

A Gift To Remember

by norwegianeyes

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The 35th Annual Diagon Alley Christmas Fair was as crowded as ever. Charlie and Hermione were being pushed and shoved by families rushing about to their favorite shop's fifty percent off all merchandise sale or to booths giving out free knickknacks and sweets. Charlie clutched Hermione's small gloved hand in a steely grip so that they wouldn't get separated, she supposed, and they finally arrived at the end of the alley where fewer people were. They quickly found an empty bench, brushed the layer of snow that covered it and plopped down onto it, instinctively holding each other: Hermione's head on his shoulder, Charlie's strong arm wrapped around her waist.

"Boy, this gets crazier every year, doesn't it?" Hermione sighed. "Perhaps we shouldn't come next year?"

Charlie raised one of his pierced eyebrows. "You're kidding yourself."

Bushy-haired Hermione's voice went up an octave in protest. "Why, exactly?"

"Every year you say that we shouldn't come the next year. Yet when the fair comes around you're the one who insists on going."

"Do I really?"

"Mm-hmm." Charlie nodded. He took her chin in his dragon-hide covered hand and seemed to study her face. Slowly, he leaned in and blew hot air on her ear lobe, causing Hermione to blush.

She was sure she saw Charlie smirk as he continued to kiss her jaw line. *Oh Merlin*, Hermione thought as she let out an unexpected moan. Hermione quickly snapped out of it. "Charlie! Charlie, *stop!*" She tried to push her boyfriend off of her.

"Hmmm... Why?" he murmured against her neck.

"*Because we're in public!*" she said in a hushed tone.

Immediately, Charlie backed off, folding his arms behind his head with a wicked smile on his face. "You know you're beautiful, right? Especially when you get hot and bothered."

Hermione hit his arm playfully. "Charlie, I love you!" She furrowed her brow when she saw that Charlie had a serious look on his face. "Dearest, what's wrong?"

Wordlessly, Charlie stood up from the bench and kneeled on the snow-covered ground. Hermione's brown eyes widened as Charlie produced a small blue velvet box from his pocket. "Hermione Granger, I was lost before I found you. You're my other half. I want to spend the rest of my life with you. Would you do me the honor of being my wife?" He opened the box, revealing a silver ring with a giant diamond on it.

Tears trickled down Hermione's cheeks as she thought: *This is absolutely unbelievable!* She collected herself when she realized she hadn't given Charlie her answer. She wrapped her arms around Charlie's neck and whispered 'yes' into his ear. They stayed like that for a long time, just holding each other, letting the new level of their relationship sink in. Finally, they separated, and Charlie slid the ring onto his fiancée's finger.

Silently, they stood up and began to walk toward the thick crowd, hand in hand.

"I guess you're right." Hermione chuckled.

"About what, Love?"

"I *do* want to come back next year."