hang out if you would like."

"But, it's still our space and would like privacy, so please be considerate."

"Thank you," Ginny said with a smile.

"Thanks."

"As for tonight," Harry said, grabbing the bottle, "I agree with Ron."

"One more glass for me," Hermione replied with a small laugh, holding her glass out to Harry so he could refill it.

"This time last year, the three of you were missing, and Hogwarts had been taken over," Ginny started. "Sitting here a year later, everything is so much different than I would have expected. The war is officially over, Harry and Hermione are happily married, and Ron and I are very happy in our own relationships. This has been an upside-down year, and I'm more than happy that we are here, ready to finish our final year of Hogwarts. We may have lost some, but we have gained so much more."

"Cheers," they said, clinking their glasses with her own.

And that followed them to the next morning, when they were awaken by Molly. They had their quick breakfast before they took off towards Kings Cross, Ginny's words from last night ringing through all their heads.

Yes, it had been a very difficult year. It was a year full of mistakes, misery, and pain. A year full of loss, but a year full of gain.

"We're here," Arthur said, breaking into all their thoughts. They got out of the cars and grabbed their trunks before entering the station, spotting Hermione's parents almost immediately.

"Mum, dad!" Hermione said, hugging her parents. "Thank you for being here.”

"We wouldn't miss this," Melinda said, hugging her daughter back. "Hello, Harry."

"Melinda, Joseph," he replied, giving her a hug and him a handshake.

"Ready to return?" he asked, clapping Harry's shoulder.

"We are," she replied.

"We'll help you get across the barrier," Arthur said, and he and Molly helped Melinda and Joseph across the barrier. Harry and Ron gestured for Ginny and Hermione to go first, and followed behind them, eventually reaching the platform.

"I can't believe we're coming back," Ron said in shock, and Harry nodded in agreement.

"I can't wait," Hermione said, pushing her cart over to Harry.

"Of course you can't," Ron replied, rolling his eyes.

The whistle blew, and they all walked over to put their trunks onto the train. They then turned back to their parents.

"Do you have everything you need?" Molly asked, looking between Harry, Ron and Ginny. They nodded. "Have a great term. Write often."

They nodded. They gave her a quick hug before giving Arthur the same.

"Best of luck to all of you."

Harry turned to Hermione, who was saying goodbye to her parents. He wrapped his arm around her waist, and that's when he noticed.

Everyone who was around was whispering, confirming the rumors to be true.

Harry Potter and Hermione Granger were married.

He rolled his eyes, already annoyed. They had talked about it last night before bed. They knew the rumors that were bound to come, and the pointing and staring. They had gotten enough of that in Hogsmeade and at Hogwarts over the summer.

"Good luck," Melinda said, smiling at her children. "We want both of you to have a great final term."

"So do we," Harry replied with a small smile. Hermione let out a laugh.

The whistle blew again, and her parents gave both a hug.

"Love you," Hermione said.

"Love you, too, pumpkin. We'll see you at break."

"Have a good term," Melinda said, giving Harry a hug.

"See you soon," he replied softly.

He then nodded at Hermione and they quickly boarded the train, finding Neville, Luna, Ron and Ginny shortly afterwards. They turned to the window and saw Melinda, Joseph, Molly and Arthur standing there, waving goodbye. The train gave a quick push before it started to slowly take off. It rounded the corner, and the platform was out of sight.

"We need to get to the meeting," Hermione told Harry and Ron.

"Be back soon," Ron said, and Luna nodded in agreement.

They walked out of the compartment. Neville turned to Luna.

"What's it like dating him?"

"It's nice, actually. Last week we went to Diagon Alley and he got me some ice cream and we just hung out."

"My brother does have a heart."

"He really is sweet."

"Have you two shagged yet?"

"No," she replied quietly.

"Harry and Hermione have announced that we're allowed to be in their dorm-within reason, of course. They're going to give us the password, and they do have an extra room they won't be using."

"Are you trying to hook your brother up?" Neville asked in disgust. Ginny thought about it for a minute before she pulled a face.

"I was trying to help Luna, but I wasn't thinking."

"Figures that McGonagall would give the married couple their own dorms," Pansy Parkinson said, glaring at Harry and Hermione.

"Upset that your boyfriend left you?" Harry asked, giving Pansy a look.

"I don't need him anyway," she hissed.

"Can we get started?" Hermione asked, and Pansy mimicked her.

"I would watch it, Pansy. We're in charge of you. We can take points away and put you in detention," Harry replied, glaring back at her. She gave him a look but remained quiet.

"Now that we can get started," Hermione said, shaking her head slightly, "Welcome back to another year of Hogwarts. I have here the list of things that Headmistress and your heads would like for us to know."

She pulled out the list and quickly glanced over it. "Because of the war, the former Great Hall has become a Memorial Chamber. The new Great Hall is the first room on the first corridor. Teachers will be there when we arrive instructing everyone where to go.

"Gryffindor prefects, I have a message from your new Head of House, Professor Sinsitra. She would like to meet with all of you before you go to bed tonight, but after you take care of the first years."

She looked up and watched as all six Gryffindor prefects nodded. She then continued.

"Ravenclaw, nothing much has changed for your house. Professor Flitwick would like to meet with all of you as well for a quick meeting before your classes tomorrow morning."

They nodded as well. She continued down the list, and she resisted the urge to smile at the next message.

"Slytherin house, this may take a bit. Your Head of House Professor Slughorn and Headmistress McGonagall are issuing a clear message: there will be no more favoritism. In the past, the Slytherin household has been shown great amounts of favoritism. No longer. All professors have been ordered to treat every student, regardless of house, fairly, or else they will be reported. Also, any prefect caught bullying a student will automatically lose their prefect status."

"That's not right!" Pansy said, speaking once again.

"I think it's plenty right. Snape let all of you get away with way too much. It's about time a foot was put down," Ron replied, and every other prefect expect the Slytherins nodded in agreement.

"Moving on," Harry replied, earning another nasty look from Pansy. "We all know how hard this term will be for everyone. People we went to school with died. Family members died. Some people have wounds that will never heal. As leaders, we need to try to be there. This is going to be a very difficult year for everyone involved."

Most of the prefects nodded in agreement. Hermione dropped her head, feeling sad for all the lives lost in the battle.

"With the message portion done, it's time to work on rounds."

They continued with the meeting for another half-hour before everyone was dismissed. Hermione turned and smiled at Harry.

"What?"

"Thanks for sticking up for me."

"You know how long I have been wanting to tell her off?" he said with a grin. She laughed.

"I have a feeling the Slytherin house is not going to have a good year."

"Probably not," he replied.

"Are you two done?" Ron asked, making a sick look. They rolled their eyes.

"Let's get back to the compartment," Hermione said, shaking her head.

They walked back to the compartment and saw Neville and Ginny kissing. Ron pounded on the door.

"Oi! Stop that!"

"It's called snogging, Ronald. Like this," Hermione said, pressing her lips to Harry's.

"Ron doesn't know because he doesn't do it with his girlfriend," Ginny replied, and Ron glared at her.

"I do too snog my girlfriend. Where is she, anyway?"

"She went to go change."

"So the two of you decided to make this your snogging compartment?"

"Grow up, Ron," Hermione sighed, as she and Harry moved past him to sit down.

He growled but sat down next to Neville. Luna returned a minute later and sat next to Ron.

"How was the meeting?" she asked.

"It was good. Slytherins aren't too happy with the new rules that were put in place."

"I can only imagine as much," Ginny replied with a laugh.

"And they also brought up the fact that our Head Boy and Girl are married."

"I bet people are loving that," Neville said, shaking his head.

"They'll get over it," Ginny replied. "No one deserves those positions more than you two do."

"We're not worried about it," Harry said, and Hermione nodded in agreement.

The hours rolled by, and soon the train began to roll to a stop. Harry gently shook Hermione awake, and they gathered their supplies to step off the train. Half of the group went in one carriage while the other half went in the other. They soon arrived at the castle, and saw the teachers directing students to where the new Great Hall was.

And as they entered the Great Hall, Harry caught the rumors and whispers start up again.

Word had officially gotten out that a married couple were Head Boy and Girl. As he sat and listened to the rumors around them, he wondered briefly how people would be reacting to that.

A married couple as Head Boy and Girl.

The doors opened, and the new first years walked through, led by Sinistra, looking both amazed and terrified. Harry glanced over at Hermione, who was interested in the sorting ceremony, and smiled softly, everything that has happened after the battle until now playing in his head.

The bond. The bond that somehow occurred on that cold Christmas Eve night. That bond that caused their marriage. Their decision to divorce initially, then the decision to stay together. The week in Australia. Their engagement. Their entire summer. His birthday. Her birthday.

Before he realized, the ceremony was over, and McGonagall was taking her stand.

"Welcome to another year of Hogwarts," she started, looking around at all her students. "As you can see, some things have changed from the previous years. Our former Great Hall has been converted into a Memorial Chamber. Also, the dorm rooms have been altered slightly to accommodate for the extra students who have decided to return. As always, the Forbidden Forest is off limits.

"Gryffindor house, your new Head of House is Professor Sinistra. Slytherin House, your Head of House is Professor Slughorn. I would also like to introduce Professor Peter Bryan as your new Transfiguration teacher, Professor Ryan Wilson as your new Defense Against the Dark Arts instructor, and Professor Christina Wallace as your new Muggle Studies instructor."

Behind her, the two men and woman stood up and smiled amongst the studies. They sat back down, and McGonagall turned back to the students.

"With that, we shall eat."

She waved her hands, and the food appeared on the table. Everyone quickly dug in, hungry from the train ride. Hermione glanced up and saw Ron's plate, and shook her head, wondering how he could eat that much.

Everyone was promptly dismissed after dinner, and Harry and Hermione stood outside of the Great Hall, wondering where their dorms were at.

"Potters," McGonagall said, walking up to them, "shall I walk you to your dorm?"

They nodded and started to follow her. They walked up to the third floor and walked to the end of it before she stopped at a portrait of a knight, staring and waiting for them.

"Sir Killan, I would like to introduce to you your new Head Boy and Girl, Harry and Hermione Potter. Can you inform them of the new password?"

"Certainly, Headmistress. The password to get into your dormitory is Stronger Together."

"Stronger together," they repeated, and he opened the door to let them through. They followed McGonagall, and their mouths opened as they saw their common room for the first time.

"What do you think?"

"It's huge," Hermione said without thinking. McGonagall smiled.

"And it's yours. Congratulations."

"Professor," Harry said, and she turned towards him, "did you chose us because of our marriage?"

"Is that the newest rumor going around?" she asked with a small smile. "I chose the both of you even before I knew about your marriage. There's no one better for the position, and every one of the professors here agreed with me. We don't care about your marital status. We just care about who's the best for the position."

"Thank you, professor," he said, and Hermione nodded in agreement.

"Even though you're married, anything marriage-related stays in the dormitory. Do you understand?"

They nodded. She gave both a stern look.

"Best of luck."

She turned and walked out of the dormitory. Hermione turned to Harry and smiled.

"Our own dorms to ourselves," she said, placing her hands on his chest.

"You sound excited about that," he replied with a grin.

"I am," she said seductively, popping open the first button to his shirt.

"It's pretty late, and we have to be up early tomorrow. Shall we retreat to our room?" he asked, holding his hand out. She let out a small smile and grabbed for it.

"How's the dorm?" Ginny asked Hermione at lunch the next day.

"It's amazing. The rooms and bathroom are so big."

"Luna and I are going to go there during our break."

"I'm sure Harry and Ron will be in there as well."

"How does it feel to be back at Hogwarts?"

"It's different. I have missed this place, but after everything that has happened it feels like it's a different place."

"I know," Ginny replied, looking around the new Great Hall.

"Ladies," Harry said, sitting next to Hermione. She leaned over and gave him a quick kiss.

"How was class?"

"This will be a hard term," he replied, filling his plate. "How was Ancient Runes?"

"I really enjoy that class."

"Of course you do."

"Harry, I'm working on a time for Quidditch tryouts and I'll let you and Ron know when."

"Great," he said, taking a bite.

"Will you take everyone back to our dorms?" Hermione asked, and he nodded in agreement.

"Of course. Off to the library already?"

"I already have six-inches of parchment due by the next class."

"See you later?" he asked, and she nodded.

"Always," she said with a smile, and grabbed her bag before walking away. He turned back to Ginny, who was eyeing him.

"What?"

"Nothing," she said, taking a bite of her own food.

"Ok then," he replied.

"Have you seen my boyfriend, by chance?"

"He and Ron were right behind me."

"There they are," she said, as Ron and Neville walked in.

"Hey there," Neville said, giving her a quick kiss.

"Do that on your own time," Ron said, avoiding them.

"Don't worry, Ron, one day you'll become a man and snog your girlfriend."

He didn't reply but glared at his sister. Harry and Neville let out a laugh.

"Like you're perfect," he shot at Harry. He held up his wedding band.

"Married, mate."

"By accident."

"Still married."

"And, if you've forgotten, they are having a Christmas Eve wedding," Ginny said with excitement.

"I'm just glad Bill and Fleur are helping out. It takes a lot of the stress off Hermione."

"As much as I hate to say it, Fleur did have a beautiful wedding before it was interrupted."

"Hermione's excited. She can't wait to see what's planned."

"You're going to love her dress," Ginny said, smiling at him.

"She won't let me see it."

"Well duh," she replied, rolling her eyes. "No seeing the dress until the wedding."

"That's why she won't get her present until the very last minute of her birthday," he replied with a grin, taking a bite of his food.

"That's harsh," she said with a small laugh.

"I'm full," he said, pushing his plate away.

"I'll be done soon," Ron said, taking another bite.

They waited for Ron and Neville to finish their lunches before Harry led him back to the common room. He told them the password before saying it to the portrait hole, watching as it opened. He turned back around and smiled as his friends looked around in amazement.

"I can't believe how big this place is."

"We couldn't either. The bedrooms and bathroom are just as big."

"Can we look?" Ginny asked, and Harry nodded. They walked into the bathroom, shaking their heads. "You definitely deserve this."

"I'm just glad that we get to be together."

"I would be, too," Neville said. "Congratulations, mate."

"Thanks."

"Shall we start our homework?" Ginny asked, reaching for her bag. They nodded and crouched around the coffee table. They spent the rest of their free time getting a head start on their homework before the rest of their classes.

After they finished their homework, they started on the path down to the Potions classroom. They met Hermione down there, who was waiting for the class to start.

"Get your assignment done?" Harry asked her, kissing her cheek. She nodded.

"Completely done."

"Harry, m'boy!" Slughorn said, walking up to him. "Congratulations on your wedding! I'm saddened that I didn't hear about that, though."

"Well, it was a shock to everyone, sir," he replied, and Hermione laughed slightly.

"Well, congratulations to the both of you."

"Thank you," they echoed, and followed him into the classroom.

The next few weeks went by, and everyone became engrossed in their schoolwork. They had all gone through the stress of O.W.L.s, and thought that was bad enough, but the stress of N.E.W.T.s was even worse. They were becoming more and more loaded with homework as the days went on, and they all wondered briefly if they would get a break anytime soon.

Gryffindor tryouts were the first week after they had gone back. Hermione, Luna and Neville had accompanied them to the pitch, and Hermione couldn't help but smile as she saw Harry's reaction to being back down on the pitch, broom in hand and ready to go.

And when Ginny had the Seekers tryout first, she could see the peaceful look that appeared on his face as he mounted his broom and took off, chasing after the snitch that had been set free.

She closed her eyes and smiled. He even felt at peace.

Then it was time for Keeper tryouts, and Ron looked nervous and he took stand in front of the goalposts. As the quaffles were thrown at him, she noted that he had only missed one of them and looked much more confident than he did when he tried out back in their sixth year.

"How do you think I did?" Harry asked, sitting next to her.

"You did great. Ron's doing great, too."

"I've missed this," he replied, looking out amongst the pitch.

"I know you have. It's nice to be back without having to worry about anything."

He nodded in agreement, watching as Ron flew back down onto the pitch to talk to his sister. He eventually joined them in the stands and watched the rest of the tryouts, which continued four a few more hours before Ginny finally made her decision and put her team together.

They had made the team as the Seeker and Keeper.

They had practice three times a week, and Hermione could already see a difference in Harry. All the muscle he had lost during the hunt became more toned and tightened, and she couldn't seem to take her eyes off him lately.

The 19th eventually rolled around, Hermione didn't even realize that it was her actual birthday. However, that didn't go unnoticed by her husband, who was concerned about how much time she was spending on her homework.

"Good morning," he said, giving her a quick kiss when she came out of the bedroom. "Happy birthday."

"I didn't even realize it was my birthday."

"That's because you have been working a little too hard. Take the day off today."

"I can't."

"Yes, you can. You're already way ahead on your assignments."

"I can take some time," she said in defeat, seeing the look on his face. "I don't have a lot."

"Deal," he said, kissing her head. "Ready to go to breakfast?"

She nodded, and they walked down to the Great Hall. They were greeted by Ron, Luna, Ginny and Neville, all of whom wished her a happy birthday.

"Thank you," she said, sitting down next to Harry.

"Harry given you your present yet?" Ginny asked, grinning slightly.

"He'll be stubborn and won't give it to me until later."

He didn't say anything but looked away from her. She lightly punched his shoulder.

"You're so mean."

"I know," he replied, grinning slightly.

"When are you going to give it to me?"

"When the time is right."

"So, never?"

The corners of his mouth curled. "Maybe."

"Are they always like this?" Luna whispered to Ron.

"Makes me sick to my stomach," he whispered back.

"You need to relax," Harry said later that night, rubbing Hermione's shoulders.

"I can't. I have loads of homework to do."

"It's Saturday night," he whispered into her ear, pressing light kisses to her neck. "No classes until Monday. It's also your birthday."

"Harry," she half-sighed half-moaned. "I need to get this done."

He didn't say anything but continued to press kisses against her neck. She dropped her quill and pressed her hand against the back of his neck, letting out a moan as he kissed a sensitive part of her neck.

"This can wait until tomorrow," she breathed out, letting out a disgruntled groan when she felt him grin against her skin.

"That's my girl," he whispered into her ear.

She got up off the floor and pressed their lips together, falling onto the couch when he fell backwards on it. His hands rested on her waist while hers worked on getting his shirt over his head. He sat up and assisted her in removing it before he laid back down on the couch. Her hands ran over his chest, enjoying the feel of his smooth, muscular chest under her hands.

"I'm so glad you've gone back to Quidditch," she breathed out when his lips moved to her neck again. He pulled away and grinned.

"Why's that?"

"No reason," she said, pulling away to run her eyes over his body. He sat them back up and removed her top, throwing it onto the floor as he did so.

"So beautiful," he whispered, running his hands across her flat stomach. She grabbed for his hand and took him to their shared bedroom, falling onto the bed when he lightly pushed her onto it.

"That was amazing," she said shortly afterwards, still attempting to get her breathing under control. Harry was still laying on her chest, and she smiled slightly. She knew that he loved to lay on her chest. She lifted her hand up and gently ran it through his hair.

"Am I hurting you?" he asked quietly.

"It's not bad."

He rolled off her and to his side, taking her in his arms as he did so. She buried her head into his chest and lightly pressed a kiss to it. He moved away from her slightly and pulled open the drawer to his nightstand, pulling something out.

"Happy birthday," he said, handing her a wrapped package. She sat up in the bed and unwrapped the gift, revealing a black box. She gave him a quick look before she opened the box, her mouth falling open.

It was a golden snitch with the words I Open at the Close etched into it.

"Harry," she whispered, running her fingers across the words. "I thought you lost this in the forest."

"I did," he replied quietly. "This is a copy, and I engraved the words onto it."

She stared at the snitch in shock, unable to form any words. According to him, this snitch held the resurrection stone in it, and he used the stone to talk to his parents, Sirius and Remus again.

"I don't ever want this to open, because it being opened means I have to leave, and I never want to leave you again."

Her eyes watered as she processed his words. She then grabbed the snitch and held it in her hand, never wanting to let go of it.

"I love you," she choked out, turning to face him. He reached up and wiped the tears from her face.

"I love you, too," he replied, lightly pressing their lips together.

On the Monday after her birthday, Hermione let out a sigh as she slowly walked back into her common room, her mind wandering more than it ever has before. She was scared, and she knew that Harry was probably feeling her and would ask why she was feeling that way later.

She had a right to be scared, after all.

She eventually entered the common room and jumped back in shock as she saw Ginny sitting on the floor, working on some of her homework.

"Hi there."

"Hi."

"What's the matter?"

"What do you mean?"

"It just seems like something's wrong."

She hesitated for a minute before asking, "Is anyone else here?"

"No, just me. What's wrong?"

"I screwed up, Ginny," she sighed, sitting on the couch next to her.

"What do you mean?"

She dropped her eyes. "I don't even know where to begin."

"Begin with what?"

"Harry and I have always used protection. I made sure of it."

"Protection? What are you-?" her eyes widened as the realization dawned on her, and she stood up. "Are you pregnant?"

## Chapter Fifteen:

"Are you pregnant?"

The word swirled around Hermione's head. Are you pregnant? She felt her eyes water and she pressed her hands against her mouth, shaking her head.

"I don't know for certain."

"What's making you think that you are?" she asked, sitting on the coffee table.

"I'm late. When Harry told me my birthday was on Saturday, I realized the date and I started to freak out. I told myself to calm down, and I waited until this morning, but nothing happened. Now I'm really scared, Ginny."

"Is that all?" She nodded. "How late are you?"

"About a week."

"When do you think this may have happened?"

"I don't know," she said, tears running down her face now. "I don't-"

She started to fully cry, and Ginny gently lifted her up and pulled her in for hug, wrapping her arms tightly around her.

"There's two things you need to do. First, there's nothing to fear until you're certain. You need to go to Madam Pomfrey and find out. Second, you need to tell Harry."

"Not until I find out for certain," she said, pulling away. "I don't want to worry him."

More tears ran down her face, and she buried her face into Ginny's shoulder again, hating herself for being so emotional.

"You need to tell him. If you are pregnant, he's going to find out. Even if you're not, he deserves to know."

Hermione didn't say anything, but kept her head buried in Ginny's shoulder.

"Hermione?"

She felt her breath catch in her throat, and she turned to Harry, fear coursing through her system. He stared at her in concern.

"Hermione what's going on?" he asked, placing his hands on her arms. She shook her head, unable to find to her voice.

"I'll give you two some privacy," Ginny said, before leaning into Hermione's ear. "Tell him!"

Harry waited until she left the common room before turning back to his wife. His heart broke as he saw her red face, and he reached up to wipe her tears off.

"Talk to me, Hermione," he whispered, resting his hands on the sides of her face.

She dropped her eyes, unsure of what to say to him. "You're going to want to sit down."

He stared at her in confusion before he sat on the couch. She let out a deep breath and sat on the coffee table, rubbing her hands together before grabbing onto his own.

"I think I'm pregnant, Harry."

His mouth fell open as shock filled his face. She stood up and turned away from him, unable to see the look on his face any longer. "I knew I should have waited to tell you."

"Hermione," he said, shaking his head, "how-how did this happen?"

"I don't know," she said, tears filling her eyes again.

"Wait," he said, standing up to stand in front of her. "You said you think you're pregnant?"

"I'm not for certain, but I'm pretty positive I am."

"I think we need to find out, Hermione," he said softly, reaching up to wipe her tears off. "Let's go to Madam Pomfrey right now and find out for certain."

"What if I am pregnant?" she whispered, lifting her eyes up to meet his own.

He grabbed her hand, and they sat back down on the couch. "If you are, then I'll be an extremely happy man."

"You'd be happy?"

"We'd be having a baby. I would be the happiest man alive."

"But we're at Hogwarts, and I'd have the baby right as we were about to graduate, and I couldn't find work and-"

He gently pressed their lips together. He broke away a moment later and kissed her head, and she could see the enthusiasm written on his face.

"I know the timing is horrible, but we could be having a baby. While we're here we'll use concealment charms and do whatever it takes to make sure no one finds out. If you really wanted to work after the baby is born, then I'll hold off going into the program, or we'll get someone to watch the baby. We'll figure it out, but in no way am I not happy about this."

"You would do that for me and the baby?" she whispered, and he nodded.

"I would do anything for either one of you in a heartbeat, and I know you would do the same for us."

"Harry," she choked out, feeling emotional again. She wrapped her arms around his neck and buried her head into his shoulder. He rubbed her back and kissed her head, feeling both happy and scared. "Let's go to the Hospital Wing."

He gave her a small smile before he helped her up. They started on the path to the Hospital Wing, fear filling the both as they stepped closer and closer to it. They entered the room and spotted Madam Pomfrey sitting in her office, writing on some pieces of parchment.

"Potter, are you needing healed already?" she asked, raising her head up.

"Actually, Madam Pomfrey, it's me," Hermione said quietly. "I need you to do a pregnancy test on me."

She pressed her lips together as she looked between them. "How late are you?"

"About a week late."

"Any other symptoms?"

"No," she said, shaking her head.

"Let's go to the beds," she said, grabbing for her wand. She walked past them and held open a curtain before closing it behind them. "Take off your shirt and lay down on the bed."

She removed her school shirt with shaky hands and gave it to Harry. She then let out a shaky breath as she laid back on the bed, grabbing for his hand. Madam Pomfrey put her wand on Hermione's stomach, but Harry stopped her.

"Hermione," he said, and she turned her head towards him, "whatever this test says, I want you to know that I'm not going anywhere."

She smiled. "I know. I love you."

"I love you, too," he said, kissing her hand. He nodded to Madam Pomfrey, who said a spell under her voice. She then looked up at them.

"In a moment, smoke will appear. If the smoke is green, you're pregnant. If it's red, you're not."

Hermione couldn't breathe as she waited for the smoke. She clutched at Harry's hand tightly, probably hard enough to bruise it, but not wanting to let go of it until they knew. After what felt like the longest minute of their lives, the smoke appeared, and her other hand flew to her mouth as her breath caught in her throat. Beside her, he smiled with a shocked look on his face.

The green smoke disappeared almost instantly.

She was pregnant.

Tears rushed down her face as her free hand moved from her mouth to her stomach. He leaned over and kissed her head; shock, fear and happiness running through his body.

"You are pregnant," Madam Pomfrey said, making a note in her charts. "Let's see how far along you are, shall we?"

She waved her wand over Hermione's stomach again, but Harry couldn't see anything that she was doing. He then glanced back over to Hermione; whose face was once again wet with tears. He kissed her hand, trying everything he could to get her to stop crying.

"Don't be scared," he whispered, wiping her tears off.

"We're having a baby," she said, smiling at him.

"We're having a baby," he echoed back, squeezing her hand slightly.

"You're four weeks along, Hermione. Any idea?"

"Four weeks?" she asked, furrowing her brow. She then turned to Harry and let out a small smile. "Four weeks would have been my birthday party."

"What date would that have been, exactly?"

"August 22nd," Harry said. "I surprised Hermione with a birthday party since we're at Hogwarts during her actual birthday."

"Almost exactly a month later. Here we are on September 21st. This would explain why the rest of your symptoms haven't come in yet, either. You're still quite early. Most people don't get diagnosed until around six to eight weeks."

"But she and the baby are fine?" Harry asked in concern.

"Great, actually. The baby's on pace and Hermione's vitals are excellent."

"Do you know if it's a boy or a girl yet?"

"It's still a little early. As soon as I can, I will let you know. Let me get a few things to get you started, and we can talk a little more about your current situation."

They nodded, and she disappeared behind the curtain. She took her shirt back from him and put it back on, still trying to process the news.

"We're having a baby," he said, sitting on the bed across from her. A smile formed on her face and she cupped her stomach.

"We're having baby!" she cried out a moment later, wrapping her arms around him. He kissed her head, feeling happy.

He was going to be a father.

"Are you just as scared as I am?" she whispered into his ear.

"Probably worse," he joked with a serious tone, "but I'm more happy than scared."

"Me, too," she said, pulling back to stare at him. "I love you so much."

"I love you, too. Both of you," he said, placing his hand on her stomach. She smiled, placing her own over his.

"Ok," Madam Pomfrey said, returning from behind the curtain. "Here are some vials to get you started. It'll help with nausea. Here's also some information about pregnancy and what to expect. Your expected due date is around May 21st."

"That's a month before we're done with school," Hermione said, looking at Harry in worry.

"That will be a bit of a problem," she said, looking between them.

"What are we going to do?" she asked him.

"We have plenty of time to figure it out," he said soothingly, patting her hand.

"Most likely, as we come into the end of May, you'll be transported to St. Mungo's. After that, well, it's up to the both of you. We'll have to do a monthly checkup just to make sure everything is ok. Make sure you see me at least once a month."

She nodded and climbed off the bed. "Thank you, Madam Pomfrey."

"No problem. It's unfortunate that the baby will be born before you leave, but I'm sure we can get something worked out."

"You know, I was almost expecting a lecture," Harry said, and she smirked slightly at him.

"This is not my business. I am only here to do what I need to do. I'll be in touch with you soon."

They nodded and turned to walk out of the Hospital Wing. Hermione put the vials into her bag, and they remained silent as they returned to their common room, unable to stop the smiles that were forming on their faces.

They were going to have a baby.

"Are Harry and Hermione ok?" Neville asked, noticing that neither had shown up to dinner. Ron shrugged.

"Probably off shagging somewhere. Let's just go to the dorm before bed."

"We'll take them a plate," Ginny said, grabbing a spare plate to fill it with food. Neville did the same. After they finished eating, they met up with Luna and took off towards the head's dorms, hoping that everything was ok with the couple.

Of course, Ginny knew why they skipped dinner.

She was hoping more than anything that they had gone to Madam Pomfrey to officially find out.

Her theories were confirmed, however, when they entered the common room and saw them sitting on the couch, kissing one another.

Ron cleared his throat, and they broke apart, clearly embarrassed.

"We're sorry," Ginny said, glaring at Ron. "We were a little concerned when you didn't come to dinner."

"It's dinner time?" Hermione asked in shock, looking at the clock.

"Clearly you were busy," Ron said, as he and Neville handed them plates, "so we brought you some plates."

"Thank you," Hermione said, digging into hers. Harry's eyes drifted over to Ginny, who was watching him, and he gave her a slight nod, watching as she pressed her hands to her face but didn't make a noise.

"Why didn't you come to dinner?" Luna asked, sitting in the chair.

"We just got a little sidetracked," he said, eating the food they had brought for him.

"What are you two hiding?" Luna asked, and they looked up in surprise.

"What do you mean?" Hermione asked back.

"I can see the mistels flying above your heads, which means that you're hiding a big secret."

They gave her a look before they turned to one another, smiling and nodding their heads. Harry put his plate onto the coffee table and looked back up, and he couldn't stop the smile that formed on his face.

"Hermione and I actually have some news that needs to stay between all of us."

"What is it?" Neville asked.

"I'm pregnant," she said, grabbing Harry's hand and smiling. Everyone's mouths dropped open, expect for Ginny, who was smiling.

"Congratulations!" she said, wrapping her arms around Hermione.

"Thank you."

"Are you being serious right now?" Ron asked in shock, looking between them.

"Very serious. I'm four weeks along."

"Congratulations," Neville said, giving Hermione a hug and clapping Harry's back.

"What do you plan on doing?" Luna said, also giving Hermione a hug.

"I'm going to use concealment charms, so no one notices. There's a little problem, though."

"What is that?"

"The baby's going to be born at the end of May."

"Oh, no," Ginny said. "What are you going to do?"

"We have no idea," Hermione said. "We've been trying to figure it out ever since we found out."

"Do you think it's a boy or a girl?" Ginny asked, clearly excited.

"I don't know," she laughed, sitting back down next to Harry. He wrapped his arm around her shoulder.

"You both have never looked happier," Luna commented, and Harry and Hermione turned and smiled to each other.

"Are you scared at all?" Neville asked.

"Very scared," Harry replied, rubbing Hermione's upper arm, "but happier. I can't wait to hold him or her."

"I'm not ready for childbirth," she said, and he chuckled next to her, "but, like him, I can't wait to hold the baby."

"You're going to be amazing parents," Ginny said, smiling at them.

"Listen, you lot are the only knows who know. Please keep it that way. We're not even going to tell her parents or Molly and Arthur until we see them in person."

"Of course," Luna echoed back.

"Do you feel any different?" Ginny asked Hermione.

"Not yet. I wouldn't have even known if, well, you know. Madam Pomfrey said most people don't find out until they're about eight weeks."

"When do you think it happened?"

"We don't want to hear this," Ron said, pulling a face. Ginny rolled her eyes.

"Let's go to the bedroom," Hermione said, and Ginny and Luna stood up and followed her.

"Terrified?" Neville asked Harry, who nodded his head.

"Very terrified. I'm really concerned about her having the baby right before we leave here."

"My parents would watch the baby for the last two weeks or so that you would be here. Maybe McGonagall would let you go home early."

"We couldn't leave the baby. I don't know what we're going to do."

"I would talk to McGonagall," Neville said.

"I think you should, too."

Harry rubbed his eyes under his glasses, letting out a deep breath as he did so. "Funny thing is, I had just talked to Hermione about using protection, too. We only used it on her. I don't regret it, though. I want to see my son or daughter more than anything right now."

"You're going to be a good father," Ron said, clapping his back.

"So, when do you think it happened?" Ginny asked, after they had shut the door behind them.

"I'm thinking it was the birthday party that Harry threw for me. We shagged a lot that day."

"Did the protection not work?"

"It would have worked had we used it," she said, rubbing the back of her head.

"You forgot to use protection?"

"I've been thinking the last few hours, and I realized that I had gotten so distracted by everything that day that I may have forgotten to cast the spell."

"So that's how you knew you were. You knew you forgot to use protection."

"I didn't want to tell Harry because I feel like he would blame me and-"

"Honey," Ginny said, wrapping her arm around Hermione's shoulder, "he loves you so much. He would never blame you. Did you see how happy he was out there? He's so happy, Hermione. All he's ever wanted is a family, and now he finds out that his wife is pregnant."

"He wasn't happy until you two out about your marriage, and now he's happier than any of us have seen him."

Hermione nodded, rubbing her stomach as she did so. "I'm having a baby."

"You're having a baby!" they cried, pulling her up so they could hug her.

"We're going to be your baby's aunts."

She rubbed her stomach again, still in disbelief that she was growing a child in there. "Harry and I have been talking all afternoon. We really didn't even know that it was time for dinner."

"I know how scary this is to you, but just think that, when we leave school, you and Harry will be holding your son or daughter. That's got to be making you feel so much better."

"I think I'm past the terrified stage. I'm still in the disbelief stage," she joked.

"What do you want more? A boy or a girl?"

"I'm happy either way."

"Do you think your parents will be happy about this?"

"That's a good question," she said, nodding her head. "I don't know how they'll react, especially since they're not finding out anytime soon."

"They're going to be surprised," Ginny said. "But they'll be happy."

Luna looked at the clock and sighed. "We should probably be going."

"It is getting late. We'll talk to you tomorrow."

Hermione nodded, and followed them out to the common room where the boys were.

"We should be going. Only Ronniewonnie is a prefect and if we're out we'll get in trouble."

"See you tomorrow, mate," Ron said, clapping his shoulder. Neville said the same, and they all disappeared behind the portrait hole.

"It's been a long day," Hermione said, laying down on the couch. He moved her legs onto his lap and removed her slippers, rubbing her feet softly.

"We should get to bed soon."

"We still need to do our rounds," she said, and he shook his head.

"I honestly forgot."

"Can't say I blame you," she said, reaching up to push his hair out of his eyes. "You need a haircut."

"It grows so quick," he replied.

"Let's go do our rounds real quick, then come back here and talk more, and maybe I can cut this hair of yours before bed."

He nodded, and they took off to join the prefects. After they finished all their rounds, they returned to their dorm room, completely tired and ready for bed. She quickly gave him a haircut before they changed their clothes and went off to bed, exhaustion filling them.

"Much better," she said, running her hand through his hair.

"Feels better," he replied, running his own hand through his hair.

"I think the baby will look like you," she said in a tired voice.

"It'll be as smart as its mum, and as beautiful."

She smiled. "What do you want? A boy or a girl?"

"I'm happy either way," he replied, kissing her head.

She leaned up and lightly pressed their lips together. She pulled away a minute, and he could see the exhaustion written all over her face.

"Get some sleep, Hermione," he whispered, pulling the blanket up to her shoulder. She flashed him a smile before closing her eyes, falling asleep in a matter of minutes. He was happy that she was sleeping as she had gotten so little the night before.

She had told him that she had a hard time falling asleep. Truth is that she had stayed up the whole night worrying.

He stared at her for a minute before he bent his head down to her stomach. He lightly pressed a kiss to it through the blanket before saying, "Hi there, little one. I'm your dad. We just found out about you, and we couldn't be any happier. We already love you way more than you can imagine. Your mummy and I are so excited, and a little scared, but we're so ready for you to be here. We'll see you in May, and mummy and I will figure something out, because we're not leaving you."

Hermione stirred, and he hesitated for a moment to make sure she was still asleep before saying, "I'll talk again soon. I love you."

He lifted himself back up, laid his head on his pillow, wrapped his arm around her waist, and fell asleep, feeling incredibly happy.

## Chapter Sixteen:

On the second-to-last weekend of October, Harry awoke by the sound of Hermione getting sick, and he immediately grabbed his glasses and ran to the bathroom, feeling horrible as he saw her crunched over the toilet. He walked up to her, held her hair in his hand, and rubbed her back.

"The morning sickness has started," she said, lifting her head up.

"I'm sorry."

"Can you get me one of my vials? They're on my nightstand."

He nodded and walked back into their shared bedroom to grab the vial. He took it back to her and watched as she quickly downed it, the color returning to her face almost instantly.

"That's better," she said, flushing the toilet. He helped her up, and she washed her hands off.

"I know you've been feeling horrible lately, and if there's anything I can do to make you feel better, I'll do it."

"You've done enough," she joked, cupping her stomach. He gave her a look, but the corners of his mouth curled into a smile. "Kidding. You have actually given me the best birthday present you could have given me."

He leaned down and kissed her stomach, smiling softly against it. "Can it be May already?"

"You're not the one who's carrying it for nine months," she laughed, running her hands through his hair.

"Fair point," he said with a nod. "We need to get to breakfast.”

"Am I noticeable yet?"

"Not quite yet. You shouldn't need the charms for a little while longer."

"This is unreal," she replied with a small laugh.

He smiled. "Let's take a shower and get to breakfast."

"You have a Quidditch game this morning, handsome," she said, pressing her hand against his chest.

"I've been waiting for this game for quite some time."

"I can't wait to see you play. You look so happy up there."

"So did you when I made you go up there."

"I'll admit, that was fun. I can't do that now, though."

"No way in bloody hell are you going up there," he replied sternly, pressing his hand against her stomach.

"I wouldn't ever risk it."

He moved his hand around, feeling the extremely small bulge that had formed. She placed her hand on top of his, smiling as she did so.

"Let's take a shower, Harry," she said, leading him to the shower. They took a quick shower before they began to change. She helped him into his robes, loving the way they looked on him.

"This is a great fit," she said, running her eyes over his body. He grinned.

"Make sure to dress warm. It's supposed to be cold outside today."

"Good day to wear this, then," she said, picking up the silver sweater that her mother had given to her for her birthday. She put it on and looked in the mirror, checking for any signs of a bump.

"You look beautiful," he said, wrapping his arms around her waist.

"Let's go eat."

He nodded, and they took off towards the Great Hall. They immediately spotted the other red robes, and sat down next to Ron and Ginny, who were discussing game plans.

"About time you lot showed up," Ron said, looking up at them.

"We're early, you know," Hermione said, filling her plate to the max. Ron looked at her.

"And you always get on me when I fill my plate up that much."

"You know why I'm eating a lot of food," she said, so quietly that he had to lean in to hear her.

"Eat all you want," Luna said, giving Ron a look.

"Thank you, Luna," Hermione shot back, digging into her breakfast.

"You're our key, Harry," Ginny said, looking up as he began to fill his own plate. "We need you to catch that snitch and as soon as possible."

"I'll give it my all," he replied, taking a bite.

"We're playing Slytherin, and you know how that goes every year. They always target someone. Keep your eyes open."

"We got this, Ginny," Ron said, finishing his breakfast and pushing it aside.

"This is our last term here for all of us. We need to go out with a win."

"And we will," Harry reassured her.

"You've got this, Gin," Neville said, giving her a quick kiss. "You just need to relax."

"Good luck today, Harry," two fifth-year girls said, giggling as they walked up to him.

"Thanks," he replied dully, continuing to eat his breakfast.

"We know you'll do great," the blond-haired girl said, flashing him a smile.

"It's not just me on the team," he replied. He then reached over and grasped Hermione's hand, making sure to flash their wedding bands. She smiled, knowing exactly what he was doing.

"Well, best of luck," the other girl said, seeing their bands. They walked off.

"You couldn't be more loyal if you tried," Luna said, smiling at Harry.

"He's the best," Hermione replied, giving him a smile.

"Ready for this?" Ron asked, picking up his broomstick.

"Plenty ready. Let's go take down Slytherin."

"Best of luck," Hermione said, giving Harry a quick kiss. "Win that game for us."

He smiled, knowing exactly what she meant. "We will. See you afterwards."

He took off with Ron and Ginny down to the Quidditch Pitch. Hermione turned to Neville and Luna, who were beginning to put their jackets and scarves on.

"Oddly cold for October, isn't it?" Luna remarked.

"This would be the start of the dreaded winter," Hermione remarked with a small laugh. "We should be going if we want to get good seats."

They nodded, and they all began to walk down to the pitch. Hermione took a breath and let out a smile, enjoying the fresh air.

"I bet Harry catches the snitch in under ten minutes," Neville said, after they had taken their seats.

"I believe that," Luna said, nodding in agreement. "He's the best seeker I have ever seen."

Hermione didn't say anything, but she stared out towards the Gryffindor locker room, wondering what Ginny was telling her team inside of there. The stands became more filled, and soon the commenter, a Hufflepuff fourth year, began to speak.

"Welcome to our first Quidditch game of the season: Gryffindor vs. Slytherin!"

The cheers broke out, and he waited until the cheering settled before he began to speak again. "Let's bring our teams out. First is Gryffindor, with captain Ginny Weasley!"

Streaks of red began to fly around, and Hermione immediately spotted number seven, hovering above the rest of the team. Ginny flew out in front, waiting to shake hands with the Slytherin captain.

"And here is the Slytherin team, with captain Damon Gosforth!"

Booing erupted from the crowd as green robes began to flash in the sky. They formed the same arrangement that Gryffindor had before Madam Hooch flew up to them.

"Captains, shake hands."

Ginny and Damon did, both glaring at one another as they did so. She waited for a moment as the snitch and bludgers took off in the sky before releasing the quaffle and blowing her whistle, starting the game.

"Harry's not moving," Luna noticed, watching as he hovered slowly around.

"He's studying. It's how he finds it so quickly," Hermione replied, watching as his head moved slowly around.

Ron missed a quaffle, and they all let out a sigh. Ginny was able to get the quaffle back and quickly scored, and that was enough for Ron to be able to block the next few attempts. Harry was slowly moving around, clearly frustrated at not having found the snitch yet.

Behind him, the Slytherin seeker was keeping a close distance.

"Meyers scores again! Gryffindor 60 Slytherin 40!"

"Come on, Harry," Hermione whispered, noticing that he was still hovering around.

"He's got this," Luna said, and Neville nodded in agreement.

"There goes Stevens! The game is now tied at 60!"

Finally Harry took off, followed closely by the Slytherin seeker. They all watched him closely, hoping that he would catch it and win the game. He and the other seeker began to push and shove, and Harry extended his arm, reaching for the snitch.

That's when it happened.

Hermione felt a sharp pain go through her, and she put both of her hands over her mouth, unable to breath. She felt nausea rise in her stomach, and she sat down in her seat, trying everything she could to stop herself from getting sick.

"Bloody hell, he caught it," Neville said in shock.

She looked back up and saw that Harry was still on his broom, one arm wrapped around his chest while the other displayed the snitch. The whistle blew, and Ginny and Ron immediately rushed over.

"GRYFFINDOR WINS!" the commenter cried, and the crowd cheered.

"Are you ok?" Ron asked, helping Harry get back down to the ground. He shook his head, unable to talk.

"They got me good," he grunted out, hissing in pain when Ron wrapped Harry's arm around him, supporting him. Sinistra rushed out and assisted Ron in getting him off the field.

"We better get going," Neville said, trying to snap Hermione out of her shock. She nodded, but was unable to speak, fear and worry coursing through her.

They quickly rushed up to the Hospital Wing and spotted the entire Quidditch team waiting outside the door.

"He'll be fine," Ginny said, standing up in front of Hermione. "He has a few cracked ribs but he's ok. Madam Pomfrey is only allowing you in."

Hermione let out a deep breath and pushed open the doors, closing them behind her. She immediately spotted him and pushed open the curtain, her eyes watering as she saw him topless on the bed.

"I'm fine," he started, giving her one of his crooked smiles. Tears flew down her face, hating herself for being so emotional.

"You promised not to give me a heart attack," she choked out, and he chuckled slightly, wiping her tears off.

"It wasn't my fault."

"I know," she said, grabbing for his hand.

"He'll be fine, Mrs. Potter," Madam Pomfrey said, returning from behind the curtain. "Just some cracked ribs, but nothing that couldn't be repaired."

She rubbed some gel onto the right side of his body, and Hermione watched as the bruise disappeared.

"You're lucky you didn't receive a punctured lung, Potter. I would have had to keep you overnight."

"I would have enjoyed spending more time with you, Madam Pomfrey," he said, flashing her a grin. Hermione let out a small laugh, shaking her head as she did so.

"You're free to go," Madam Pomfrey replied, shaking her head as well. She turned and walked back to her patients.

"Don't scare me like that again!" Hermione said, lightly slapping his chest.

"Yes, love," he replied, putting his robes back on.

They walked out of the Hospital Wing and were greeted by his fellow teammates.

"You ok?" Ron asked.

"Fine now."

"Party in the common room!" Griffins, one of the beaters, said.

"Are you coming with?" Harry asked Hermione.

"Just for a little while. I need to work on my assignments, too."

"This should be a refresher," Professor Bryan began, walking between the desks. "I want you to spend the rest of the class working on this, and I will come by and assist if needed."

Harry stared at the piece of parchment in front of it, trying to remember how to change it to a needle. Beside him, Hermione was attempting the spell, and a second later it changed.

"Excellent work, Potter," Bryan said, looking at the needle.

"Thank you, sir," she said, and he nodded and walked away. Beside her, Harry finally got his to change.

"I did it," he said in shock. She looked at him in surprise.

"Why are you so surprised about that?"

"Because I'm not this good at Transfiguration."

"You have been studying harder. It's showing."

"I can thank you for that."

"Are you two done yet?" Ron asked, still struggling with his. Hermione rolled her eyes.

"And some people haven't be studying."

"I get my assignments done."

"Somehow," she replied dully.

"Will you please help me?"

"Like this, Ronald," she said, waving her wand. He followed her and said the spell, and his parchment also turned.

"Thanks," he said, looking at the needle.

"Today is all about things that you should have done in the past. This part is easy. Next class we will focus on N.E.W.T. level Transfiguration, and you will be working alone. When you take your exams, you will be on your own. You have all taken your O.W.L.'s and know what to expect. I will grade you like they will."

Hermione let out a quiet breath, knowing that she will have to take the exams after the baby arrived. She felt a small flutter in her stomach and let out a small smile. She knew the timing was horrible, but ever since she found out she was pregnant, all her devotion has gone to the baby. She's put in more studying time, more time on her assignments, and paid extremely close attention in all her classes.

And she's noticed that Harry's done the same.

His marks have gone up this term, but she's noticed that he's spending as much time as her on all his assignments ever since they found out. He was trying as hard as he could, and she loved him even more for that.

Once class was released, they returned to their dorm room with Ron, Neville and Ginny. As soon as they were safely behind the portrait hole, Ginny turned to Hermione.

"Have you found out the sex yet?"

"Not yet. We went to Madam Pomfrey last week for our three-month checkup, and she said we would have to wait a few more weeks."

"What do you think it is?"

"I really don't know."

"Leave her alone," Ron said, rolling his eyes at his sister. "They'll find out when they find out."

Ginny glared at him but didn't say anything further. Hermione rubbed the bump that has officially formed, the same bump that has caused her to start using concealment charms shortly after the Quidditch game. Harry wrapped his arm around her shoulder and kissed her head.

"Why do I have the feeling that they're going to overload us over break?" Ron asked, looking through all his assignments.

"That's what happens when you get behind."

"I'm not that far behind."

"Looks like you are to me, mate," Harry said, chuckling.

"You used to be like this you, you know."

"They do say married couples act alike," Ginny said with a slight grin.

"What can I say? She's a great influence."

"If only I had gotten through to them back in first year," she replied, shaking her head.

"Can you help me with these assignments please?" Ron asked.

"I have my own assignments to do, and so does Harry. You're on your own."

He grunted but opened his Potions book and began to start his essay. Harry and Hermione opened their own and started their own essays, trying to get as much done before dinner as they could. Luna arrived a half-hour later and started to work on her own.

"I'm starving," Hermione said a little while later.

"It's about time for dinner," Harry said, looking at the clock. "Plus, you didn't eat much for lunch.”

"I wasn't hungry then."

"Let's get to dinner," Ginny said, putting her books away.

November quickly turned to December, and snow began to collect on the grounds. Hermione smiled as she looked around outside, enjoying the scenery.

She always loved Hogwarts during the winter times.

Harry stirred in the bed, and she turned back to him, watching as he stretched and sat up. He grabbed for his glasses and put them on.

"We could be having a snowy wedding," she said, sitting across from him. He turned and looked out the window.

"What could be more of a winter wedding then snow?" he said with a grin. She smiled back at him. "How do you feel?"

"Great, actually. Today's the day we find out."

"Are we going to have a son or a daughter?"

"What do you think?"

"I think we can wait until we go and see Madam Pomfrey after breakfast."

"Just guess," she said with a laugh. "Boy or a girl?"

"What do you think?"

"I really think it's a girl."

"You think it's a girl?"

"I don't know," she replied softly, cupping her stomach, "but I just have the feeling."

"You've always had the best instincts. We could very well be having a girl."

"I can't believe I'm almost four months already," she said, rubbing her stomach.

"And our wedding is two weeks from now."

"I can't wait," she said with a smile. "I'll have to alter my dress slightly."

"We also have to tell everyone else about the baby."

"We'll do that after the ceremony. I'm just hoping my mum doesn't figure it out any earlier."

"Even if she does, she does," he reassured her.

"I can't wait any longer. Let's get cleaned up, go to breakfast and find out."

"Fine, impatient," he laughed, and they took off towards the bathroom to take a quick shower. They walked down to the Great Hall and met up with Ginny and Luna, both of whom were sitting at the Gryffindor table.

"Where's the boys?" Hermione asked, quickly filling her plate.

"Still asleep."

"You honestly think they'll wake up early on a Saturday?" Ginny said with a laugh.

"I'm surprised Harry's up."

"I wake up when she does," he said with a grin.

"Is today the day?" Luna whispered, and Hermione nodded.

"We're going after breakfast," she replied, just as quietly.

"So exciting!"

"Do we get to find out?"

They shook their heads. "Everyone will find out at the wedding."

They changed topics when the table became more filled. Harry and Hermione quickly ate their breakfast, both very excited to find out what they're having. After they finished, they bid goodbye to Ginny and Luna and took off towards the Hospital Wing.

"Good morning," Madam Pomfrey said, walking out of her office.

"Good morning, Madam Pomfrey," they echoed back.

"Head over to the bed and I'll be there in a minute."

They nodded and took the bed closest to her office. Hermione removed the charm from herself and watched as her bump came into view.

"How are we today?" Madam Pomfrey said, closing the curtain behind her.

"Feeling a little better. I'm not as nauseous as I was."

"That should start to settle down. I'll give you a few more vials just in case. Go ahead and take your shirt off and lay back. With any luck, I can figure out the sex today."

"Do you want to know?" Hermione asked Harry, handing him her shirt.

"I really want to know."

"So do I," she replied, laying back on the bed. Madam Pomfrey waved her wand over Hermione's stomach, and Harry stared at Hermione, smiling. She flashed him a smile back, squeezing his hand in anticipation.

"Everything looks great," she said, looking back up at the couple. "The baby's heart rate is excellent."

"Do you know the sex?" Hermione asked, biting her lip.

"I do."

"You're not going to tell us, are you?" Harry said, giving her a playful glare.

"I want you to guess."

He looked back at Hermione. "What do you think?”

She put her hand on her stomach and smiled. "I think it's a girl."

"We think it's a girl," Harry said, turning back to her. She stared at them for a minute before smiling.

"There's a reason why you're the brightest witch of your age, Hermione."

Harry let out a giant smile, while Hermione's hand flew to her mouth.

"We're having a girl?" she said, smiling behind her hand.

"You're having a girl."

"Harry!" she cried, wrapping her arms around his neck. "We're having a girl!"

He kissed her head, feeling extremely happy.

They were going to have a daughter.

## Chapter Seventeen:

"Harry, Hermione," Molly said, giving each of them a hug. "How have you been?"

"We've been good, Molly," Harry said, pushing his cart forward.

"Only a few more days. How are the both of you feeling?"

"We're happy," she said, smiling at Harry.

"As you should be."

"Hi, mum," Ginny said, pushing her cart up to them.

"Where's Ron?" Harry asked, looking around.

"Snogging his girlfriend."

"He's going to see her in a few days," Hermione said, shaking her head.

"Go get your brother. We need to leave," Molly ordered, and Ginny left her cart with her mother to go find Ron. "Bill and Fleur have got everything ready. Christmas Eve day they'll go and set up. I'll also be working on your cake and the dinner."

"We'll be helping as well. Thank you for everything."

"You both deserve this. After everything you've been through you deserve to have a great wedding."

"Found him," Ginny said, rolling her eyes as Ron walked up next to her.

"We need to get going," Molly said, and they all crossed the barrier to return home.

On Christmas Eve morning, Hermione awoke by a pair of lips lightly pressing against hers. She smiled against them as she pressed her hand behind Harry's head, pulling him in closer.

"Merry Christmas Eve," he whispered, pulling away slightly.

"Merry Christmas Eve," she whispered back, opening her eyes. "Today's our anniversary."

"Happy one year," he said, giving her another quick kiss.

"Our wedding's today."

"I finally get to see you in that dress."

"If it still fits."

"You can always alter it."

"That makes me feel better," she replied dully, rolling her eyes.

"You're pregnant, Hermione. You're going to gain weight."

"But I would like not to gain weight," she shot back.

"Doesn't work that like, love," he replied with a chuckle.

"I don't feel like my old self anymore. I'm just getting bigger and feel worse."

"I think you're getting more beautiful," he said, and she shook her head. "You are. You will always be beautiful to me no matter what."

"Even when I'm as big as a house?"

"Even if you're bigger than a house," he said with a smile, and she couldn't help but laugh.

"I love you."

"I love you, too," he said, kissing her head. "And you, my beautiful daughter."

He put his hand on her stomach, and Hermione put her hand on top of his. "We still need to get clothes and furniture."

"We have a few weeks to get all of that stuff."

"How are we going to get it without someone figuring it out? I can't use Polyjuice Potion."

"Maybe we could go to a muggle store?"

"Maybe. We need to figure out where we're going to live, too."

"We'll stay here for now, and as soon as possible we'll go look for a house."

"There's so much to get done before the baby gets here."

"We'll somehow pull through. We also have your parents and Molly and Arthur to help. We'll get it figured out."

He lightly pressed their lips together. She broke away a moment later, running her hand across his cheek.

They were getting married today.

"Fleur!" Hermione said, after she and Harry apparated into the backyard. "This is beautiful."

"I am zo glad you like eet," she said, smiling.

"I love it. The tables, colors, everything just looks beautiful."

"The Weasley boys helped out," Bill said, wrapping his arm around Fleur's waist. "With Dad, Fleur, George, Ron and I's teamwork it only took an hour to set everything up. We've put heat barriers around the holding tent and where the actual ceremony will be. It should feel warm for you and all the guests. Since the wedding will be after dark, there will be plenty of candles floating in the sky."

"We can't thank you enough," Harry said. "Both of you."

"We figured zou could get married facing ze sea."

Hermione nodded, agreeing with Fleur. "Thank you so much."

"Mum's been busy cooking all day. She did your cake this morning and was starting to fix the dinner last we spoke.”

"I should go see if she needs help," Harry said. "Ron and Luna are going to get your parents and bring them here."

"Great. I'm going to help Bill and Fleur finish out here."

He gave her a quick kiss before he ventured inside the house. She turned back to Bill and Fleur, who were setting the tables up.

"I need to go put our outfits in our rooms. Fleur, can you help me?"

She nodded and directed Hermione into the house. "Harry will be in ze guest bedroom and zou can take Bill's and I's."

"Thank you," she repeated, stopping by the guest bedroom to put Harry's robes in there. She then walked to the master and hung her dress on Fleur's armoire. "I actually need your help."

"With?"

"I need you to help me alter my dress."

"Zid it not fit before?"

"It fit perfect before. I might have gained some weight since then."

She studied her for a minute before clicking her fingers. "Zou is pregnant!"

"I am," she replied with an awkward laugh. "Harry and I are going to have a baby in May."

"Congratulations!"

"Thank you," she replied, pressing a hand to her stomach. "Please keep this quiet. Only a few know and we plan on telling everyone after the ceremony."

"Do zou know zhe sex?"

"We do, but no one knows that. Something else we planned on telling after the ceremony."

"Try zhe dress on," she said, helping Hermione get it out of the bag. Hermione pointed her wand at her stomach and removed the charm, smiling softly as her bump came into view. Fleur went into the bathroom while Hermione removed her clothing, attempting to pull the dress up but finding it unsuccessful.

"No luck?" Fleur said, coming out of the bathroom. Hermione shook her head. Fleur attempted to lightly pull the dress up as well but was unable to pull it over her stomach. "Zold on."

She grabbed her wand and pointed it at the dress, expanding it slightly. She then pulled it again, and it managed to go over her stomach.

"How zous it fit?"

"It's a little tight," she said, and Fleur pointed her wand at her stomach again. The dress expanded even more. "Much better."

"Zou look zo beautiful."

"Thank you," she said, looking at herself in the mirror. It was clearly obvious that she was pregnant, but she casted the charm over herself once again, and it looked like it had before she became pregnant.

"I need zo return zo Bill now."

"I'll be down to help in just a moment," she replied, and Fleur nodded in agreement. She walked out of the room, and Hermione took the dress off and placed it back in the bag before redressing, feeling a little more nervous as time went on.

She then sat on the bed and rubbed her stomach. "How are you, baby girl? Today is daddy and I's wedding day, and we're very excited. We're more excited to see you. We'll come up with a great name for you. You have no idea how we love you, and how hormonal you're making mummy right, but I'll deal with the nausea, and the heartburn, and the hormones if it means that I get to see you. I can't wait to see you."

There was a knock on the door, and she looked up to see Ron entering.

"Your parents are here."

"Great," she said, getting off the bed. She followed him downstairs and saw her parents standing in the yard, looking at the setup.

"Pumpkin!" Joseph said, wrapping his arms around her.

"Hi, dad."

"How are you?" Melinda asked, also hugging her daughter.

"A little nervous but excited."

"Where's the groom?"

"He's helping Molly and Arthur with the dinner. I'm helping Bill and Fleur out here."

"Is there much left to do?"

"Not a lot," she said, looking around. "We're expecting snow during the ceremony."

"How beautiful."

"Fleur went out of her way to set this up. It's incredible."

"Fleur is?"

"Fleur is Bill's wife. Bill is Molly and Arthur's oldest child."

"Got it. This is their house?"

"Sure is. They offered us their house to get married at."

"Happy anniversary," Melinda said, wrapping her arm around Hermione's shoulder.

"Thanks, mum."

"What do you think about this, Hermione?" Bill asked, walking her over to the dining area.

"Looks great," she replied, looking around.

"Then we're all setup here."

"Thanks for everything. You're the best."

"Anytime, Hermione. You and Harry are a part of our family."

"Only a few hours until the ceremony. How are you feeling?" Melinda asked.

"Pretty good. I'm a little nervous."

"Everyone gets cold feet. Just take some deep breaths and you'll be ok."

"There you are!" Ginny said, as she and Luna walked up to her. "We need to start getting ready soon!"

"I'll be there in a minute," she said with a laugh. She turned back to her parents. "Harry's inside the house if you want to talk to him."

"We would love to," Joseph said, and they followed Hermione inside the house. She took them to the kitchen with Harry before she walked back up to the master, finding Ginny working on Luna's hair.

"I'll do yours soon," she said, taking Luna's hair in her hands.

"Take your time," she replied, laying back on the bed. "I can't believe I'm getting married today."

"Do you and Harry have any plans for afterwards? Like a honeymoon?"

"We've already had a honeymoon. We spent a week in Australia. Plus, with the baby and school, we don't feel like taking a vacation. There's so much to get done. This is the only time we have before the baby arrives and we need to get the furniture, clothes and everything else we may need."

"Are you still not going to tell us?"

"Not yet."

"That's cruel."

"How's Harry doing with all of this?" Luna asked.

"He's so happy. When we found out what the baby was, his face just lit up. He can't stop talking about it."

"That's adorable," Ginny said. "You're going to be amazing parents."

"Five more months," she replied, rubbing her stomach.

"What are you going to do about school?"

"We still have no idea."

There was a knock on the door, and her mother entered, smiling at them. "I'm going to finish helping with the dinner, but I wanted to tell you that I'll be back up here soon."

"Thanks for helping."

"Harry seems very happy."

"He's been happy lately."

"Are you about ready, Hermione?" Ginny asked, and Hermione nodded.

"I'll be back soon," Melinda said, and turned and walked out the door. Hermione walked into the bathroom to take her clothes off before putting her robe on. She walked back out and waited on the bed as Ginny finished Luna's hair, smiling at the final product.

"You look beautiful, Luna," Hermione said, looking at the high bun Ginny had decided to go with. She left the two strands that bordered Luna's face out of the bun and curled them slightly.

"Thank you," she said, looking in the mirror. Ginny spun the chair around and started on Luna's makeup.

"How are things going with you and Neville?" Luna asked quietly.

"Things are great."

"I think I might hear the next wedding bells," Hermione said. Ginny shook her head.

"Not anytime soon, I'm sure."

"Now we'll have a flower girl or a ring bearer," Luna said, looking towards Hermione. She gave them a look.

"You already want to use my unborn child as a flower girl or a ring bearer?"

"And you're thinking of a wedding as well?" Ginny said.

"Not soon, but sometime down the road."

"Good luck getting my dolt of a brother to propose anytime soon."

"We just got together over the summer. I'm not expecting a proposal anytime soon."

"I wouldn't be expecting one anytime soon," Ginny laughed. "You're done, Luna. Ready, Hermione?"

She nodded and took Luna's place in the chair. Ginny ran her hands through Hermione's hair, thinking something over in her mind.

"How do you want your hair?"

"I really don't know. It's hard to control it."

"I have an idea," she said, reaching into her bag. "We used this at the Yule Ball, remember?"

She showed her the hair gel, and Hermione smiled. "You plan on using that again?"

"I plan on straightening your hair out, then bringing these two pieces in," she said, grabbing Hermione's hair that bordered the side of her face. "I'll tie these two together, then curl the rest of your hair out. It'll look beautiful."

"Do what you need to do," Hermione said, and Ginny opened the gel. She rubbed it into Hermione's hair, and used her hands to straighten it. She waited for the gel to dry before she grabbed the two pieces of hair and tied it together with a hair tie. She then grabbed her wand and curled Hermione's hair, smiling at the result.

"What do you think?" she asked, and Hermione couldn't speak.

"Ginny," she said, looking at herself in the mirror. "It's beautiful."

"I thought you would like that," she said, spinning Hermione around so she could do her makeup.

"Dinner is just about finished," Molly said, turning to her husband, Harry and Melinda. "Thank you for the help. We can take it from here."

"Thanks for everything, Molly," Harry said, giving her a hug.

"Anything for you, dear."

"There's a half-hour before the ceremony starts. I better go get ready."

"How are you feeling?"

"Good. A little nervous but excited."

"Kingsley will be your Minister."

"Of course," Harry said with a smile. "I really better get ready before Hermione notices I'm not yet."

She nodded, and he turned to walk up the stairs. He entered the guest bedroom and saw his robes. He then put his robes on and looked in the mirror. He raised his hand up and flattened his hair, feeling a little frustrated when it did nothing.

There was a knock on the door and Ron, Arthur and Neville entered, dressed in their robes.

"Almost time, mate," Ron said, clapping his shoulder.

"I'm ready," he said, looking at himself in the mirror.

"Ready for this?" Neville asked, and Harry nodded.

"I've been ready for this."

"I need your ring," Ron said, holding his hand out. Harry pulled his hand up and removed his wedding ring.

"First time I've taken it off since it's been on," he said, giving Ron the silver band.

"I can tell. There's a line," Neville said, and Harry smiled slightly.

"We should probably be getting downstairs," Ron said, and they nodded in agreement.

"Hang back a minute, Harry," Arthur said, and he nodded. Ron and Neville walked out the door. "How are you?"

"I'm good," he said with a slight nod.

"I know how much you wanted your parents, Sirius or Remus to be here, and they deserved to be here. A son should see his parents on his wedding day."

"You weren't there when I was first met Molly. Hagrid had taken me to Kings Cross and left me there with no idea on where the platform or anything was. Then I overheard Molly talking to the boys and she told me how to get onto the platform, and she looked generally worried that I was alone. The moment she found out about me the both of you have been there for everything. You took me in every year, fed me, and helped me learn the wizarding world. You warned of Sirius and were scared about it. Molly was at the Triwizard Tournament and you've helped me ever since. You may not be my biological parents, but you sure feel like parents to me. If the both of you are here, my parents are here."

Arthur wrapped his arms around him. "I'm so glad I get to see another son get married."

"Thank you for being there for us."

"We'll always be here. Now, I believe it is time for you to get downstairs. Don't want to keep the bride waiting, do we?" he asked, opening the door.

"Looking good there, son," Joseph said, when they walked down the stairs. "Nervous?"

"I was a little, but it's gone now. How's Hermione?"

"Melinda said she's happy as can be up there. She can't seem to shake a smile."

"Good," Harry said, smiling as well.

"Can I talk to you in private for a minute?" he asked.

"Sure. I'll meet you out there," he addressed to Ron and Neville, who nodded and walked out the door.

"I love Hermione more than anything, Harry," Joseph started. "She and her mother are my everything. I know you've been married for a year now, but I need you to promise me something."

"Anything."

"Take good care of her for me."

Harry nodded. "I will always take care of Hermione. She comes first."

"I'm glad to hear that. That makes me feel a lot better."

He turned to walk away, but Harry stopped him.

"Is something wrong?"

"There's something that I have to tell you that very few know. I feel like, if I don't tell you, you'll be mad when we announce it and Hermione's hormonal enough the way it is."

"What is it?" he said, though he sounded like he knew.

"She's pregnant," he said quietly, never losing eye-contact. "She's four-months pregnant, to be exact."

He nodded his head, surprise filling his face. Harry was beginning to feel very anxious, wondering whether Joseph would yell at him. A long moment passed, and Joseph nodded, smiling softly.

"Boy or girl?"

"A girl," Harry replied. "We're having a girl in May."

"I'm having a granddaughter?"

Harry nodded. "We wanted to tell everyone in person. We were going to announce it after the ceremony, but after you said that Hermione and Melinda were your everything, I felt like I had to tell you. I love Hermione so much. Ever since we found out she was pregnant, all my devotion in school has gone to her and the baby. They deserve a great future. I am going to do everything it takes to make sure my daughter has the future she deserves. I'm working so hard to make sure of it. Hermione and the baby deserve everything."

"You're already a great father," Joseph said, placing his hand on Harry's shoulder. "There's no way I can be mad, if that's what you're thinking. The fact that you came to me and then told me how hard you're working to make sure my daughter and granddaughter are going to be well taken care of shows me how much you care about them. I couldn't have asked for a better husband and father of my granddaughter than you, Harry."

"That means a lot," he replied, letting out a shaky breath.

"You need to get ready. It's almost time to start."

He nodded and walked outside. He smiled almost immediately by who was on the other side of the door.

"Your godson has been wanting to see you," Andromeda said, handing Teddy to Harry.

"Hi, buddy," he said, smiling down at Teddy. "Thank you for coming."

"Thank you for inviting me."

"Hermione and I are getting married today," he said, ticking Teddy's stomach. "We're going to be one happy family."

Teddy squealed, and they both laughed.

"Let's go have a wedding, Teddy."

"Hermione? Are you ready?" Ginny called through the bathroom door.

Hermione stared at herself in the mirror, still in disbelief at the way she looked. Ginny knocked on the door again, and she turned to open it.

"You look so beautiful," she said, looking at her.

"Look at you," Melinda said, when Hermione stepped out of the bathroom. "You have grown into a very beautiful woman, Hermione."

"Thank you, mum," she said, taking the bouquet from Ginny.

"You look beautiful, Hermione," Molly said, smiling at her.

"How's Harry?"

"He's outside, and he looks very happy."

"I need your wedding ring," Ginny said, and Hermione took it off and gave it to her, feeling empty without it on.

"Are you ready?" Luna asked, and she nodded.

"Blue looks really good on the both of you," she said, and they smiled.

"It's time, Hermione," Molly said, and she nodded. Her mother and Molly gave her a hug before they turned and walked out the door. Ginny and Luna walked out, and she pressed a hand to her stomach, smiling softly.

She then walked out the door and saw her father standing down by the stairwell, smiling at his daughter.

"You look beautiful, pumpkin," he said, holding his arm out to her. She linked hers to his.

"Thank you, dad."

"By the way, I know," he whispered, and she turned to look at him.

"Know what?"

"About the baby. Harry told me."

"He told you?"

"He had a good reason for doing so. When is my granddaughter going to be here?"

She smiled. "She'll be here in May."

"Congratulations, pumpkin," he said, kissing her head.

"We're very happy."

"As you should be. Harry also told me you were a little hormonal."

"He's a blabbermouth," she said with a laugh.

"I just want to you know that, if you or Harry need anything for the baby, your mother and I are more than willing to help out."

"Thank you," she said, giving him a quick hug.

"We better get out there," he said, and she nodded. They walked out to where the ceremony was and waited behind Ginny.

The music started playing and Luna began to walk, followed closely behind by Ginny. Hermione finally looked up and caught Harry's eyes. He was smiling, never taking his eyes off her. She smiled back, not noticing anyone else around them.

Then, everyone stood up, and she and Joseph started to walk down the aisle. Her eyes never left Harry's until they were face to face.

"Who gives this woman to this man?" Kingsley said.

"Her mother and I do," Joseph said. He then turned and hugged Hermione. "I love you."

"I love you, too," she said, her eyes watering as she broke away from him. He nodded to Harry before taking a seat next to his wife. Harry held his hand out to Hermione, and she took it, moving to stand across from him.

"We are gathered here today to unite this man and this woman in holy matrimony. Since these two are already wed, this will be a shortened version of the traditional wedding. I would like to start off by saying a few things about these two. I have known Harry and Hermione for a little over three years as hard as that is to believe. I first met Harry at his aunt and uncle's house after having been through everything that he had gone through, and I met Hermione at Grimmauld Place. Together they have been through the worst, and now they're here, celebrating their one-year wedding anniversary. I have to say that, ever since you found out, neither one of you have ever looked happier. Hermione, would you like to say your vows to Harry?"

She gave Ginny her bouquet before taking the piece of parchment from her. She opened it with shaky hands. "Before we found out about our bond, I never once thought we would be together. Everyone else ever since our fourth year had assumed, we were together. Seven months ago we found out that we were married, and I feel in love with you. As our summer went on, I somehow fell more in love with you. You are my best friend, my husband, and the love of my life. I can't wait for what the future holds for us. Happy one-year anniversary."

Ron held Harry's out, but he brushed it off. "Hermione Potter, you have been with me through everything. Even when everyone turned away from me, you were there, trying everything you could to make sure I succeed. When I locked myself away during Christmas break in fifth year, it was you who got me to come out. We were always there for each other, Hermione. We make sense, and we always have. I think I may have fallen in love with you back at Christmastime last year when we were alone and unsure of where to go. I love you. I will always love you. Happy anniversary."

Her eyes watered, and he reached over to wipe her tears off.

"May we have the rings, please?" Kingsley said, and Ginny gave Harry Hermione's ring while Ron gave Hermione Harry's ring. "The rings will bind you together forever. Harry, place this ring on her finger, and say 'with this ring, I thee wed."

He lifted Hermione's left hand and slid the ring onto her finger. Kingsley instructed her to the do the same.

"I now pronounce you husband and wife. Kiss your bride."

Harry leaned down and lightly pressed their lips together. Clapping erupted around them, and they broke away, smiling at each other. He gestured towards the house, and they walked back into the house, unable to wipe the smiles off their faces.

"You look so beautiful," he said, running his eyes up and down her body. "I couldn't stop looking at you."

"I love you," she said, wrapping her arms around his waist and burying her head in his chest. He kissed her head.

"I love you both so much," he said back, laying his head on top of hers.

"You told my dad."

"He told me how you and your mum were everything to him. Even though we've been together, he just wanted to make sure you would be well taken care of. I had to tell him."

"How'd he react?"

"He was happy." She smiled against his chest. "He's ready for his granddaughter to be here."

"I had to alter my dress. It wouldn't go over my stomach."

"She's getting big," he said, placing his hand over her stomach.

"Sorry to interrupt," Neville said, and they turned towards him, "but we're ready to take pictures."

"We'll be out there in a minute," Harry said, and he nodded and turned and walked back out the door. He leaned down and pressed their lips together.

"Let's go take the pictures," she said, pulling away. He nodded, and they walked out towards the area they designated for their pictures. After they finished their pictures, they moved to the dining area and sat at their table, looking incredibly happy.

"Before we eat," Harry said, standing up, "I wanted to thank Bill and Fleur for not only allowing us to have our wedding here, but helping us set up. We came here expecting to help only to discover that everything was done when we got here. Also to Molly and Arthur for making the dinner and the cake. Lastly, for everyone who helped with the wedding and were in the wedding. Thank you."

"Thank you," Hermione echoed back.

"You are very welcome, Harry and Hermione. Now, I believe it is time to dive into mum's delicious dinner," Bill said. "The happy couple should go first."

Harry and Hermione stood up and got their plates. Everyone else followed behind them. When they returned to their seats Hermione leaned over to Harry.

"This has been an amazing day."

"Just think in a few days we get to start baby shopping."

"For what?" Ginny asked, as she and Neville joined them at the table. They shook their heads.

"Not yet."

"When?"

"After we cut the cake we're going to announce it."

"Congratulations," Luna said, when she and Ron finally joined them.

"Thank you."

"I want to make a toast," Harry said, as he and Hermione raised their pumpkin juices. Everyone else raised their butterbeers or firewhiskey. "I want to toast to friendship, because without any of you, I would most definitely not be here. It took all of us to stop the war. To friendship."

"To friendship," they said, clinking their glasses together.

"So no firewhiskey for quite a while, huh, mate?" Ron asked, taking a sip.

"Hermione can't have any and neither will I. I like pumpkin juice better than I do firewhiskey."

She kissed his cheek. "You're a great husband."

They spent the next several minutes finishing their dinners. After they finished Ron, Luna, Ginny and Neville took to the dance floor while Harry and Hermione stayed back.

"It's almost time to tell everyone," she said, grabbing for his hand.

"I think they'll be ok with it," he replied, kissing her hand.

"You look really nice," she said, running her hand across his robes.

"You look so beautiful. It was worth the wait to see you in that dress."

"You don't even want to know how I got my hair like this," she said with a laugh.

"I should have asked you to the Yule Ball."

"This is our Yule Ball. Christmas Eve four years later, and I'll tell you I am having a much better time now right now than I was then."

"Ron certainly is," Harry said, nodding his head over to Ron's direction. She turned towards him and smiled as she saw Ron and Luna on the dance. Ron whispered something to her, and Luna let out a small laugh.

"He looks a lot happier."

"And Neville is still with Ginny."

"They look so happy together," she said with a small smile.

"He told me before we left Hogwarts that he could really see a future with her. I think he's planning on purposing at the end of the term."

"I could see that," she said, nodding her head. "She and Luna told me earlier than they plan on using our daughter as their flower girl. Well, in their own words, a flower girl or a ring bearer since they don't know the sex."

He chuckled. "I think they can wait until she's born at least."

"Not much longer now," she said, looking down at her concealed stomach.

"You're going to be a great mum," he said, kissing her cheek.

"And you will be a wonderful father."

"Speaking of father," Harry said, as Andromeda walked up to them.

"Hi, Teddy," Hermione said, taking him from Andromeda. "I haven't seen you in so long."

"I wanted to say congratulations."

"Thank you," they said together.

"I figured you would want to see him for a little while."

"We do, thank you. We've missed him so much."

"I'll give you some time," she said, nodding her head. She then turned and walked away.

"He looks so much like Remus," she said, kissing Teddy's head.

"I know," Harry said sadly.

"Hey, Teddy, guess what," Hermione said quietly. "You're going to have a baby sister."

"They'll only be a year apart," he said, ruffling Teddy's hair.

"You're getting so big so quick. We've been away from you for too long."

"Hopefully we won't have to be away from him for much longer," he replied, kissing her head.

Molly walked up to them, smiling as she did so. "Whenever you're ready to cut the cake you can. Everyone has finished dinner."

"Thank you, Molly," Harry said. He turned to Hermione who nodded before they stood up.

"I'll take Teddy so you can eat. It's time to cut the cake!" she announced, taking Teddy from Hermione's arms. They moved over to the cake. Harry picked up the knife and waited for everyone to gather around the cake before he and Hermione cut the first piece.

"I've been craving for cake all day," she whispered, and he chuckled.

"Here is your piece," he said, handing her the plate. He then cut his and they went back to their table. "Are you about ready?"

"I'm ready," she said. They waited until everyone had their piece of cake before Harry tapped his glass, and they stood up.

"Hermione and I have an announcement to make."

Everyone stared at them, wondering what they were about to announce. They turned to look at each other, smiling softly.

"I'm pregnant!" she finally said. Everyone who didn't know mouths fell open.

"You're pregnant, Hermione?" her mother said, and she nodded.

"I'm four-months pregnant."

"What is it?" Luna asked.

"It's a girl!" they said together.

Ginny stood up and gave them a hug. "It's a girl. That's so exciting."

Melinda, Joseph, Molly and Arthur walked up to them.

"Why didn't you tell us?" Melinda asked.

"We wanted to tell everyone in person."

"Have the both of you thought this through? Four months would mean you would be having the baby before Hogwarts ended," Arthur said.

"What will you do?" Molly asked, completely in shock.

"We're working on that," she said, and he nodded.

"We love our daughter so much. We're so happy about the pregnancy and we can't wait for her to get here."

"We're having a granddaughter?" Melinda asked, and they nodded.

"She'll be here in May," Hermione said, giving her mother a hug.

"That means we'll be having our first grandchild, too, Molly," Arthur said, smiling at his wife. Harry smiled.

"We're having a granddaughter!" Molly said, giving Harry a bone crushing hug.

"Congratulations," Joseph said, giving them a hug.

"Thank you," they said quietly.

"I was definitely not expecting this," Melinda said, and they laughed. "You look so little for four months."

"Oh," she said, and pointed her wand at her stomach. The charm removed itself, and her bump came into view.

"How adorable," Molly said, pressing her hand to Hermione's stomach.

Everyone else stood up to offer their congratulations. Harry and Hermione were beaming, unable to stop the smiles that were forming on their faces. McGonagall walked up to them last.

"I want to talk to the two of you about this."

"About what?" they asked.

"About the baby."

"What about the baby?"

"Sit down," she said, gesturing to the chairs. Ron, Luna, Neville and Ginny stood up and walked over to the dance floor. She took one of their seats. "I have known for a little while. Poppy told me a few weeks ago. I have been thinking about this, and I have come up with a possible solution."

"What is it?"

"Near the end of May, you two will give up your head duties and no longer live at the castle. You can keep the baby with someone for the day while you return to the school through floo powder for your courses and N.E.W.T.s, and at the end of the school day, you return home to take care of your daughter. That way, you still get to be with her, and you will still get your coursework done."

"You would allow us to do that?" Hermione asked.

"I would. It would need to be kept as quiet as it could be. Obviously losing the head boy and girl will be noticed."

"Can we choose our replacements?" Harry asked, and she nodded.

"Who do you have in mind?"

"Neville and Luna."

"I agree," Hermione said, nodding her head.

"I'm assuming you're agreeing with this plan?" she said, looking over her glasses. They turned to look at each other.

"I think it's our best option, Hermione," he said, and she nodded.

"We would get to see the baby every day and still be able to get our schoolwork done."

"So you agree?" he asked, and she nodded in agreement.

"Absolutely."

"I figured you would," McGonagall said, smiling at them. "Congratulations to the both of you."

"Thank you, professor," they said, and she nodded at them and stood up. They finished their pieces of cake before he held his hand out to her and led her to the dance floor.

"Everything seems to be going our way for a change," he said with a smile, and she let out a laugh.

"We're married, and our baby girl will be here soon."

"We grew up quick."

"Not like either one of us had much of a childhood."

"Our daughter will have a much better one."

"Her daddy will make sure of it," Hermione replied with a smile.

She laid her head on his shoulder as they swayed slowly to the song. A lot has changed in the past year, but she wouldn't have it any other way. The war was over, Voldemort was gone. She and Harry were married with a daughter on the way. Before the next year they would be graduating Hogwarts.

Like Harry said, everything seemed to be going their way for a change.

## Chapter Eighteen:

Christmas Day came and went, and the holiday break seemed to be flying by. Harry awoke the morning of December 27th, chuckling slightly as he saw Hermione sprawled out across their bed.

'I see how it is,' he thought, carefully getting out of the bed, 'you take all of the bed and I get this small area of it.'

She then rolled over to the other side of the bed and curled into a ball. He gave her a look, but the corners of his mouth curled into a smile.

'Minx.'

He walked into the bathroom to use the loo before walking back out. She started to stir, and he waited for a minute as she opened her eyes and sat up in the bed.

"Good morning."

"Good morning."

He moved to sit next to her, and she laid her head on his shoulder. He wrapped his arm around her shoulder and kissed her head. "How's the baby?"

"She's being very quiet in there," she said, placing her hand on her stomach. "I've felt her move a few times."

"Five more months," he said with a smile.

"I'm still not ready for childbirth," she laughed.

"I'll be right by your side."

"I know you will." She thought something over for a minute. "Do you know that this is our only Christmas that it will be just the two of us? Next Christmas we'll have a daughter to celebrate with."

"I can't wait."

"That doesn't scare you, though?" she asked, and he gave her a look. "Only five more months of it just being us, then we'll have someone to take care of for the rest of our lives."

He leaned in and pressed a kiss to her lips. "It does scare me, Hermione. I have loved the time that we have had together, but it's time for us to move on. It's time for us to focus on our baby and our futures. We have five months left together. We should make it count. After that, it's all about her. We have Teddy and we've been watching him since he was two months old. It's a scary journey, but we've faced a hell of a lot worse. If we're together, nothing can stop us."

She wrapped her arms around him and buried her head into his shoulder. He kissed her head.

"I'm glad I'm on this journey with you," she whispered.

"It all started with a troll, and it'll end with a family," he replied, and she let out a small laugh. "We were meant to be together, Hermione. It just took a little pushing for it to happen."

"If you could turn back time, would you?"

"No," he said. "I've went back in time once before. I don't want to do that again. We have the rest of our lives together. We don't need to be together at the scariest and most stressful points of our lives."

She smiled. "I do wonder sometimes if our relationship would have lasted during the war. Some part of me is kind of happy we got together after the war was over."

"We were able to focus on us instead of the battle. Had we gotten together earlier, our relationship would have been much more stressful and may not have even lasted."

"I love you," she said, lightly pressing their lips together.

"I love you, too," he said back, pressing their lips together again. She wrapped her arms around his neck and fell back on the bed, where they spent the rest of the morning proving how much they love one another.

"You're getting so big," Molly said, smiling at Hermione's bump. They smiled back.

"She's growing."

"Molly, can we talk to you and Arthur?" Harry asked.

"Is something wrong?"

"We want to ask you something."

"Let me go get him," she said, and they nodded. "Take a seat."

They sat down at the table and waited in silence for them to return. After a few moments they came back and sat across from them.

"What can we do for you?"

"Hermione and I want to ask you something."

"Harry and I have been talking and we would like to know if you would want to the watch the baby for us during the day while we were at Hogwarts."

"You want us to watch your baby?"

"We would love for you to. We know she'll be in good hands while we go back to Hogwarts. It would only be for the day and we would come and pick her up after we returned from Hogwarts."

"Or we might have a better solution," Arthur said, looking over at his wife. "You two live with us for as long as you like. That way, the baby isn't traveling back and forth, and she'll be in a comfortable place. Everything that Molly and I would need would be here. It's completely your choice, but it's an offer."

"I think that's a great idea," Hermione said, turning to Harry.

"I do, too."

"Arthur and I would love to take care of her. We want you to finish Hogwarts. After each day you come home and take care of her."

"We really appreciate that," Hermione said, rubbing her stomach.

"We know you want out of Grimmauld Place and are trying to find a house. I would wait for a little while longer. Come live with us, and you can get out of that house until you find one of your own."

"Thank you," Harry said.

"You don't have the furniture yet, do you?"

"Not yet."

"There's a great place not far from Diagon Alley."

"We're trying to keep this quiet."

"I could go to Diagon Alley and pick you up a catalog," Arthur said. "You order what you want, and we can go pick it up. Molly and I will even put it in our names."

"Same with clothing," she said.

"I'm sure my mum is already at muggle stores," Hermione said with a laugh. "Thank you both so much."

"You have no idea how much we appreciate this."

"It's our pleasure. This is our granddaughter and we want to make sure she is all set."

"I do have a question. What are you planning on doing when Hermione goes into labor?"

"Madam Pomfrey told us that Hermione and the baby have to remain in the hospital for two days, and we planned on staying home at least one day so Hermione can get some rest, so we plan on missing a few days of classes."

"Ginny and Luna promised to help us stay caught up."

"As long as you're prepared for your exams, schoolwork shouldn't be such an issue."

"We're studying as hard as we can. We'll be prepared for them as much as we can be."

"You two will succeed," Arthur said. "We know you will."

"Why don't Arthur and I run to Diagon Alley and pick you up some catalogs. Neville and Ginny are about while you wait."

"Thank you," they said, and Molly and Arthur went to the fireplace and disappeared in the flames.

"I'm so glad they're helping us out so much," she said, reaching for his hand.

"I knew they would. This makes it so much easier on us."

"I'm so ready for her to be here. It feels like it's taking forever."

"You're only four months, Hermione," he said with a laugh. "Is Ron here?"

"I think he's at Luna's. Ginny and Neville are here. Let's see if they want to talk."

"I'll go see," he said, and she waited for a few minutes before he walked down alone, a disgusted look on his face.

"What's the matter?"

"I've heard things I shouldn't be hearing," he replied.

"Oh," she said, pulling a face. "Sorry."

"Are you hungry?" he asked, shaking his head. She nodded, and he made her a plate of the lunch Molly had served earlier.

"They're brave," she said. "I wouldn't want Molly overhearing us doing that."

"They must have figured out that they left." He gave her the plate.

"Are you not hungry?"

"Not really," he said, picking at the small amount of food he had put on his own plate.

"What are you thinking about?"

"What I'm going to do after Hogwarts."

"What do you mean? You were going into the program."

"If I go into the program, I may not be able to see you or the baby that much. I would be busy studying or training for something that I may or may not be able to get into. Its three years of studying before we get selected. My daughter would be three years old by the time I finally get selected. I wouldn't get to see you or her that much."

She dropped her fork and reached over to grasp his hand. "I thought this is what you wanted to do."

"It is."

"Harry, you gave up going into the program so you could come to Hogwarts with me and make our marriage work. You can't keep giving things you want to do up. If you want to go into the program, you need to go."

"What about you?" he asked.

"What about me?"

"You're working so hard to get into Magical Law. If I go into the program, you won't be able to start your own job unless we get someone to watch the baby."

"Don't worry about me," she said, running her thumb across his hand. "It won't take as long to get into my job as it will with yours. I'll stay home with her, and you go into the program."

"Are you sure?" he asked, and she nodded.

"You've already sacrificed for us. It's my turn now."

"I love you," he said, kissing her hand.

"We love you, too. You're a great husband and father. If you don't want to enter the program you don't have to. It's completely your choice. Your daughter and I are behind you no matter what."

He squeezed her hand. "We might be starting this journey a little earlier than we expected to, but I'm glad we're starting it."

"Me, too," she whispered, smiling at him.

They finished their meals and waited in the living room for Molly and Arthur to return. A short time later Ginny and Neville walked down the stairs.

"Hi," she said with a smile.

"Hi there," Hermione said with a smirk. "Did you know your mum and dad left?"

"Did you hear?" she asked in horror. Harry nodded.

"Next time don't forget the silencing spell. I casted one for you."

"Sorry about that," Neville said, rubbing at his neck while his cheeks turned scarlet.

"I guess it’s better that you forgot the silencing spell than protection," Hermione said, rubbing her stomach.

"We are definitely a lot more careful about that spell since you two found out," Ginny said, and Neville nodded in agreement.

"Your parents should be back any minute. They went to get Hermione and I catalogs for the baby."

"Furniture shopping?" Ginny asked, sitting in the chair. They nodded.

"This is the only time we have before she gets here."

The fireplace roared to life and Molly stepped out followed by Arthur.

"Here are the catalogs," they said, handing them to them. "We also got her something. We couldn't resist."

She gave them the wrapped package. Hermione tore the wrapping off and smiled.

It was a pink blanket with quaffles, snitches, goal posts and bludgers on it.

"This is adorable," she said, rubbing the soft blanket. "You shouldn't have."

"We wanted to," she said.

"Thank you," Harry said.

"That should be everything you need," Arthur said. "I believe the prices are on it, too."

"Thank you so much," Hermione said, flipping through the catalog.

"We have a lot to get done," Harry said, and she nodded in agreement.

"Quite a bit."

"The good news is that you still have some time."

"We can look over them tonight after Teddy goes to bed," Harry said, and Hermione nodded in agreement.

"We need to go pick him up. Thanks for all of your help."

"Anytime."

They bid their goodbyes before they took off to Andromeda's house. The house was oddly quiet, and Harry looked around, searching for her.

"Andromeda?" he said quietly and watched as she walked out of the bedroom.

"Hello, Harry, Hermione. I'm sorry it's so quiet in here. Teddy's still asleep."

"We can come back."

"No. He's been asleep for a while he should be waking soon. Can I get you anything?"

"We're ok," Hermione said, looking at Harry. He nodded in agreement. "Thank you."

"You're looking good," she said, gesturing towards Hermione's stomach. "You're tiny for four months."

"Which is odd because I eat everything in sight," she said with a laugh.

"It must be difficult going to Hogwarts while you're pregnant."

"It's very stressful and I'm starting to feel tired a lot more than I was. I can hardly stay awake to do my homework sometimes and I'm just barely in my second trimester."

"When I was pregnant with Nymphadora I was always tired. It wears you down especially the further you get into it."

Crying came from the next room, and she stood up. "Someone is awake from his nap. Let me go get him."

She disappeared for a few minutes before she returned with Teddy, who was still struggling to wake up. Harry smiled at his godson as Teddy was put into his arms.

"Did you have a good nap?"

Teddy rested his head on Harry's shoulder. He gently rubbed his godson's back.

"Here's everything you should need. He should be getting hungry soon."

"How are you, little guy?" Hermione asked, gently rubbing his hair.

"We should probably get going before he gets hungry," Harry said, and she nodded in agreement. "Thank you for letting us have him for a few days."

"Anytime. He absolutely adores you."

"We adore him," she said. "We've missed him so much at Hogwarts."

"You'll get to spend more time with him after Hogwarts," she said, and they nodded in agreement.

"How's it going?" Harry asked, entering the bathroom.

"It's great. He loves bath time."

Harry smiled at Teddy's happy face. He waved his toy around.

"I've got a bottle ready for him. He should be getting tired soon."

"He's done in here," she said, and he grabbed the towel off the sink and held it out. Hermione took Teddy out of the infant tub and Harry wrapped him in the towel, his heart breaking at Teddy's loud screeching.

"I'm sorry, Teddy," he said, casting a heating spell on him. Teddy calmed down and Harry took him to the bed where his sleeper and diaper was.

"Is that better?" he asked him, removing the towel. He tickled Teddy's stomach, smiling at the laugh. "I'm guessing that's a yes."

He put his diaper on and put him into his sleeper, casting a drying spell over his hair. He then picked him up and grabbed the bottle.

"I don't think he likes the part after the bath," Hermione said, walking into the bedroom.

"He's exhausted," he replied, watching as Teddy's eyes began to droop.

"He's not the only one," she said, sitting on the bed.

A few moments later Teddy stopped sucking on the bottle. Harry carefully got up and walked over to the crib, placing him inside of it.

"Goodnight, Teddy," he whispered, kissing his head.

"Now we can start this," she said quietly, handing him one of the catalogs.

They spent the next half-hour quietly looking through the catalogs. Harry was filling out the order form as they went, and they were both very happy with how quickly they were getting things done.

"What do you think about this one?" Harry asked, showing her the picture. She nodded.

"I love that one."

He circled it in the catalog. "I can't believe we're almost done."

"It's a good start," she said, looking through her own. "I know my parents are getting some supplies for us as well."

"Do we have everything that we need?" he asked.

"I believe we do. She's all ready to go."

"I'll finish filling this out then and head to Gringotts tomorrow to get the money. Arthur said he would stop by to drop it off."

"Good," she said, handing him her catalog. She then laid down in the bed and let out a breath. She smiled when his hand moved to her head and he started to rub it.

"After I finish this I'm going to check on Teddy."

"Andromeda said he's sleeping through the night, but we should still check up on him just to be safe."

"Alright," he said a few minutes later, putting the order form into the envelope. "We just purchased our daughter's furniture."

"I'm so glad," she said, struggling to stay awake.

"I'm going to check on Teddy, and we can go to bed, ok?" he asked, and she nodded. He got out of the bed and walked over to the crib, happy to see that Teddy was still sound asleep. He turned back around and saw that Hermione was also sound asleep, snoring softly. The corners of his mouth curled as he covered her with the blanket and kissed her head.

"You are making mummy so tired," he whispered to her stomach, "but I know she wouldn't have it any other way. We love you so much."

He climbed into the bed next to her and fell asleep, resting his hand on her stomach.

Just a few days before they were due back at Hogwarts, Hermione smiled as she folded the onesies, extremely excited that the furniture had arrived this morning. She held one up to her face and looked at it.

It was a red and gold onesie with the words 'daddy's little seeker' written on it.

Harry's face lit up as he saw it earlier. It was a surprise from her, and he hasn't stopped smiling since.

The bedroom door opened, and Harry walked in, holding a mug in his hand. She gave him a look before he handed her the mug, and she smiled.

"You made me hot chocolate?"

"Your mum said it's your favorite winter drink, so I made you some."

She took a sip, enjoying the feeling of the warm beverage. She put the mug onto the nightstand. "I have been craving this. Thank you."

He stretched his arms over his head, letting out a yawn. "I'm beat."

"I'm so tired anymore," she said, laying her head on his shoulder. "This one is wearing mummy out."

She rubbed her stomach. He kissed her head. "I can't wait to see her."

"I wonder who she'll look like more."

"I think she'll look just like her mother. Brown hair and brown eyes."

"I think she'll look like me, but with black hair, and hopefully those green eyes of yours."

"I guess we'll have to wait and see," he replied with a smile, resting his hand on her stomach.

She sat up in the bed, letting out a breath as she did so. "I thought I still had a few more weeks before things became uncomfortable."

He bent down and kissed her stomach. "Well, she does come first…"

"Don't use my words against me," she said with a laugh, lightly smacking his head.

"Don't listen to your mum," he laughed. "Be as comfortable as you want in there."

"If only you could have kids," she remarked, but couldn't stop the smile that formed on her face as she saw Harry talking to the baby.

"I know you're starting to feel uncomfortable, and it'll only get worse as time goes on, but I promise you I will do whatever you want or get whatever you want. I just want you to feel more comfortable."

"Thank you," she said, laying her cheek on his head when he nuzzled it into the crook of her neck.

Hermione felt something in her stomach, and she stared down at it for a minute before she felt it again. Her mouth opened as she tapped on Harry's arm.

"What is it?"

"She's kicking!"

He immediately pressed his hand to her stomach and waited for a minute before he felt the soft kick. His face lit up as his mouth formed a smile.

"This is incredible."

"She's a kicker," Hermione said, pressing her hand to her stomach. "We need a name for her, Harry."

"We'll come up with a good one," he said, laying his hand on top of hers.

She stared at him, thinking something over in her mind. "What about Lily?"

"Lily?"

"After your mum," she said softly. "Look at everything your mother has done for you. She gave her life so you could be saved. Without her doing everything she could to save you, who knows where any of us would be right now. She deserves to be remembered. I would love for our daughter to be named after her."

He flashed her a smile. "Are you sure?"

"Positive."

He leaned down and kissed her stomach again. "I love you so much, Lily."

## Chapter Nineteen:

"Dinner was delicious, Melinda," Harry said, as they all ventured back into the living room.

"I'm glad you enjoyed it."

"I really miss your cooking while I'm at school," Hermione said, and Melinda smiled.

"I want to wish the best of luck to both of you," she said, wrapping her arms around her daughter and son-in-law. "Well, all three of you, I suppose."

"Can you tell I'm pregnant yet?" Hermione replied with a small laugh.

"You're getting big," she said, pressing her hand against Hermione's stomach. "Has she kicked yet?"

"She did last night. She wouldn't stop kicking."

"Have you come up with a name yet?" Joseph asked.

"We have actually," Harry said, and Hermione nodded in agreement.

"We've decided to name her Lily, after Harry's mother."

"That's beautiful," Melinda said. "After your mum, Harry?"

"My mum's name was Lily Potter. She did a lot for everyone in the wizarding world."

"What do you mean?" Joseph said.

Harry lifted his bangs up and presented his scar. "You know about the war, but you don't know what happened beforehand. On Halloween night in 1981, Voldemort found out that I was on the only one who could stop him. One of my parents friends-his name was Peter Pettigrew-betrayed them and told Voldemort where to find us.

"He came to our house that night, and my dad told my mum to take me and run away. She locked herself in my nursery and had to listen as he killed my father. Knowing that she was trapped, she did what she could to try and comfort me. Voldemort broke down the door and he was going to let her go free. She refused, and he eventually killed her. When he turned to me, something happened. The spell didn't work. It backfired and hit him instead and left me with this scar.

"I found out later that it was because of her that it happened. Her love for me-something that Voldemort never understood-saved my life and the life of the wizarding world. Because of her, I was able to stop Voldemort once and for all. Our world is safe again. Hermione really wanted our daughter to have her name, and I agreed."

"I'm so sorry for your loss, Harry," Melinda said.

He nodded, unsure of what to say. Hermione reached over and grabbed for his hand.

"She and James Potter are definitely heroes, along with their son."

"Along with my wife. Without you, I wouldn't have gotten anywhere."

"We were going to save this until she was born, but I can't wait any longer," Melinda said, wiping her eyes as she stood up. She came back downstairs a few minutes later and handed Hermione a wrapped present. She tore the wrapping off and smiled.

"Mum," she said, running her hand over the frame. "You took this picture of Harry and I when we were in Australia."

"I did."

"And there's a blank frame," she said, pulling the second frame out.

"Because I plan on taking a picture of all three of you in the hospital. That way, you have a picture of the beginning of your marriage, and you have a picture of your daughter on the day she was born."

"Mum," she said, handing the frames to Harry. She stood up and hugged her mother. "Thank you."

"Speaking of," Harry said, opening the folder they had brought with them. "We have these for you."

"Good thinking. This pregnancy brain is messing with me," she said, sitting next to him. She pulled some pictures out and handed them to her mother. "We got our wedding pictures back."

"We had them still these ones in case you had people over. They won't move at all."

"Awe," Melinda said, looking at the pictures. "What beautiful pictures."

"When we have our own house, we're going to put ours up."

"Have you been able to find anything?"

"Molly and Arthur are going to let us live with them for a little while. They're going to watch Lily for us while we're at Hogwarts during the day and we'll come home after classes."

"That sounds like a good plan."

"Plus, we can get out of that house," Harry said, and Hermione nodded in agreement. "Lily will be in a safe and comfortable place and that makes us feel so much better."

"I'm sure that takes a lot of stress off you both as well. It will be hard to leave her for your exams, but you're doing the right thing. You need to finish school."

"School and Lily are our first priorities," Harry said. "Our focus during the day is school and during the night is her. We'll do whatever it takes to make sure everything gets done and we're ready for our N.E.W.T.s. We're studying extremely hard."

"You'll do fine," Joseph replied. "The biggest thing is staying relaxed and not stressing out about them."

"Absolutely," Melinda said, nodding in agreement.

"And not freaking out when all of your scores but one are 'outstandings'," Harry remarked, grinning at her. She rolled her eyes.

"That was very upsetting to me."

"She has always put that much stress on herself," Joseph said, shaking his head. "Even before Hogwarts."

"He, on the other hand, wasn't all that upset about his scores."

"That you know of," he shot back. She looked at him.

"What do you mean?"

"I had gotten an E for Potions, and Snape required an O. Without that class I wouldn't have been able to be an Auror. It worried me very much."

"I didn't know that."

"You're not the only one who worries."

"You just doesn't like showing emotion," she replied, rolling her eyes playfully.

"Pregnancy's made you mean."

"Just wait until you get in the delivery room," Joseph said, and Melinda nodded.

"I yelled at your father I don't know how many times."

"At least she was a quick delivery."

"That's true. She was early, too."

"That's good news for me, right?" Hermione asked, rubbing her stomach.

"Not necessarily. Just because you were early doesn't mean that she will be."

She dropped her head. "You're supposed to be making me feel better."

"I'm not?"

"Not at all."

"Well I apologize."

"That didn't sound like you meant it."

"I'll make you feel better," Harry said, wrapping his arm around her shoulder.

"Would you like any dessert?"

"I'd love some," Hermione said, standing up. She looked back at Harry who shook his head before following her mother into the kitchen.

"How do you feel?" she asked, cutting her daughter a piece of pie.

"Horrible. My back hurts so much."

"You'll feel better soon," she said, handing her daughter the plate.

"Really?"

"When she's out of you, yeah."

"Thanks, mum."

"Not much longer," she said, rubbing her daughter's back. Hermione dropped the fork.

"Is this apple pie?"

"Yes, it is. Why?"

She immediately stood up and ran out of the kitchen. Melinda followed her, and Harry immediately stood up when she ran past him.

"What happened?"

"I gave her some apple pie."

"Apples have been making her feel a little sick."

"Hermione, I'm sorry!" she called out, feeling horrible. Harry reached into his bag and pulled out a vial.

"Excuse me," he said, rushing to the bathroom. He gave her the vial to her and watched as she drank it.

"Thank you," she said, as he helped her up.

"I'm so sorry, honey," Melinda said, appearing in the doorway.

"You didn't know. I should have asked you."

"Let's go sit down," he said, leading her back to the living room.

"I'm so hungry, and I feel like I can't eat anything."

"That's pregnancy, Hermione," Melinda said, kissing her head.

"We should probably get going, Harry," she said, turning to him. "Thanks for dinner, mum, dad."

"We'll miss you, pumpkin," Joseph said, giving his daughter a hug.

"I'll miss you, too," she said, turning to hug her mother.

"We'll be at the train station tomorrow morning to see the both of you off."

"See you then," Harry said, nodding his head. They bid them goodbye before they apparated back to The Burrow.

"Ronald! Let's go!" Molly called up the stairs. Hermione laughed behind her hand.

"Leave it to my brother to be taking forever," Ginny said, rolling her eyes.

"Go ahead and pack up the cars," Molly said. "I'll get him down here."

They nodded and walked out to the cars. Harry put the trunks in the car while Hermione got in. He got in next to her, smiling softly.

"Nearly done," he said, kissing her hand.

"We're getting so close."

The door opened and Ron climbed in. "We should be leaving any minute."

"What took you so long?"

"I kept forgetting things."

"Shocking," she said, shaking her head.

"We didn't see you much, mate. Where have you been?"

"I stayed with Luna for most of the break."

"How are things going?"

"Good. I didn't think our relationship would last this long, to be quite honest."

"You looked so happy at our wedding. I can still picture the smile that was on your face."

"She's great," he said, looking away from them. Hermione was unable to hide a smile.

The car eventually came to a stop, and they all stepped out. Harry removed their trunks before meeting Molly, Ginny and Neville at the other car.

"Let's get going," she said, and they entered the station. Hermione found her parents waiting by the door, and she quickly gave them a hug.

"We can talk on the barrier," she said, and they nodded in agreement. They quickly walked up to it and disappeared behind it.

"You ok?" Harry asked, and she nodded. They put their trunks onto the train before they turned back to the parents.

"Almost there," Molly said, giving them both a hug. "Contact me as soon as possible."

Harry nodded, understanding what she meant. "I'll do what I can."

The train whistle blew, and Ron and Ginny gave their mother a hug before they boarded the train. Harry and Hermione quickly turned to Melinda and Joseph.

"Good luck," her mother said, giving Hermione a tight hug.

"Thanks, mum."

"Finish strong," Joseph said, shaking Harry's hand.

"We'll do whatever it takes."

The train whistle blew again. They said their goodbyes before they boarded the train and found an empty compartment. They waved goodbye to everyone before the train took off around the corner and disappeared out of sight.

"How was your break, Luna?" Hermione asked.

"It was wonderful. My father has taken a real liking to Ron."

"That's good," Harry said, glancing over to him. He shrugged. "I was worried on how Hermione's parents would react to me as well."

"They love you," she replied, rubbing his back.

"I don't think Neville's grandmother likes me," Ginny said. He let out a sigh.

"She likes you."

"Are you sure about that?" she asked, clearly annoyed.

"Hermione, how's the baby?" Neville asked, changing the subject.

"She's good. She kicked for the first time two nights ago."

"That's incredible."

"It was amazing," Harry said. "She's amazing."

"I think I see who's more eager for her to be here," Luna said with a smile.

"He's one very excited man," Hermione said, smiling at Harry.

"Who do you think she'll look like more?"

"I think she'll look like Hermione."

"And I think she'll look like Harry."

"I think she will look like Harry, mainly because I believe she'll get the black hair," Ginny said, looking between them.

"We have to keep playing the waiting game," he said, resting his head against the back of the seat.

"No one wants her out faster than me," Hermione said with a laugh. "I am so uncomfortable."

"Not much longer," he said, rubbing her arm.

"Four-and-a-half months. That's quite a long time to me."

"Would you like to play Exploding Snap, Harry?" Ginny asked, and he nodded and sat on the floor across from her.

"It feels weird to say this," Hermione said, walking around their common room, "but I have missed this place."

"This feels like home to us. I've missed it, too."

"How do you think they'll react?" she asked, sitting in the chair.

"I think they'll be very happy. They know we're doing this for Lily."

"We're doing everything we can," she said to her stomach, rubbing the bump. "Everything for you, Lily."

The portrait hole opened, and Neville and Luna walked through, smiling at them.

"You wanted to talk to us?" he said.

"Please, sit down," Hermione said, gesturing towards the couch. They did. "Harry and I have some exciting news to tell you."

"Professor McGonagall talked to us at the wedding about what we're going to do after we have the baby, and she came up with a good solution."

"What is it?" Luna asked.

"At the beginning of May, Harry and I are going to give up our head duties and we'll be living away from the castle. We'll come for school and go home when there's no classes."

"You're going to give up your head duties?"

"Who will be Head Boy and Girl?"

"You two," Hermione said. They looked at her in shock. "We asked Professor McGonagall if you could be our replacements after we go."

"You want us?"

"Of course," Harry said, sitting on the coffee table. "We trust the both of you more than you could imagine."

"From this point forward, you'll be assisting us with the head duties, and you'll eventually take over."

"Thank you," Luna said.

"Thank you. With you two helping, we get to see Lily every day."

"Lily?" Neville asked.

"Her name is Lily," Harry said with a smile. "Hermione decided to name her that."

"After Harry's mum."

"It's a beautiful name," she said with a smile. "Lily Potter."

"You both look so happy," Neville remarked, and Harry leaned in, to kiss Hermione's head.

"We love her so much."

"Professor McGonagall told us to give you these," she said, handing them badges. "You are now a Head Boy and Girl."

"Thank you both," Luna said, looking at the badge.

"Thank you," Harry said. "You're really helping us out."

Rumors began to spread at the fact that there were now four Head Boys and Girls. Through all the speculation, though, no one dared to question any of them. Harry and Hermione were extremely grateful for that, as they didn't have any idea on what to tell people.

Their thoughts were disrupted, however, when it was time for Hermione's next check-up. Entering the Hospital Wing, they disappeared behind one of the curtains and she removed her shirt and charm.

"Twenty weeks," Madam Pomfrey said, suddenly appearing. "You're halfway through it. How do you feel?"

"I'm starting to feel really uncomfortable."

"Let's take a look," she said, waving her wand over Hermione's stomach. "Everything is looking good. She's a little small but nothing to be worried about. I think she's going to be a small baby."

"My mum said I was small, too," Hermione said, smiling.

"Would you like to see?" she asked to Harry, who nodded and stood up.

"Wow," he said, smiling down at her stomach.

"Can you see her?" she asked, and he nodded.

"She is really tiny."

"Can you see what she looks like?"

"Not really," he said, shaking his head. "It's dark."

"Heartbeat is really strong," Madam Pomfrey said. "This is one healthy baby and a very healthy mother. Your vitals are great, Hermione, and it doesn't look like you've put on a lot of weight."

"I'm looking as big as a house."

"You look good," she said again, patting her hand. "I think we're all done here."

"She's beautiful," Harry said, giving Hermione a quick kiss.

"I'll see you back here next month," she said. "Keep doing what you're doing."

"Thank you," Hermione said, and Madam Pomfrey disappeared behind the curtain. She put her clothes back on and she redid the charm before they walked out of the Hospital Wing.

"I have to get to Quidditch practice," he said, looking at his watch.

"I'll go with you," she said, and they took off towards the Quidditch pitch.

"I can't believe how much homework we have already," he remarked.

"I know," she said, shaking her head. "I think this term is worse than fifth year was."

"Nothing you can't handle, right?"

"As long as I have you," she said.

"You'll always have me."

She smiled slightly. They remained silent the rest of the way until they reached the pitch, and he gave her a kiss goodbye before she started on the path back to the castle, feeling extremely tired.

"You ok?" Neville asked, as she entered the dorm. She nodded, having trouble breathing.

"It was a long walk."

"Here," he said, getting up. He helped her onto the couch before moving to the floor.

"Thank you."

"Here's some water," Luna said, handing her a glass.

"I'm fine," she said, taking a sip of the water. "I had a feeling that all of this walking would catch up with me eventually.”

"I bet that does wear you out."

"What are we doing?" she asked, looking at their schoolwork.

"We're working on this Transfiguration assignment," Luna said.

"Great," she said, standing up to collect her bag. She pulled her Transfiguration book out and sat it on the couch, opening to the page they were on.

"Things must be going well with Ron," she said, glancing over at Luna. She nodded.

"He's wonderful. I'm having such a good time with him."

"Is this what you ladies talk about when we're not around?" Neville asked, looking over at them.

"We talk about other things, too," Hermione replied.

"Like what?"

"Other things," she remarked, and he gave her a look before he shrugged and returned to his assignment. "Harry and I think you'll be proposing to Ginny soon."

He dropped his quill and looked away. "Did Harry tell you?"

"Tell me what?"

"Nothing," he said when he realized that she had no idea.

"Tell me!"

"No!"

"You know I'll make Harry tell me, so you might as well."

"Fine," he said. "You can't tell anyone, either one of you."

"Our lips are sealed," Luna said.

"I had talked to Harry about where he had gotten the ring from and told him that I was planning to purpose to Ginny, assuming we would still be together, after we graduate."

"That arse told me without telling me!" Hermione said. "So you are planning on proposing."

"Yeah, I am."

"That's wonderful."

"Please keep this quiet. I want her to be surprised."

"Of course," they said together.

"I'll never forget when Harry proposed to me. Ron and I had just been attacked and he was feeling guilty for leaving us for an unknown reason. Little did I know, he was ring shopping. I badgered him to tell me where he went, and he just proposed. It was beautiful."

"And seven months later you're pregnant."

Hermione turned to her and gave her a look. "It wasn't from that night."

"My apologies," she said, and Hermione shook her head.

"What'd you get for this, Hermione?" Neville asked, and she looked over at him.

"I believe that is…." She said, flipping through her textbook, "Right here."

"Great, thanks," he said, looking through at the page.

They continued to work on their assignments for another hour before they decided to rest. Hermione laid back on the couch, fighting the back pain.

The portrait hole opened and Harry, Ron and Ginny walked in.

"Getting close to our match with Hufflepuff," she said, taking a seat next to Neville.

"We're ready for it," Harry said, taking a seat next to Hermione.

"It's almost dinner time," Ginny said. "Shall we head down to the Great Hall?"

They nodded, and Harry helped Hermione up before they walked down to the hall to have dinner. After dinner they all returned to the head's dorms to continue working on their assignments.

"Hermione, what do you think?" Ron asked, turning his head to look at her. "Never mind."

Harry turned his head as well and saw his wife on the couch, fast asleep. He pressed his lips together and gently shook her awake.

"Wha-?" she said, jumping in shock.

"You fell asleep again," he said softly.

"I'm sorry," she said, rubbing her eyes. "I can barely stay awake anymore."

"We understand, Hermione," Ginny said, rubbing her arm. "Don't be so hard on yourself."

"Let me help," Harry said, moving to sit next to her. He opened her Potions book and turned to chapter eight. "We're talking about the properties of moonstone."

"Oh, good," she said, glancing over the chapter.

"You ok?" he asked, wrapping his arm around her shoulder.

"I'm fine. I just need to find a way to stay awake long enough to get my work done."

He rubbed her arm and kissed her head. She leaned into his chest and read from her textbook, trying to keep herself as focused as she can be.

"You look so good," Ginny remarked, nodding towards Hermione's stomach.

"Thank you. I feel huge, though."

"You don't look it," Luna said, shaking her head.

Hermione nodded, fighting her eyes from closing again. Ginny nodded to everyone and they picked up their supplies.

"We'll see you tomorrow," she said, smiling at Harry. He nodded and watched as they disappeared out of the portrait hole. He then gently put Hermione's head onto the pillow and conjured a blanket, covering her up.

He then grabbed his supplies and moved to the study table where he continued to work on his essay. After he finished the essay, he pushed it aside and pulled out his Defense Against the Dark Arts assignment, hoping to have it finished before he went to bed.

"Harry?" Hermione asked, looking around. He closed his books and walked over to her.

"Let's go to bed.”

"I'm so sorry."

"Don't be sorry," he said quietly. "Let's just go to bed."

She nodded, and he helped her up. They walked into their bedroom and changed into their pajamas before crawling into bed. He placed his hand on her stomach and smiled as he felt a soft kick.

"I love you, Lily," he whispered, rubbing her stomach. "You too, Hermione."

"I love you, Harry," she whispered back, and the corners of his mouth curled.

"I thought you were asleep."

"Sort of," she said, rolling over to face him.

"This is the part where you're supposed to sleep."

"Be quiet," she remarked, lightly slapping his chest. He grinned.

"Goodnight, Hermione."

"Goodnight, Harry," she whispered, leaning up to capture their lips together. She buried her head into his chest and closed her eyes, feeling safe in his arms.

The next three weeks rolled by, and, on Valentine's Day's, Hermione awoke to a snoring Harry sleeping beside her. She let out a small smile as she laid her hand on his chest, trying to go back to sleep.

"Stop moving," he moaned out, throwing his arm over his eyes. She let out a silent laugh as she buried her head deeper into his chest.

"Stop whining," she said back quietly. He groaned and grabbed for his glasses.

"Good morning."

"Morning," she said.

"You woke me up."

"Blame your daughter. She wouldn't let me sleep."

"Don't be blaming our poor daughter."

"It's true. She was kicking me all night."

He sat up and stretched. "It's Valentine's Day."

"Happy Valentine's Day," she said with a smile before she pressed their lips together. He pulled away a minute later and looked at the clock.

"We still have some time. You said your back was hurting you?"

"Why do you ask?" she said, her eyes glowing.

"I was thinking I could draw us a bath."

"That sounds lovely."

"Meet me in the bathroom in a few minutes."

She bit her lip as he got off the bed and disappeared behind the bathroom door. She waited for a few minutes before she slowly got up and followed him into the bathroom, smiling as she saw the tub.

"Maybe I can make your back feel a little better," he whispered into her ear, and she shivered.

"You're the reason why my back hurts," she said with a grin.

"In my defense, you were in charge of the protection spell."

"And you were in charge of making sure we didn't forget about the spell," she said with a small laugh. He chuckled. "I don't regret it."

"Not what-so-ever," he replied, pressing his hand to her stomach again.

She grabbed the hem of his shirt and threw it over his head, tossing it aside. She then ran her hands across his toned stomach, lingering for a while on his six-pack.

"Don't ever stop Quidditch," she said, unable to remove her eyes from his chest. He grinned.

"I have to eventually, love."

Her fingers moved to his pajama bottoms and she removed them and his boxers, desire coursing through her as she looked up and down his body.

She wanted him.

She couldn't quite figure it out, but, within the last month, she's been wanting him more.

Then the answer dawned on her.

It was her pregnancy hormones.

She reached up and pressed their lips together, wrapping her arms tightly around his neck. He moaned into her mouth and pulled away, trying to catch his breath.

"I need you," she breathed out, removing her shirt. He eyes grew dark before he captured their lips together again and led her back to the bedroom.

"Bloody hell, Harry," she said sometime later, still attempting to get her breathing back under control. He leaned over and kissed her head, his own breathing erratic.

"You know, I had planned on us taking a bath….."

"My hormones said differently," she replied, and he chuckled. "Not my fault my husband is incredibly sexy."

"You're sexier," he replied.

"Looking as big as a house?" she said, narrowing her eyes.

"The house that is holding our daughter," he said, pressing his hand against her stomach.

"Funny," she said, rolling her eyes. The corners of his mouth curled. "I think I'm ready for that bath now."

"I hope it's still warm," he said, helping her up. They walked into the bathroom and he casted a heating charm on the tub before they stepped in.

"Everyone's going to wonder why we're late," she said with a small laugh.

"We'll catch them at lunch."

"This feels great," she said, throwing her head against the back of the tub.

"Feeling better?"

"As much as I can."

A small pain shot through her stomach, and she clutched it, letting out a deep breath. He quickly sat up, worry covering his face.

"What's the matter?"

"I don't know," she said, rubbing her stomach. "It hurts."

"Breathe," he said, and she did, trying to get through the pain. "It's probably that false labor Madam Pomfrey told us about. Just keep breathing."

She closed her eyes and let out another breath. He moved next to her and grabbed for her hand, and she took it, squeezing it lightly.

"At least it didn't happen during classes," she said, laying her head on his shoulder.

"How do you feel?"

"Worse than before I was in the bath," she remarked, another shot of pain going through her.

"Madam Pomfrey said that there's nothing we can do. We just have to wait for it to pass."

"Ok," she said, rubbing her stomach. "How do you always know what to do?"

"I don't. I always turn to you for help," he said with a grin, and she let out a laugh. "We'll figure this out together.”

"I know we will," she said, and she was more than grateful that Harry was with her.

His hand moved up to her head and he gently rubbed it. Her eyes closed as she began to relax, the pain coming in further apart. Her mind began to drift to what her parents had said last time they had seen them, and she smiled slightly.

She may scream at him, curse at him, or something else, but there was no way she could deliver the baby without him. She needed him, and he would be there for her like he was now, soothing her and helping her through the pain.

She counted her lucky stars that she ended up with him.

## Chapter Twenty:

"What is the problem?" Madam Pomfrey asked, as Harry and Hermione appeared in the Hospital Wing.

"I think I had a false labor experience, and I just want to make sure everything's ok."

"Let's take a look," she said, grabbing for her wand. "Have the contractions ended?"

"Yes, and I don't think my water broke, but I was in the bath when it happened."

She waited for Hermione to undress before waving her wand over her stomach. "It was just false labor. Everything is still looking good."

"That's good," Harry said, rubbing her hand. She let out a breath of relief.

"I was very worried."

"It's natural to be worried. Is there anything that may have triggered this?"

Hermione bit her lip. "Harry and I shagged right it happened."

"Ok," she replied slowly, looking between them. Hermione looked concerned.

"What could happen if we shag?" she asked, furrowing her eyebrows.

"You could be sent into an early labor."

Hermione let out a deep breath. "Is there anything else we should know?"

"You're in your third trimester now. You need to be careful, Hermione, and come to me if you feel like something's wrong.”

"I will," she promised, and Harry nodded in agreement.

"I'll see you at your next appointment," she said, and disappeared behind the curtain. Hermione turned to Harry.

"I didn't know that."

"Neither did I," he replied, kissing her hand again.

"You were right," she said. "It was just false labor."

"It's better safe than sorry. These things happen."

"Thank you for being so calm."

"I'm trying to be as calm as I can be."

"You don't need to be calm for me," she said softly, running her hand across his cheek.

"I love you. I am doing whatever it takes to help you get through this. This is new to both of us, but I know we'll get through it.”

"I love you, too," she said, reaching up to kiss him, "and I am starving."

"You haven't eaten at all today and I don't like that. Let's get you some food."

She got dressed before they started off on the path to the Great Hall. They immediately spotted everyone and sat down, filling their plates.

"Where have you two been?" Neville asked.

"We'll explain later," Harry said, and they nodded in agreement.

They finished their lunch before returning to Harry and Hermione's dorm. Harry helped Hermione onto the couch before sitting down next to her.

"Did something happen?" Ginny asked.

"Hermione had a false labor experience this morning."

"Are you ok?" she asked, rushing over to her.

"I'm fine. It happens with pregnancy."

"That's why we missed breakfast."

"As long as you're alright," she said, rubbing Hermione's arm.

"I'll be fine."

"What did it feel like?"

"It was horrible," she said, resting her hand on her stomach. "Thankfully, it didn't last for very long."

"It sounds like you're ready for childbirth," Luna said, and Hermione closed her eyes and took a deep breath.

"Not anywhere close to being ready."

"We still have some time to prepare," Harry soothed. He gently rubbed her back, and she rested her head against the back of the couch.

"You're almost done, Hermione. You'll be holding little Lily soon."

Hermione smiled. "I can't wait to hold her."

"Me, either," Harry said, kissing her head.

The first signs of spring began to rise in the air. The snow was beginning to melt, the temperature became warmer, and the flowers were starting to bloom.

And spring was when their daughter was due.

Hermione let out a deep breath, still in disbelief that she would be having a baby in a little over a month-and-a-half. Harry looked up beside her and flashed her a small smile, as though knowing what she was thinking about.

"Time is up!" Professor Slughorn said, looking at the clock. Everyone put their quills down and he walked around to pick up the parchments, glancing over them.

"I will grade these and give them back to you next class. You have just a little over two months before your N.E.W.T. examinations. You are running out of time. Start studying, make sure you get your assignments completed and ask for help now. You are on your own for your exams."

He turned to his desk and put the parchments onto it before turning back to the class. "Today I want you to work on Polyjuice Potion. I can almost guarantee this type of potion will appear in your practical. You will have the remainder of the class to complete it. When you are finished, leave a vial on my desk, clean up and you are free to go."

Hermione pulled out her potions book and opened it to the recipe. Ron and Harry got up to gather supplies.

"This should be pretty easy for you," Harry remarked, grinning slightly.

"I have done this a few times now," she laughed. "Hopefully I'll never have to do this again."

"I hope I never have to drink this stuff again. It's horrible," Ron remarked, pulling a face as he looked at the recipe.

"Looks like the lovebirds over there have this potion under control as well," Harry said, and Hermione turned her head to Neville and Ginny, and smiled as she saw them working on their potion together.

"How does this look?" Ron asked sometime later, and Hermione looked into his cauldron, shaking her head slightly.

"It's not completely bad."

"Good enough for me," he said, pouring a sample into his vial. She shook her head and looked over at Harry's, smiling at his success.

It was near perfect.

"Done," he said, putting his sample into his own vial. She put her own into her vial and handed it to him, watching as he took them up to Slughorn's desk. He then came back and helped Ron put everything away while she washed out their cauldrons, beginning to feel more tired as the day drug on.

"I can't believe it's almost time for N.E.W.T.s," Ron said, slinging his bag over his shoulder.

"We're almost done with Hogwarts," Hermione said, watching as Harry grabbed both of their bags.

"Then we're off to the Auror's program," Ron said, looking over at Harry.

"Everything's going to change, isn't it?" she said, as they walked out of the classroom.

"Everything's already changed," he said. "You and Harry are married; you'll be starting your lives. Neville and Ginny aren't far behind. I have a great thing going with Luna and we'll all be starting our careers."

"But we'll all be together," Harry said. "That matters more than anything."

She nodded. "It matters so much."

"We have a Quidditch match tomorrow," Ron reminded Harry.

"We do. It's against Hufflepuff."

"That shouldn't be too bad."

"As long as no one gets hurt," she said, turning towards Harry.

"I'll be fine."

"Are you going to be ok walking all the way down there?" Harry asked, putting his robes on. Hermione nodded.

"Neville and Luna will be with me. I'll be ok."

He crouched down and put his hands on her stomach before he leaned in to kiss it. "Lily, daddy's got a big game today. I just want you to know that you and mummy are my good luck charms."

He felt a soft kick, and a smile lit up both of their faces.

"She's wishing you good luck," Hermione said, pressing her hands to his hair.

"I love you, Lily. I'm going to win this for you."

"You should probably get going."

He grabbed her hand and they began their track down to the Great Hall. They met up with Ron and Ginny as they ate a quick breakfast.

"If we win this, we'll be in the lead," Ginny said.

"And we will win it," Ron said.

"We should probably get going," she said, grabbing her broom. Hermione stopped Harry, wrapped her arms around his neck, and pressed their lips together.

"Good luck," she whispered, breaking away. He smiled at her before following Ron and Ginny.

"Are you ready to head down?" Neville asked, and she nodded. They walked slowly down to the pitch, taking a few breaks so Hermione could catch her breath. They found some seats and sat down, waiting for the game to begin. Hermione felt another kick and smiled.

"WELCOME TO OUR NEXT QUIDDITICH MATCH: HUFFLEPUFF VS. GRYFFINDOR!"

Cheers broke out. Hermione looked around and saw the red robes coming out of the locker room. She smiled again, hoping Gryffindor won today.

"LET'S BRING OUT HUFFLEPUFF WITH CAPTAIN CASSIDY STUART!"

Hufflepuff began to fly out of the locker room. The commentator waited for the cheering to die down before continuing.

"HERE COMES GRYFFINDOR, WITH CAPTAIN GINNY WEASLEY!"

Red and yellow began to clash around the field before they got into formation. Ginny and Cassidy shook hands before Madam Hooch released the quaffle and started the game.

"GRYFFINDOR SCORES! TEN TO ZERO!"

Hermione's eyes remained on Harry, who hovered in the sky. She then glanced over at the Hufflepuff seeker, who was watching Harry while looking for the snitch as well.

"HUFFLEPUFF SCORES! THE GAME IS TIED!"

'Relax, Harry. Focus on the snitch,' she thought, watching Harry get a little more frustrated as time went on.

"Neither one of them have found it yet," Neville remarked, looking around the stadium.

"Harry's getting anxious."

"How can you tell?" he asked, and she turned to look at him. "Right. I forgot."

"He'll find it," Luna said.

Sure enough, a few moments later, both seekers took off. Hermione's eyes remained on Harry as he flew around the stadium, her breath caught in her throat. He and the Hufflepuff seeker began to smash into each other, both arms extended as they reached for the snitch.

Then Harry moved out of the way and extended his arm, displaying the gold snitch.

"HARRY POTTER HAS CAUGHT THE SNITCH! GRYFFINDOR WINS!"

The crowd erupted in cheers. Hermione instantly felt happy, and she smiled up at Harry, enjoying the happy look that was on his face.

'Daddy did it, Lily. They won.'

"We should head to the Gryffindor Common Room," Neville said, standing up.

"Go on ahead. I'm going to wait on Harry."

They nodded and took off towards the castle. Hermione walked over to the locker room and waited for her husband. He emerged a few minutes later with a smile on his face.

"Good job," she said, wrapping her arms around his waist. "I knew you would do it."

"I know my good luck charms," he said, and her eyes lit up.

"There's a party in the common room. You should go."

"Are you going?"

"All this walking is wearing me out. I'm going to our dorm to lay down."

"I won't go-"

"-Yes, you will. You go have fun."

"Are you sure?"

"Plenty sure. Go have fun."

He flashed her a smile before they started on the path back to the castle. He walked her up to their private dorms before giving her a quick kiss and took off towards Gryffindor Tower. She smiled before she walked into the dorm and sat on the couch, removing the charm.

"You are your daddy and I's good luck charm," she said, rubbing her stomach. "We can't wait for you to be here, Lily."

The next few weeks continued, and the end of April and beginning of May quickly dawned on them. While Hermione was excited for it, she was also becoming more and more nervous as her due date approached.

She undressed and put on the robe before laying down on the bed, turning her head to her husband. He smiled softly at her, resting his hand on her stomach.

"May 1st," Madam Pomfrey said, smiling at them. "Just a few more weeks. How are we feeling?"

"Horrible."

"That's expected," she said, putting a glove on. "Here's where things get tricky. You're thirty-seven weeks. Any given minute you could go into labor."

"That's what I'm afraid of."

"Let's hope it doesn't happen during your courses," she said.

Harry gently kissed Hermione's hand, and she let out a deep breath. Madam Pomfrey finished her exam.

"Let's talk for a minute," she said, throwing the glove away. She disappeared behind the curtain before returning. "While you could go into labor within the next few weeks, there's a very good chance you may not be."

"What do you mean by that?"

"You're ready for labor, but just because you are doesn't mean she'll come on time. Pretty much, we're waiting on her."

"How long could that be?" Harry asked.

"It's unpredictable," she said. "It could be tomorrow; it could be a few weeks from now. I can't determine it."

Hermione let out another deep breath. "So, what will happen if she doesn't come on time?"

"I want to see you every Saturday until she arrives. If, on your due date, she is still not here, we'll wait about one more week. If she's not here by then, we'll send you to St. Mungo's to get induced."

"Not before that?" Harry asked. She shook her head.

"St. Mungo's generally waits about a week after the due date. If it does come down to you being late, there's a few home remedies you could do, but we'll talk about it if it comes to that."

"You're looking extra happy today," Ginny remarked, looking over at Harry and Hermione.

"Today's my due date."

"Today is?"

"Sure is."

"She's going to be here soon!"

"Hopefully. She sure is taking her sweet time."

"You must have made a good home for her in there," Luna said with a smile.

"Too good of a home, I think," she replied, rubbing her stomach. "She doesn't want to come out."

"Not much longer, love," Harry said, kissing her head.

"There's also not much time left before N.E.W.T.s either," Ginny said, pulling her homework out.

"We have a little bit of time before we need to see Madam Pomfrey. We can get some assignments done," Harry said, reaching over for his and Hermione's bags. She sat up on the couch and looked through her bag, pulling out her Defense Against the Dark Arts book and pieces of parchment.

"Luna and I actually finished ours last night at the library and we're going to take a walk," Ron said, as they stood up. Hermione gave them a look as they said goodbye to everyone before disappeared out the portrait hole.

"This was quite the surprise," she said, turning towards him and smiling.

"Hermione's been in a mood lately, and now that she's late, I can only imagine. I'll let Harry deal with that."

"Ronald," she said, pulling him into a broom closet, "that's not very nice. You don't know what she's going through."

"Hermione's scary enough when she's not pregnant!" he said quietly. She gave him a look.

"What happens if I ever get pregnant?"

His eyes widened. "You're not, are you?"

"No!" she said, shaking her head. "I'm just saying that all women get like that especially if they're late. You can't be blaming her. She'll be back to normal after the baby's out."

"So you're not pregnant?"

"You're hopeless," she said, shaking her head again. "Let's go on that walk now."

"Wait," he said, grabbing for her hand. She turned back to him. "Even if you were pregnant, I would be happy."

"You'd be happy?"

"Of course. We have been dating for almost a year now."

"That's sweet, but I am not ready for a baby anytime soon."

"Neither am I," he replied, and she laughed.

"Sometime in the future, then?"

"One day."

"I love you, Ron," she said, wrapping her arms around his neck.

"I love you, too, Luna," he said back, wrapping his arms around her waist. He leaned down and pressed their lips together.

"Still no baby?" Madam Pomfrey asked, appearing behind the curtain.

"Nothing yet."

"No contractions either?"

"Nothing."

"Let's take a look," she said, putting a glove on. Hermione let out a frustrated sigh. "You're dilated, but it could still be some time."

"Is there anything you can do?”

"Unfortunately there isn't."

"You said there's some things that Hermione can do to try to put her into labor."

"There's a few things. I have a list right here. The most effective measure is sex."

"You told us no."

"Because it can put you into labor. That's why I said no until you're late."

"So, shagging can put her into labor?"

"Very possibly. It's an option."

"I'll do anything!" she said, looking over at Harry. "I am miserable!"

"If she's not here in two days, come back for another checkup."

"Will do," Harry said, and she nodded at them before she disappeared behind the curtain. Hermione let out a disgruntled sigh as Harry helped her up to get dressed.

"She'll be here, Hermione," he reassured her.

"Why isn't she here yet?"

"She'll be here," he reassured again, kissing her head after he put her school robe back on. "In a way, it's good that she'll be late. It's less time that we'll be here."

"That's true," she said with a nod. "We're down to just a few weeks here."

She grabbed his hand as they walked back up to the common room. They had to take a few breaks before they arrived back, seeing all their friends waiting for them.

"What'd Madam Pomfrey say?" Ginny said, looking over at them. Hermione let out a frustrated sigh and sat on the couch.

"It could still be a while."

"If she's not here by next Saturday Hermione will be induced."

"I'm sorry, Hermione," Luna said, rubbing her arm.

"Is there anything we can do?" Ron asked. She shook her head.

"We just have to keep waiting."

"She'll be here," Ginny reassured her.

"I just want to see my daughter."

"Let's not focus on the baby. Is there anything you want to do?" Harry asked, sitting next to her.

"I'm really tired. I might go lay down."

"Ok," he said, and she kissed his cheek before walking into their bedroom. He let out a sigh before turning back to everyone. "It's been a fun few weeks."

"Hermione's really uncomfortable. She'll feel better after Lily is here."

"I know," he said, standing up and running his hand through his hair.

"Do you think this will make Hermione feel better?" Neville asked, looking at the muffins.

"I had mum send it to me. Hermione loves muffins. I'm hoping it will make her feel better."

They entered the dorm and looked around, finding it empty. Ginny sat the muffins onto the coffee table before sitting on the couch, looking at the clock.

"It is late. Maybe they went to bed early."

"Maybe she finally went into labor," he said.

"Sure didn't," Hermione said, appearing out of the bedroom.

"Three days late. How are you?" Ginny asked, and Hermione turned to her.

"How am I? Oh, I don't know: I'M MISERABLE! THIS KID IS NOT COMING OUT!"

They both cringed before Harry walked into the common room. Hermione turned to him.

"You."

He closed his eyes. "Hermione-"

"-You did this to me!"

"I'm sorry."

"You WILL be sorry."

"Maybe we should go," Neville said, helping Ginny up.

Hermione let out a frustrated sigh as she sat on the couch. Harry waited until they left before he sat next to her.

"I am so uncomfortable," she said, repositioning on the couch.

"I wish there was something I could do."

"There is something you can do!" she said in annoyance, turning to him. "And why we haven't done it, yet I can't figure out!"

"Hermione-"

"-Harry, I'm late! We have tried everything else and nothing! You know St Mungo's won't take me until Saturday."

He rubbed his head. "She's clearly not coming out on her own."

"Stubborn like her daddy," she said with a small smile. The corners of his mouth curled.

He pressed his hands against the sides of her face and pressed their lips together. She wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled herself as close to him as she could. She moaned into his mouth as her hands twisted into the strands of hair, enjoying the feeling of the soft silk against her skin.

"Oh, Harry," she moaned as his lips moved to her neck. Her hands began to work on the buttons to his shirt when a sharp pain went through her stomach. "Stop!"

"What?" he asked, pulling away.

"My water just broke," she whispered. "I'm in labor."

## Chapter Twenty-One:

"Wait here," Madam Pomfrey said, before disappearing behind the curtain.

"We're going to be parents."

"Very soon," he said softly, kissing her head.

They remained quiet until Madam Pomfrey returned. "We're sending you by floo powder. You'll arrive in the Healers station and they'll escort you to your room. Best of luck, Potters."

"Thanks for everything, Madam Pomfrey."

"I've healed you for seven years now. I think it's time to take on the next generation."

He chuckled as he helped Hermione up. "Are you ready?"

"No," she said, shaking her head.

"She's almost here. She'll be here by tomorrow night. Keep focusing on her and not the pain."

They walked over to the fireplace and disappeared in the flame. They arrived in the Healers station, which was strangely empty.

"Hello there," a woman said with a smile. "My name is Rebecca, and I'll be your Healer. You must be Hermione."

"Yes," she hissed out, grabbing for her stomach.

She stared at her watch for a moment before the contraction ended. "Let's get you to a room."

She walked in front of them to the room near the station. "There's a robe on the bed. Remove your clothing and I'll be back in a minute to start the exam."

She nodded and waited until Rebecca left before undressing and climbing into the bed. Harry covered her with the blankets.

"This is it," he said softly.

"As scared as I am, I'm so ready for her to be here."

"Me, too. Madam Pomfrey said she would get ahold of Molly and Arthur, and they'll bring your parents here."

"Good," she said, rubbing her stomach. There was a knock on the door before Rebecca entered.

"Is this your first child?"

"Yes," she said.

She nodded before walking over to a machine. She attached the cord to Hermione's stomach and waited for the machine to turn.

"This is a heart monitor. It'll monitor the baby's heartbeat. Do you know the sex?"

"It's a girl."

"Congratulations," she said, putting a glove on. "Let's see where you're at."

"Hopefully close."

"Not quite," Rebecca said. "You're only four centimeters dilated."

"Are you kidding me?"

"This may go faster than you think. I'll be back in a little while."

Hermione threw her head against the pillow as the door closed behind Rebecca. Harry gently rubbed her hand.

"I was hoping to be further than that."

"Just think about her. Tomorrow we'll be holding her and taking care of her."

"Easy for you to say. She's not coming out of you."

He pressed his lips together. "Not much longer, Hermione."

There was another knock on the door, and it opened to reveal her parents and Molly and Arthur.

"Hi, darling," Melinda said, walking over to Hermione to kiss her head.

"Hi, mum," she said back.

"We brought the baby's bag," Molly said, handing Harry the bag they had packed and left at The Burrow.

"Thank you," he said, putting it onto the couch.

"How far are you?" Melinda asked.

"I'm only four centimeters."

"How are you?" Arthur asked, clapping Harry's shoulder.

"I'm good."

Hermione cried out in pain, and Harry timed it with his watch as he waited for it to end. She then threw her head back against the pillow and let out a deep breath.

"Harry, let's go for a walk," Joseph said, and Arthur nodded in agreement. He kissed Hermione's head.

"Don't be gone for long."

"I'll be back as soon as I can," he whispered, kissing her hand. He then followed Joseph and Arthur out of the room.

"My granddaughter is almost here," Melinda said, rubbing Hermione's head.

"She's taking her sweet time," she replied back, sitting up.

"Try having seven of them," Molly said, patting her hand.

"Nope. Harry wants four and I can tell him right now that's not happening."

"I am so proud of the woman you have become," Melinda said, rubbing her arm. "You are married, just about to finish school and are having a baby."

"I thought you and dad would be disappointed with me."

"We would never be disappointed with you. It's just your hormones talking. We love you so much, Hermione."

"You're the same age Arthur and I were when we had Bill. I got pregnant almost immediately after leaving Hogwarts. If we can do it, so can you. Arthur and I are here for you, as are your mum and dad, I'm sure."

"Always," Melinda reassured her.

"We're ready for you, Lily."

"You're going quickly. I was in labor with Bill for nearly twenty-four hours."

"That's not making me feel better."

"I was in labor with you for about fifteen. Trust us, you're moving along quickly."

"Were either one of you late?"

"I was early."

"So was I."

"This isn't fair. Why are you three days late?" she asked to her stomach.

"She's coming, Hermione. Just keep breathing."

"How are you doing?" Arthur asked Harry outside of the room.

"I'm ok. Feeling a little nervous, but I'm excited."

"Listen, Harry," Joseph started, "whatever Hermione says or does to you, you just need to move past it and not let it get to you. She needs you. She's in a lot of pain."

"And trust us, she'll say something."

He nodded. "I'll do whatever I can to take sure she's comfortable.”

"Becoming a father is both scary and rewarding. Whatever you have bottling up inside of you right now, I promise it will be gone the first time you see Lily. I held each of my children the day they were born, and I still smile to this day upon seeing their faces for the first time."

"The doctors told Melinda and I that we were unlikely to have a baby. Not long after that Melinda became pregnant. Holding Hermione was the greatest thing I have ever experienced because I knew that would probably be the only time I would get to do it. Melinda never got pregnant again, so I will always remember what to felt like to hold her. It was one of the greatest days of my life."

"We know you and Hermione have probably been very stressed with your school and preparing for the baby, but you're doing great and we're very proud of you. This can't be easy at all."

"It'll be even harder to go back after she's born, and I know Hermione and I will struggle with it, but we're doing this for Lily, and we'll do whatever it takes to make sure we give the best future we can."

"You're not alone on this, either. We're here to help."

"Absolutely," Joseph said in agreement.

"Thank you," he said. "We really appreciate everything you both have done for us."

"We're here, son. No matter what."

"We shouldn't keep you too long," Arthur said. "Better get back in there."

Harry nodded, and turned to walk back into the room. He walked back to Hermione's bedside and grabbed for her hand, kissing it softly.

"I'm probably going to be in labor all night," Hermione said about an hour later, looking miserable. "Why don't you all go home and come back tomorrow."

"Are you sure?" Melinda asked.

"Unless you want to stay, but I would feel horrible if you slept here uncomfortably."

"We've offered them your room, if that's ok," Molly said.

"Of course. Thank you for bringing them here and taking care of them."

"Anytime, Hermione. They're family, too."

"We'll be back in the morning," Joseph said, kissing her head. "Don't have this baby before we get back."

"She better be here before you get back," she said with a laugh. "I love you, dad."

"I love you, too, pumpkin. I know it hurts, but your daughter is almost here."

"If you need anything, we'll be back here in a heartbeat."

"Thank you," she breathed out.

"Just remember to keep breathing," Molly said. "We'll be back soon."

"Goodnight," Harry said, giving everyone a hug.

She sat up in the bed when everyone walked out of the room. "I feel horrible."

"Well, you are giving birth."

"Really? I had no idea. I thought our daughter just magically appeared instead of coming out of me," she replied, rolling her eyes.

He rubbed her stomach. "Wouldn't that be something?"

"You're an arse," she said, throwing her head back against her pillow.

"I'm your arse."

"That's true," she said with a smile. "I've been thinking about our lives since the battle ended."

"Yeah?"

"I still can't believe a year later we're married with a daughter."

"I'm sorry we couldn't celebrate our anniversary," he said, rubbing her hand.

"Even if we had I would have been moody," she said.

"You're pregnant, Hermione. You have every right to be moody with me."

"I love you," she said, turning her head.

"I love you so much."

"Tell me a story," she said, taking a deep breath.

"Remember when Slughorn tricked us?" Harry said with a small smile. She let out a small laugh.

"No one was tricked but Ron. If he would study more, he would have known that was not the real form of Polyjuice Potion. It takes weeks for that potion. Slughorn just had us make it so we would know what goes into it. It's going to be on the written exam."

"Ron's reaction was the best, though."

"Why would he do this to us? Why make a potion that's not even close to finished!" she mimicked, rolling her eyes. "No one fell for that except Ron. Everyone was confused until he explained in the next class."

"Ron wasn't the only one. There were some Slytherins who also fell for it, and he had that question on that practice exam he gave us before we made the potion."

"What goes into a Polyjuice Potion and how long does it take before it can be used? Yeah, I remember. That has to be on our N.E.W.T.s."

"I'm sure it is."

"Ow!" she cried, clutching his hand again. She let out a deep breath, trying to get through the pain.

"How are we doing?" Rebecca asked, walking back into the room.

"I'm chipper," she replied bitterly.

"You're five centimeters. You're halfway there, Hermione."

"She's already late, why not take her sweet time coming out?" she asked Harry, glaring at him. He rubbed his head.

"She's on her way. It won't be much longer now."

"I'll be back in a little while," Rebecca said, before turning and walking out the door.

"Why is she taking so long?"

"Remind me again what you think she'll look like," he said.

"I think she'll look like you," she said, squeezing his hand.

"Why do you think that?"

"I just do. I can picture her with a black hair and those green eyes of yours."

"Do you know what I picture?" he said, and she shook her head. "I picture a little you, with brown hair and brown eyes. I picture a five-year-old begging us to read her stories for bed. An eleven-year-old excited for her first day of Hogwarts. I picture you."

She smiled. "I wasn't that bad, you know."

"I talk to your mum and dad," he replied with a grin.

"They talk too much." She took in his look. "You should try to get some sleep before she comes."

"No. I'm not missing anything."

"Then you might want to grab some coffee."

"I've done more on less, Hermione."

"Ten centimeters. You're ready for delivery."

"Finally," she breathed out, and Harry took the rag to wipe the sweat from her face.

"Breathe," he said, and she glared at him.

"You did this to me."

"Get ready to start pushing, Hermione."

Harry wrapped his arm around her shoulder. The next contraction hit her, and she screamed out in pain once again as she began to push, clutching Harry's hand harder than ever before. Rebecca counted to ten before Hermione leaned back against her pillows.

"We'll wait for the next contraction and do this again," Rebecca said.

"You're doing great," Harry said. She cried out in pain again as she began to push.

"She's crowning!" Rebecca said.

"Breathe, Hermione."

"BE QUIET!" she screamed, crying out in pain.

"Hold on!" Rebecca said. "The baby's breached."

"What does that mean?" Hermione said through her breaths.

"It means she's upside down. You're going to have to push even harder now."

"Merlin," she said, and started to push again, screaming in pain.

"You're going to have to push harder than that, Hermione," Rebecca said.

"It hurts!" she cried out.

"You can do this," Harry coaxed into her ear. "One more big push and she's out."

Hermione gave one final scream as she pushed as hard as she could before her screams mixed the cries of the baby. She fell back against the pillows as her breathing came in spurts. She clutched at his hand for a minute before she turned to look at him.

"You did it," he said, leaning down to kiss her head.

"Where is she?”

"They're cleaning her up."

"I'm sorry."

"For what?"

"Everything I've said to you. I didn't mean it."

"I know. She's here. She's finally here."

"She sure is," Rebecca said, walking over holding a pink bundle. She placed the bundle into Hermione's arms. "Congratulations. She's seven pounds one ounce and eighteen inches long. Born on May 26th at four-twenty-five a.m."

Hermione started down at her daughter, her eyes filling with tears. Harry cracked the biggest smile he's ever had.

She had blue eyes that Hermione knew would change in the upcoming months. Jet-black hair filled the top of her head.

She looked identical to Harry.

"Look at you," she said, running her finger across Lily's cheek. "You're your daddy's little mini-me."

"She's beautiful," Harry said, placing his hand onto his daughter's head.

"Do you have a name for her?" Rebecca asked, and Harry and Hermione looked at each other.

"Did you ever come up with a middle name?" she asked him, and he nodded.

"I think I have one, if you like it. What do you think about Lily Nymphadora Potter?"

"I like it," she said, smiling down at Lily. "Welcome to the world, Lily Nymphadora."

"That's a beautiful name. Congratulations."

"Thank you," they said together.

"I'm so proud of you," he said quietly, and she turned her head to look up at him.

"I'm proud of you, too. Thanks for staying with me even though I was moody."

"It wouldn't be the first time," he said with a grin, and she rolled her eyes but couldn't help but to smile.

"You want to hold her?"

He nodded, and she moved over on the bed so he could take her. His chest swelled with pride as he stared down at his daughter.

"Hi, Lily. I'm your daddy."

"I was right. She looks just like you," she said, rubbing Lily's head.

"She's beautiful, just like her mum," he said, and she leaned in to kiss his cheek.

"I love you."

"I love you, too," he replied, leaning down to press their lips together.

"Harry? Hermione?" Ron asked, walking into their dorm. "Are you here?"

"Think she finally went into labor?" Neville asked, looking in the bedroom.

"Merlin, I hope so," he replied, shaking his head. "We should get back to the girls."

"There you are," McGonagall said, walking up to the portrait hole. "I need to speak with all of you."

"Is it about Hermione?" Ginny asked, sitting onto the couch.

"Your mother just contacted me. The Potters had their baby overnight."

"She had the baby?"

"She did. Since it is a school night, I will allow you to go see them after your courses end, but you need to be back here before dinner."

"We will. Thank you, professor."

"Get to your classes now. Best not be late."

They nodded and turned to walk out of the dorms.

"I can't believe she had the baby," Ginny remarked.

"We need to remember to write the assignments down for them."

"At least it's only three weeks. That shouldn't be too hard for them."

"I wonder who she looks like more," Luna said.

"I still say she looks like Harry."

"Are you about done?" Ron asked, rolling his eyes at his sister. "We'll see them later."

"Your best friends just had a baby. That doesn't make you happy?"

"I'd rather not talk about it so no one else finds out."

She pressed her lips together. "Fine."

There was a knock on the door, and Molly, Arthur, Melinda and Joseph walked through, their faces lighting up as they saw the baby.

"Hi," Hermione said, smiling. "Your granddaughter is finally here."

"Look at her," Molly said, cooing at Lily.

"What's her name?" Joseph asked.

"Lily Nymphadora Potter."

"Nymphadora?" Melinda asked in confusion.

"You named her after Tonks," Arthur said, and Harry nodded.

"Nymphadora Tonks was Teddy's mother. She was a great friend to Harry and I."

"That's a beautiful name," Molly said, smiling at them. "It's got a nice ring to it, too."

"Can I hold her?" Melinda asked, and Harry carefully put her into her arms. She cooed down at her granddaughter. "Not hard to tell who she looks like more, is it?"

"Not at all," Hermione said with a laugh. Harry beamed with pride.

"We got you something," Joseph said, handing Hermione a bag. She pushed through the wrapping paper and pulled out a onesie, smiling.

"My grandparents love me. Thank you."

"That's cute," Molly said. Melinda gave Lily to her husband.

"Hi there," he said, lightly bouncing her. "I'm Grandpa Joseph."

"How do you feel?" Melinda asked Hermione, kissing her head.

"I'll be fine soon."

"So you were three days late and how long in labor?"

"About eight-and-a-half hours."

"She definitely didn't want to leave, did she?" Molly asked.

"No. I thought I was going to have to be induced. He's probably glad she didn't take any longer to get here. I was driving him crazy," she said, gesturing to Harry.

"You didn't drive me crazy."

"You're being nice."

"I warned you," Joseph said, carefully putting Lily into Arthur's arms.

"What'd you tell him?" Melinda asked, narrowing her eyes.

"Nothing."

Harry chuckled. "I know that you didn't mean anything you said."

"Thanks for staying so calm."

"I don't feel so angry anymore," he replied quietly, and she smiled slightly, knowing exactly what he meant. "I haven't in over a year."

"She's so beautiful," Arthur said, smiling at them. "I can only imagine that you looked just like this when you were born, Harry."

"Show them your album," Hermione said, and he reached into Lily's bag to pull out the album Hagrid gave him in his first year.

"Splitting image," Joseph said, looking at the picture. "You look just like your father."

"I get that a lot. Dad's looks mum's eyes."

"It looks like she'll have Hermione's eyes," Melinda said. "The shape, at least."

"She has her mouth, too. I'm in real trouble."

"I want a divorce," she replied, shaking her head. He chuckled.

"Love you," he said.

"Love you, too," she said, reaching over to press their lips together.

"I think this one needs changed," Molly said, bouncing Lily. Harry took her and quickly changed her before giving her to Hermione to be fed.

"We'll give you some privacy," Melinda said, and they walked out.

"You're a good daddy," she said, looking over at him.

"You're a great mum."

"My mum got me a pump so you, Molly and Arthur can feed her, too."

"I can't believe I'm a father," he said, smiling at Lily.

"We've had nine months to prepare," she said with a small laugh.

"It's different now that she's here."

"I know what you mean. Seeing her in person makes me feel much different than I did when I was pregnant."

He wrapped his arm around her shoulder and kissed her head. She smiled at him before looking down at the baby, feeling the happiest she's felt since she found out they were married.

"Remember, be back before dinner," McGonagall ordered, and they nodded. "Go to The Burrow, and your parents will take you to the hospital."

They nodded again, and she handed each one floo powder. They arrived at The Burrow and found Molly and Arthur waiting for them in the living room.

"You ready to go?" he asked.

"I'm assuming you've seen her?"

"She looks just like Harry," Molly said, grabbing the floo powder. "She's tiny, too."

"Told you," Ginny said, looking at Ron. He rolled his eyes.

They each stepped into the grate and disappeared in the flames before arriving at St. Mungo's. They dusted themselves off as they waited for Molly and Arthur.

"This way," Arthur said, leading everyone through the doors. They stopped at room 650 and he knocked, waiting for a response. He turned to them when he got one. "They have been up since yesterday morning. They are very tired and running on very little sleep. Be considerate."

He opened the door, and they walked through. They smiled as they saw Harry and Hermione leaning over a plastic crib, looking extremely happy as they stared down.

"Come on in," she said, smiling at them. "There's someone we would like you to meet."

Gasps and awes echoed as everyone stepped closer.

"Molly and I will be waiting in the waiting room," Arthur said, before he and Molly walked out.

"Everyone, this is Lily Nymphadora Potter," Harry said, smiling.

"She couldn't look more like Harry if she tried, could she?" Luna asked.

"She's her daddy's daughter, that's for sure," Hermione said, smiling at Harry.

"I bet you're feeling so much better," Ginny said, placing her hand on Hermione's arm.

"A lot better. I'm sorry for acting like a grump."

"We understand. Look what you got out of it," she replied, looking down at the plastic crib. "She's beautiful."

"Do you want to hold her?" Hermione asked, and Ginny nodded. She carefully took her out of the crib.

"Hi, Lily. I'm your Aunt Ginny."

"Why don't you go lay down," Harry said, and Hermione nodded, walking back over to the bed. He covered her up and kissed her head.

"I'm exhausted."

"We don't have to be back to class until Monday. You'll have plenty of time to get some rest."

She smiled as she saw her daughter being introduced to all of their friends. "We need to make sure we don't fall behind on our courses, too."

Lily started crying as soon as Neville took her. "I don't know what I did!"

"It's probably a little much for her," Hermione said with a small laugh. He walked over to give Lily back to her mother. "What's the matter, sweetheart? Are you getting hungry?"

"She hasn't eaten in a while," Harry said, looking at his watch.

"Neville and I will step out," Ron said.

"I'll go with you," Harry said. "I'll be back in a little while."

"Ok," she said, giving him a quick kiss. He turned and walked out the door. She turned back to Lily and began to feed her.

"How bad did it hurt?" Luna asked, sitting on the bed.

"It's unexplainable, but it was all worth it, even though you took your sweet time my beautiful girl," she replied, rubbing Lily's cheek.

"I'm so happy for you both," Ginny said, smiling at her.

"Thank you. How am I going to leave you during the day?" she asked with a sad look on her face.

"You're doing the right thing," Luna said.

"I know," she said with a sigh. "It's all for you."

"You know, Ron actually said something the other day that threw me off track."

"What'd he say?"

"He was gripping because Hermione was late, and she was moody, and I asked him what he would do if I was pregnant and he said he would be happy."

"He said that?" Ginny asked in shock.

"He sure did."

"Wow," Hermione said. "He's looking forward to a future with you."

"He is."

"You're not pregnant, are you?" Ginny asked in concern.

"Hard to tell you're related to Ron," she said, rolling her eyes. "No."

"How do you feel?" Neville asked.

"I'm a father," Harry said, shaking his head. "I'm so happy."

"Congratulations, mate. She's beautiful."

"Thank you. We're very happy."

"Hermione looks like she's back to her old self."

"The bond made me feel the pain that she was going through during labor, and I feel horrible. I can't imagine having to go through it. I can't blame her for feeling upset."

"Now's the fun part," Neville said with a grin. Harry laughed.

"She's great."

"We're so happy for you two."

"Have the rumors started yet?"

"People were wondering where you were at. I think it's only a matter of time before they figure it out."

He nodded. "It was bound to happen sooner or later."

"You hid it for eight months. That's impressive."

"It's a good thing Hermione knows every spell imaginable. Not only did it protect her, but it also kept our privacy. After Hogwarts, we don't care if the secrets out. No one will bother us at our own home. We want it quiet at least until then."

"We'll do what we can, Harry, but we can't stop it, especially since you'll be gone until Monday."

"Let them think what they want. Hermione and I are happy, and that's all I care about."

"As it should be," Ron said.

"How were classes today?"

"They were good. It's mostly 'you're two weeks away from N.E.W.T.s' information again."

"I can't believe there's only three weeks of the term left."

"And our last Quidditch game is next week."

"Time's flying."

"Before we know it, we'll all be enrolling in the Auror's program."

"But for now," Ron said, clapping Harry's shoulder, "we celebrate the birth of your daughter."

They stood in the hallway to talk for several more minutes before Ginny collected them. They returned inside, and Hermione gave Lily to Neville.

"I hope it goes better this time," she said with a smile.

"She's really small," he said. He looked back up at Hermione. "Are you ok?"

"Yes," she replied, wiping her tears off with the tissue.

"Rebecca said she'll be a little hormonal for the next few days."

"I thought I was done with all this hormone stuff," she replied, putting the tissue onto the nightstand.

"You're almost done."

"Has anyone else been here?" Luna asked.

"My mum and dad and Molly and Arthur. Bill and Fleur stopped by earlier, and George popped in real quick. He had somewhere to be."

"We won't be long. You both look exhausted."

"You're fine."

"We can't be long anyway. We promised McGonagall we'd be back before dinner."

"I'm glad you get to see her."

"We wouldn't miss this," Ginny said.

"Welcome home," Molly said, giving them a hug.

"It feels good to be out of that hospital," she laughed, putting the bags down. Harry smiled as he put the carrier onto the couch.

"Let's get you out of that thing, Lily," he said, unstrapping her.

"I can't believe how little she is," Molly remarked. Harry carefully put Lily into her arms.

"I am so exhausted," Hermione said, laying her head against the back of the couch.

"I can watch her if you want to get some sleep," Molly said, lightly bouncing her.

"It's almost time for bed anyway," she replied. "Thank you, though."

"I'll go unpack the bags," Harry said, and he grabbed the bags before heading upstairs. Lily started crying, and Hermione took her from Molly and started to feed her.

"I'm so proud of you," she said, and Hermione looked up.

"It'll be hard, but we're happy."

"As you should be. At least now you don't have to worry about the war."

"That's such a relief," she replied. "I can't imagine having her during the war."

"The good thing about my children is that they were raised in-between the wars. The great thing about yours is that she'll be raised in a free world."

"Daddy and I are going to give you the best future we can," she said, running her fingers against Lily's hat. "Where's Arthur?"

"Out at the shed again. He loves it out there. Are you hungry? Dinner is just about finished."

"I'm starving. I didn't eat much at the hospital."

"I'll go finish it."

"Thank you," she said, watching as Molly disappeared through the door. She threw her head against the back of the couch and closed her eyes, exhaustion filling her.

"You act like you just had a baby," Harry said, and she opened her eyes to give him a look.

"Is everything put away?"

"Yes. I left her sleeper out and some pajamas for us."

"Thanks," she said, leaning over to kiss his cheek. "After dinner I'll pump some bottles so you can feed her."

"Ginny is going to send us the assignments we missed so we can get caught up before we head back on Monday."

"You were right, though," Hermione said, and he turned to look at her. "It was better having her later than earlier."

"I was right? That's new."

She laughed. "You're right more than you think you are."

"But I can't remember you saying that before."

She shook her head. "I've said it before."

"I don't think so."

"You keep thinking that," she said. "It may be the only one you ever get."

"Mummy's not being nice," he said, tickling Lily's cheek.

"Neither is daddy," she said, and he gave her a look.

"I'm always nice."

"Since when?" she asked, laughing slightly.

"Should I go ask Malfoy if his nose ever got repaired?”

"Fair point," she said, nodding her head. "You're a nice person."

"And you're sort-of a nice person."

"Thanks," she replied, rolling her eyes. He grinned.

"Dinner is ready when you are," Molly said, walking back into the room.

"I think she's about finished. I'll be there in a minute."

"Take your time," Molly replied. "I have to go fetch Arthur from the shed."

"I don't know about you, but I am famished."

"Same," she replied, rubbing Lily's head. "I have been so hungry."

"You didn't eat much at the hospital."

"I wasn't all that hungry. I was ready to get out of there."

"We're home now."

"We certainly are. Welcome home, baby girl."

They waited for Lily to finish eating before they walked into the kitchen. Molly took her from them while they filled their plates, cooing softly at her.

"Welcome home," Arthur said, smiling at them.

"It's good to be home," Harry replied, sitting across from him.

"Has Ginny sent you the coursework yet?" Hermione asked.

"She has. The letter is over there."

"Thank you," she replied, taking a bite of her food. "We have two days to try to get it all done before we have to go back."

"Molly and I will help as much as we can. Don't hesitate to ask if you need anything."

"We really appreciate everything you have done for us," Hermione said.

"You're our children, too. We'll do whatever we can to make sure you get through Hogwarts."

"Plus, we get to spend time with this little one," Molly said, smiling at Lily.

"Do you think the rumors have started?" Arthur asked.

"I know they have. It's like I told Ron and Neville: I don't care if they find out after we graduate, but we'd like to keep it quiet until then."

"Even if people find out, it's your business not theirs."

"Don't let it get to you."

They continued talking all the way through dinner. After dinner, they said goodnight to Molly and Arthur before taking off for their bedroom.

"I'm going to prepare some bottles," Hermione said.

"I'll get her changed."

"Be back in a few minutes."

He nodded, and she disappeared out the door. He took her onesie off before changing her and putting her into her sleeper.

"No matter what mummy says, I know what I'm doing," he said, tickling her stomach. Lily smiled, and his chest swelled with pride. "See? You know."

He picked her up before sitting down on the bed, holding her in his arms. "How is it that you're only a few days old and you've stolen everyone's hearts?"

She yawned, and he smiled. "I know what mummy would say. She would say that I'm boring you already. I think you're tired just like we are-well, probably not like we are. You actually got to sleep."

He brushed his thumb against her hair. "I love you way more than you can imagine. At first, mummy and I were scared, but all of that is gone now. We've never been happier. We love you so much."

Her blue eyes stared back at him. He leaned down and pressed a kiss to her head. "Welcome to the world, Lily Nymphadora. I'm so relieved it's a much better world than what mummy and I grew up in."

"Here's the bottle," Hermione said, walking into their room. She gave Harry the bottle and watched as he put it up to Lily's lips, smiling softly. "I don't think I've ever seen you so happy."

"I have a beautiful wife and daughter. I am the happiest man alive right now."

"After she goes to bed, we can start those assignments-"

"-Hermione, you just had a baby two days ago and you've barely slept. We'll worry about that tomorrow. Let's get as much sleep as we can tonight."

"I love that you take such good care of me," she said with a smile.

"It's my job to take care of you."

"And it's my job to take care of you."

They looked back down at Lily, smiling softly as they watched her eyes close. Within minutes she was asleep, and he gently took the bottle out of her mouth and put it on the nightstand. They stood up and walked over to the bassinet, and he carefully put Lily into it.

"Goodnight, princess. I love you," he said, leaning down to kiss her head.

"Goodnight, Lily. Sleep well for a few hours."

He chuckled quietly and wrapped his arm around her waist. They stared down at her daughter with smiles on their faces, feeling happy.

## Chapter Twenty-Two:

Lily's crying awoke Harry. He sat up in the bed and rubbed his eyes, grabbing for his glasses. He then got out and walked over to the bassinet, trying to quiet her down.

"Shh, it's ok," he whispered, carefully picking her up. He grabbed a rag before he walked out of the bedroom and went downstairs, changing her and putting her into the bassinet. He grabbed a bottle from the fridge and heated it up with his wand, testing it to make sure it wasn't too hot.

"I've got your bottle right here," he said, picking her up again. He walked over to the couch and started to feed her, smiling softly. "Is that better?"

He stared out the window, admiring the sun as it began to rise in the horizon. He felt his eyelids growing heavier, but he fought the urge, needing to stay awake to take care of his daughter. He wanted Hermione to get as much as sleep as possible.

"Falling asleep on me?" he asked quietly, looking back down. Lily's eyes began to droop, and he smiled again. "I'll take any sleepless night if it means I get to take care of you."

"Good morning," Molly said, walking into the living room.

"She didn't wake you, did she?"

"Oh, no. I always wake up this early. How'd she sleep?"

"She did pretty well. She woke up occasionally."

"That happens," Molly said, smiling at him. "Are you hungry? I can have breakfast done soon."

"No, thank you. I'm so tired. As soon as she's done, I'm going to go back to bed."

"Enjoying fatherhood?"

"I love it. I love her," he said, rubbing her head with his fingers. She reached up and grabbed his finger, wrapping her hand around it.

"She's so beautiful," Molly said. "Congratulations, Harry."

"I bet you're happy with Lily being your first grandchild."

"Arthur and I are over the moon. We absolutely love her."

"What are you doing?" Hermione asked, appearing in the living room.

"I better go start breakfast," Molly said, turning into the kitchen. Harry turned back to Hermione.

"I was hoping that you would sleep," he replied, looking up at her.

"We're a team, mister," she said, sitting next to him. "She was just hungry?"

"I changed her diaper, too. Looks like she's falling back asleep."

"I think you should know by now that when you're awake, I'm awake."

"That would mean that we're bonded," he replied, cranking his head to the side. She smiled slightly.

"I think we have been for almost a year-and-a-half."

"So, that's how I got stuck with you," he remarked with a grin, and she slapped his shoulder playfully. "Kidding. I love you."

"Love you, too," she whispered, pressing their lips together.

"I think she's done," he said a few minutes, taking the bottle out of her mouth. Hermione grabbed the bottle and took it to the kitchen before returning, smiling at her husband and child.

"You need to get some sleep, Harry," she said, looking at the bags underneath his eyes.

"So do you," he said, carefully getting off the couch. They walked back upstairs and put Lily in the bassinet, hovering for a moment to make sure she didn't wake. After a few moments they returned to their bed, and he wrapped an arm around her waist and kissed her head, dozing off almost immediately.

Lily's cooing woke them up a few hours later. Hermione broke out of Harry's grasp and stood up, walking over to the bassinet.

"Good morning, beautiful girl," she said, carefully taking her. "Did you sleep well?"

"Did you?" he asked, stretching. She put Lily into her father's arms before walking over to the dresser.

"I slept fine," she said, looking through the onesies. She pulled a particular one out and smiled.

"That makes me happy," he cooed to Lily. She tossed him the onesie and he changed Lily.

"She's probably getting hungry. Why don't you get cleaned up, and I'll feed her?”

"Are you sure?" he asked, and she nodded.

"I'll get cleaned up after breakfast."

"I won't be long," he said, giving her a kiss. She stood up and walked down to the kitchen, spotting Mrs. Weasley at the stove.

"Good morning."

"Good morning, Molly," she said, sitting at the table. Molly walked to the refrigerator and pulled a bottle out, warming it with her wand.

"Here you go," she said, giving the bottle to Hermione.

"Thank you," she said.

"I made you a plate," Molly said, putting a plate of food in front of Hermione.

"Thanks," she said, smiling down at Lily. "I'm exhausted, but I wouldn't have it any other way."

"Being a mother is so exhausting, but so rewarding. Watching her grow up will be the best thing you have ever experienced."

"Can't she stay this size forever?" she asked, rubbing her finger against Lily's cheek.

"Unfortunately not," she replied, patting Hermione's shoulder. "Are you going to be ok going back to class on Monday?"

"I'll do the best I can."

"You just had a baby three days ago."

"I know. Harry and I need to finish. We're so close now. We'll make it. I know we will."

"Arthur and I know, too. Just three more weeks and you both are done for good."

"Then it's you, daddy and I," she told Lily, "and probably Uncle Ron complaining because you're waking him up."

"He better get used to it," Molly replied. "He'll have children eventually."

"We silence the room at night," Harry said, appearing in the kitchen. Molly put a plate in front of him and he dug in.

"I'll give you both some privacy," she said, turning to walk out of the kitchen.

"Is she eating well?"

"She's hungry. This bottle is almost gone. She must have your appetite, too."

"We're just two hungry people, aren't we, Lily?"

"I'm going to have to do a lot of cooking," she said, shaking her head. He grinned.

"I can cook, too, you know."

"I think you're a better cook than I am."

"Nah," he replied, shaking his head. "Your food tastes so much better than mine."

"Are we done?" she asked, taking the bottle out of Lily's mouth. She put it onto the table and lifted her up over her shoulder, lightly patting her back.

"My girls," he said with a smile. She smiled back.

"There we go," she said, pulling Lily back to her face. She laid her down in her arms.

"I am finished with my breakfast, so I will take her," he said, taking hold of her.

"That's good, because I'm starving," she replied with a laugh. She dug into her plate.

The weekend quickly flew by, and before they knew it, Monday morning had arrived, and it was time for them to return to class. Hermione was having a hard time getting ready for the day, and multiple times Harry had to console her.

"I can't believe it's time to go back already," she said sadly, staring down at Lily.

"Just a few weeks, Hermione. We can do this, and we get to come home and see her each night."

"I don't want to leave her."

"I know," Harry whispered, kissing her head.

"She's in good hands," Molly said.

"She is. I pumped you quite a few bottles that should last you until we get back."

"You better be going before you're late," she replied. Hermione sighed as she leaned down and kissed Lily's head.

"We'll be back tonight. I love you so much."

"I love you, princess. I'll see you tonight," Harry said, also leaning down to kiss her head.

They grabbed their bags and went over to the fireplace before disappearing in the flames. They reappeared in their former common room, jumping back in shock as they saw their friends waiting for them.

"Welcome back," Ginny said, giving them a hug. "How's the baby?"

"She's good. It's so hard to leave her."

"You'll see her tonight," Luna reassured her.

"Before the both of you head out, we have some bad news," Ron said.

"What bad news?"

"Somebody," he replied, looking over at his sister, "may have slipped it out that you two had a baby."

"Ginny," Hermione sighed, looking over at her.

"I'm so sorry! It was an accident!"

Harry closed his eyes, pressing his fingers against the bridge of his nose. Hermione ran her hands through her hair.

"So everyone knows now?"

"I'm so sorry. I wasn't thinking."

"It's ok," Harry said, patting her shoulder. "People were going to find out eventually. It's not like we can keep her hidden."

"We know you were trying to keep this quiet."

"It's ok," Hermione repeated. "People probably figured it out on their own anyway."

"We should be getting to breakfast," Neville said, and they nodded in agreement. They all walked down to the hall, and Harry and Hermione instantly felt uncomfortable.

Everyone around them began to whisper.

"She was pregnant!"

"I knew it!"

"I'm sorry," Ginny said again, guilt filling her face.

"It's going to be a long day," Hermione said, and Harry nodded.

"We'll get through this," he reassured her.

"I heard they had a girl!"

"I wonder what she looks like."

"Ignore them," Harry whispered to Hermione. She walked closer to him, already feeling overwhelmed.

"I just heard," Dean Thomas said, turning to them when they sat down at the table. "Congratulations."

They nodded, not wanting to say anything. He grabbed hold of Hermione's hand underneath the table, and she squeezed back, feeling completely overwhelmed.

"There's my girl!" Hermione said, running up to Lily the moment she returned to The Burrow. Molly looked up in concern.

"Is everything ok?"

"Everyone found out," Harry said, putting their bags onto the floor.

"I'm sorry."

"It was a long day and I missed Lily so much," Hermione replied, kissing Lily's head.

"How was she?" he asked.

"Really good."

"Thanks for taking care of her."

"Of course. I'll give you all some privacy."

He nodded, and she walked out of the room. He moved to sit next to her, wrapping his arm around her shoulder.

"Is it just me?" she asked quietly.

"Is what just you?"

"Is it just me worrying about all of this?"

"Today bothered me, too. I hate being the center of attention, and I don’t want you or Lily getting caught up in it. You know the things they wrote about me."

"That's not making me feel any better."

"You just had a baby not even a week ago. Your body may not be back to normal yet. It's natural for you to not be feeling like yourself."

She let out a deep breath, stroking Lily's black hair. "I think it's more separation anxiety than anything. Being away from her was horrible."

"We get to spend the rest of the night with her," he replied, kissing her head.

"We sure do," she said, smiling down at the baby. "Mummy loves you so much."

"So does daddy."

Harry woke up early the following Saturday, eager for his final Quidditch game. Hermione groaned and rolled over, placing the pillow over her head.

"You're supposed to be a night owl," she moaned.

"I'm excited."

"And I'm tired," she replied, rolling over to face him. He chuckled.

"Our daughter will be awake any minute."

"So why are you up if she isn't?"

"Grouch," he replied with a grin, throwing his pillow at her.

"How long have you been awake?"

"About fifteen minutes. I've already taken a shower."

Lily started to cry. Hermione immediately sat up and glared at him.

"If you woke her up Harry James Potter I swear….."

He held his hand up and walked over to the bassinet, picking Lily up. He quickly quieted her down before returning to the bed with Hermione.

"She's cheering for her father," he pointed out. Hermione glared at him again.

"You woke her up."

"I didn't mean to wake her up."

She let out a disgruntled sigh and went to use the loo before returning. She rummaged through the dresser before pulling out a onesie, smiling at what it said.

"It's game day, Lily!" he said, watching as she stared up at him.

"And she is going to support her daddy," she replied, giving a onesie to him. His eyes lit up as he looked at it. "Want to put her in this?"

"That's probably my favorite one."

"I know it is," she said. They quickly changed Lily, and Hermione smiled as she saw the look on his face.

"Are you daddy's little seeker?" she asked Lily, tickling her stomach.

"I'll feed her while you take a shower."

"I'll get you a bottle," she said, disappearing into the kitchen. She then pulled out a bottle and warmed it with her wand before taking it back up to him.

"I'll be back in a few minutes."

He nodded, and she went to take a shower. She returned about ten minutes later, just as Lily had finished eating.

"You look beautiful," he said, looking over her attire.

"Aren't you sweet," she said. "I've gained a little weight and this outfit doesn't fit much right now, but thanks."

"You will always look beautiful to me," he replied.

She walked over to them and picked Lily up. "Meet us in the living room when you're ready."

He nodded, and she turned to walk out of the room. She met Molly and Arthur downstairs.

"There's my granddaughter," he said, smiling at them. "Is she ready for her father's game?"

"She sure is," she replied, moving her arm to show them the words. "I'm sad that she can't go to the game, though."

"It's for the best. Everyone knows, but Lily's way too young."

"I agree, and I'm well assured Harry will take her to Quidditch games in the future."

"Sure will," he said with a grin, appearing in the room.

"Ready?" she asked.

"Absolutely," he replied, smoothing out his robes. He walked up to her and gently stroked Lily's cheek. "You're my good luck charm, Lily. I am winning this for you."

Lily laughed. He smiled, feeling incredibly happy.

"She's wishing you good luck," she said, also smiling. He reached his finger down and watched as Lily's small hand grabbed for it.

"We should be going," he said, and she nodded in agreement. She gave Lily to Molly.

"We shouldn't be gone for long."

"Enjoy yourselves. This is your last big thing at Hogwarts. Lily will be fine. Arthur and I will take care of her."

"I agree," he replied.

"See you soon, princess," Harry said, kissing his daughter's head. Hermione did the same before they disappeared in the emerald flames, reappearing in the Head's Dorm.

"They must be in the Great Hall."

"Shall I escort you down there?" he asked, holding his hand out to her. She smiled.

"At least I'm not pregnant now."

He chuckled. "It should be much easier for you to get there."

She took of his hand, and they started on the path to the Great Hall. When they arrived, Ginny was instantly relieved.

"I was thinking you weren't going to show," she said, letting out a breath.

"I wouldn't miss this. It's my final Quidditch game."

"This is for the cup," Ron said, raising his glass. "We play Ravenclaw, and it's all or nothing."

"It's for all," Harry said, raising his own cup.

"We should be going," Ginny said, and everyone got up and started on the path to the pitch.

"Good luck," Hermione said, giving Harry a quick kiss. He nodded and followed everyone into the locker room.

"You look exhausted," Neville said, wrapping his arm around her. She laughed.

"I am, but it's so worth it."

"How will you be with your exams?" he asked softly. She shrugged.

"We're studying as much as we can. Whatever happens, happens."

He stopped and stared at her in shock. "What'd you do with Hermione?"

"Become a father, and you'll understand."

He smiled. "I'm asking her soon."

"When do you plan on doing it?"

"After Hogwarts. I have this."

He pulled out a black box from his pocket and opened it to show her. She smiled down at the silver band, which flashed a diamond up at her.

"How beautiful," she said, looking at it. "She'll love it."

"I'm hoping so," he replied, closing the box. "It was my mother's."

"I'm so sorry," she said, placing her hand on his arm.

"Do you have any advice?"

"Just be yourself. Ask her when you feel the time is right."

He nodded. "Thank you, Hermione."

"Hello," Luna said, walking up to them.

"Where'd you disappear off to?" he asked, looking at her.

"I wished Ron good luck," she replied.

"We better find some seats," Hermione said, and they went to find seats, trying to stay cool on the unusually hot day.

"WELCOME TO THE LAST GAME OF THE YEAR: GRYFFINDOR VS. RAVENCLAW!"

The crowd erupted. "LET'S BRING THEM OUT! HERE COMES GRYFFINDOR, WITH CAPTAIN GINNY WEASLEY!"

More cheers erupted as the red robes appeared on the pitch. They took position in the middle of the field.

"NOW RAVENCLAW, WITH CAPTAIN CHO CHANG!"

The blue robes made their way onto the field. They also took formation.

"Captains, shake hands!" Madam Hooch ordered. Ginny and Cho shook hands.

The quaffle was released, and the game began. Red and blue began to mix on the field. Throughout the entire game both teams stayed neck and neck with one another, barely staying ahead of the other.

And Cho and Harry didn't drift far from each other.

She swallowed, feeling something form in the pit of her stomach. She hasn't felt this way since she was going after Ron, and she closed her eyes as the answer dawned on her.

Jealously.

She shook her head, knowing that she had no reason to be jealous. Harry said several times that he regretted that relationship, and that it was nothing more than a silly crush.

The moment her attention returned to the pitch, Cho and Harry took off. Both began pushing and shoving as they tried to catch the snitch, struggling to reach it.

"Come on, Harry," she whispered.

The pushing and shoving continued. The snitch flew away from them, and Cho smashed into Harry, nearly knocking him off his broom. Hermione's breath caught in her throat as she watched him quickly jump back onto it and chase after Cho, still in battle for the snitch.

Finally, they both reached their arms out to grab for it, and he caught it, wrapping his fingers tightly around the snitch. The crowd cheered almost immediately.

"HARRY POTTER HAS CAUGHT THE SNITCH! GRYFFINDOR WINS!"

The rest of the team quickly crowded around him, congratulating one another. Hermione let out one of the biggest smiles of her life.

"We won!" Neville cried.

They watched as the cup was given to Ginny and Sinistra before they got up and waited outside of the locker room. About ten minutes later the team walked out.

"Congratulations," he told Ginny, kissing her cheek.

"We did it," she said, looking between her brother and Harry.

"I'm so proud of you," Hermione told Harry, wrapping her arms around his waist. He wrapped his around her back and kissed her head.

"This was definitely a good end to a good year."

"You lot coming to the party?" Ron asked, wrapping his arm around Luna's waist. She turned to look at her husband.

"We can come for a little while."

"Excellent," he replied, rubbing his hands together. "Shall we go ahead?"

"Go on ahead," Neville said, and Ginny gave him a look. "I was hoping to go on a walk around the lake."

"Ok," she said, continuing to look at him.

"We'll meet you up there, mate," Harry said, and they turned to walk back to the castle.

He grabbed hold of Ginny's hand, and they started on the path to the lake. She noticed that he was becoming more nervous as they reached the lake, and her mind went into overdrive, trying to figure out what he was planning.

"Is something bothering you?" she asked, noticing his expression. He shook his head.

"Congratulations on the win."

"Thanks for supporting me."

"I have something I want to ask you," he replied, turning to look at her.

"What is it?"

"We've been together for a year now," he started, and she nodded. "It has been a great year, and one that I have enjoyed in so many ways."

He got down on one knee, and her mouth opened. "Ginny Weasley, will you marry me?"

"Yes!" she said without missing a beat. He stood back up, and she pressed their lips together.

"I love you," he said, breaking away.

"I love you, too."

He took the ring out of the box and slid it onto her finger. She pressed their lips together again, feeling incredibly happy.

"Some pumpkin juice, m'lady," Harry said, handing Hermione a glass. She smiled.

"Thank you."

"That was quite the game, mate," Ron said, gesturing his glass towards him. "You had us worried for a minute."

"She was beginning to hurt," he replied, shaking his head. "I thought for a minute she would catch it, but I wasn't going to let my daughter and my team down."

"Whatever your motive for winning the game is, you won it. Congratulations."

"You as well, mate," he said, clinking their glasses together. He turned to Hermione. "Speaking of, were you feeling a little jealous today?"

"Jealous?" she asked, looking at him.

"I could have sworn that I felt jealous on the pitch."

"I don't think so.”

He grinned. "Are you sure?"

"Plenty sure," she replied, placing her glass onto the table.

"You have nothing to be jealous of," he reassured her. "She and I are in the past."

"I know. I don't know why I was feeling like that."

"I love you," he said, raising her hand to kiss her rings. "Only you."

"You, too," she replied, wrapping her arms around his neck, she pressed their lips together.

"Where have you lot been?" Ron asked, when Neville and Ginny arrived. She shrugged.

"We'll tell you later."

"This one's for the captain!" Dean called out. Ginny smiled, raising her arm in the air.

"For the captain," the rest of their friends said, raising their glasses.

"Speech!" someone called out. Neville handed her a glass and she took a sip before starting.

"Most of us in here are graduating in a few weeks. Those of you who are know how it feels to have won the cup. It's an amazing feeling. After everything that's happened, we needed this. My wonderful team won this cup for Gryffindor. The three chasers, the two beaters, the keeper and of course the seeker. It was scary for a minute when it looked like Cho was going to grab for it, but Harry prevailed, and we were able to win the cup. To my fellow teammates, thank you for a wonderful year, and good luck next year or in your careers. Cheers to everyone!"

"Cheers!" everyone repeated, holding their glasses in the air. Neville kissed Ginny's cheek.

"That was a wonderful speech," Hermione said, smiling at the couple as they took a seat on the couch.

"Here's to a wonderful captain who won us the cup," Harry said, clinking their glasses together.

Harry and Hermione decided to stay for another hour before they made the decision to leave. The rest of the friends followed them back to the Heads Dorms.

"We'll see you on Monday," Ron said, clapping Harry's shoulder. He nodded.

"Monday is Charms, mate. Better get studying."

"He will be," Luna said, grabbing hold of Ron's hand. He groaned.

"Before you go," Ginny started, turning her head and smiling at Neville, "we have an announcement."

"What's going on?" Ron asked.

"We're engaged!" she said, and Neville wrapped his arm around her shoulder.

"Congratulations!" Hermione said, giving them both a hug.

"You're engaged?" Ron asked in shock.

"Sure are," she replied, showing him her hand.

"Congratulations, mate," Harry said.

"I thought you were waiting until after Hogwarts," Hermione said.

"You said wait until the timing was right. It felt right."

"Congratulations," she said, giving him another hug.

"Thank you."

"So, we're engaged," Ginny said, pointing between herself and Neville, "Harry and Hermione have a baby, and then, well, there's Ron…."

He glared at her. "Luna and I are happy with the way things are."

"Leave them alone," Hermione said. "They're great together."

"We better be going, Hermione," Harry said, and she nodded in agreement.

"We'll see you all Monday."

"Bye," they said, and the couple disappeared in the emerald flames.

"Ron, I need your help studying. Will you come to the library with me?"

"I'm dating Hermione," he replied, rolling his eyes. Ginny gave Luna a look of gratitude before they walked out of the dorm.

"Don't listen to Ginny."

"Never do," he replied.

"You've already said you wanted a future with me. That's all I care about."

"One day, I will, you know."

"I know," she nodded. "I'm not expecting it anytime soon."

"I love you."

She smiled. "I love you, too."

"Do you have everything you need?" Molly asked, and Harry and Hermione looked through their bags.

"I think so."

"You both need to stay calm and get through these exams as much as you can. You both will succeed."

"Thank you, Molly," Harry said, kissing Lily's head. Hermione did the same.

"Good luck," she said, before they stepped through the grate. They arrived in the Heads Dorm to the rest of their friends, who were waiting for them.

"Did you eat?" Ginny asked. They nodded.

"We ate before we came here."

"They're setting up now. We need to be down there by nine-o-clock. Exams start at nine-thirty."

"We should head down then," Harry said, looking at his watch. They left their bags in the dorm before taking off towards the hall, getting crowded in with the other students, both fifth and seventh years.

At nine-thirty, the doors opened, and they were all called forward. They took their seats, and McGonagall waited until everyone was settled before flipping the hourglass over, starting the exam.

"That wasn't so bad, was it?" Ron asked later at lunch.

"It was harder than O.W.L.S were," Harry said. Hermione nodded in agreement.

After lunch, everyone prepared for their practical exams. Hermione rested her head on Harry's shoulder, exhaustion filling her.

"Are you two going to be ok?" Ginny asked, looking between them.

"We'll be fine."

They sat in silence as they waited for their names to be called. Ginny was growing very frustrated, knowing that she was at the bottom of the list.

"Lester, Charles-Longbottom, Neville-Lovegood, Luna-Merkins, Bryan!" Professor Flitwick called. Ginny gave him a quick kiss before he took off.

"Best of luck," Ron said, and she nodded before following Neville.

"I'm feeling nervous," Hermione said.

"Don't be nervous. You'll give it your all. I know you will," Harry replied softly, squeezing her hand.

"I hate that we're at the bottom of the list," Ron replied, looking over at his sister.

"It gives you more time to prepare," Hermione said, and he nodded his head in agreement.

"True."

"You must be so happy," she said to Ginny, noticing the ring on her finger.

"I am. I told you I plan on using Lily as a flower girl….."

"She's only a week-and-a-half old," she said, shaking her head.

"Did I say I was getting married anytime soon?" she replied, rolling her eyes playfully. Harry chuckled.

Another twenty minutes passed. Harry sighed, ready to be done with the exam. Hermione clutched his hand, feeling the same.

"Potter, Harry-Potter, Hermione-Russel, Steve-Rylee, Martin!" Flitwick called out.

He leaned over and gave Hermione a quick kiss, whispering words of encouragement to her, before they both stood up. She nodded to Ron and Ginny before following behind Harry, waiting to be assigned.

"Professor Marchbanks is available, Hermione."

She nodded and walked over to the woman. She stood behind the desk and glanced up when Hermione approached her.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Potter. This is your Charms N.E.W.T. practical examination. In a moment I will be giving you different spells, and I want you to perform them for me. Prepare yourself."

"How were your exams?" Molly asked, looking between them.

"They were good."

"So was this little one," she replied, gesturing towards the bassinet. Hermione walked over and picked Lily up, cooing down at her.

"Hi, baby girl. I've missed you so much."

"I'm glad she's being good for you."

"I've taken care of seven babies. There's nothing she can't throw at me that I haven't seen before."

"She's my daughter, just you wait," Harry remarked, grinning slightly. "Hermione says I have a habit for getting myself into trouble. Maybe it's genetic!"

She groaned. "If she becomes a troublemaker, you're getting an earful."

"I'm used to it, love."

Molly laughed. "She just ate and was changed so she should be good for a little while."

"It's bath night," Hermione said, cooing at her.

"Harry, Hermione," Arthur said, walking into the room, "how were your exams?"

"Good."

"Very good," he replied, sitting in the chair.

"As long as you study, you'll be fine," Molly said, and Arthur nodded in agreement.

"I think we're plenty ready," Harry said, wrapping his arm around Hermione's waist.

"Never hurts to study a little more," she replied, looking up at him.

After they ate dinner, they prepared to give Lily a bath. Harry got the infant tub ready while Hermione undressed her.

"I don't know what your daddy has told you about me," she said quietly, a small smile lighting up her face. "It's all lies."

Lily's blue eyes moved around the room. "I love your father so much. He's a great husband and he's a wonderful father. The two of you seem to have stolen my heart."

She picked her up and held her in her arms, pride and love filling her body. Lily snuggled into her mother's chest, gripping her shirt with her tiny hand.

"I love you so much," she said, leaning down to kiss her head.

"Ready, Hermione!"

She started off to the bathroom. She then gave Lily to her father, who removed her diaper and put her in the tub.

"What were you two talking about?" he asked.

"How great her daddy is, and what lies he's telling about me this time."

"I haven't told her any lies," he replied with a grin.

"Sure you haven't."

"Look at her," he gestured towards the tub. She leaned in and smiled at Lily, her heart melting at her the sight of her.

"She loves bath time."

"Like her mum," he replied.

"You like baths, too."

"Only if they're with you," he said with a wink, and she let out a small laugh.

"Wasn't drawing me a bath what got us her?" she asked, pointing to Lily.

"No. I made you breakfast in bed."

"Right," she said with a smile. "I don't know why I was scared when we found out I was pregnant. I love her to pieces."

"Because we're young," he started, "we're still in school, and I think you were most afraid of how I would react."

"I panicked. I thought you would be mad at me for forgetting protection."

"It was my responsibility, too. I should have remembered. Do you regret it?"

"Not at all," she said, shaking her head.

"Neither do I."

"Are you about done?"

"Yes we are," he said, turning the water off. She grabbed the towel that sat on the vanity and held it out. He carefully took Lily out and put her into the towel, wrapping her up in it. His heart broke at the sound of her screeching.

"I have everything laid out," she said, as they walked into their room.

"I'm sorry, princess," he said, changing her as fast as possible. Her crying stopped as soon as he zipped the sleeper up.

"Did daddy make you mad?" she asked, leaning down to kiss Lily's head.

"Who don't I make mad?" he asked, picking Lily up.

"Me."

"I seem to remember you telling me off quite a bit the last few weeks of your pregnancy."

"That's not fair," she said, sitting up on the bed. "I had a human being who refused to come out growing inside of me."

"Excuses, excuses," he said, shaking his head. She rolled her eyes.

"She looks so happy when you hold her. She is a daddy's girl."

Lily started crying, and Hermione took her from Harry. She immediately stopped and snuggled into her mother's arms.

"Are you sure about that?" he asked, giving her a look. She smiled.

"Sometimes she wants mummy."

"I'll get a bottle," he replied, and walked out of the room to the kitchen. He pulled a bottle out of the refrigerator and walked back upstairs, giving it to his wife upon entering the room.

"Here, sweetheart," she said, putting the bottle up to Lily's lips. "I can't believe you were inside of me for nine months, and you come out looking like daddy."

"What's wrong with that?" he asked with a grin.

"Nothing. The two of you look like twins."

"I honestly thought she would resemble you."

"I knew she wouldn't."

"Maybe she'll act like you."

"Maybe," she replied, glancing down at Lily, who was beginning to fall asleep on her chest. "I know you don't like to talk about your life before Hogwarts, but, growing up, did you ever think about your future?"

He shrugged. "It was hard to sometimes. I always thought about my parents. There were times when I thought ahead and wondered if I would end up with anyone. Then I found out I was a wizard and things began to change."

"I'm sure it was hard for you. Your aunt and uncle didn't care."

"They're my past. My girls are my future," he replied softly, kissing her head. She smiled. "What about you?"

"I didn't have many friends growing up. It was mainly just me, mum and dad. I focused on my schooling. I often fantasized about my dream wedding and who I'd married to. Then Hogwarts came along and everyone thought it would be you and I together. Turns out it was in the end."

"One of the scariest times in my life was when you went down in the Ministry of Magic. I was afraid that something really bad happened to you."

"The third task," Hermione whispered. "When it was reported that the cup had been taken and no one had returned. Oh, and when you were attacked by the snake and wouldn't wake."

He popped the first three buttons to his shirt, and she stared at the scar sadly.

"Or when you were petrified, and wouldn't wake," he said quietly. "Even then, you helped us figure out the chamber."

"I knew you would figure it out," she said, smiling at him.

"Yours and Ginny's lives depended on it."

"Thank you for giving our daughter a safer world to live in," she whispered.

"I couldn't have done it without you."

She smiled again as she rested her head on his shoulder, her own eyes beginning to droop. A few minutes later she said, "We have Transfiguration tomorrow. We need to be studying."

"Here," he said, carefully taking Lily from her. He walked over to the bassinet and put her in, waiting for a moment to see if she would wake before returning to the bed. She grabbed her bag and pulled her book out.

"We'll study as much as we can," she said, opening the book.

As the week continued, Ginny could see how Harry and Hermione were dragging on. As Thursday rolled around, and their last exam for the week occurred, she could see how the duo were barely staying awake.

"Are you going to be able to focus on your exams?" she asked Hermione, who nodded.

"We've been staying up studying and waking up early to get Lily ready for the day. We're just tired."

"The good thing is that we don't have a lot of exams next week. That'll make it a little easier for you."

She nodded, rubbing her eyes.

And, as the week concluded, neither Harry nor Hermione could wait for the release that the weekend would bring.

He collapsed onto the couch the moment they returned to The Burrow. She smiled slightly, feeling as tired as he did.

"One more week," Molly reassured them. "Then you're done."

"At this point, I'm ready to be done. I want to be at home with my daughter."

"Not me?" Hermione asked, pouting her lip.

"Of course you, too," he replied, rolling his eyes.

"You two are acting like an old married couple already," Molly said with a laugh.

"Where's Lily?"

"She's asleep in the bassinet," she said, pointing to it. Hermione stood up and smiled down.

"How was she today?"

"Not so good. I don't think she likes being away from her mum for very long."

"Awe," she said sadly, staring down at her. "Mummy is so sorry. I am almost done with exams, and daddy and I will be here full time.

"We're almost done," Harry reassured her, standing up to walk behind her. He leaned down and kissed her head.

"I hate leaving her."

"So do I," he whispered.

"As hard as it may be, you both are doing the right thing. Just a few more exams and you'll be done."

"She's sleeping now," he said quietly. "Let's get some dinner before she wakes."

"Ok," she said in defeat, turning away from Lily.

"You still have an exam tomorrow, right, Hermione?" Molly asked at the table.

"I do, but Harry doesn't. He'll stay here and take care of Lily."

"What exam do you have tomorrow?"

"Ancient Runes. I'll be gone all day."

"I brought you some tea," he said later that night, as Hermione was feeding Lily.

"Thank you," she replied, watching as he put it on her nightstand.

"What's wrong, Hermione?" he asked, placing his own cup onto his nightstand. He then sat on the bed.

"I know we've been going back and forth for two weeks now, but it's so hard to. I hate leaving her."

"So do I," he said, kissing her head. "We're doing this for her. It's so hard to leave her and it's even harder to focus on our exams, but we're almost done. You have two exams next week and that's it. Then we get to spend the entire summer with our little princess."

She nodded, looking down at her daughter who was fast asleep against her chest. He rubbed her back soothingly, trying to make her feel better.

"At least we have two days with her before we have to go back."

"I love you," he said.

"I love you, too," she whispered, giving him a quick kiss.

Lily started crying. Hermione started to lightly bounce her, hoping that she would fall back asleep.

"What happened?" she asked quietly, trying to sooth her. She grabbed the bottle and put it back up to her lips, letting out a sigh as Lily refused it.

"What's the matter?" Harry asked, taking her from his wife. He got up and walked around, bouncing Lily in his arms.

"It's going to be a long night," Hermione said, and he nodded in agreement, trying to figure out what could be wrong with Lily.

"Will you be ok?" Hermione asked the next morning, grabbing for her bag. Harry nodded, looking over at the bassinet.

"I'll be fine."

"Do I have to go?" she asked. "I am going to hate the fact that both of my loves are at home while I go take a test."

"It's just for one day, love," he said, getting off the bed. He kissed her head.

"I pumped some more bottles for you and if you need more diapers, they're in the closet and-"

"-Hermione," he cut in, placing his hands on her arms, "relax."

"You're right," she said, shaking her head. "I should be going."

"Good luck," he said, giving her a quick kiss.

"You, too," she said with a smile. He chuckled. "I'll be back as soon as I'm done."

She gave him another kiss before walking out of the bedroom. Harry glanced over at Lily to make sure she was still asleep before climbing back into his bed, staring up at the ceiling.

A few minutes later Lily started cooing. He smiled as he got out of the bed and walked over to the bassinet.

"Good morning," he said, carefully picking her up. She yawned, and he put her onto the bed next to where her clothes were at.

"Just you and I today, Lily," he said, unzipping her sleeper. He changed her and put her into her onesie. "What are we going to do?"

She looked up at him, and he leaned down to kiss her head. "Let's go see Grandma Molly for breakfast."

He picked her up and walked down the stairs. He walked into the kitchen and spotted Molly at the table, looking through The Daily Prophet.

"I'm glad Kingsley put his foot down. This paper seems more credible now."

"I'm still not reading it," he said, sitting in one of the chairs. She got out of hers and walked over to the refrigerator, pulling a bottle out. She heated it with her wand and gave it to him.

"How did she sleep last night?"

"Not well. She would not fall asleep."

"Babies do that sometimes. Hopefully she'll sleep better for you tonight."

"I hope Hermione does well during her exams. Last thing she needs is to fall asleep during it."

"The joys of parenthood," she replied with a smile. "Hermione will do well. She always does."

"You both look exhausted," Luna pointed out Monday morning, looking between Harry and Hermione. They shook their heads, trying to stay awake.

"Lily would not sleep at all," she replied, rubbing her eyes.

"Why?"

"We have no idea," he replied, rubbing Hermione's back. "We tried everything."

"Are you going to be able to focus on your exams?" Ginny asked in worry.

"We'll be fine," he replied, taking a sip of his juice. She nodded in agreement.

And they both thought that until it was time for their written exam. After McGonagall had flipped the hourglass, Hermione found herself dozing off and awaking a few seconds later, panicking at how little of the exam she has done so far.

'Focus!' she told herself, looking back down.

What goes into the Draught of Living Peace?

She raked her brain, struggling to remember. Exhaustion was building inside of her and she found her mind in disarray, unable to focus.

She couldn't stop herself from looking up at the hourglass. It was a quarter full.

'No!' she thought, panic filling her system. Harry looked up and glanced over, worry filling him.

The answer dawned on her, and she began to write out all the ingredients. She moved on to the next question, fighting herself to stay awake.

She glanced over to Harry and saw him put his own quill down. She let out another breath of relief, knowing that he was done, and she only had one more written exam to do.

She didn't know how, but she made it through. One exam left to go.

"Last exam, Hermione," Harry encouraged her. "It's only a written one there is no practical. You studied hard for this last night. You can do this."

"I memorized as much dates as I could. I really need to pass this one, Harry. I need this score for Magical Law."

"You always do this. You think you will fail and then receive the top marks in the class."

"You're right. Kiss for good luck?"

He smiled before he pressed their lips together. She broke away a minute later and walked into the Great Hall. A few minutes later McGonagall flipped the hourglass, starting the exam.

She found that she was flying through this one.

She couldn't figure out if it was because Lily had slept well last night, or the intense study session Harry had put her through, or both, but she found this exam much easier than her previous ones.

She flew through it.

She put her quill down with ten minutes left and leaned back in her chair, letting out a sigh of relief.

Her Hogwarts career was over.

She tapped her fingers against the desk quietly as she waited for the exam to officially be completed. A little later McGonagall ordered everyone to stop, and she collected the exams.

"Open the doors please," she said to the students in the back. They got out of their seats and opened the doors, crowding the hall with students.

"How'd you do?" Harry asked, walked up next to her.

"I think the study session really helped," she replied with a smile. He smiled back.

"This is the conclusion of your examinations," McGonagall said, looking around. "Congratulations on your exams and your graduation, seventh years. You should be receiving your scores no later than July 31st. For those of you wanting a job in the Ministry of Magic, be sure to file your application as soon as possible, and you will receive a response shortly after receiving your scores. Once again, congratulations, and good luck."

"We did it," Hermione said, standing up to wrap her arms around Harry's neck.

"We're done. We can go home and see Lily for good."

"Congratulations," Ginny said, giving them a hug. "We'll miss you both."

"You'll be home in a few days," Hermione laughed.

"We're done here," Harry said, looking around at the first place he called home.

"This was your home," Hermione said, putting her hand on his cheek.

"My home is where you and Lily are," he whispered, pressing their lips together. Ron gagged, and Luna slapped his chest.

"Stop!"

"They're disgusting!"

"They're happy. Leave them alone."

"Don't worry, Luna, Ron will grow into a proper man one of these days."

"You lot staying for lunch?" he asked, ignoring his sister. They turned to look at each other.

"Sure will. It'll be our last meal here."

And sure enough, it hit Harry. He was leaving the first place he called home. It was his freedom away from the Dursley's. It was the place where he learned about his parents. The place where he trained to fight Voldemort. The place where he defeated Voldemort.

The place where he met his wife and best friends.

She grabbed for his hand, and he smiled at her. Yes, his home would be wherever she and Lily were. Without them, he didn't know where he would be.

He just knew that he would not be at home.

## Chapter Twenty-Three:

"Ready to go, Lily?" Harry asked, strapping her into the carrier. Hermione grabbed the baby bag and Lily's pink blanket.

"Grandma Melinda and Grandpa Joseph have been wanting to see you," she said, tickling Lily's stomach.

"It feels good to have so much more time," he replied, rubbing Lily's head. "We'll be back tonight, Molly."

"Tell them we said hello," she replied, grabbing for the laundry basket.

"Will do," Hermione said, watching as Harry picked the carrier up. They walked over to the fireplace and disappeared in the emerald flames, reappearing in her former living room.

"Hello, pumpkin," Joseph said, kissing her head. "Hello, Harry."

"Joseph," he said, placing the carrier onto the couch.

"I'm sorry we haven't been by lately."

"It's fine, Hermione. Your mum and I are glad that the both of you finished school."

"There we go," Harry said, pulling Lily out.

"She's getting big," Joseph said, smiling at his granddaughter when Harry put her into his arms. "Hi, Lily."

"She eats around the clock. I keep telling Harry that she has his appetite, too."

"She's the best," he replied, sitting down next to Hermione.

"You both look so exhausted," he remarked, checking out his children's appearances.

"Yeah. We're hoping to get some more sleep now that school is over."

"Does she sleep well?"

"For the most part. She wakes up every now and then."

"I thought I heard voices," Melinda said, walking into the room.

"Hello, mum," Hermione smiled. Melinda sat down next to her husband, her face lighting up at the sight of the baby.

"Look at her," she said, tickling Lily's cheek. "I think she'll have your eyes, Hermione."

"Finally she gets something from me," she joked, flashing Harry a smile. He gave her a playful look.

"She is definitely a daddy's girl," Melinda replied with a laugh. "You both have made a beautiful daughter."

"We love her so much," Hermione said.

"Dinner is about ready," Melinda said, getting up.

"I'll help, mum," she said, following her mother into the kitchen. She walked over to the cabinet and began to set the table.

"How's motherhood?" she asked, turning to her daughter. She smiled.

"I love it. Lily is wonderful even when she's a grump."

"Wait until she starts teething."

"Don't remind me."

"How's Harry with her?"

"He's so wonderful," she replied, unable to stop a smile from forming on her face. "When we were taking our exams, I had one that Harry didn't have so he stayed home to take care of her. When I arrived home from school, she was asleep on his chest, and he was humming to her with his eyes closed. He had no idea I had even returned. If she wakes up in the middle of the night, he always sneaks her out of the room to feed her so I can sleep."

"I am so glad you found such a wonderful man," she said, playing with the piece of Hermione's hair that was not held back by the ponytail.

"So am I. I love them so much."

"We're ready in here," she said, and Hermione got Harry and Joseph before taking a seat at the table. "I'll hold the baby while you eat."

"Are you sure?" Harry asked, giving Lily to her. She nodded.

"Go on and eat."

"Thank you."

"So, Harry, Hermione," Joseph said, once everyone had gotten their plates, "What are your plans now?"

"I plan on looking for a house," he said, and she nodded in agreement. "I'm also putting my application in to become an Auror."

"I think I'm going to hold off putting mine in, if that's ok," she said, and he turned to look at her.

"We've talked about this, Hermione. There's no pressure for you to work."

"I just don't think I'm ready yet."

"Then you don't need to. Whenever you're ready, it's up to you."

She smiled at him and clutched his hand. Melinda and Joseph both smiled.

"He's a keeper, Hermione," she said, gesturing towards Harry.

"Well, I'm a better seeker, but thanks."

"What?"

"He's joking," Hermione said, laughing slightly. "There's a game in the wizarding world called Quidditch. There's seven players on the team, and two of them are a seeker and a keeper. Harry played as a seeker when we were at Hogwarts."

"Kidder," Joseph said, grinning at him.

Lily started crying, and Melinda began to gently rock her. Hermione got up and got a bottle out of the refrigerator, warming it with her wand.

"She's hungry."

"She has the saddest cry."

"She does," she laughed, sitting back down in her chair. "Sometimes she pouts and holds her lip out. It's so adorable."

"How are you both adjusting?"

"We're doing well. Now that Hogwarts is over with it'll be much easier."

"We are very proud of you both. It wasn't easy, but you did it."

"Thanks, dad."

"What a sweetheart," Melinda cooed down to Lily. "I just remembered. Joseph, will you get the package on my desk?”

He nodded and stood up to walk into their study. He returned a moment later and gave a parcel to Hermione, who tore it open and smiled at the pictures.

"Harry, look," she said, showing them to him.

"I told you I would take a picture of the day she was born."

"These are beautiful, mum," she said, staring at the family portrait. "I love the one of Lily."

"I love this," he said, looking over her shoulder to view the picture.

"Thank you," she said to her parents, putting the pictures back into the envelope.

"You're welcome, darling."

"I'll put these into her bag," he said, grabbing for the envelope. He walked over to Lily's bag and carefully put the pictures into it before rejoining her at the table.

"Dinner is delicious, Melinda," Joseph said, smiling at his wife.

"Agreed," Harry said, raising his glass to her.

"Thank you. I'm glad you're enjoying it."

"Excuse me," Hermione said, standing up. She walked out of the room, and Harry made sure she was out before turning back to her parents.

"I want to thank you both for everything you've done. With accepting us, helping with the wedding, and everything you've done to help us get through the pregnancy and delivery. I know you being at the hospital really helped us and Joseph I listened to everything that you and Arthur told me. Thank you for everything."

"We may be Muggles, Harry, but you deal with problems that Melinda and I have gone through. Don't ever hesitate to come and talk to us."

He nodded. Lily started crying, and Melinda removed the bottle from her mouth and started to bounce her. When that didn't work, Harry got out of his seat and took her from Melinda, holding her against his shoulder. Her crying stopped almost immediately.

"That isn't a daddy's girl or anything," she joked, taking a bite of her dinner. Harry chuckled.

"She usually wants Hermione."

"Is she ok?" Hermione asked, returning to the room. He nodded.

"She just wants her father," Joseph replied with a smile.

The next day was when everyone was set to return home from Hogwarts. Harry and Hermione were both excited for their friends to return and were even more excited for Lily to be reunited with them.

"We're off to the train station," Molly said later in the day. "There's leftovers in the refrigerator if you get hungry."

"Thank you," Hermione said, cooing at Lily. Molly turned and walked out of the door.

"You're getting so big, Lily," Harry said, smiling as Lily's hand wrapped around his finger.

"I can't believe you'll be a month old on Saturday."

"Your aunts and uncles are on their way home, and they've been wanting to see you again."

"I need to do some laundry," she said, giving Lily back to her father. "I'll be back in a moment."

He nodded, and looked down at her, watching as her blue eyes began to droop. He used his thumb to stoke her hair, and within minutes she fell asleep. He propped his feet onto the coffee table and laid his head against the back of the couch, letting out some deep breaths as he did so.

"Picture perfect," Hermione said quietly, returning to the room. He smiled.

"I would help you fold those, but I'm a little stuck."

"It's fine," she laughed, sitting next to him.

"Are you hungry?"

"Not really. I can go make a snack if you are."

"Just a little. I'll be fine until dinner."

"Are you sure?"

He nodded, looking back down at Lily. She folded the laundry and put it back into the basket, smiling at the onesies.

"I can't believe she won't be able to fit in these much longer."

"She's a growing girl," he remarked, turning his head to his wife.

"So is her daddy," she grinned, rubbing his stomach.

"I haven't gotten that big."

"No. You've barely gained any weight."

"I remember last year when we were in Australia, and we ate everything imaginable."

"Ah, that was amazing. I will never forget our honeymoon."

"Maybe one day I can take you back there for a second honeymoon, or a vacation with Lily."

"I would love to have Lily with us," she said, rubbing Lily's hair. "A family vacation in Australia."

"So it's a plan then?" he asked, smiling at her.

"Sometime in the future, yes," she said, running her hand through his hair.

"Does that sound fun, Lily?" he asked his sleeping daughter, smiling down at her. "Maybe by then you'll have a younger brother, too."

Hermione gave him a look, and he said, "Or maybe not."

"No more kids anytime soon," she replied, shaking her head at him.

"Fine, party pooper."

"I have a surprise for you," she said, getting off the couch. She walked upstairs to collect something before returning downstairs. She showed him the picture frames, and his face lit up. "What do you think?"

"I think that's one beautiful family," he replied, smiling at her.

"Remember when we took this one in Australia?"

"We were on the beach," he said, watching as she sat down next to him. "We were just about to leave Australia with your parents when your mum wanted to take the picture."

"I'm really surprised I didn't get pregnant when we were there," she said with a laugh.

"So am I, to be honest. I think we were a lot more careful at first."

"I just got completely sidetracked on my fake birthday. I forgot to cast it."

"She was well worth the nine months of agony, right, mummy?" he asked her with a grin. She smiled.

"She sure was. I love you so much, Lily."

"So do I," he said softly, leaning down to kiss her head.

When Lily woke up from her nap about an hour later, Hermione fixed herself and Harry a plate for dinner. He arrived in the kitchen a minute later and sat at the table.

"I don't know about you, but I'm starving."

"So am I," she said, digging to her plate.

"I see you're wearing your rings again," he said, pointing to her hand.

"I've worn them a few times. It's hard when my hands were swollen for a while, and I didn't want to resize them just to resize them again."

"I don't blame you. I'm just glad you're feeling better."

"More sleep would be nice, but, yeah, I feel a lot better."

He chuckled and waited for Hermione to finish eating before giving Lily to her. He then dug into his own dinner, and once they had finished, they returned to the living room. Her chest swelled with pride as she saw Harry cooing at their daughter.

"She's ticklish!" he said, tickling Lily's sides. She laughed, and Hermione smiled.

"She gets that from me, I'm afraid."

"Oh, I know," he replied, winking at her. She rolled her eyes.

"Yes, you know all too well."

"She has the most adorable laugh."

"I can't believe how big she's getting already."

"Neither can I."

"I'm going to get a bottle," she said, getting off the couch. She walked into the kitchen and pulled a bottle out before returning to the living room, watching as her husband tickled Lily's stomach.

"Here you go."

"Thanks," he said, putting the bottle up to her lips.

The door opened, and they could hear voices coming through.

"Lily, your Aunt Ginny and Uncle Ron are home."

"Hi!" Ginny said, walking into the room. They smiled at her.

"Hey."

"How is she?"

"She's good. As soon as she's done eating you can hold her."

"Hello, mate," Ron said, clapping his shoulder.

"How was the train?"

"It felt weird that it was the last time we would be riding it."

"Now what?" Ron asked, looking around.

"Now we enjoy the summer and wait for our results."

"Then we're off to the program, mate."

"Assuming we get in," he said, and Hermione slapped his arm.

"Don't think like that."

"Any thoughts on what you're going to do, Ginny?" he asked, giving his wife a look.

"I'm not sure yet."

"What are you thinking, then?"

"I'm thinking about becoming a Healer."

"Really?" Hermione asked, as though in shock. She nodded.

"I want to heal people. Luna and I have been talking, and we both want to become Healers."

"I applaud you, Ginny," Harry said, and she turned to look at him. "I've always seen you as a Healer."

"Really now?"

He nodded. "I think you would make a damn good one."

"Language," Hermione growled.

"Sorry, love."

"I feel like I don't know anything anymore," she said sadly, and he lightly squeezed her hand.

"Don't feel that way," Ginny soothed. "We just haven't seen each other that much. We're back now, and we can talk again."

"Why don't I put Lily to bed, and you and Ginny can talk."

"Are you sure?"

"You need some time to yourself. I have Lily tonight."

"Thank you," she said, kissing his cheek.

"It's a nice night. Want to talk outside?"

"Sure," Hermione said, leaning over to kiss Lily's head. "Goodnight, Lily."

"See you in a little while," Harry said, giving her a quick kiss. She nodded and followed Ginny outside.

"How's fatherhood?" Ron asked, smiling at him.

"I love it, mate. She's incredible."

"She's beautiful."

"Do you want to hold her?"

He nodded, and Harry carefully took the bottle out of her mouth. He stood up and put Lily into Ron's arms.

"When are her eyes going to change?"

"I don't know. I'm pretty sure she has Hermione's eyes."

"Your looks and her eyes. That's a perfect combination between you and her."

"You ok, mate?" Harry asked, seeing his expression.

"I'm fine."

"You sure?"

He nodded, cooing at Lily. "I'm not going into the program."

"What changed your mind?"

"Kingsley offered me a better job. It's great pay, great hours and I'll definitely know I'll get into it."

Harry narrowed his eyes, as though figuring something out in his mind. "What's going on, Ron?"

"Luna and I had a pregnancy scare shortly after Hermione gave birth to Lily."

"She's not?"

He shook his head. "No. Just a scare.”

"And now you're thinking of a way to provide a better future."

He nodded, unsure of what to say. Harry sat down beside him.

"I get it. Ever since I found out Hermione was pregnant; I've made sure every decision I've made will be good for them. I've second-guessed almost every decision. I've studied harder than I ever have before. They're going to get the best future they deserve."

"That's my personal promise to Luna. She deserves a great future."

"What'd Kingsley offer you?"

"I'm going to work alongside my dad in the Office for Detection and Confiscation of Counterfeit Defensive Spells and Protective Objects."

"That's a great job, mate."

"I agree."

"Can I feed her?" Ginny asked, when Harry and Hermione finally arrived downstairs the next morning. She nodded.

"I'll get you a bottle."

"Look at you," she cooed to Lily. "She is so beautiful."

"Thank you," Harry said with a smile.

"Here you go," she said, giving Ginny the bottle. "So, Ron, Harry told me that Kingsley offered you a job."

"He sure did. They're just waiting on my N.E.W.T. results."

"I'm proud of you, Ron," Arthur said, sitting next to him.

"Thanks, dad."

"Harry, this arrived for you," Molly said, giving Harry a piece of parchment. He opened the envelope and pulled the parchment out, furrowing his brow.

"What is it?" Hermione asked, looking at him in concern.

"It's the reading of my mum and dad's will," he said slowly, rereading the parchment.

"They left a will?"

"I guess so," he replied with a shrug.

"What does it say?" Molly asked.

"They want me at Gringotts tomorrow morning at eleven."

"This says it was to be read to him at the age of seventeen. He's almost nineteen."

"Well, Harry left immediately after his seventeenth birthday, didn't show back up until the battle, and had reportedly broken in to Gringotts somewhere in between."

"Right," he replied slowly, placing the parchment onto the table.

"They made a binding contract with your parents. They have to inform you even if they don't want to."

"I wonder what they left," Hermione mused, looking over the parchment.

"I already know about the money. I thought that's all they had left me."

"If they didn't want you to have it until you were seventeen, then they left you something big."

"Arthur, do you mind coming with us?"

"Of course. We should probably have Bill come with us as well, considering."

"Good idea," Hermione said, rubbing Harry's back.

"I can watch Lily for you tomorrow," Molly said, glancing over to Ginny.

"We appreciate that."

"I already have a bad feeling about this," Harry said, as they waited in Diagon Alley for Bill to arrive.

"Just relax and do what they say," Arthur ordered, and they nodded in agreement. "Since Hermione is married to you and has your last name, she is, as well, included in this will. Lily, too. Everything that's in it can go to them."

"Sorry I'm late," Bill said, walking up to them.

"Just on time."

"Thanks for coming, Bill."

"No problem, Harry. I can only imagine how this will go."

"We should be going," Arthur said, stretching his arm out towards Gringotts. Harry and Hermione took a deep breath before following the Weasley's into the bank.

"Can I help you?" one of the goblins asked, refusing to look up.

"Harry Potter is here for the reading of Lily and James Potter's will."

The goblin sneered and looked up, glaring at Harry and Hermione. They looked away from him.

"Excuse me," he said, getting out of his chair. They waited, rather uncomfortably, until he returned with another goblin.

"This is Brunick. He'll read the will."

"Right this way," he growled, taking off in the opposite direction. Bill gave them a comforting look before they all followed him to a room.

"Take a seat," he said, pointing to the various chairs around them. They all took one. "We have called you here for the reading of Lily and James Potter's will."

He sat down in his own chair and pulled a piece of parchment out of his pocket. He then put his glasses on and a grabbed for a quill before opening it.

"This is to be read only by the person of whom it is addressed to," Brunick said, glancing over to Hermione.

"Dad and I will go, but Hermione is his wife and is entitled to everything that is in that will. Her name is Hermione Jean Potter."

"Very well," Brunick said with a sigh. "You may go."

"We'll be right outside," Arthur said, and they nodded. Brunick waited for them to leave before rolling out the parchment.

"This is the last will and testament of Lily and James Potter. This will was completed on the 22nd of October, 1980, and is to be read to our son, Harry James Potter, on the 31st of July, 1997, his seventeenth birthday."

He pulled an envelope out and handed it to Harry, who stared at it in confusion before putting it onto the table.

"Inside this envelope is a private message from your parents for your eyes of only."

His attention turned back to the will. "We leave all of our money contained inside of our vault, vault number 687, to Harry Potter and Sirius Black, our son's legal guardian. We also leave our house in Brentwood, Essex, to Harry."

"They left me a house?" he said in surprise, leaning for in his chair.

"That's what it says," Brunick said, as though he were annoyed at being interrupted.

"Sorry," Harry replied, looking away from him.

"All of our personal belongings will also go to our son or Sirius Black. I am sad to say, Mr. Potter, that all of your parent's belongings that were not in the vault were burned in their house the night they died."

He nodded, figuring as much. The goblin continued.

"In the event of our death, we give full custody to Sirius Orion Black, Harry's godfather."

"That worked out so well," he muttered, causing Hermione to grab for his hand.

"That seems to be it for you," he said, pushing the will towards him. "I need you to sign stating that you heard and understand the contents of the will, and that will be all."

He picked up the quill and signed his name to the parchment. Brunick summoned it back to him and rolled it back up, sealing it closed as he did so.

"That will be all," he said, before standing out of his chair. Harry grabbed for the letter before standing up as well and following him out of the room.

"I really appreciate this," Harry told him.

"Have a good day, Mr. Potter," Brunick said coldly. He glanced over to Hermione who shrugged.

"We should be going," Arthur said, looking at the goblins, who were all glaring at them. They quickly walked out of the bank and back to Diagon Alley.

"Thank you, Bill," Harry said.

"Anytime, Harry."

"Let's go home," Hermione said, and he nodded, grabbing for her hand.

They apparated away and arrived back at The Burrow. Hermione let out a disgruntled sigh when Lily immediately woke up and started screaming.

"I'm so sorry, sweetheart," she said, taking her from Molly. She lightly bounced her and watched as she quieted back down at the sight of her mother.

"Let's not do that again."

"How did it go?" Ginny asked.

"They left me a house," he said, sitting on the couch.

"They left you a house?" Ron asked in surprise. He nodded.

"It must have been the house they lived in before they went into hiding."

"Where is it?"

"Somewhere in Brentwood, Essex."

"How was being at Gringotts?" he asked, looking between the couple.

"They hate us," Hermione said, sitting down next to Harry.

"I figured as much."

Harry stared at the letter in his hands, debating in his mind if he should read it now or later. Hermione glanced over to him and gave him a sympathetic look.

"Can we have a minute?" she asked, and they nodded before taking off to the kitchen. "Do you want to read it?"

"Yeah," he replied, tearing open the envelope. He pulled the parchment out with shaky hands and opened it. He stared at the closed letter, unable to open the folds.

"Do you want me to read it?"

He hesitated for a minute before nodding. He carefully took Lily from her and gave her the parchment, watching as she opened the folds and began to read.

*Dear Harry,*

*By you reading this, it means that we have passed, and you are now an adult in the wizarding world. Your father and I just put you to bed, and it took all our courage to sit down and write this letter to you. We don't want to have to think about what could happen, but we need to.*

*By now I'm sure you've been told of the real reason why we're gone. We have so much faith in you that you will win this war. There would never be doubts in our minds. You WILL win, and once you do, you'll get married and start a family of your own. Tell our grandchild that we love them so much.*

*It's making us sad to write this, son, because we don't want to leave you. We know you're in good hands with Sirius. He already loves you like his own and hates when he has to be away. We know he's the best person to take care of you. I know he'll raise you right and make sure you stay focused on your studies, while your father knows that he'll keep the Marauders going through you.*

*We are so sorry we had to leave. You are our entire world and we're even crying as we write this. We love you so much, Harry (or Prongslet, as your father likes to call you). Just know, son, that we are always with you, no matter what. We will never fully leave you. We hope to forever be in your heart.*

*Love always,*

*Mum and Dad*

"Harry?" she said, wiping her tears off of her face. He stared down at Lily, and she was unable to see the expression on his face. "Harry, are you ok?"

"What if we had to write this for her?" he asked quietly, unable to look away from Lily. Hermione pressed her hand to her mouth and shook her head, unable to think about it. "What if we forced to write out a will and letter knowing that we only had so much time to live, like they did? Never knowing what the future would hold. I couldn't stand to leave her, Hermione…"

She shook her head, unable to stop herself from crying. He wiped his own eyes with his free hand, unable to look away from Lily's blue eyes.

"I couldn't imagine what they went through when they found out."

"I never want to go through what they probably went through," he whispered, leaning down to kiss Lily's head. "I want to see my daughter grow up, graduate Hogwarts and get married. The things my parents never got to see."

She rubbed his back, not even caring that tears were flowing down her face. He leaned over and pressed their lips together.

"I don't want to lose you, either," he whispered again. She stared at him for a minute before she reached for her bag and pulled the snitch, he gave to her for her birthday.

"You'll never lose me, Harry," she whispered back, clutching the snitch in her hand. "You're not losing anyone else."

He smiled softly as he pressed their lips together again, so thankful for everything that she's done for him.

## Chapter Twenty-Four:

"This was the house my parents had before they went into hiding?" Harry asked Arthur, looking around. He nodded.

"I guess they planned on living here before they found out. I would assume they moved houses when they found out and went to a more secure location."

"How has it not been taken already?"

"The Ministry has protected it, I'm sure."

"I don't understand how he didn't find out about this sooner."

"The Goblins were waiting for Harry to be of-age, but after what happened, I can assume they weren't too thrilled to announce it right away."

"They're mad at me, I get it," he replied, rolling his eyes. "So they waited quite a while before telling me there was one. Thanks for coming with us, Arthur."

"Bill helped out a lot there, too. I've never seen them that angry."

"Well, breaking into their bank can't land you on their good side."

"We did it for a good reason," Hermione reassured him. "That's something they'll never understand."

"Regardless of the reason, you both still deserve this house, if you would like it."

"Want to look around?" he asked her, and she nodded.

"Take your time," he said, moving stand outside. Harry grabbed Hermione's hand and ventured upstairs, looking through the bedrooms.

"How will you feel living in your mum and dad's old house?"

He shrugged. "It's amazing that they left it to me and it's still here."

"I think this was supposed to be your room," she said, opening the door to the blue nursery. He walked inside and ran his hand across the wall, closing his eyes.

"I miss them," he said, turning to her. "It breaks my heart Lily will never get to know her grandparents."

"You never got to know them, either," she said softly, wrapping her arms around his neck. "I know they loved you very much."

"I know they did," he replied, kissing her head. "Let's keep looking around."

She nodded, and they continued looking around the upstairs. They moved back down and looked at the kitchen, liking what they saw.

"Look at this place, Harry," she said, taking a look around. "I love it."

"So do I," he replied, looking out the French doors at the backyard. She walked back up to him and did the same.

"A big backyard to teach Lily quidditch."

"I can see our family living here."

"So can I," she said.

"We're doing this, then? We're taking this house?"

"Yeah," she replied, flashing him a smile. "We're getting a house!"

"Hermione!" he said, wrapping his arms around her back. She kissed his cheek and buried her head into his chest.

"Have you decided?" Arthur asked, meeting them in the kitchen. They nodded.

"We're taking it."

"Congratulations."

"Thank you," they said together.

"I'm going to return to The Burrow. I'll see you back soon?"

They nodded, and he disappeared with a crack. She turned back to him, laid her hands on his cheeks and pressed their lips together.

"That was a nice surprise," he said, pulling away with a grin.

"This is our new home, Harry."

"It's perfect for our little family."

"Come here," she said, grabbing for his hand. She led him to the study.

"It's huge," he replied, looking around. "I happen to see two desks in here."

"What are you implying?"

"This room is ours. Your personal library and our private room for work."

"We better get to work then," she replied, looking around at all the cleaning and decorating they would have to do.

"We'll start tomorrow. For now, let's go home to Lily."

She stared at him for a minute before saying, "Something is bothering you."

He shook his head. "Nothing's bothering me."

"You're lying through your teeth. What is it?"

"You can't tell anyone."

"I won't."

"Ron and I were talking last night, and he told me the real reason why he dropped out of the Aurors program."

"What is it?"

"Luna had a pregnancy scare. They thought she was. When they found out she wasn't, Ron began to think about other career options. I'm beginning to do the same."

"You don't want to be an Auror anymore?"

"It's three years to get into something I may not be getting into. Then, to go into battle, and having the fear of not being able to see my girls anymore. I've dealt with that my whole Hogwarts career. I don't want to deal with it anymore."

She stared at him for a moment before wrapping her arms around his neck. He wrapped his around her waist and kissed her head.

"We have talked about this," she whispered, pulling away from him. "Lily and I support every decision that you make."

"What do you think I should do?"

"Do what your heart tells you," she said, placing her hand on his chest. "What are you thinking?"

"You wanted to talk?" Ron asked, looking at Harry and Hermione.

"We asked you to be here because we have some news.”

"You're not pregnant again, are you?" he asked. She gave him a look.

"No, I'm not pregnant. Harry, Lily and I are going to move into The Potter's old house, meaning that Grimmauld Place will be abandoned."

"What are you suggesting?" Luna asked.

"We're suggesting that you take it. We'll help you clean it up and make it a better place to raise a family."

"There's no rush so take your time. Hermione and I are going to the house today to continue working on it."

"You're still watching Lily for us, right?" she asked Luna, who nodded in agreement.

"We're more than ready."

"I'm not so sure I want Ron watching our daughter," Harry replied with a grin.

"I better go check on her," Hermione said, getting up to walk into the living room.

"We appreciate the offer," Ron said, and she nodded in agreement.

"We would love for it to go to you."

"Can we talk?" Luna asked, and he nodded in agreement before grabbing a bottle from the refrigerator. He followed Hermione into the living room, smiling as she saw her singing softly to Lily.

"She's a tad grumpy," she said, bouncing her slightly.

"I brought a bottle."

"Good," she said, watching as he warmed it with his wand. She sat on the couch and took the bottle, putting it up to Lily's lips. "What'd they say?"

"They're talking it over now."

"I'm happy that we can get out of that house for good. I think it'll make you feel a lot better."

"I love you," he whispered, pressing their lips together. She smiled.

"I love you, too. I know your parents and Sirius would be so proud of the man you've become."

Lily started crying and rejecting her bottle. Hermione let out a sigh and put the bottle onto the table, gently putting her daughter up to her shoulder to rock her.

"What's going on with her?"

"I have no idea," she said sadly, whispering soothing words to Lily. Harry held his arms out and she put Lily into them. He stood up and started walking around, bouncing her softly.

"Why are we so grouchy today?"

"She's barely slept. I finally got her to sleep right before we went to talk to everyone, and she must have woken up while we were away."

"Give me the blanket," he said, moving to sit back down on the couch. She handed him the pink blanket and bottle and watched as she readjusted Lily in his arms, covering her with the blanket. He gently put the bottle back up to her lips and watched as she took it.

"You won't be able to move."

"I don't need to. I'll be fine."

"Are you sure?"

He nodded. She leaned over and kissed his cheek before standing up to walk out of the room. He gently rubbed Lily's head, trying to coax his daughter into taking a nap.

"You're in good hands, Lily," he whispered a few minutes later, leaning down to press a kiss to her head. "That's because mummy finally left the room."

"You're an arse," she said, returning to the room. He chuckled.

"I'm only kidding."

"You better be."

"She's asleep," he said softly, looking back down at her.

"Good. Hopefully she'll be in a better mood when she wakes up."

The door between the kitchen and living room opened, and Ron and Luna returned, sitting opposite of them.

"We're going to take it."

"Congratulations!" Hermione said, standing up to hug them.

"Harry told you, didn't he?" Ron asked, and she nodded, turning to look back at Harry.

"He did. Which is why we want the house to go to you."

"Why not Neville and Ginny?"

"Neville has other plans," Harry said. "He told me shortly after they got engaged."

"We really appreciate this," Luna said, squeezing Hermione's hand.

"And do know, had you been pregnant, Harry and I would have been here for you. We would have helped you with whatever you needed."

He nodded behind her, recovering Lily with her blanket. They smiled at them.

"Thank you."

About an hour later, Lily woke up from her nap. Harry gave her to Ron and Luna before he and Hermione took off to the house.

"Which room do you want to be Lily's?"

"This one," she said, pointing to the one next to Harry's old nursery. "I think we should give Teddy your old room."

"I think so, too."

"I brought everything over," she said, showing him the pieces of furniture she had shrunk.

"We better get started, then," he said with a smile, grabbing for his wand.

"I'm going to start on the kitchen."

He nodded, and she turned to walk back down the stairs. She pulled her wand out and started to clean up the kitchen, falling more in love with it as it became cleaner.

'Look at all of this counter space,' she thought, running her hand across the granite countertop. 'I can't wait until we're in this house.'

She looked around, loving the way the kitchen looked. The white counters with the black granite countertop set it off, with overhead white cabinets with a glass door hanging above. The oven sat in the middle of all of the counters, and the refrigerator sat on the other side of the room.

'Thank you, Lily and James,' she thought again, smiling at the room. 'Thank you for everything.'

"Is everything ok?" Harry asked, returning to the room. He wrapped his arm around her waist and kissed her head.

"Everything's perfect."

"Kitchen looks great."

"How's Lily's room coming along?"

"I'm almost done. I'm taking a quick break."

"Take your time. It's going to take me a while to get cleaned up down here."

"Do you want to come see?" he asked, and she nodded. They returned upstairs, and he opened the door to Lily's nursery, smiling at her reaction.

"Harry," she whispered, looking around lavender bedroom. "It's so beautiful."

"I'm just about finished with this, then I'll move to our bedroom."

"I'm going to help you finish," she said.

They finished painting Lily's room before moving to their bedroom. She looked around and smiled at the color, loving the way it looked on the wall. They had decided to go with beige.

"One step closer," he said, rubbing her back.

"I'm ready to be in here."

"So am I."

They remained at the house for a few more hours as they finished cleaning and decorating it. When Hermione returned downstairs, Harry snuck back into Lily's nursery and spelled her name out on the wall with pink letters, smiling at the end result.

"Are you ready?" she asked sometime later. He nodded.

"I have a surprise for you."

"Yeah?" she asked, and he nodded. He grabbed her hand and walked back up to the nursery. "You wrote her name out."

"I sure did."

"It's so beautiful."

She pulled the baby furniture out of her pocket and resized it. He grabbed for the crib and angled it in the corner of the room. He then put the dresser on the other side of the wall, and the rocking chair near the crib. She looked around, loving the way her daughter's room turned out.

"What do you think?" he asked, rejoining her once all the furniture was put in place.

"I love it."

"So do I."

"We've done enough for today, love," she said, laying her head on his shoulder. "We can come back and finish soon."

"Hi, Neville," Hermione said with a smile as he and Ginny emerged out of the living room.

"Hi there. Hi, Lily."

"Would you like to hold her?" she asked, and he nodded. He sat next to her and she put Lily into his arms.

"She's so beautiful, Hermione," he said, cooing down at Lily.

"She's adorable," Ginny said, rubbing Lily's head.

"Thank you."

"Where's Harry?"

"He's outside with Ron enjoying their quidditch time," she said with a laugh. "He deserves it. He spends all of his time taking care of Lily."

"I can't believe how much she looks like him," he remarked.

"She gets that a lot. She is definitely his mini-me."

"Can she go outside for a little while?"

"For only a short while. I don't want her outside for very long."

They nodded before they all stood up to walk outside. Hermione smiled, realizing that this was the first time Lily had been outside.

"Mind if I join?" Ginny called up to the two men.

"Come on up!" Ron called out.

Harry flew down next to Hermione and dismounted his broom. "Hey there, mate."

"Hi, Harry."

"Enjoying the fresh air, are we?" he asked, taking Lily from Neville. She smiled as soon as her father came into view.

"I think someone's missed her daddy," she said with a smile.

"I think she's already loving quidditch," he replied with a grin. She rolled her eyes.

"Oh, no."

"You're in trouble, Hermione," Neville replied with a grin. She shook her head.

"I knew that before I was pregnant."

"How have you been, Neville?"

"I've been good. It feels like forever since I've seen either of you."

"We know. It feels so good to be done with school, especially with this little one taking all of our attention."

"Have you and Ginny discussed wedding plans yet?"

"Not really," he said with a shrug. "We haven't even told people yet."

"Better get on that," she said with a wink. He chuckled.

"We'll probably just do what you both did and have a private thing."

"I'll tell you; it was a nice wedding."

"It really was," Hermione said, smiling at Harry.

"Mate! Come on!" Ron called down. Harry put Lily back into her mother's arms.

"Enjoy yourself," she said, watching as he nodded. He mounted his broom and took off.

"You're moving then?"

"Probably before yours and Harry's birthdays, yeah."

"You think it will take that long?"

"There's a lot to do, and we're in no rush. Molly and Arthur are great, and they help us so much with Lily."

"She's only a month-old. How much trouble can she cause?" he said, grinning. She laughed.

"She has her moments."

"You both have went through a lot in the last month."

"Yes we have, and I wouldn't have it any other way," she replied, leaning down to kiss Lily's head.

"Uncle Neville and Aunt Ginny may have gotten her something," he said, reaching into his pocket. He pulled a box out and resized it before giving it to Hermione.

"What is this, huh?" she asked Lily, opening the box. She pulled out a black plush dog, and her mouth opened in surprise.

"We know it's probably really sensitive for Harry, but we saw it and just had to get it. I hope it's ok."

"He'll love it," she said, running her finger across the plush. "Thank you, Neville. Lily will love playing with this when she gets a little older."

She put the toy back into the box and looked back down at Lily, who was beginning to look tired.

"I think it's nap time," she said, standing up.

"I can take her."

"Are you sure?" she asked, putting Lily into his arm. He nodded. "Thank you."

"She is my niece, after all," he said with a wink. He disappeared back into the house.

She stared back up at Harry, smiling as she saw him laughing and enjoying himself. A few minutes later he flew back down and sat next to her, drinking from the glass of pumpkin juice she had gotten for him.

"Did you have fun?"

"Always," he said with a grin, watching as Ron and Ginny joined them at the table.

"Where's Neville?"

"He wanted to put Lily down for her nap."

"I'll go checkup on them," she said, standing up. Harry turned back to Hermione.

"We have such wonderful friends."

"And then there's Ron," she replied with a grin. He glared at her.

"He is a troublesome uncle, isn't he?"

"Why am I friends with you lot?"

"Well, you met him on the train, and you both saved me from a troll….."

"I don't know why we did," he replied with a grin. She gave him a look.

"You're still my friend, right?" she asked her husband, who laughed.

"I'm more than your friend."

"Let's not go there," Ron said, pulling a face. Hermione rolled her eyes.

"We do have a baby, you know, which means we shag."

"There goes my lunch," he said, pushing his sandwich away. Harry chuckled.

"She's asleep," Ginny said, returning to the table.

"Good."

"He said that she refused her bottle at first."

"She likes to do that," Harry said, shaking his head.

"She's stubborn. I bet you can't guess where she got that from.”

He glared playfully at her. "She got it from her mother."

"No she didn't."

"Over there," Hermione said, pointing to where she wanted the couch. He put the couch on the floor and resized it, watching as she nodded in approval.

"I love it."

"Good," he replied, putting his wand away.

"I can't believe it's almost done," she said, looking around their now furnished house.

"This is our home, Hermione," he said, wrapping an arm around her waist and pressing a kiss to her head. "This is where Lily and Teddy will grow up."

"I'm so glad your parents left us this house."

"So am I," he replied, plopping onto the couch. She sat down next to him.

"Do you think Lily will love it?"

"I know she will. She'll love playing quidditch with me in the backyard." She gave him a look. "When she's old enough, of course."

"I'm doomed."

"Don't act like you don't like riding a broom," he replied with a grin.

"I wish we could do that again."

"Who says we can't?" he said, pulling his broom out. She smiled. "We have time to ourselves and a whole backyard to fly around in.”

"Let's go."

He led her out to the backyard and resized his broom. They climbed onto it, and he started off slowly. She wrapped her arms around his waist and held on tight, smiling to herself as they began to fly even higher.

"What do you think?" he called back to her.

"This is incredible!" she said, looking at the view.

"So I can teach Lily how to fly, right?" he asked her.

"Not until she's old enough," she ordered, and he smirked.

"Fine, love."

They flew around for quite a while before she wanted to get off. He flew back down and reshrunk his broom, smiling at her.

"What do you think?"

"That was fun," she agreed, flashing him a smile.

"I told you it would be."

"We need to get back to Lily, though."

"Wait," he said, grabbing hold of her hand. He pulled her back towards him and pressed their lips together, smiling against them when her arms wrapped around his neck.

"I have such a loving husband," she said with a smile. He grinned at her.

"Let's go get our daughter."

"We're going to miss you," Molly said, wrapping her arms around Harry then Hermione.

"We'll miss you, too," Hermione replied, pulling away.

"Congratulations on your new home," Arthur replied, also giving them a hug.

"We're going to have everyone over when we get everything set up."

"Ready to go home, Lily?" Harry asked her, strapping her into the carrier.

"We'll see you soon," Ginny said, giving them a hug.

"Good luck," Ron said, giving Hermione a hug and clapping Harry's shoulder.

"Thank you," they said. They said their final goodbyes before they arrived back at their home, smiling.

"Welcome home, Lily," Hermione said, watching as Harry put the carrier onto the couch. She unstrapped her and carefully pulled her out, kissing her head as she did so.

"This is our new home," Harry told her, rubbing Lily's head as he did so. "You have your own bedroom here and a big backyard to play in."

"This is our new home," she echoed back, looking up at her husband. He smiled at her.

"We grew up quickly."

"We sure did," she replied, looking back down at the baby. She leaned down and kissed her head again.

"I should be starting dinner," he said, rubbing her knee. She nodded and watched as he stood up and disappeared into the kitchen.

"I bet you're getting hungry," she said, rubbing Lily's cheek. "Mummy will get you a bottle in just a minute."

She put Lily into the infant rocking chair before standing up to go to the kitchen. She pulled a bottle out and warmed it with her wand, smiling as she saw Harry prepping for dinner.

"Somebody couldn't wait on you," she said, grinning. He gave her a look.

"I know she got her impatience from you."

"I am not impatient."

He didn't say anything else but continued to look at her. She glared at him.

"You're impatient," she replied.

"Not very often."

Lily started crying. Harry turned back to Hermione with a smug look.

"Impatient calls."

"I'm going to feed her," she said, and he nodded. She walked back into the living room and picked Lily up, quieting her down. She put the bottle up to her lips and watched as she took it, snuggling into her mother's chest.

"Daddy seems to think that you got your impatience from me," she said, watching as Lily's blue eyes stared up at her. "We both know that it came from him."

She sat in silence as she waited for Lily to finish her bottle. He returned to the living room sometime later, smiling at them.

"How's she doing?"

"She's about done," she said, looking at the bottle. "How's dinner coming along?"

"It's going to take a few hours."

She nodded, laying her head on his shoulder. He reached up and rubbed it, letting out a sigh of contentment.

"What do you want to do for your birthday?" she asked him. He shrugged.

"I just want to spend time with my girls."

"You don't want to do anything?"

"We've done quite a bit. I just want to relax."

"Ok," she said, leaning up to give him a kiss.

She was fine with this, because she had plans already made for his birthday.

On the morning of the 31st, Hermione quietly snuck out of the bed the moment Lily awoke and took her to her nursery, changing her. She put her into Harry's favorite onesie and a pair of shorts before returning to the bedroom, gently shaking him awake the moment they sat on the bed.

"Good morning, daddy," she said, watching as he sat up in his bed and grabbed for his glasses. He smiled the moment he put them onto his face. "Happy birthday."

"Thank you," he said, taking Lily from her. "This is a wonderful way to be woken up on my birthday."

"What do you want to do today?"

"I don't know," he said, smiling down at his daughter. "I just want to be with my girls."

"You have our attention all day today," she smiled. "Until Lily needs to eat or sleep, that is."

He chuckled. "Best birthday ever."

"I am going to make you your favorite breakfast. Lily is ready she just needs to eat."

"You're the best," he said with a grin.

"Meet me downstairs when you're ready," she said, leaning over to give him a kiss. She got off of the bed and went to the kitchen. She pulled everything she needed out and started on his breakfast, humming softly to herself as she did so.

"Someone's getting crabby," he said, arriving in the kitchen. She moved from the stove and pulled him a bottle out before giving it to him, watching as he sat at the table and began to feed Lily.

"She wants her breakfast, too."

"She wants my breakfast, not this baby breakfast," he grinned.

"Tell her she'll be able to eat it soon enough," she replied with a smile.

"It smells amazing, Hermione."

"Happy birthday," she said, resting her hands on his shoulders and kissing his head.

"I have a beautiful daughter and an amazing wife. It definitely is a good birthday."

"It shouldn't be too much longer," she said, rubbing his arms. She turned back to the stove and finished breakfast. She pulled the muffins out of the stove and sat them out on the counter before finishing the rest. She then made him a plate and took it to him, watching as Lily finished her bottle.

"Thanks, love," he said, placing the bottle on the table. She grabbed for it and washed it out before fixing her own plate.

"I do have a surprise for you," she said, joining him at the table. He looked at her. "Ginny, Luna, Ron and I went together and were able to get you, Ron and Neville tickets to the quidditch game tomorrow."

"Hermione!" he said, looking at the tickets. "You shouldn't have done this."

"It makes you happy. It was my pleasure. Ginny and I couldn't figure out what you both wanted to do for your birthdays, and Ron informed us that there was a game going on. We thought you would enjoy a day out with the boys without worrying about Lily and I."

"You're the best," he said, leaning over to give her a kiss. "Thank you."

"Happy birthday."

"You're setting the bar pretty high for your birthday."

She smiled. "I know you'll come up with something amazing."

"I'll do my best," he replied with a grin. She looked at him.

"It's been quite the year, hasn't it?"

"It sure has," he said, cooing at Lily. "We have a beautiful daughter."

"I'm so proud of you."

"For?"

"Everything," she said softly, grabbing for his hand. "You made it through Hogwarts with your moody pregnant wife and you managed to complete your N.E.W.T.s even though we had to leave Lily."

"You were not that bad," he said, giving her a look.

"You're still being nice, love," she said with a laugh.

Lily made a noise, and they both smiled down at her. Hermione finished her breakfast and took her from Harry so he could eat his own.

"I'm still curious as to whose eyes you have," she said, turning Lily around to look at her.

"I think your mum's right. She has yours."

"You think?"

"I know so," he said with a grin.

An owl tapped at the window, and he walked over to open it. The owl flew in and dropped two envelopes onto the table before landing on the chair. He gave the owl a treat and watched as it flew back out the window.

"Letters from the Ministry of Magic," he said, giving her the one addressed to her.

"N.E.W.T. results. Open yours first."

He gave her a hopeful look before he tore the envelope open and pulled two pieces of parchment out. Opening the first one with shaky hands, he began to read out loud.

*NASTILY EXHAUSTING WIZARDING TEST RESULTS*

*Pass Grades Fail Grades*

*Outstanding (O) Poor (P)*

*Exceeds Expectations (E) Dreadful (D)*

*Acceptable (A) Troll (T)*

*Harry James Potter has achieved:*

*Charms: O Herbology: E*

*Potions: O Transfiguration: E*

*Defense Against the Dark Arts: O*

"Harry!" she cried, throwing him a look of pride. He looked at her in shock, still in disbelief.

"Did they confuse my exams with yours?"

"Stop that. I told you that you've been doing so much better. I'm so proud of you."

"There's another one," he said, switching to the other piece.

*Dear Mr. Potter,*

*Based on the results of your N.E.W.T. examinations, we are happy to inform you that we have accepted your application to join the Improper Use of Magic Office.*

*This office focuses on underage magic and magic that may be used in presence of a Muggle. Before you officially join the office, you will have a month-long training session that applies your abilities in real-life situations.*

*Minister Kingsley Shacklebolt and Head Barbara Consistence will have more information.*

*Sincerely,*

*Amanda Kingston*

*Assistant to Head Barbara Consistence*

"Yay!" she said, clapping her hands together. Lily squealed, and Harry grinned.

"Are you proud of me, Lily?" he asked her, kissing her cheek.

"I sure am," Hermione said, smiling at him. "I know she is, too."

"I'm surprised they let me in with how much trouble I've caused."

"I'm sure Kingsley helped with it. Plus times have changed," she replied, stroking Lily's hair. "Are you sure about this?"

"Positive," he said, sitting down next to her. "I just want to come home from work and see my girls."

She smiled. "I just want you to be happy."

"I am happy," he said, showing her his wedding band. "I have the best wife and an amazing daughter. What about you?"

He took Lily from her before she grabbed her envelope and tore it open, letting out a deep breath as she did so.

*NASTILY EXHAUSTING WIZARDING TEST RESULTS*

*Pass Grades Fail Grades*

*Outstanding (O) Poor (P)*

*Exceeds Expectations (E) Dreadful (D)*

*Acceptable (A) Troll (T)*

*Hermione Jean Potter has achieved:*

*Ancient Runes: E Charms: O*

*Herbology: O History of Magic O*

*Potions: O Transfiguration: O*

*Defense Against the Dark Arts: E*

"Those are excellent, Hermione. I'm proud of you."

"You know, the sixth-year me would have been freaking out about those two E's. I'm just happy I got these scores. I couldn't stop thinking about Lily during the exams."

"Neither could I."

"Still, we went back and forth between Hogwarts and home, raised a barely two-week-old daughter, and still found time to study and these are the grades I got? I can live with it. I'm so happy."

"So am I. I'm proud of both of our grades."

"I love you," she said, giving him a quick kiss.

"Love you, too. You too, princess."

"Are you sure you're ok with me not working?" she asked, turning to look at him.

"Hermione, we have talked about this. There is no pressure for you to work. You want to stay home and take care of Lily. I have no problem with that. Whenever you're ready, I know you'll find a good job that you really want, and Lily will have her grandparents to take care of her."

"Thanks for supporting me."

"Ditto," he said, kissing her head. "We're a team."

"We're a family," she said, looking back down at their daughter.

"Always a family," he whispered, pressing their lips together.

## Chapter Twenty-Five: Epilogue

On the morning of December 23rd, 2002, a girl with black hair stared out the window, her brown eyes wide as she watched the snow fall to the ground. A woman walked up to her, smiling as she saw the look on the little girl's face.

"What is that?" she asked, pointing to the window.

"It's snowing!" she called out. A man walked up to her and stood on her other side.

"It is snowing," Hermione said, kissing her head.

"Do you know what we do when it snows?" Harry asked. Lily shook her head. "We go outside and play in it."

"But first, we must get into our clothes."

Lily grabbed for Hermione's outstretched hand and followed her mother upstairs. Harry smiled at them, taking another sip of his coffee. He then put the cup back onto the table and went upstairs to change.

"She's waiting for you," Hermione said, walking into the master.

"We'll be outside," he said, kissing her cheek. She nodded, and he turned to walk out of the room, smiling as he saw Lily in her own bedroom, looking over her toys.

"Ready, princess?"

"Yeah!" she said, grabbing her father's hand. They carefully walked downstairs and to the backyard, and he let out a laugh and she grabbed a handful of snow and threw it into the air.

"Let's make a snow angel, Lily," he said, collapsing into the fluffy snow. She copied her father and made a snow angel, giggling out loud.

"Look at you," Hermione said, smiling down at her daughter.

"I'm playing in the snow, mummy," she said, sitting back up.

"You certainly are. Want to help daddy and I build a snowman?"

She nodded, and walked over to her father, who began to start on the snowman. Hermione went back into the house before returning with a carrot.

"What do you think?" Harry asked sometime later, picking Lily up.

"I love it!"

"Do you have a name?"

"Snitch," she said, reaching her arm out to rub the snowman's head. He chuckled.

"That's a good name," Hermione said, smiling at her husband. "Snitch the Snowman."

He put Lily back down and gathered a ball of snow in his hands. He smirked as she copied him.

"Lily," he said quietly, turning to her, "when I count to three, throw this at mummy. One, two, three!"

They threw their snowballs at Hermione, who turned in laughter to give her husband a playful glare.

"Harry James Potter! You are such a bad influence!"

"You're a bad influence!" he mimicked back, sticking his tongue out at her. Lily laughed.

Hermione picked a snowball up and threw it at him, winking to Lily in response. She did the same, and Harry threw his arms up in defeat, chuckling as he did so.

"I surrender!"

"Good!" she said, leaning down next to Lily. "I think he's learned his lesson."

"We need a boy," he said with a grin. "I'm outnumbered."

"Someday," she said with a wink, fixing Lily's ponytail.

"Little Miss. Lily, what do you want to do?" he asked, picking her up.

"Fly!" she said, pointing to the sky.

"Mummy?" he asked, and she let out a shaky breath. "It's not snowing anymore."

"Don't go very high," she ordered.

He nodded, pulling his broom out of his pocket. He then resized it and climbed on, carefully putting Lily in front of him. He wrapped one arm around her and slowly took off, smiling at the nervous look on his wife's face. He slowly flew around, his heart warming at the sound of his daughter's laughter.

"Having fun?"

"Yeah!" she said, looking back to Hermione. They flew around for a few more minutes before they dismounted, and she ran up to her mother.

"I think you and daddy enjoy giving mummy a heart attack," she said, rubbing her head.

"You worry too much," he replied, kissing her head.

"She's my child, too, you know."

"No kidding? I didn't have her with someone else?"

She glared at him. "You're mean."

"Mummy, I'm hungry," Lily cried, looking up at her mother.

"Let's go get some lunch," she said, and they walked back into the house to have lunch.

"Let's get you changed while mummy fixes lunch," Harry said, holding his hand out. She took it, and they traveled upstairs. Hermione smiled as she fixed everyone's lunches before they finally returned back downstairs.

"Here you go," she said, giving Lily a sandwich and apple slices. She dug into her meal.

"Thanks, love," Harry said, kissing Hermione's cheek and grabbing for his own sandwich.

"I can't believe how big she's getting," she said sadly, turning to look back at her daughter.

"I know. She needs to stop growing!" he said, ticking Lily's sides. She laughed, trying to swat her father's hands away.

"Say stop it daddy!"

"Stop it, daddy!" she told Harry, pointing to him. He turned to Hermione who grinned in response.

"You're a bad influence."

"I'm never a bad influence."

"Harry, you should start a club that teaches us how to defend ourselves against the dark arts!" he mimicked her. She smirked.

"I don't sound anything like that."

"Uh huh," he said, taking a bite of his sandwich. She sat down next to him

"It feels so nice to have a few days off," she said, pushing Lily's hair back behind her ear. He nodded.

"It sure does, and tomorrow is our five-year anniversary."

"I've been stuck with you for five years?" she asked, shaking her head. He grinned.

"You're stuck with me forever."

"Great," she replied, lowering her head. He chuckled.

"I love you."

"Love you, too."

The fireplace roared, and he glanced over to it to see a head floating in it.

"It's Neville," he said, walking over to the grate. "What's up, mate?"

"Ginny's in labor," he said, sounding extremely nervous.

"How far is she?" Hermione asked, walking up next to her husband.

"She's already at seven centimeters. They're thinking about two hours."

"We'll be there soon," Harry said.

"It's room 654 when you get here," he said before disappearing.

"Lily was three days late and almost nine hours in labor, and Ginny is two weeks early and only a few?"

"Life's not fair, love," he said with a grin. "Let's finish eating, then we need to get to the hospital."

"Finish your lunch," she instructed Lily before eating her own. After they had all finished, they got ready to leave for the hospital.

"Lily, let's go," Hermione said, grabbing for Lily's shoes. She put them on her before putting her own on. "You're going to have a cousin today."

They arrived at the hospital and walked to the room. Ginny was grabbing for Neville's hand, crying out in pain as she did so.

"Hi," Hermione said, giving her a hug. "You're so close already."

"It hurts," she said, letting out deep breaths.

"It only gets worse, I'm afraid," she said, rubbing her hand.

"Thanks for coming," Neville said, and Harry clapped his shoulder.

"We're here for you, mate."

"How's my niece?" Ginny said, holding her arms out. Hermione picked Lily up and put her on the bed, smiling as she gave Ginny a hug.

"What are they saying?"

"Last time they checked I was at seven. The pain had been getting worse over the last few hours until my water finally broke."

"Whatever you do, just keep breathing. It may seem pointless, but it does help."

"Aunt Ginny, are you ok?" Lily asked.

"I'll be just fine," she replied, rubbing Lily's back.

"Your son will be here soon," Hermione soothed, rubbing Ginny's hand.

She cried out in pain again. Neville rubbed her other hand, whispering soothing words to her.

"How are we?" the Healer asked, returning to the room.

"Not good," she replied, trying to catch her breath.

"I'll be right back," Harry said, turning to walk out of the room.

"Nine centimeters. Let's get you ready for delivery."

"Keep breathing," Hermione said, picking Lily up. "It'll be over with soon."

"Thank you," Ginny said, before crying out in pain again. She nodded to Neville before turning to walk out of the room, moving to the waiting room.

"Hey, beautiful."

"There you are," she said, turning to him. "They're prepping her for delivery."

"Guess we have time to wait then," he said, plopping into the nearest seat. Lily moved to sit in the seat next to him. "Do you want me to read your book to you?"

"Yeah!" she said, watching as her father pulled a miniaturized book from his pocket and resized it. He opened it and began to read, and Hermione looked at her watch, noticing the time.

"Harry, it's almost time for her nap," she said, and Lily looked over and grunted at her.

"No!"

"Yes, Lily."

"I'll take her home," he said, shrinking the book again. "Tell Neville and Ginny I'll be by after she wakes up."

"Love you," she said, giving him a quick kiss. "Have a nice nap, sweetheart."

Harry grabbed for his daughter's hand and took her out of the hospital. Hermione let out a sigh as she leaned back in her seat.

"Where's Harry?" Ron asked, as he and Luna finally arrived in the hospital. Molly and Arthur came in after them.

"He took Lily home for her nap. We'll come back later."

"What are they saying? Do you know?"

"She's about to have the baby."

"That was quick," Ron remarked.

"Some labors are," Molly said.

"He's going to be a feisty thing," he told his wife, who nodded in agreement.

"He sure will be," Luna said, smiling at him.

"You said the same thing about Lily," Hermione said, looking at him.

"Have you seen your daughter?"

She gave him a look. "She's her father's daughter."

"That's the truth," he said, nodding in agreement. Hermione smiled and shook her head.

"Here we go, Lily," Harry said, helping Lily into her bed. She gave him a sad look, and he knew exactly what she was trying to do. "You may have your mummy's eyes, but you can't use them to manipulate me. It's naptime."

"Daddy!" she cried, and he shook his head.

"Lay down," he said. She did.

"Where's Padfoot?" she asked, looking around.

"I think he's downstairs. I'll go get him," he said, standing up. He quickly went downstairs and found the black plush dog sitting on the couch. He grabbed for it and returned to her room, a small smile forming on his face by the look that appeared on hers. He pulled the book out and resized it, starting from the beginning.

It was Hermione's favorite childhood book.

Alice in Wonderland.

Just a little over halfway through the story, Lily's soft breathing filled the room. He closed the book and softly kissed her head, covering her up with her blanket. He then turned and walked out of the room and to the kitchen, starting the dishes they didn't get a chance to clean earlier.

'Not much,' he thought, looking around. He finished the dishes and put them away before turning to the living room. He sat on the couch and threw his legs over the coffee table, reaching for the paper that Hermione had left there this morning.

And, as he read through the paper, he felt his eyes beginning to droop. He laid his head against the back of the couch and fell asleep in a matter of minutes.

"He's here!" Neville said, appearing in the waiting room. Everyone stood up. "Joshua's here."

"Congratulations, mate," Ron said, clapping his back.

"Can we see him?"

"Yeah," he said, as though the thought just occurred to him. "Right this way."

They followed him back to their room and awed at the baby held in Ginny's arms.

"Hi, everyone," she replied, smiling at them.

"He's beautiful," Hermione said, taking the baby from Ginny. "I can't tell who he looks like more."

"He looks like Neville to me," Luna said, cooing at the baby.

"I agree," Ron said, standing next to her.

"Where's Harry and Lily?"

"He took her back home for her nap. We'll come by later so they can see him."

"She's going to love her cousin Joshua," Ginny said, leaning back in her bed.

"When he's big enough to play with her, of course. Victorie isn't quite there yet," she replied with a laugh, handing Joshua to Molly.

"She's going to have plenty of cousins running around soon enough," Molly replied with a laugh, "and she's the oldest of them all."

"Technically Teddy is, but pretty close."

"Do you have Teddy for the holiday?" Arthur asked Hermione, who nodded in agreement.

"We sure do. Andromeda is coming to your Christmas dinner, and we'll pick him up there. We get him for a few days. Lily will be so happy."

"She gets cuter as she gets older," Luna said with a smile.

"She has her moments."

"She's been refusing to nap at our house," Molly said.

"She's in the "no" phase. She thinks she can get away with everything right now. Harry and I are working on it."

Joshua started crying, and Arthur gave him back to Ginny. She lightly bounced him in her arms.

"I think he's hungry."

"We'll give you some privacy," Luna said, and everyone turned to walk out.

"I'm going home to check on Harry and Lily," Hermione said. "We'll be back soon."

"Thank you for coming," she said, smiling up at her.

"We wouldn't miss this. If Lily wouldn't be such a grump if she didn't nap, we would have let her stay up today."

"She is never like that."

"If you say so," she replied with a laugh. "He is beautiful. Congratulations."

"Thank you," she said, looking back down at her son. "I think he does look like Neville."

"You think?" he asked, leaning over to look at him.

"I do."

"I'll give you some privacy. We'll be back soon."

"Bye, Hermione," they said together, and she turned to walk out of the room.

She said goodbye to everyone in the waiting room before walking out of the hospital and apparating home. She walked into the living room and smiled at Harry, who was snoring softly on the couch. She walked over to him and gently shook him awake, holding back a laugh when he jumped back in surprise.

"Tired much?" she asked, watching as he rubbed his eyes and sat up on the couch.

"I'm exhausted lately."

"You're working full-time and taking care of Lily. It's going to wear you down."

"You're doing the same and you don't look tired."

"Trust me, I'm very tired. Lily's taking her nap why don't we take one as well?"

He nodded, and they walked up to the master bedroom, falling asleep the moment they fell onto their bed.

"Are you ready to see your cousin Joshua?" Hermione asked Lily, as they walked through the hospital. She nodded.

"I'm feeling a little more awake now," Harry said, and she nodded in agreement.

"So am I."

They stopped at Neville and Ginny's room and knocked, waiting for a response. They opened the door when they got one.

"Hi there," Neville said.

"Look at him," Harry said, taking the baby from Ginny when she held him out to him. "He's bigger than I thought he would be."

"Trust me, I know," Ginny said, rolling her eyes. "Delivering him hurt."

"It hurts so much, but it is so worth it," Hermione said, kissing Lily's head. "I'll never forget the day I held this one in my arms."

"I won't, either," she said, looking over at her son.

"And Luna's the next one."

"Not for a while. She just found out last month."

"I can only imagine how Ron will take that."

"He'll be a great father," Hermione said, and Harry nodded in agreement.

"He sure will be."

Harry sat down next to Lily and showed her Joshua. "This is your cousin Joshua."

"Hi, Joshua!" she said, waving to him. Neville and Ginny smiled.

"She's getting too big."

"We know," Hermione said sadly, playing with Lily's hair. "Where did the time go?"

Harry gave the baby back to Neville to be changed. "We did have her early, love."

Neville cooed at his son. "This one of the happiest days of my life."

"What's the other?" Ginny asked, smiling at him.

"Our wedding day."

Hermione smiled at Harry. He smiled back at her.

"Since we won't be able to see you, happy anniversary," she said, smiling at them.

"Thank you," they echoed.

"Anything special going on?"

"Not that I'm aware of," she replied, looking over at Harry. He shrugged.

"I don't have anything planned."

"That's usually code for I do have something planned and you'll find out when you find out."

He shrugged again. Ginny smiled at him.

"He's definitely got something planned."

"Oh, I know," she said with a smile. "I haven't figured it out yet."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"All I know for certain is that we're having dinner with my parent's tomorrow night."

"We'll be having dinner here," Neville said with a grin. Harry chuckled.

"Sounds fun."

"I'm happy he came before the holiday," Ginny said, taking the baby from Neville. "We may be spending it in a hospital, but at least we get to spend it with him."

"It's a great feeling," Hermione said, rubbing Lily's head.

"It sure is," Harry repeated, smiling at his wife and daughter.

Christmas Eve morning arrived, and Hermione was the first to wake for it. She sat up in her bed and stretched, turning her head to her husband.

'Lazy,' she thought with a smile, looking at him as he was sprawled across their bed. She got out and walked to the bathroom, taking a quick shower and dressing herself as she did so.

After she was dressed and ready for the day, she walked out of the bedroom and quietly into Lily's, seeing that her daughter was playing with the black plush dog that Neville and Ginny had gotten her when she was a baby.

"Good morning," she said with a smile, going over to Lily's closet.

"Mummy!"

"We're going to see Grandma Melinda and Grandpa Joseph tonight," she said, picking an outfit out.

"Grandma and grandpa?" she asked, clutching the dog to her chest.

"Ready to get dressed?" she asked, and Lily nodded. She removed her pajamas, and Hermione immediately felt sad by how big Lily had become.

"You're getting too big," she said, helping Lily put her clothes on.

"I'm a big girl!”

"Yes, you are. Go use the loo," she said, and they walked into the bathroom.

After they finished in the bathroom, they walked downstairs to the living room, and Hermione stopped in her tracks by what was waiting for her on the coffee table.

"What is this?" she asked, looking at the vase of roses. "Lily, I think daddy left me a surprise. Want to help mummy figure it out?"

"Yeah!" she cried. Hermione bent down next to her.

"Let's see here. There are eleven roses. Six are red and five are pink."

She stared at them for a minute, the realization dawning on her. She smiled. "Eleven roses, because daddy and I have known each other for eleven years. The red roses are the six years we spent together as friends. The pink ones represent the five years that we've been together."

"Daddy!" Lily said, pointing behind her. She turned around.

"It's always fun being married to the brightest witch of our age," Harry said, walking up to her. She smiled.

"This was a surprise."

"I see you figured it out," he replied with a smile.

"Eleven roses because we met in 1991. There are six red roses. We were friends from 1991 to 1997. There are five pink roses. We were married in 1997 to now, Christmas Eve, 2002.”

"I still have one more," he said, pulling a white flower out from behind his back.

A lily.

"A lily for our Lily," he said, giving the flower to his wife.

"Ron's right. You've turned soft," she replied, smelling the flower.

"That's why he spoils Luna on a constant basis."

"Lily," she said, calling her daughter over to her. She stuck the flower behind her ear. "Can you say pretty?"

"Pretty!" she said, reaching up to touch the flower.

"Happy anniversary, love," he said, leaning down to give her a kiss.

"Five years together. I can't believe it."

"Neither can I."

"Dinner with my parents tonight, then the family dinner at the Weasley's tomorrow."

"I can't wait for tomorrow morning," he said, rubbing Lily's head.

"Neither can I," she replied, moving the vase out of way. "She'll be so thrilled."

She put the flowers onto the kitchen table and smiled, feeling loved. Harry picked Lily up and threw her over his shoulder, letting out a grin as she squealed with laughter.

"Let's get you some breakfast, princess," he said, putting her back onto the floor. He moved to make her a plate while she climbed into her chair. Hermione pulled her sippy out of the refrigerator and gave it to her.

"It's sad that Neville and Ginny have to spend their Christmas in the hospital."

"They also have a son to celebrate with. It'll be a nice holiday for them."

"It sure will be."

He gave the plate to Lily and fixed his own, watching as Hermione grabbed some toast and sat down across from him.

"Not hungry this morning?"

She shrugged. "I don't want to eat a lot today."

"She doesn't feel the same way," he said, gesturing to their daughter, and who working on her plate. Hermione smiled.

"She's hungry."

The fireplace went off and Luna stepped out followed by Ron. Hermione stood up and made them plates.

"Morning mate, Luna."

"Good morning," they echoed. Luna sat next to Lily.

"Any plans today?"

"We're seeing my father for dinner tonight."

Harry noticed the look on Ron's face and let out a smirk. "Sounds great."

"Happy anniversary, by the way," she said.

"Thank you," Harry and Hermione echoed.

"You have a little bump," she said to Luna, who rubbed her stomach.

"We actually have some news," she said, smiling at her husband.

"We're having twins."

"Are you serious?" Hermione asked, her eyes widening in surprise. He nodded.

"Sure am. It's still too early to tell the gender, though."

"Congratulations!" she said, wrapping her arms around both of them.

"Thank you."

"Congratulations," Harry echoed, smiling at them. "That's going to be a challenge."

"Oh, we know," she said, rubbing her stomach again. "We're more than ready for it."

"We're not babysitting," Harry said with a grin. Hermione rolled her eyes playfully.

"Correction: he's babysitting and I'm not."

Ron laughed. "Uncle Harry and Aunt Hermione will babysit for us. We know it."

"How are you feeling?" Hermione asked Luna, who shrugged in response.

"I'm ok. This morning sickness is horrible."

"I got that a lot when I was pregnant, too. It'll get better."

"Are you done, Lily?" Harry asked, looking over at her plate. She nodded.

"Can I play?"

"You can go play," Hermione said, watching as her husband stood up and cleaned up. Lily got out of her seat and ran to the living room.

"Are you doing anything for your anniversary?"

Hermione shook her head. "Not really. We don't even exchange presents until tomorrow.”

"Five years. That has to be exciting."

"I can't believe it was five years ago today that Hermione and I went to Godric's Hollow and we somehow got married."

"I thought I had lost you that day," she replied, grabbing for his hand.

He pulled her hand up to his face and kissed her rings. She smiled at him.

"We've only been together for a year and this one is driving me crazy," Ron said, grinning at his wife. She glared at him.

"Is there any possible way for these kids to come out of him?"

"Unfortunately not," Hermione replied with a laugh.

"Just do what I do, Luna, and punch him in the shoulder."

"If only," she replied with a smile. "Lily is talking so well.”

"Yes, she is. Molly, Arthur, Harry and I have been working with her. She loves to read and loves to learn new things."

"I bet you can't guess where that came from," he replied with a grin, taking a drink. She smiled.

"My mum and dad said I was just like that when I was her age."

"I can only imagine," Ron replied, shaking his head. "You were a nightmare at Hogwarts."

"Be nice," Luna said, slapping his chest.

"It's fine," she said, narrowing her eyes at him. "I would have rather been a nightmare than a slacker."

"She's my favorite nightmare," Harry said, grinning as he did so. She gave him a look but couldn't stop a smile from forming.

"You are such an arse."

"Look, daddy!" Lily said, running back into the kitchen. She showed Harry her drawing.

"Beautiful," he said, looking at it. "I say this deserves a spot on the refrigerator."

"I agree," Hermione said, standing up. She put the picture onto the refrigerator. "Very pretty, Lily."

Lily stared at the picture for a minute before disappearing again. Hermione smiled as she sat down next to Harry again.

"We should be going," Luna said, looking at the time. "Thank you for breakfast."

"Anytime."

"See you tomorrow at dinner?"

"Of course," Harry said, standing up.

"We'll see you then," Ron said, before he and Luna said goodbye to Lily and disappeared in the flames.

"You look beautiful, Lily," Hermione said, smoothing out her daughter's dress. Lily twirled, giggling as she did so.

"It's pretty."

"It is pretty," she replied, putting her hair into a ponytail. She smiled as she watched her daughter twirl again.

"Are we ready?" Harry asked, peeking his head into the room.

"Doesn't she look pretty, daddy?"

"Beautiful," he said, bending down next to her. "We have a very beautiful daughter."

"We sure do," she said, kissing Lily's head. "Let's go see grandma and grandpa."

Harry grabbed Lily's hand and took off towards the fireplace. They disappeared in the flames and reappeared in The Granger's living room.

"Hi, mum, dad," Hermione said, wrapping her arms around her parents.

"Hello, Hermione. Hello, Harry. Merry Christmas Eve."

"Merry Christmas Eve," Harry echoed back.

"You're getting so big!" Joseph said, kissing Lily's head.

"Grandpa!" she cried when he started tickling her sides.

"Want to me help finish dinner?" Melinda asked Hermione, smiling at her husband.

"Of course," she replied, following her mother into the kitchen.

"How have you been?"

"We've been good."

"Happy anniversary."

"Thank you."

"Grandma!" Lily said, running into the kitchen.

"There's my granddaughter!" she said, giving her a hug. "You are getting so big."

"And she still looks and acts like her father to this day," Hermione replied with a smile. "The only thing this kid got from me is her eyes."

"She's intelligent, just like her mother," Harry said, walking into the kitchen. He wrapped his arm around Hermione's waist and kissed her head. Joseph followed behind him and tried to take Lily's plush dog away from her. A smile grew on his face as he heard his daughter's laughter.

"When are we getting another one?" Melinda asked, and Hermione gave her mother a look.

"When Harry and I decide we're ready."

"Lily wants a little brother or sister."

"She likes being an only child."

Harry chuckled. Melinda gave her daughter a defeated look before turning to the stove. Harry pulled Lily's sippy out and gave it to her. She took a drink from it before disappearing down the hall.

"Joseph, will you slice the ham?" Melinda asked, and he nodded and went over to the oven. Harry helped Hermione set the table before taking off to find Lily. They joined everyone at the table, and he fixed her a plate before fixing his own, sitting next to Hermione.

"Thank you for dinner," Hermione said, hugging her parents.

"Merry Christmas and have a happy anniversary."

"Thank you," Harry said, also giving them a hug.

"Merry Christmas, Lily," Joseph said, giving his granddaughter a hug.

"Merry Christmas," Melinda said, also giving her a hug.

"Let us know when you're wanting to have dinner again."

"We will," Melinda said, nodding to her. They said their goodbyes before they disappeared in the emerald flames.

"Ok, Lily, it's time to get ready for bed."

"No!" she cried, looking up at her mother with a sad expression on her face.

"Yes, it is. Let's go."

She pouted her lip and followed her parents upstairs. They changed her into her pajamas and tucked her into bed. Harry pulled a book out and started to read to her, watching as her little brown eyes began to close. When she was sound asleep, he closed the book and bent down to kiss her head.

"Goodnight, princess."

"Goodnight, Lily," Hermione whispered, also kissing her head. They blew out the candle and walked out of the room, turning to one another as they did so.

"It's still our anniversary."

"There's a bottle of firewhiskey in the kitchen. Meet me in the living room."

His eyes lit up as they both returned downstairs. She plopped onto the couch and watched as he disappeared into the kitchen for a few minutes before returning.

"Happy anniversary," he said, handing her a glass of firewhiskey.

"Happy anniversary, love."

"Five years. I still can't believe it."

"Five wonderful years with you."

"Did you like your surprise this morning?"

"I certainly did."

"Then you'll really like your presents tomorrow," he replied with a grin.

"I think you'll like yours, too."

"What'd you get me?"

"You can find out tomorrow."

"Well, then, so can you," he replied, finishing his glass. He poured himself another.

"I can't believe how much times have changed."

"Neither can I."

She finished her own and poured herself another, staring at the family portrait of the day Lily was born. He wrapped his arm around her shoulder, and she and put her legs up on the couch and laid her head on his shoulder.

"I want to say, Harry, that the last five years have been great. Granted we got together after we were married, but still."

He laughed. "I agree and look at all we've accomplished since then."

"We have done a lot."

She reached over to put her glass down, closed her eyes and breathed in his scent. He leaned down and kissed her head, and she smiled up at him. She reached up and pushed his hair out of his face, running her fingertips across his skin as she did so.

"I love you," she whispered, pressing her hands against his face. He put his own glass on the table and rested his hands on her hips.

"I love you, too."

He leaned down and pressed their lips together. She wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him down on top of her. She grabbed the bottom of his shirt and pulled it over his head, pressing their lips back together the moment it was off. His hands slipped under her shirt and rested on her hips, tracing her skin with his thumbs.

"Oh, Harry," she breathed out when his lips moved to her neck. She traced her nails down his back, grinding their hips together.

"Let's go to bed, Hermione," he said, his voice husky with desire. She nodded, and they raced upstairs, closing their bedroom door behind them.

The feeling of a pair of lips pressing against hers woke Hermione up the next morning. She smiled against them before he pulled away, and she opened her eyes to see him looking down at her.

"Merry Christmas."

"Merry Christmas. Last night was fun."

"It sure was," he replied with a grin.

She sat up in the bed and stretched, shivering as his fingers traced her bare back.

"She'll be awake soon," he said, moving to get out of the bed.

"Better get ready, then," she said with a smirk, laying back down in the bed. He moved to her side of the bed and looked down at her, raising an eyebrow as he did so.

"Wasn't it you that said we were a team?"

"Except when I'm tired."

"It doesn't work that way," he said, bending down. He picked her up and grinned as she let out a screech and started pounding on his back.

"Put me down!"

"Fine."

"Rude," she said, giving him a look. He pressed his hands against her cheeks and placed his lips on hers.

"Race you to the shower.”

"Already there, love," she said, backing into the bathroom. He smirked as he followed her.

"I think that's all of it," Hermione said sometime later, looking through their closet.

"I can't wait to see her face."

"Neither can I," she replied with a smile.

They walked downstairs and put their presents under the tree. He wrapped his arm around her waist and kissed her head, feeling incredibly happy.

"Shall we go get her?"

"We shall," she replied with a smile, and they turned to walk back up the stairs.

"Are we ready?" he asked outside of Lily's room, and she nodded. He opened the door and peeked his head in, smiling as he saw his daughter rummaging through her toys.

"Merry Christmas, Lily!" they said together.

"Merry Christmas!" she said, running into her father's waiting arms.

"We have a surprise for you downstairs," Hermione said, kissing her head.

She used the loo before they all went downstairs, and Lily's eyes grew huge as she saw what was under the tree. Harry and Hermione smiled at each other.

"Daddy is going to hand the presents out," Hermione said, sitting on the floor. Lily sat next to her, and Harry gave her the first present.

"Merry Christmas, princess."

"What is it?" she asked, helping Lily tear off the wrapping. They opened the box and she pulled out a stuffed quaffle toy, her eyes widening in happiness.

"It's a quaffle!"

"It sure is," he replied, rubbing her head. "Here is mummy's present from me."

"What'd you get me?" she asked, smiling at him. He handed her a small package, and she tore off the wrapping and opened the box, her mouth falling open by its content.

"You shouldn't have," she said, pulling the bracelet out.

"I did."

"It's beautiful," she said, running her finger across the silver band. "Thank you."

"Merry Christmas, and happy anniversary," he said, leaning over to give her a kiss.

"Now it's time for yours," she said, looking through the gifts. She pulled one out and handed it to him. "Merry Christmas, and happy anniversary."

He tore the wrapping off and opened the box, taking the present out.

"Nice!" he said, running his hands over the two pieces of fabric. "What made you think of this?"

"Just seeing you and her on the broom together warms my heart. I figured you would like these."

"I love them," he said, looking over the two red robes that read Harry and Lily. "Thank you, love."

"Let see what else Lily got," she said, as he looked through the gifts again. They spent the next several minutes giving gifts, and Harry and Hermione smiled at Lily's reactions to each one.

"Time for Christmas morning breakfast," Hermione said, getting up off the floor.

"Pancakes?" Lily asked, her eyes widening.

"What do you say?" Harry said.

"Can I have pancakes, please?"

"Yes, you may," her mother said with a smile. "The apple didn't fall far from the tree, love."

"We love pancakes," he replied with a grin. She smiled.

"I'm going to make breakfast. You two have fun."

"No," he said, standing up as well. "It's my turn, and I won't hear any arguments."

"You're not getting any," she replied with a laugh. He gave her a smile before disappearing into the kitchen.

"Do you like your presents?"

"I love them!" she exclaimed, grabbing for her toy wand. "Thank you, mummy."

"Merry Christmas, sweetheart," she said, kissing her head.

She pulled her bracelet back up to her face and smiled at it, loving the present that he had gotten for her.

"Look at what daddy got mummy," she said, showing Lily the bracelet.

"Pretty!"

"Glad you like it!" Harry called from the kitchen.

"I don't hear a lot of cooking going on in there!"

"I'm working on it!"

"Work faster. We're hungry!"

"You always want something," he called back, and she rolled her eyes, but a smile was set onto her face.

"Your daddy's silly.”

Lily started waving her wand around, and her smile grew bigger. She stood up and pulled her own wand out, causing puffs of smoke to come out of them. Lily giggled and started to grab for them.

"You will forever be your father's daughter," she replied with a laugh. "I love you so much, Lily."

"I love you, mummy," she said, giving her mother a hug.

"It's a pajama day, isn't it?" she asked, winking at her. "Want to go help daddy make breakfast?"

Lily nodded, and they walked into the kitchen. Harry smiled at them before he set the bowl with the muffin mixture onto the table, watching as his daughter climbed into her mother's lap and started to stir it.

"Good job," he said, kissing her head. "How did I get so lucky to have been blessed with a beautiful wife and daughter?"

"After everything we've been through, we deserve to have a beautiful future," Hermione replied, smiling at him.

"We sure do." He then picked Lily up and walked over to the stove, watching as Hermione filled the muffin tins and put them into the oven. She started on the bacon while he began to cook the pancakes, smiling at her daughter.

"Almost time for breakfast," she said, placing the bacon on a plate. Harry put the pancakes onto another one then started to make the eggs, letting Lily try a piece of a pancake.

"It is good?"

She nodded, finishing her piece quickly. He then put her down and she walked over to the table, climbing into the chair as she did so. They finished the eggs and pulled the muffins out of the oven.

"Ready, then?" he asked, and she nodded. They moved everything to the table, and Hermione got everyone drinks before joining her family at the table.

"Enjoy your breakfast," Harry said, giving Lily a plate. She dove right into her pancakes, and he ruffled her hair.

"Merry Christmas," Hermione said, raising her glass. He raised his own and clinked them together.

"Merry Christmas, love."

"Merry Christmas," Molly said, giving Lily a hug.

"Merry Christmas, grandma."

"Merry Christmas, Molly," Harry said, giving her a hug.

"It feels so weird without Neville and Ginny here," Hermione remarked, looking around as Molly turned her attention back to the stove. Harry looked at his watch.

"I'm sure they've been released already. They're exhausted, I'm sure."

"Harry!" a boy with green hair said, running up to his godfather. Harry grinned and picked him up, watching as his hair turned black and his eyes turned green.

"Merry Christmas, Teddy."

"Hi, Lily!" Teddy said, waving to her when Harry put him back onto the floor.

"Hi, Teddy!" she cried, hugging him.

Hermione smiled. "Best friends for life."

"Brother and sister, more like it," Harry replied, wrapping his arm around her shoulder.

"I can't believe how big they're getting."

"Too big too quick. I still remember when they could wrap their hands around my finger."

"Makes me miss having babies around," she said sadly, laying her head on his shoulder.

"We could always have another one," he replied softly, and she looked up at him.

"Do you want another baby?"

"Sometime soon," he replied with a shrug, and she smiled.

"So do I, but I don't think I'm ready to get pregnant again."

He pressed their lips together for a second before pulling away again. "Within the next year?"

"Within the next year, love," she whispered back to him before pressing their lips together again.

"I see he's found you," Andromeda said, smiling at them.

"He found us, all right," Harry said with a grin, looking back down at his children.

"He's been calling for Lily. I should bring him to Molly's more so he can play with her."

"She's always looking for a playmate."

"It's nice that they're close to the same age. They have somebody to play with."

Harry smiled as he watched Teddy and Lily chase after one another. He wrapped his arm around Hermione's waist and kissed her head.

"About time you lot showed up," Ron said, walking up to them.

"It's odd, because we're normally waiting on you."

"Play nice," Hermione said with a smile.

"Uncle Ron!" Lily said, running up to him. He leaned down and picked her up.

"There's the future quidditch star!"

Hermione closed her eyes. "My poor girl."

"She loves it," Harry replied with a grin. "Don't you, Lily?"

"Yeah!" she said, grinning at him.

"Harry, Hermione," Arthur said, walking up to them. "There's Miss. Lily!"

"Grandpa!" she said, giving him a hug.

"It's only been a few days and she acts like she hasn't seen anyone in three months," Harry said with a laugh, shaking his head.

"We love babysitting her," Arthur said, rubbing Lily's back. "It's amazing to see how much she grows."

"Now you'll have even more to babysit."

"Victoire, Joshua, and the other future Weasley," he said, gesturing towards Ron and Luna.

"You're going to have your hands full."

"We raised seven children. Not much of a challenge."

"Dinner is ready!" Molly called out, and everyone moved to the tables and sat down.

Harry turned to Hermione and smiled, and she smiled back. His mind started to race as he looked around and waited on his dinner.

Five years ago, he was being attacked by Nagini. Hermione saved his life, and in doing so, somehow bonded them. In five years they graduated Hogwarts, raised Lily and both received jobs in the Improper Use of Magic Office. They lived in his parent's former house and were now talking about having another baby.

He's loved everything that the last five years have brought him.

"I love you," he whispered to Hermione, who turned back to him and smiled again. "You and Lily both.”

"We love you, too," she whispered back, giving him a quick kiss. Lily giggled beside them, and they turned back to her and smiled.

**The End**