

Everything's Going to Change Now, Isn't It?

by phoenix

Complete Harry and Hermione never meant for it to happen. They each thought they were destined for someone else, but after a night on the run from the Death Eaters, they learned they belonged together.

Prologue

Chapter 1 of 5

Complete Harry and Hermione never meant for it to happen. They each thought they were destined for someone else, but after a night on the run from the Death Eaters, they learned they belonged together.

A/N: I have to thank JenKM1216 for the basic premise of this fic. In her story "It All Comes Down to Time" – which I'm beta'ing – we came up with the concept of the Veiling Charm. I started having all sorts of ideas about it that she chose not to use in her story, so I decided to adopt the charm and use it here. This is for all the Harry/Hermione shippers out there. While I don't ship H/Hr, I just don't see her with Ron. I'd also like to thank nota for being a loyal beta and indulging my wide range of pairings.

This story is completed, and I'll try to post a chapter every few days.

Prologue

Harry and Hermione ran deep into the woods. They had not expected to find anyone at Godric's Hollow. Especially not Death Eaters.

He grabbed her hand and yanked on it. "In here," he whispered harshly. He pulled her into a small cave and wrapped his arms tightly around her, pulling her into the shadows.

They both held their breath as they heard the footsteps run past their hiding place.

As he held her, he couldn't help but notice the enticing floral scent of her hair, or the softness of her arms under his hands. Slowly, he started caressing her arm and nuzzling her hair. His pulse was still racing from the thrill of the chase. As his hand caressed her, he could feel her hand rubbing his thigh. The adrenaline coursing through his veins was urging him to do things that he normally would never have done.

Nibbling at her neck, he could hear her panting, and she leaned her head back against him. Slowly, he moved his hand to cup her breast and was rewarded with a moan and her gripping his thigh more tightly. Spinning her around, he captured her mouth in a deep, hungry kiss, which she eagerly returned. He flinched when he felt her hand slip past his waistband and grip his cock. The feeling was sheer bliss. After a few moments, he lowered her to the ground, and they began fumbling with each other's clothes, lost in the moment.

He carefully lowered himself between her legs and teased her briefly with his fingers, but his need was overwhelming. Her soft caress was resulting in a painfully hard erection. Suddenly, all he wanted – no needed – in this world was to be inside of her.

"Oh, Harry," she moaned.

This was all the encouragement he needed. Settling between her legs, he tried to thrust into her.

"Ow! Careful."

"Sorry." Reaching down, he tried to line himself up.

"Hurry,"

"I am." Finally, he felt the soft wetness surround him and began thrusting deeply. He met resistance and realized that he must be her first, just as she was his. Not dissuaded, and urged on by her pulling him toward her, he thrust again, and this time he felt himself break through. He heard her cry out. "Hermione?"

She hooked her legs around his. "Keep going," she urged.

He did not need to be told twice, and he resumed thrusting. Hungrily, he devoured her mouth again, unable to get enough of her. One hand fondled her breast while the other was beneath her, tilting her so that he could plunge even more deeply into her. She was tight, and he could feel the contractions pulling him further in, and then he realized he could not hold himself back much longer. She writhed against him, crying out for him to move faster, making it even harder for him to hold back. As he spilled himself inside her, he couldn't help grunting. Collapsing atop her, he kissed her again, reveling in the euphoric feeling. Even better, she kissed him back.

After a few moments, they both seemed to realize what they had done and pulled away from each other, dressing quickly and trying to regain some sense of composure, suddenly feeling uncomfortable in their nudity.

"I, er," he stammered.

"Um, yeah..." she replied, nervously straightening her hair.

"Perhaps, maybe, we, er, should keep this to ourselves?" He tugged on his shirt, making sure it was on straight.

"Oh, right. I think you're right," she added quickly. "Ron doesn't need to know about this."

"And neither does Ginny," he said. Even though he and Ginny weren't together now, he hoped to change that after Voldemort was defeated.

Chapter 1

Chapter 2 of 5

Harry and Hermione never meant for it to happen. They each thought they were destined for someone else, but after a night on the run from the Death Eaters, they learned they belonged together.

Chapter 1

The rest of the summer passed by in a blur. Harry desperately wanted to find the remaining Horcruxes so that he could finally be over this part of his life. Unfortunately, he really hadn't gotten very far.

The three of them...Harry, Ron and Hermione...were sitting around the table. Hermione was the one who finally broke the silence. "You have to come back to school with us. Unless you do, you can't take your N.E.W.T.s, and then you won't be a fully qualified wizard."

"Like that's really important," Harry muttered.

"It is. You always said that you wanted to be an Auror. You can't do that unless you sit your N.E.W.T.s," she insisted.

"Well, I've changed my mind. I think I've had enough of dark wizard chasing."

"Fine then, but you still need to take your exams. Harry, please, your education is important," she pleaded, reaching across the table to place her hand on his. When she realized what she had done, she quickly pulled her hand away. "All right, if that's not enough, where have we gotten on the search? Nowhere. You at least need to be able to use the library at school. There is no better resource, and besides, Dumbledore may have left something behind that could be useful."

He looked into her eyes and found it hard to resist her. "For the library."

Hermione grinned broadly. "That's fantastic. I've been putting together a plan to search for clues in the library."

Ron and Harry both moaned.

Hermione had been quite irritable and moody lately, but Harry supposed it had to do with all the work they were doing. She was studying harder than any of them. When she didn't return to the common room that evening, he decided to go to the library and see what she was doing. It wasn't like her to work this late.

Entering the library, he saw her slumped over a book-strewn table. He shook her gently. "Hermione? Are you all right?"

She jumped up and rubbed her eyes. "What? Oh, I guess I fell asleep," she said sheepishly.

He sat next to her. "Yeah. You've been doing that a lot lately." He looked around to make sure no one could hear them. "You haven't gotten hold of a Time Turner, again, have you?"

"No. You know they were all destroyed, and I wouldn't do that again, anyway. I'm just tired." She stretched and failed to stifle a yawn.

"Well, then perhaps it would be a good idea for you to call it a night? I mean, you aren't getting anything done anyway." He thought that she could definitely use a good night's rest.

"Sure. Help me with my books?"

He helped her gather up the books that she wanted to take with her, and they walked back up to Gryffindor Tower together. She started talking about her latest leads, but she couldn't stop yawning.

Autumn melted into winter, and Hermione's moodiness did not seem to be waning. If anything, it was getting worse. Ron had taken to avoiding her almost completely as he seemed to be able to do nothing that pleased her. Every time he said something, it either set her to tears or else she would lash into him. Their relationship had never come easily, but now it looked as though it was regressing if anything.

Harry was only slightly luckier, and he spent a good deal of his time trying to decide what Ron had done to earn Hermione's ire. Normally, he was able to figure it out and decide if it was possible to smooth things between the two of them. But this time, he couldn't think of anything that Ron had done to make her so upset.

They were alone in the common room late one night, and he said, "Hermione, is something bothering you?"

She stared into his eyes for several long seconds. "Just all the work we still have before us. We've only been able to find two Horcruxes. We have a long way to go." She looked back down at her book.

"Hermione," Harry said softly as he reached across the table and placed his hand on hers. "You can tell me anything; you know that, right?"

She looked up into his eyes and found that she couldn't hold back the tears anymore. "Oh, Harry," she sobbed.

He moved around to her side of the table and wrapped his arm around her. "What is it?"

She sniffled and wiped the tears from her face. "Not here. Get your Invisibility Cloak." While he was gone, she rose and started pacing, trying to determine how to tell him. She had been waiting for weeks for the opportunity to break the news to him, but it had never come. Now was still not the ideal time, but she found that she could not keep the secret any longer.

When he came back downstairs, he asked, "Where are we going?"

"An empty classroom," she replied as she stood close enough to be concealed under the Cloak. As they walked down the deserted corridors, she found her body reacting to his nearness, remembering that glorious summer night when she had given herself to him.

On the fourth floor, they found what they were looking for. Once the door was closed and locked, he pulled off the Cloak, but said nothing.

She paced, gathering up the courage to speak. Finally, she was ready, and she stopped her pacing. Looking into his eyes, she said, "I'm pregnant."

Harry stared at her in stunned silence for a few seconds. "You're what!" he shouted.

"Shhh. Harry." The last thing she needed was anyone discovering them in a deserted classroom with no schoolbooks.

"You're sure?"

"Positive," she replied as she opened her robe and showed him her gently swollen belly.

"Blimey!" He stared until she closed her robe. "How far... When's the baby due?"

"Middle of April, so I'm about five months along."

"But then... It's mine?"

She bit her lower lip and tried to fight back the tears as she nodded, not trusting her voice. Even though she tried to stop them, she could feel the tears running down her cheeks. When Harry wrapped his arms around her, she collapsed against him and sobbed.

He held her, rubbing her back gently, waiting for her to finish. When her sobbing finally subsided, he asked softly, "Who else knows?"

"No one. I've...I've kept it secret. If anyone were to find out..." She didn't finish, knowing that Harry would come to the same conclusion. The fact that she was Harry's friend already made her a target. If anyone were to learn that she was carrying his baby... She couldn't bear the thought of something bad happening to her baby.

His hand drifted so that it gently rested on her stomach. "People are going to start noticing soon," he said softly.

"See, that's what I've been working on. I know that right now my robes will hide it, but I've been working on a Veiling Charm. It's a modification of the Invisibility Charm. Anyone looking at me won't be able to tell. Of course, the only problem is that if anyone were to brush against me, they could still feel that I'm pregnant. But I'll be careful," she added quickly. It was the best she could do, but depending on the circumstances under which someone found out, she thought that she could Obliviate them.

He brushed her cheek. "You should go into hiding. That way no one will find out, and no one will harm either of you."

Placing her hand on top of his, she replied, "You need me here. We both know that Ron isn't any good at library research, and frankly, neither are you." It would be so easy to run away and hide, but she had responsibilities and she just couldn't run from them.

Harry paled. "And what about Ron?"

She sighed, knowing that Ron really did love her deeply. "We both know he can't keep a secret..."

"Not that. Hermione, he loves you. This would devastate him. For that matter, what about Ginny." He released her and ran his fingers through his hair as he started pacing. "And what about the baby?"

"I thought that...that perhaps we could give the baby to my parents. They could keep it safe. At least until the war's over."

"And then what? I mean, don't get me wrong, I love you, Hermione, but..."

She was every bit as confused as he was, and she had known about her condition for months now. "I know. Just not that way," she finished. "I feel the same way, but... I don't know. Harry, I'm so sorry. I should have been more careful..." She turned away from him as she once again began crying. She hated not having control over her emotions and her body.

He moved behind her and wrapped his arms around her again. "It's not solely your fault. We're both to blame." Once again, his hands drifted to her stomach, tracing the gentle swell, mesmerized by the life that was growing within her.

She found unexpected comfort in his touch and managed to regain some small measure of control. "The baby's really started growing. And... I think I felt a kick last night."

Nuzzling against her, he replied, "My baby."

Not wanting his touch to vanish, she gently grasped his hand and guided it inside her robes so he could feel her bare flesh. As his hand traced her stomach she could feel herself becoming aroused. Pressing her back against him, she could feel that she was not the only one affected by their closeness to each other. Impulsively, she turned around and kissed him deeply. She had been craving this sort of physical attention for weeks, but she knew she could never have it with Ron. Not in her current condition; not even if she still felt that way about him.

Slipping her hand into his robes, she brushed his erection, feeling it grow harder. She was throbbing and wanted nothing more than to feel him inside her again. "Oh, Harry," she moaned.

Soon, they were both giving in to their passions; their robes the only cushion against the hard stone floor.

Hermione was alone most of Christmas break. She had Ginny for company, but Harry and Ron were on yet another Horcrux search. She tried not to be short with Ginny, but the lack of sex was taking a toll on her patience. In the week preceding the holidays, she and Harry had managed to get together every night, but he had now been gone a week, and she was on edge. Of course, that made her feel guilty whenever she was around Ginny, because she knew that her friend loved Harry deeply and was willing to wait until the end of the war for him. A part of her wanted to confide in Ginny, and had the father been anyone other than Harry, she would have.

Fortunately, due to her excellence in Transfiguration, she was able to modify her clothing so that it still fit. Unfortunately, by Christmas the baby had grown so much that her robes alone could no longer conceal her condition, and she found that holding her Veiling Charm was quite tiring, especially when combined with the fact the pregnancy was also exhausting her. She had taken to spending a lot of time in her dormitory alone so that the other students staying over the Christmas holidays did not see her very often or for very long. Unfortunately, Ginny could walk into her dormitory unannounced, so she'd had to set up a charm to let her know when someone was coming up the stairs.

Near the end of the holiday, she was trying to get some much needed rest, but the baby had really started kicking. Rather than lay awake in bed, she decided to go down by the fire. Wrapping her dressing gown around her, she grabbed a book and headed downstairs.

As she had expected, the common room was deserted. Sitting in the chair by the fire, she opened her book and started reading. Without thinking she started rubbing her belly.

The flicker of the fire mesmerized her. She set aside her book and started thinking about the future. Someone as bright as her should not have made such a foolish mistake. At first, she had thought that she could give the baby to her parents. Now, she wasn't so sure. Feeling the baby moving within her, she realized how special it was, how much a part of her this child was. No, she knew she could never give this child up. Tears streamed down her cheeks as she thought of the five lives that had been ruined, one before it had even properly started, in that brief moment of passion. She knew that both Ron and Ginny would feel betrayed, and rightly so.

She heard the portrait hole opening and reached for her wand to cast the Veiling Charm but realized she had left it upstairs. Instead, she did her best to shrink into the chair and hope that whoever it was wouldn't see her. She listened anxiously as the footsteps drew closer to the fire, and she wished she could Apparate to her room.

Harry came around the chair, halting suddenly at the surprise of seeing her there. "Hermione?"

She breathed a sigh of relief. "Oh, Harry, it's only you." She saw that he was staring at her belly. Patting it softly, she said, "The baby's really growing."

"So I see." He sat down in a chair beside hers. "How are you feeling?"

"Not too bad, still tired, but that's normal." She reached out and took hold of his hand, placing it on her stomach. "Can you feel that?" she asked proudly.

He stared at his hand a few seconds and then looked up at her, a huge grin on his face. "I can feel him kicking." In order to more easily feel the baby, he knelt before her.

"It could be a her, you know," she replied playfully.

"I know." He stared back at her stomach, as though he were trying to see the child within. "That's our child," he said in awe.

Watching him, she knew that she could not deny him this child, especially not since he himself had known what it was like to be an orphan. "It is." She reached out and gently tipped his chin up so that she could look into his eyes. "Our child should have both her parents. I know we didn't want it this way, but I think that's how it has to be."

"That's why I came back. I had to see you, let you know that I want to be a part of my child's life."

"Oh, Harry!" she said and threw herself into his arms. "I'm so glad to hear you say that." She kissed him, but when she tried to pull away, she found that he had laced his fingers through her hair. When he tried to slip his tongue into her mouth, she let him.

When he finally broke the passionate kiss, he said, "The boys' dormitory is deserted..."

She nodded and replied breathlessly, "Okay."

Chapter 2

Chapter 3 of 5

Harry and Hermione never meant for it to happen. They each thought they were destined for someone else, but after a night on the run from the Death Eaters, they learned they belonged together.

Chapter 2

By the end of January, Hermione was coming to dread classes. Even though many students had not come back to school this year, it was still quite crowded in the hallways between classes, and she was always afraid that someone was going to bump into her. She tried to keep her bookbag in front of her stomach as she walked, using it as a shield, hoping that no one would notice anything odd. But with her rapidly expanding girth, that was growing more and more difficult. Unfortunately, she still had ten weeks to go. Obviously, she had not inherited the 'barely there' pregnancy trait from her mother's side of the family. Her aunt Grace had never been this large any of the times she had been pregnant, and that was at full term.

She was not having a good time of it. It was now becoming awkward for her to stand up, and she had been forced to abandon sitting in her favorite armchair by the fire

after Ron had looked at her oddly the last time she had tried to get up from it. Not to mention the baby was prone to kicking ferociously while she was in class, something she was finding harder to hide, especially when she had to rush out of class to use the bathroom when he would press on her bladder.

Given all the trouble the baby was causing, she was starting to think of it as a he. After all, Harry came from a long line of troublemakers. If she were carrying a girl, surely the child would have taken more after her mother.

A part of her was reconsidering Harry's idea that she should go into hiding. She knew that the risk of discovery was high, but she was insistent on getting her education. She had even pointed out to him that her due date fell during the Easter holidays. Of course, that was still nearly two and a half months away, and she wasn't sure she could keep up the charade for that long. Especially since the Veiling Charm was taking a lot out of her. She was finding it more and more difficult to hold.

The only thing keeping her at Hogwarts was Harry.

Rather than not loving each other romantically as they had long thought, they had found that both had been in denial. In the past, Hermione had always been the calm voice of reason balancing Harry's passions. Now, those roles were reversed. Late at night, they would sneak away to the Room of Requirement under his Invisibility Cloak. Some nights they would make love to each other. Others, he would just hold her, and they would talk. He planned to rebuild his parent's house once the war was over, once the final two Horcruxes were found and Voldemort defeated. The three of them would live there in peace.

Hermione could think no happier thought.

Entering the Potions classroom, she noticed the only seat left was next to Ron. She had taken to sitting next to Harry in most of their classes, but today she was running late owing to her need to use the lavatory. She had purposely been keeping her relationship with Ron as distant as she could, and she was not looking forward to sitting next to him for an entire class now.

Their assignment was already on the board, so she unpacked her bag, gathered the necessary ingredients from the cabinet, and sat down to work on her potion.

About halfway through class, Ron rose and stood next to her. "Excuse me, I need to get to the ingredients cabinet."

She sighed and scooted forward as far as she could, which was only a few inches. "Honestly, Ron, can't you do anything right the first time?"

"No, because I'm one big screw up," he snapped. "Come on, move up and let me by."

"I am up," she replied irritably. Her belly was pressed up against the table.

He shoved past her, pushing her hard against the wooden edge.

"Ow! Ron, *be* careful." She shoved her stool back away from the table, wanting to rub her stomach, but she knew that would have to wait.

"What? What could I possibly have done now? I didn't push *you* that hard."

"I... hit my knee on the table." She reached down and rubbed her knee. "Just, go around the other way when you come back, would you. please?"

"Fine. I will," he replied angrily.

Once everyone had stopped staring at her, she rubbed the sore spot on her stomach. Thankfully, she was fine, except for some minor discomfort. Noticing Harry watching her, she gave him a reassuring smile before returning to her work.

After class, Ron rushed out of the room. Harry and Hermione walked out together, and he pulled her into an alcove. "Hermione, you can't keep this up. It's too dangerous."

"I'll be more careful. We would have been fine if I'd only gotten to class on time. It won't happen again."

He put his forehead against hers. "Drop the spell." When she did, he put his hand on her swollen stomach. "Look at yourself. The baby is really growing now. If you are having problems hiding your condition now, how are you going to manage for another two and a half months?"

She knew that he had a point, but she was determined to make this work. She couldn't bear the thought of being away from him for so long. Besides, she had no idea where she would go. "But if I leave now, people will wonder why. And that might lead them to start looking for me. There isn't any safer place than here for me to be."

He sighed. "I know. I just worry about you. You look so tired; that spell has got to be taking a lot out of you. Skive out of Charms. I'll fill you in later on what we went over. We can meet in the Room of Requirement so that you don't have to keep holding the charm." His hand was now softly caressing her, and he showered her with kisses.

Half-heartedly, she tried to push him away. "I can't think when you do that."

"I know. I don't want you to think. Get some rest, and we'll meet after dinner." He intended to try once more to talk her into going into hiding. It was simply becoming too dangerous for her to remain here much longer.

Hermione was glad it was almost over. Just two more weeks. Of course, that also meant that Harry was being more insistent that she needed to find someplace safe to have the baby. Fortunately, he had not been able to suggest someplace more secure than Hogwarts and he did not push it too seriously.

The baby was especially active in Transfiguration, and Hermione found that she was having a hard time concentrating on Professor McGonagall's lecture. She longed to press her hand against her belly and urge the child to be silent, but she couldn't risk Ron catching her. After having ignored her for several weeks, he was showing quite a bit of interest in her again; continually asking her if she was all right and trying to get too close to her.

She thought it was a measure of how thick Ron was that he hadn't figured out her secret yet, for he was convinced that she did indeed have a secret of some sort. He just didn't know what it was. It really was for the best that things hadn't worked out between the two of them. Over the last several months, she and Harry had learned how well-suited they really were for each other.

As she stood up, she lost her balance and nearly fell. Thankfully, Harry caught her. Unconsciously, she put her hand on her stomach.

"Are you all right?" he asked quietly, looking around to see if anyone had seen her near accident. His hands remained firmly on her arms

"Yes, thank you." The baby had definitely shifted and Hermione now felt a great deal of pressure low in her hips. Obviously, the baby had dropped. When she started walking, she found that she had to widen her stance and almost waddle.

They were nearly out of the classroom when McGonagall said, "Mr. Potter, Miss Granger, come here a moment."

They looked at each other nervously for a second before turning around. Harry moved aside, letting Hermione go first.

She felt a new pain developing in her back and barely resisted the urge to rub it. "Yes, Professor?" she asked as though being called to the teacher's desk after class was normal.

McGonagall conjured a low chair. "Have a seat, Miss Granger," she offered.

Hermione looked skeptically at the chair. "No thank you, Professor. If Harry's standing, I prefer to stand, too." She knew there was no way she would be able sit down in that chair without giving herself away.

"I see," McGonagall replied and conjured a chair for Harry. "Now, sit, the both of you."

Hermione looked nervously at Harry, at the chair and then at McGonagall. The look on her professor's face convinced her that she had better comply. Carefully, she lowered herself into the chair, knowing how awkward her movements must appear. McGonagall watched Hermione intently, saying nothing. Hermione shifted in the chair, trying to find a less uncomfortable position that would relieve some of the pressure on her bladder, which suddenly felt very full.

"I assume there is something the two of you wish to tell me?" she finally said.

"No, Professor," they both replied quickly.

"I suppose that is true. You would not *wish* to tell me." Her gaze flitted between the two of them.

Hermione continued to shift; the pressure on her bladder was becoming unbearable.

"Miss Granger, would you *sit still*?" McGonagall ordered.

"Yes, Professor," she replied. She tried to settle into one position, but just couldn't help herself.

Harry asked, "Professor, since there's nothing we have to tell you, may we be excused?"

"No, you may not," she said sternly.

Finally, Hermione couldn't stand it any longer. She knew that if she did not leave the classroom that instant, she would never make it to the girls' lavatory in time. "I'm sorry," she said as she struggled to stand up as quickly as she could and then made her way out of the room.

"Potter! Stay where you are."

When Hermione returned to the classroom, she found that neither Harry nor Professor McGonagall had moved.

Once she was seated, McGonagall asked, "I trust that you will be able to sit still now, Miss Granger?"

"Yes, Professor," she replied softly.

"Now, I would prefer to hear it come from one of you, but as my time is limited, I do not have all day to wait for one of you to speak. It will be better if you tell me, but if you continue to refuse to cooperate, I will tell you my theory."

"About what, Professor?" asked Harry innocently.

"As Headmistress, there is little that occurs here that I do not know about. Do either of you have anything you wish to tell me?" she asked in a voice that made clear this was their last opportunity to volunteer the information.

Hermione and Harry glanced at each other, and Hermione could tell that Harry was also willing to take the chance that McGonagall did not know the full extent of their secret.

"Very well then. Miss Granger, I know that you are pregnant."

A/N: As always, thanks to nota, my loyal beta reader, and JenKM1216 for providing the catalyst for this story. I hope that you are enjoying this little look at how Harry and Hermione might end up together in the face of adversity.

Chapter 3

Chapter 4 of 5

Harry and Hermione never meant for it to happen. They each thought they were destined for someone else, but after a night on the run from the Death Eaters, they learned they belonged together.

Chapter 3

Hermione could feel the color draining from her face, but she still tried to deny her condition. "What would give you that idea, Professor?"

"Having had five children of my own, I began to recognize signs in your behavior. I have suspected it for the past few weeks. I knew that you were hiding something as I can tell that you have cast a charm on yourself, but I did not know for what purpose until I saw you walk out of class today. You're rather far along, are you not?"

Hermione could see that Harry looked mortified. She couldn't believe that she had not considered McGonagall noticing that she was using a charm, and she had not considered the fact that her professor was also a mother. Panic started rising and negative outcomes raced through her mind. "You aren't going to expel me, are you?" At the thought of losing everything she started crying.

"Hermione!" hissed Harry.

She looked down and saw that she had lost control of her Veiling Charm. Professor McGonagall could now see that she was very heavy with child, and Hermione saw a momentary look of shock on the older witch's face.

McGonagall came around her desk and offered Hermione a handkerchief. "When is the baby due?"

Hermione took the handkerchief. "O-o-ver Easter," she sniffled.

McGonagall looked at Harry and saw the young man was now intently staring at his fingers. "I am incredibly disappointed in the two of you. I would have expected you to know better. Especially now." She sat on the edge of her desk. "Who knows?"

"Just the three of us," said Harry soberly.

"Well, there is about to be one more. We're going up to the hospital wing. Potter, help her." They started to walk out of the classroom. "Miss Granger, your charm?" she prompted.

Hermione was quite embarrassed that she had nearly walked into the corridor without recasting her charm. She found the walk to the hospital wing quite uncomfortable. It almost felt as though the baby was about to fall out, but she knew that wasn't possible. Harry had hold of her hand and gave her a reassuring squeeze.

When they entered the hospital wing, McGonagall said, "Poppy, could you screen off a bed for privacy?"

"Of course. What's wrong?" the nurse asked.

"Not yet."

Poppy quickly screened off a bed, and once the four of them were in the enclosure, she cast a Silencing Charm. She watched Harry help Hermione onto the bed. "Now, Miss Granger, what seems to be ailing you?"

Hermione took a deep breath, closed her eyes, and let go of the Veiling Charm.

"My goodness," Poppy said softly. Once she regained her composure, she said, "Lie back, my dear." As she began her examination, she said, "You should have come to me sooner."

Hermione asked in a panic-stricken voice, "Is something wrong with the baby?" She could feel Harry's firm grip on her hand.

"I haven't finished my exam yet. I was merely stating that it is good to be under proper medical supervision throughout a pregnancy, especially the first time."

Hermione watched nervously as the matron cast several diagnostic spells and physically examined her belly. She dreaded hearing that something was wrong with her child.

Finally, Poppy finished and smiled. "Both you and the child are perfectly healthy. You're due in a few weeks, aren't you?"

Hermione nodded. "Middle of April."

"That's about right. The baby has dropped recently, hasn't it?"

"Just a little while ago. Does that mean I'm going to give birth soon?"

Poppy patted her hand reassuringly. "It's hard to tell. It could be days, or it could be weeks."

"Weeks?" asked an incredibly disheartened Hermione. She felt like she was getting ready to burst, and the prospect of being pregnant for weeks more was not something she was looking forward to, even though the rational part of her mind knew that her due date was still two weeks away. She had hoped that since the baby had dropped, it meant that

she was nearly done.

"I know it's difficult, dear, but it's really for the best. The baby will come when it's ready and not before. Now, I want you to take it easy, make sure you are getting plenty of rest. You look quite tired. I assume you will be staying here to give birth?"

Hermione looked at Harry for several seconds. Finally, he nodded. "I will," she replied.

"Then I'll set up a private room for you. When you think you are going into labor, come see me."

McGonagall interrupted, "I think it would be best if Miss Granger were to move into that room now. And you will be excused from classes."

"But, Professor..."

McGonagall raised a hand to quell further argument. "I will see that you are given your assignments. I can see that the charm you have been using to conceal your condition has taken a lot out of you. I won't have you doing that anymore. You are to take care of yourself, is that understood?"

"Yes, Professor," she replied meekly.

"I'll have your things sent to your new room." She turned to leave and paused. "One more thing. That will be ten points from Gryffindor for each of you and a detention. Miss Granger, you will serve yours once you return to class."

"Yes, Professor," they replied in unison.

"I'll come study with you," Harry said once they were alone.

"What are they going to tell everyone?"

"I don't know. Hopefully, they'll let me come up with something. I'll make it something contagious to keep the visitors away." He kissed her softly.

"I think we need to tell Ron and Ginny. It isn't fair to keep this from them anymore." She didn't really want to, but they had a right to know, and she had been putting it off for far too long. Odds were, this would ruin the friendships she and Harry had with the two of them. That was why she had waited this long, she knew that Harry needed Ron to help with the Horcrux hunt, which was, thankfully, almost over.

He held her tightly. "I know. Let's wait until after the weekend. I think that Ron and I are closing in on a Horcrux."

"I suppose a few more days won't matter, will it?" She still couldn't help feeling guilty, but this was bigger than her and Harry. It was important to the wizarding world that the Horcruxes be found, she rationalized.

"No..."

Pomfrey entered the enclosure. "I have your room ready, dear." She and Harry helped Hermione to her feet. "If you need anything, just ask. The house-elves will bring you anything you need, or they'll fetch me. Don't be afraid to call me, even in the middle of the night."

"I won't." She cast the Veiling Charm for what she hoped would be the last time before they walked out of the enclosure and down the hall. When they entered the room, she was surprised at how light and airy it was. There was a large bed with bright yellow bedding, and next to it was a bassinet. The dresser, changing table and rocking chair were all painted white. Next to the fireplace was a cozy sitting area, and through a doorway she could see what looked like a garden. Overcome with emotion, she

could feel the tears streaming down her cheeks. "It's...it's lovely."

Harry wrapped his arms around her in a comforting embrace.

Pomfrey said, "We want you to be comfortable. That veranda is screened so that no one will be able to see you if you sit outside. When the weather is warm, I encourage you to go out and walk. Moving will make you feel better. I'll check back on you later this evening."

Harry led Hermione to the sofa. "Are you okay?"

She wiped the tears from her face, ashamed by her display of emotion. "I'm fine. This is just so wonderful."

"Other than the fact we have detention."

She laughed at his glib comment and leaned into his chest. "That's true. And you'll bring my assignments by?"

"I'll spend as much time here as I can. Did you want me to stay with you now?" He held her tightly.

She knew that he had class and that it might look suspicious if they were both absent. "No. I'll be all right. I think I'll lie down and get some rest."

After giving her a lingering kiss, he said softly, "I'll come by after class."

Once Harry was gone, she rubbed her stomach. "Well, little one, we have a nice new home." Looking into the dresser drawers, she found that they were filled with baby clothes and could feel the tears forming in her eyes. She had ordered a few by owl post, but that was the sort of package that she had feared would draw too much attention. She had intended on having Harry sneak out of the castle to purchase more things, but now that would no longer be necessary.

Harry and Ron returned to Hogwarts' gates battered, bruised, tired, and in Harry's case, singed, but they had with them a Horcrux to be destroyed.

"Thanks, Ron. I don't think I could have done it without you."

"No worries. You know I'll always be there for you. Anything you need, just ask."

Harry felt incredibly guilty for what he was doing to Ron. For his own selfish reasons, he had not yet told Ron that Hermione was forever out of his reach. He looked at the ugly burn on his arm. "I think I'm going to stop by the hospital wing." Ordinarily, he wouldn't have bothered, but he was eager to see Hermione and let her know there was only one more Horcrux left.

Once in the castle, he and Ron parted ways. Entering the hospital wing, he was surprised that Madam Pomfrey did not come out of her office to see who was there. He walked back to her office and found it deserted. It was still early enough that she should have been there. Suddenly, he thought of Hermione. What if something was wrong with her?

He rushed out of the room, down the hall and burst into Hermione's room to hear her screaming out in pain. Rushing to her side, he placed his hand on hers, noticing that her bed had been transformed into what he assumed was a birthing bed. "Is she all right?" he asked McGonagall.

McGonagall wiped Hermione's brow. "She's fine; she's just in labor."

"Labor? You mean she's going to give birth?" He couldn't believe that this day was here, and that he had nearly missed it. "How soon?"

"Not soon enough," Hermione grunted. "How much longer?"

"It's hard to say, dear. First children can be stubborn," Pomfrey said.

"I got the Horcrux," he said softly, hoping to distract her from the agony she was in.

"That's good," she panted.

"How are you doing?" He took the damp cloth from McGonagall and tenderly patted the beads of perspiration from her forehead.

"I've been better."

He handed her a glass of water for her to sip. "It'll be over soon."

"I hope so." She gripped his hand tightly as she had another contraction.

It was his burnt right hand that she was holding, and he was reminded of how painful it was, but for her sake, he clenched his jaw shut and refused to cry out in pain. Whatever pain he was feeling was minimal compared to what she was going through.

"When did it start?" he asked once she loosened her grip.

"She started pushing about twenty minutes ago, but started feeling contractions about sixteen hours ago," McGonagall replied.

"You can do this," he said to her in an encouraging voice.

A/N: As always, I must thank nota for her invaluable help. I hope that you are enjoying this story, and there is one more chapter left after this.

Chapter 4

Chapter 5 of 5

Harry and Hermione never meant for it to happen. They each thought they were destined for someone else, but after a night on the run from the Death Eaters, they learned they belonged together.

Chapter 4

"Come on, Hermione. Push," Harry urged.

She was nearly in tears. "I can't push anymore. I'm too tired."

"You have to push, dear. It's nearly over," prompted Pomfrey.

"That's what you said an hour ago. Can't you spell the baby out?" She just wanted this to be over. They wouldn't tell her how long she had been in labor, but she thought it had to be close to a full day.

"I can see the baby's head. Just a few more pushes."

"You can?"

"Push, Hermione!" Harry urged.

She tried pushing, but was just too tired. "I can't. I can't do it." For the first time in her life, she was going to fail, and she found she couldn't hold back the tears anymore.

Harry leaned down and brushed her cheek. "Yes, you can. You've never given up on anything before. This is the most important thing you've ever done. You aren't going to give up now, are you?"

Fighting back the tears, she replied, "No."

"That's my girl," said Harry as she pushed with the contraction. "Come on. Nearly there. Just a little bit longer."

The pressure was unbearable. She fell back against the bed, needing to rest. "He's too big. I can't do it."

"No, he's not. One more big push, and I'll have the baby's head. Come on, Hermione. Once more. The head's the hard part," urged Pomfrey.

"I can't," she cried.

Pomfrey rubbed her leg. "You have to; for the baby. He's ready to be born. He has to come out now. He can't wait any longer, or he might be in danger."

This was all the motivation she needed. She didn't want to hurt her baby. After taking a few deep breaths, she felt another contraction. Grabbing her legs, she bore down and pushed. Grunting, she could feel the baby moving. She was going to do it. Any second now her child would emerge into the world.

"Good, good. Okay. I've got the head. One more big push," Pomfrey said.

Harry had a huge grin on his face. "Nearly there," he said proudly.

As Pomfrey pulled the baby free, Hermione felt relief. She had done it. Her grin matched Harry's. Finally, she heard the sound she had been waiting for: her baby's wailing. "Oh, Harry." She now found that she couldn't control her tears anymore.

He leaned down and kissed her. "How's the baby?" he asked.

"Perfect." Pomfrey set the swaddled child in Hermione's arms. "He's a perfect baby boy."

"I told you it was a son," Harry said.

"He was so much trouble that I figured you were right." Pulling back the blanket, she saw strands of black hair that already promised to be unruly. "And it looks like he takes after you."

Harry sat on the edge of the bed and wrapped his arms around Hermione. "I'm proud of you." After kissing her on the top of her head, he added, "I love you."

"I love you, too, Harry."

After a few moments, he pulled away. "Ron's going to wonder where I am. I guess I should go tell him. Can you live without me a little while?"

"Hurry back?" She wasn't sure that she was up to dealing with the baby by herself.

"As soon as I can. After all, our son needs a name." He gave her one last kiss before leaving.

Harry was still in a daze when he entered the common room. He was a father, and his son was magnificent.

"Hey, where've you been? It's been hours," asked Ron. "I went by the hospital wing, but no one was there."

Harry grabbed his arm, realizing that he had never had it looked at. "Er..." He couldn't think of what to say.

"I guess you couldn't find Madam Pomfrey, either, huh?"

"Er, is Ginny around?" He realized this was a stupid question since the common room was deserted except for the two of them.

"She went up to bed. You know, it's really late."

"Yeah, I know." He paced a few moments. He needed to speak to both of them together, but he knew that he could not go up to the girls' dormitory. "Dobby."

"What?" Ron asked, utterly confused.

"Dobby!" Harry called.

There was a pop and the elf asked, "Harry Potter has called Dobby?"

"Can you go up to the girls' dorm and get Ginny?"

"Yes, sir. Dobby can do that," the elf said cheerfully and disappeared.

A few moments later, Ginny was yawning and stretching as she came downstairs. "What's goin' on?"

"Thanks for coming down," Harry said. "I have something very important to tell the two of you. Something that's going to be very hard to hear."

"What is it?" asked Ginny cautiously as she flopped into the chair.

He took a deep breath, trying to decide how best to continue. "I know where Hermione is. She's in a private room."

"Can we go see her?" asked Ginny.

"In a little while. If you still want to."

"Why wouldn't we want to? I mean, she's been moody to me, but she's still my friend," said Ron.

Harry frowned. They had no idea what he was about to say. "The two of us have been keeping something from you, something pretty big." He looked into their eyes and could tell they were waiting for him to elaborate. A part of him wanted to get up and pace, but he knew that would just be a stalling tactic. "Last summer, we did something stupid."

"And? You do stupid things all the time," Ron said.

He ran his fingers through his hair. "Not like this." He decided the time for stalling was over. "I got her pregnant."

They started at him in silence for a few seconds until Ron started laughing. "Oh, that's rich. That's a real funny joke. What did you really do?"

This was not the response he had expected. He thought Ginny looked as though she desperately wanted to believe that it was a joke, too. "Seriously. I got Hermione pregnant. She just gave birth to our son."

Ron said sarcastically, "I would think we would have noticed if she was pregnant. I mean, we spend a lot of time around her, and that's not something you can hide."

"Yes, it is. She's been using a Veiling Charm since Christmas. I tried to get her to go into hiding, but she refused. Earlier this week, it finally became too much for her, and Madam Pomfrey has kept her in a private room where she could be monitored. We only told you that she was suffering from Dragon Pox to keep you away."

Ron wasn't laughing anymore. Ginny looked at Harry in horrified shock before running upstairs, breaking out into tears.

Ron clenched his jaw in anger. "You bastard. You really did it? You know how I feel about her."

"Ron, I know. I don't know how it happened. We were running from Death Eaters, hiding in a cave and then... Well, you know."

"I ought to punch you," Ron growled.

"Ron," Harry started.

"Don't 'Ron' me. You've been playing at being my best friend, using me. I can't believe neither one of you had the guts to tell me. And what about Ginny? I should definitely punch you for what you've done to her."

This was more the reaction he had expected. A part of him wanted Ron to just punch him and get it out of his system. "I didn't do anything to her. I told her last year that it wasn't the right time for me to have a relationship. I told her not to wait for me."

"Oh, yeah. My sister's not good enough for you. But within weeks of telling her you don't want a relationship, you *gfuck* my girlfriend. Real manly. And I guess that's why you didn't see fit to tell me, huh?"

"We didn't tell anyone. If anyone knew that she was having my baby, she would have been a target. I don't know if she would have been safe even here. We couldn't risk that news getting out."

"Because Ron has a big mouth and can't keep a secret. Can't trust Ron with anything important," he said in a sing-song voice. "Thanks a lot, *mate*." Ron got up, gave Harry a dirty look, and headed for the dormitory.

"Hermione does want to see the two of you. If you change your mind, ask Madam Pomfrey and she'll show you where she is," he called to Ron's retreating back. He had known that this would go poorly and he was impressed that Ron had not hit him. If he were in Ron's place, he would have punched himself. Hopefully they would visit Hermione once they got over the shock.

Hermione looked up when the door opened. She saw the sullen expression on Harry's face. "It didn't go well, did it?"

He sat next to her on the bed, which had returned to its original size. "No. Ginny ran upstairs crying without saying anything. Ron yelled at me a bit before leaving. I told them that you do want to see them, but I don't know if or when they'll come."

She sighed. "I suppose that was to be expected, wasn't it? I'll write them letters later." She was silent a few minutes as she pondered her next question. She had been thinking about it for some time. He had mentioned fixing up his parents' house when this was over, but they had never formally discussed anything. "When are we going to get married?" she asked softly.

This question caught him completely off guard, and he opened and closed his mouth several times before speaking. "I guess it should be sooner rather than later, shouldn't it? I, er, hadn't thought that much about it, I guess. I'm sorry," he replied nervously.

She gently touched his arm. "No, that's all right. I know that defeating Voldemort is important, and that you are very close to destroying all the Horcruxes. I thought that perhaps we could have a small civil ceremony, elope, I guess you'd call it. That way if anything..." Biting her lip in an attempt to stop the tears, she tried to think of anything else. But there had been so many casualties in the war, and Harry had taken on a more dangerous job than anyone else, that it was hard for her not to fear that something might happen to him.

He held her more tightly, trying to comfort her. "That sounds like an excellent idea. I'll talk to Professor McGonagall about it. How's he doing?" he asked to change the subject.

She shifted him against her breast. "I'm trying to get him to eat, but he's being fussy. I think he takes after you." She smiled as she looked up at him. "He needs a name, you know."

He reached over and brushed his son's wisps of hair. "How about James Patrick after our fathers?"

"That's exactly what I was thinking." She leaned against him as he held her in a comforting embrace.

"Welcome to the world, James Patrick Potter. May you have a life of peace."

~The End~

A/N: Thank you very much for reading this story. I hope that you have enjoyed my take on a possible Harry/Hermione relationship. My undying gratitude goes to

JenKM1216 for making sure I got the mommy's perspective on this story. Also, thanks to nota for being such a loyal beta reader and putting up with my diverse writings.