

Fairytale Ending

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Even practical girls secretly dream of living happily ever after.

One-shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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Molly Weasley turned the sparkling, silver tiara, a Weasley family heirloom, over in her hands. For years, she had believed there would come a day when this tiara graced the head of Hermione Granger. Molly had hoped the day would come when Hermione and Ron married, but only a portion of her wishes would be realised. Hermione Granger would become Mrs. Hermione Weasley, but she would *not* do so by marrying her youngest son.

Molly feared this wedding was a mistake. She had given a great deal of thought to Fred and Hermione's relationship, and what the two could possibly have in common, always coming up empty-handed. In fact, she ultimately determined that Hermione shared things in common with each of her sons... except the one she was to wed.

With Bill, Hermione shared the ability to excel with relative ease at whatever she set out to accomplish.

With Charlie, there was a shared desire to see all magical creatures treated kindly, fairly and with respect.

With Percy, Hermione shared a love of order, as well as a thirst for knowledge.

With George, Hermione shared a satisfaction in being a part of a whole. Whether it be one of two or one of three, neither felt a compulsion to lead, content in being what was needed to complete and strengthen the unit.

With Ron, Hermione shared a connection that, though strongest, was most difficult to define. He would lay his life down for her without hesitation and she would do the same. Theirs was the bond of a friendship which had no conditions; it simply was.

But of her six sons, Hermione Granger, a practical girl in most regards, was to marry the one son with whom Molly could find no shared common ground, and she had certainly searched for it. She had slept very little the previous night, unable to shake the feeling that Hermione was marrying the wrong son; any of the others would have been a more sensible match for her.

~♥~

Molly's hand froze on the handle of the door behind which two girls...women now...readied themselves for the wedding. She heard laughter. It was not the half-hearted laughter so many in the Wizarding World would force from their lips at appropriate times in polite company. There had been far too few things to laugh about since the War ended. This was the sound of genuine bliss, and she was unable to recall the last time she heard such a melodically beautiful sound. It had not been in recent years.

The door was ajar, so she caught glimpses of Hermione and Ginny as they moved around the room, talking as they readied themselves for the occasion. She lurked outside it, content to listen to them, rather than join in, when Arthur approached.

"What are you doing?"

She pressed her finger to her lips to quiet him when he came to stand beside her.

Hermione and Ginny continued talking, unaware they were no longer alone.

"Gin, your mum's not too happy about Fred and I...you know, Fred and I as a couple. She probably still remembers how we used to fight when we were younger. I mean, it's pretty clear she thinks I've gone mental, marrying someone with whom I have nothing in common."

Those words weighed heavy on Molly's chest; she had heard them once, a very long time ago.

"Opposites attract, you know, Hermione. Besides, you and Fred dated in secret for so long, it's no wonder everyone is acting as though this wedding is some rash decision the two of you made. I mean, you two just let everyone know you were a couple a few months ago and now you're getting married. I admit I thought it was mistake when I first found out too."

"Thank you for the vote of confidence. Another comment like that one and you will be my ex-maid-of-honor *Ginevra*."

"I'm not too worried, *Hermione*, since this dress will not fit Harry, and Ron really doesn't have the figure to show it off."

Their laughter was infectious, and Molly even heard a soft chuckle from her husband as he stood beside her outside the door to their daughter's bedroom.

"I'm just saying it is a lot easier to understand why you and Fred are a couple after seeing the two of you together for a bit, when you're not trying to rip one another's head off."

"I can't remember the last time we rowed over anything significant. We are polar opposites without a doubt, but things changed when Harry and Ron went away to the Auror Academy and I went to work with Fred and George at the shop. It wasn't like it was when we were all in school and they worked so diligently to rile me up."

"Oh, I wouldn't say Fred doesn't still do his best to keep you riled up."

"Will you stop? Honestly, Gin, you are as bad as Fred some days. But, it felt like I belonged there at the shop. He and George would actually ask for my assistance if there was something they couldn't figure out, and they seemed to appreciate my talents..."

"Yeah, I bet they..."

"Ginny! I was referring to my talents in keeping the store running smoothly! My best friend has not been a good influence on you."

"Leave Harry out of this. I grew up with six brothers. I didn't need Harry's poor influence when I already had so many others to choose from."

"Not a point I can argue with," Hermione conceded.

"We had better finish getting ready in here before Fleur comes back to see what's taking us so long and decides there is something else so wrong about our appearances to require her assistance. I do not know how Bill lives with her."

"Where did she go?" asked Hermione.

"I told her Charlie had just got here and he looked a mess, so she ran off to make him presentable, muttering about his desperate need for a wife."

"Have you even seen Charlie today, Ginny?"

"No, but Fleur doesn't know I haven't. How does it feel knowing you won't be Hermione Granger an hour from now?"

"A bit strange."

"You shouldn't have too much trouble getting used to writing it though, since I've only seen you write it thousands of times. Of course, I'm the only one who knows about your crush on Bill the summer of the Quidditch World Cup."

"Bill *and* Charlie," Hermione corrected.

"That's right. I had forgotten. It was both of them."

They both giggled at the memory.

"Hermione Granger, is that why you're marrying a twin? You..."

Molly startled as Arthur pulled her into the stairwell and up to their bedroom, out of earshot. "Sorry, but I really did not have a desire to hear her answer to that question."

"I can't remember when I last heard them talk and laugh, so carefree," she gushed.

"Sounds nice, doesn't it?"

"No, it sounds wonderful," she said, hugging him. She made to wipe a tear from her cheek, but before she could, he was there, his thumb brushing it away as it had done countless times before, after babies were born and children went away to school to start careers and families of their own.

When she looked into his gentle eyes and returned the oh-so-familiar smile, she was reminded of her family's reaction when she had announced she was going to marry Arthur Weasley. Her parents had called her a foolish girl with her head in the clouds and had sworn she would be sorry. They could not have been more wrong.

"Arthur, I believe we have a wedding to attend."

He grabbed her arm before she could make it past him to the door. "You seem much happier about this wedding than you were when you woke up this morning." He hugged her to him once more.

"I just needed a reminder that mothers, no matter how well intentioned, are not always right."

He opened his mouth to speak, only to close it again, appearing at a loss for words.

"You weren't really expecting that answer were you, Arthur?"

He shook his head, making her laugh. "When Hermione spoke of me not being happy about she and Fred being together, I was reminded of when my mother told me you and I would never last, and I would be ever so sorry for marrying you. I will admit to making a lot of mistakes in my life, but you and our children are not, nor will you ever be, counted among them."

"We were certainly lucky to find one another," Arthur said, taking the tiara from her hand. "This doesn't seem like something Hermione would like, dear. Are you sure she

will want to wear it?"

Before she could answer their bedroom door was flung open, and Fred and George came in, quickly turning to leave when they saw their parents embracing. Arthur called them back, "Boys, we..."

"Don't tell us," said George.

"We will *never* be old enough to know," affirmed Fred.

"You two come back here," said Molly. Both stopped in the doorway, but neither turned around, presenting their parents with their backs.

"Move away from one another first," said George. "We have not forgotten..."

"...nor will we ever forget..."

"...what we saw in this room when we were eight."

Both visibly shuddered, causing Arthur to laugh. "And yet still, you have not learned to knock."

There was silence for a moment.

"He has a point there, Fred."

"Admittedly, he does, George. Is it safe to turn around?"

Arthur took a step away from his wife, shaking his head and chuckling, "Yes, it is safe."

Molly summoned Fred forward and placed the tiara in his hands. "I think you should be the one to take this to Hermione."

"Mum, I'm not sure a tiara is really something which Hermione approves of," said Fred. "I appreciate it, and Hermione would not want to hurt your feelings, but I don't think she will want to wear it and look like some princess on her wedding day."

George chimed in, "I can't even imagine Hermione saying the word 'princess'."

"Me either," replied Fred, attempting to return the tiara to his mother. "This was fine for Fleur, but for Hermione...I don't know."

Molly refused to accept the tiara back from him. "Hear me out, dear. This is Hermione's wedding. You tell her my feelings will not be hurt regardless of the choice she makes, but your father and I eloped so I never got the chance to wear it. Neither of our families were pleased we had gotten married against their wishes, and I always wished I had the opportunity to wear it like all the other Weasley brides. Each of my daughters-in-law, as well as my daughter, will be given the *choice* I was not, the opportunity to wear it. However, it is just that: a choice, not an obligation."

Fred relented. "I will ask her, but I really don't believe she will want to wear it. Are you sure your feelings won't be hurt, Mum?"

"Positive, dear."

~♥~

"Hermione," Fred said as he knocked on the door to Ginny's bedroom, "may I come in?"

Ginny yelled a response through the door, "You're not supposed to see her before the wedding."

"What are you talking about? I've never heard anything about not seeing her before the wedding."

Ginny responded, "Muggle tradition or something, but Mrs. Granger insists upon it."

"Is Mrs. Granger in there?" asked Fred.

"No, but she insists it is bad luck for you to see Hermione before the wedding, and she made me promise not to let you in."

George responded rather loudly, "Yeah, there are lots of things they probably weren't supposed to be doing *before* the wedding, but these dark circles under my eyes are proof the bride and groom have kept me awake on more than one occasion this week. I'm seriously lacking in beauty sleep here."

"Shows too," said Charlie, passing by.

"Fleur, I found Charlie for you," George's voice rang out.

"Prat," Charlie said, thumping George on the back of the head and hurrying from the room.

Harry and Ron approached the door to Ginny's bedroom as George and Fred stood looking at it.

"Something special about Gin's door?" asked Harry.

Fred replied, "I'm trying to talk to Hermione, but Ginny won't let me in. Some Muggle shite about...hell, I don't even know what it's about. Could you give me a hand distracting my sister, Harry?"

"Yeah, sure. This should do it. Ron, you'll wanna stand a bit farther back from the door though."

All three Weasley brothers watched with interest, clearly anticipating that Harry was about to perform some magic. Their mouths fell open when he raised his voice and said, "Oh hello, Gabrielle. Yes, it's nice to see you too. No, I haven't seen Ron's new broom. It's in the broom shed, you say?" Harry leaned against the wall, crossed his arms over his chest, holding up all five fingers on one hand, quietly counting back from five. When only one finger remained raised, Ginny's door was thrown open with such force that had Ron not taken Harry's advice, he would be sporting a bloody nose. Ginny's face was furious as she stomped from the room.

George and Fred stared at him, mouths agape. "You're good," both said at once.

"Go now," Harry mouthed silently, indicating the open door before pinning Ginny to the wall and kissing her.

"Harry Potter, that was a rotten trick," she said. "I can't believe you let Fred talk you into something so mean."

"Come on, Gin. He is the groom and all. Besides, he didn't have to try too hard to convince me when the reward is snogging my stunningly beautiful fiancée." Harry gave her a once over, making her smile, then motioned again when he saw Fred still rooted to the floor, indicating he would only be able to keep Ginny away from the room for so long, and Fred was wasting valuable time.

Fred entered the room and closed the door behind him, using a spell that would probably not keep Ginny out for very long but, if she tired of snogging Harry, would at least slow her down.

He stopped short when he saw Hermione sitting on Ginny's old bed in the white lacy dress, her hair pulled up in ringlets atop her head. He let out a low whistle. "I don't know who you are, beautiful, but if you hurry we can be married before Hermione gets here." He crossed the room making her squeal when he pushed her back on the bed, pinning down her upper arms and kissing her soundly.

"Fred Weasley, if you don't let me up, I swear I will hex your bits off."

"We will have a very disappointing wedding night if you do, love."

She pushed him off her and attempted to straighten her hair while checking for smudges in her make-up.

"Since when do you care so much about how your hair looks?"

"Since your brother's wife pulled half of it out trying to make it look like this. If you really love me, you'll post a guard outside the door with strict orders not to let Fleur anywhere near me again. The makeover was not an experience I have any desire of repeating today... or ever."

"I come bearing a gift from yet another of the Weasley women, but this one you're welcome to refuse with the assurance no feelings will be hurt. She made me promise to bring it in here though and offer it to you."

Hermione sucked in her breath.

"I told Mum I didn't think you would want to wear it. Now I've asked and I can take it back to her."

"You will do no such thing!" she exclaimed, taking it from him and going to sit in front of the mirror and try it on. "Come here and help me, won't you, Fred?"

He rose from the bed and went to stand behind her, using a Sticking Charm when she had it arranged just as she wanted. "You sure you want to wear it? You're not just doing it because you think Mum wants you to."

"When Bill and Fleur got married your mum told us how she wished she had gotten to wear this tiara. It is so beautiful, isn't it?"

"I guess," he said. "Doesn't really seem like something you'd want to...you are full of surprises, you know?" he said, kissing her.

She elbowed him in the ribs and pointed to her hair and make-up. "Fleur's death will be on your head if she comes near me with lipstick, mascara or hair styling accessories of any kind because you messed this up. I almost lost an eye for this mascara."

"Fine," he huffed before heading from the room. "I'll just take my unwanted lips downstairs."

"I promise your lips will feel anything but unwanted later."

"I don't know," he said. "My lips are very sensitive, you know. You've hurt their feelings now, so you'll have to work extra hard to make it up to them. Are you up for the challenge, Granger?"

"I am about to become Mrs. Fred Weasley, I'd say I'm up for any challenge." She grinned back.

"Good to know, cause the ceremony starts in three minutes."

She visibly sped up as she moved around the room tossing last minute items into a bag.

"Hermione, by the way, you look amazing." He winked, closing the door behind him as he walked out.

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There was an audible gasp when Hermione Granger started her descent down the aisle toward her groom as the Weasley family tiara caught the sunlight and sparkled brilliantly.

Arthur leaned in and whispered to his wife, "The tiara looks lovely on her, doesn't it? I guess you were right. She did want to wear it."

"Today's the start of a whole new chapter in their lives. Even a practical girl like our Hermione secretly dreams of living happily ever after."

"Do you believe there really is such a thing as happily ever after?" Arthur asked.

"I'm quite sure there is," she said, lacing her fingers with his.

~♥ Fin ♥~