

Burrowed Secrets

by *Southern_Witch_69*

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I'm using some of JKR's characters to reply to a Potter Place Challenge Prompt. No money is being made...damn it! Hehehe.

Thanks go to RobisonRocket for beta reading this on such short notice. Cheers, doll, you're a lifesaver.

Ron looked around, expecting to see the family ghouls charging at him, but when no movement met his eyes, he settled down into the rocking chair next to the old window. It had been a long time since he'd ventured into their attic, but he felt the need to get away from everyone below. Hermione, whom he secretly still loved, was below with her new boyfriend, Severus Snape...of all people. He didn't feel like facing them. Everyone had gathered at the Burrow after his mum's funeral. While he supposed it was a nice gesture and all, he just didn't feel like he could speak to anyone at the moment. He was afraid that his true feelings would come out.

Of course he didn't want his mother to die. That would have been his last wish, but part of him rather felt like it was a blessing. She'd contracted a disease the year before, and since then, she'd been deteriorating. The last few weeks had been horrible for her...all the moaning, crying, and agony. He'd wished many times that he'd had the nerve to end things for her. He'd hated seeing her suffer.

What bothered him, though, was this: had he wanted to end her suffering for her or for him? Was this being selfish? He was uncertain. Hermione would easily read him. Years of being his best friend and then girlfriend would enable her to almost read his mind. It wouldn't do for her to be trying to analyze things, especially with that git standing at her side. He wouldn't want his other brothers and sisters to know either.

"Why'd you get this, Mum?" he asked aloud. "Why you?"

The Healers said that it was just something that happened and that it was very rare that anyone got it anymore, but his mum wasn't hadn't been so lucky. Pushing those thoughts away, he picked up a small book that was half hidden by a shawl.

Molly's Book

His eyes widened as he realized that he'd stumbled upon his mother's diary. He tried to open it, only to have the book snap at his fingers. He dropped it and listened as it growled and said, "Password only."

"Er... Weasley," he said. Nothing happened. "Ron. Ginny. Ginevra, Ronald, Percy. Charlie, Bill, Fred and George. Arthur. Family. Love. Children." At the last word, the diary said, "You may read," and clicked open. He hesitated for only a moment and picked it up. These were his mother's words. It would be a comfort to him and the rest of his family. He flipped open a few pages and paused to read.

November 28, 1970

Although this is my firstborn, I am certain that the pregnancy won't last much longer. How uncomfortable I've been! Poor Arthur, he's trying to do all that he can to appease me, but I can't help being cross and moody. I'm simply so miserable that I'm actually praying to anyone listening that I'll go into labor. If nothing happens by the morning time, I'm going to drink one of those home remedies that I've been reading about. Brings labor right away, that, so it says.

"Well, not exactly the maternal ponderings I would have thought, but I suppose that's a trying time for women," Ron said aloud. His brother had been born two days after that. "Must have fixed herself some of that tonic then." He wondered if the labor had gone all right and flipped forward a couple of pages.

December 7, 1970

It's been a while since I've been able to take a few moments for myself to write things. Bill is such a good baby. Why, he hardly cries at all, and he's simply lovely. His hair is coming in nicely already, and it's just as red as mine. I worried that it might come out brown, not that it would have caused Arthur to be suspicious or anything. In fact, he does look like Arthur a little. Could it really be? Or is it my imagination? Oh, and he's such a good father to little Bill. I made the right decision.

Ron's brow furrowed in confusion. Suspicious about what? Brown? While he wasn't the sharpest tool in the shed, he remembered learning something about genetics. Both of his parents had red hair, so it was most likely that their children would have that. However, if brown came through, it would be because it was a trait passed down from another generation. Why would that have been a big deal? Why wouldn't Bill look like his father? What decision?

He flipped back a few pages to see if she'd said anything during the pregnancy to explain what she was talking about.

July 5, 1970

My clothes certainly are getting tight now. The dress I wore today will be too small soon enough. I was able to slip into London today. Nobody even noticed when I left through the front exit of the Leaky Cauldron to venture into Muggle London, though the people on the street did gape at me a little. I'd thought that my attire looked Muggle enough, but I suppose not. The walk around the block to meet Robert didn't take long. I made certain to wear a large enough cloak so that he wouldn't notice my rounding stomach. And am I glad that I did it, too.

He told me that he's getting married and that he's moving down to France to be with the woman and her family. He seemed distraught to be leaving me, but we both knew it would never last. I'd chosen Arthur, a good wizard, someone my father and brothers approved of. Life for me and my child would never have been the same in the Muggle world. Robert Herbert would never have understood our ways, and he would have rejected me eventually. I just know it. And for those reasons, I married Arthur when he asked. And I do love Arthur, really. It's all just quite confusing. My feelings grow with each passing day.

I cried when I got home, and poor Arthur simply thought it was because my dress was tight. He's offered to purchase some new fabric so that I can make something new. Good man, Arthur is. I will try not to think on Robert any longer, and I can only hope that my child looks like me...and doesn't have any of his traits.

Ron couldn't believe what he'd read. His mum had been having an affair with a Muggle man! And what was worse, it seemed that the Muggle man was Bill's father! His mum had always told some romantic tale about how everyone had fallen in love and married young, scared to never have a chance because of the dark times.

"But, no," he whispered, "he's a Weasley. He has to be." Ron wondered if knowing this would cause his father or anyone else in the family to love Bill less. Would Bill want to know his own father...if he truly wasn't a Weasley?

February 28, 1970

I'm about to see Robert again. I am going to tell him that it's over. I can't keep slipping away like this. Arthur will wonder where I've been going. For all I know, Death Eaters could spot me. It's just too dangerous. How I wish Robert would have been born into our world instead of the Muggle one. Things might be different then.

Edit:

Well, I've just returned from seeing him, and after I told him that it was over, he coaxed me into making love to him one last time. It has been a while since we've done so, and it simply felt right to part in such a sweet way. I've agreed to exchanging letters with him, so I'll keep my small postal box at the Leaky Cauldron, where he's been sending his letters to me and retrieving those I leave for him.

Part of Ron wanted to find this bloke and kick his arse. His mum had been married at that time! Why couldn't he have just left her alone? He turned a few pages and frowned.

April 11, 1970

Dear Merlin, I'm pregnant. I've narrowed it down, and there's a possibility that the child could be for Robert. In fact, I'm nearly certain that it is. Maybe. Oh, dear... how will I ever explain this to Arthur? What will I say to Robert? Surely he'll insist that I leave my husband. I know what to do. I will simply not tell either of them a thing. This will be Arthur's child, and that's that.

Anger boiled Ron's blood. She'd had no right to just keep something like this to herself. People had a right to know these things! If he found out that Hermione was pregnant with his child, choosing to raise it with Snape instead without telling him, he would never forgive her!

December 1, 1968

My brothers have been killed. Gideon and Fabian died as heroes. I am proud of them, but I can't bear this feeling of loss. I'm so numb inside. This is much worse than when I was snatched by that pair of Death Eaters and brought to their home. Luckily, I was able to slip off before they did any real damage. That's how I met Robert. The poor dear thought that some average bad men were after me. There's nothing average about these men. He'd never understand even if I tried to explain it to him. I appreciate the week he allowed me to hide in his home, and I will always have a special place in my heart for him.

But Arthur has been a great comfort to me. He understands what I'm going through, having lost his brother Bilius to Death Eaters also. He's asked me to go away with him tonight and elope. I've said yes. I need him. I need something solid, something more than Robert can give, though he'd like to.

Closing the book, Ron wondered what he should do. Should tell his family what he'd discovered? At this moment, the ghoul rattled his chains. "I'll take it that's a no then, eh?" He wished that he could ask Hermione for advice. She wouldn't think badly of his mum if she knew the truth, and she would tell him what he should do. He wished things would be different for them. Why hadn't he made more effort? Would he always wonder what could have been? He snorted. "I suppose she's my Robert." He nodded as other thoughts came to him. Perhaps it was time to do as his mum did and let his "Robert" go. It was time to find his "Arthur."

He opened the book toward the end and smiled at what he saw. It was as if it were a true sign.

March 1, 2003

We had a party for Ronald today. He was quite surprised. Hermione showed up, and they talked like old times. I can still see that he's missing her, but he's just too proud to

tell her. My youngest boy has such a hard head at times, but that's part of his charm. I'm sure things will work out in time. Whatever is meant to be will happen. It always does. Having my entire family with me tonight was a blessing. It's been so long since everyone has had the time, what with the war going on. I wonder if they've all made a point to come since it might be the last time we can all be together like this. Even Percy and his family came.

Now there are no wars. There's just life. I'm going to make the most of what I have left. I've no regrets about any decisions I've made. Things are as they were intended to be, and I'm simply happy that I've had so many years with Arthur and the kids.

Ron lifted his wand and went about the business of erasing everything that had anything to do with Robert and her affair. No one needed to know about that, least of all his dad and Bill. He brought the diary down with him and handed it to his father.

"Here you are, Dad. The password is 'children.' Took me a few tries to figure it out," he said softly. He noticed that his father's face had paled. "What's wrong?"

"Did you, ah... read this?" he asked, looking around at the others crowding around.

"Er... yeah, yeah, I did." Why did his father seem so upset suddenly? Then it dawned on him. "Have you read it before, Dad?"

His father nodded and put the book into his pocket. "I don't think this is the time for this."

"Come on, Dad," Bill said. "Let's read Mum's last entry at least."

Ron put a hand on his father's shoulder and squeezed it affectionately. He leaned forward to whisper, "It's safe. All that other bloke rubbish is gone."

Relief passed over his father's face as he smiled brightly. "Right. Absolutely. Gather round, everyone. I'll read some of it to you. Just a few passages."

"What did you say to him to make him agree?" Bill asked.

"Just told him that Mum would have wanted us to know how much she thought of us and loved us... even while dying."

Those around nodded sadly and made their way into the living room to listen to Arthur. It was only Hermione, of course, who looked at him and tried to read his expression. He gave her a small, reassuring smile and fled back up the stairs, wanting to retreat. He wasn't ready to listen to his father read his mother's words. He was relieved that he didn't have to carry the burden of knowing what had happened alone, but it saddened him to know that his father had found the diary first and had been dealing with its contents privately. The worst part of it, to him anyway, was exactly how long had his father known? He supposed he'd have to ask him one day when they were alone.

"He's the bravest, strongest man I'll ever know," he whispered. "I hope I can be like him." He then gazed out of his window at the stars in the sky. "You chose right, Mum. You chose right."

Southern's Notes: I would probably do the same as Ron (keep the secret). What use is there to drag the skeletons out of the closet after all that time... and in this case, it's possibly for nothing. It's not certain that Bill is even the other man's son.

Prompt responding to: 34. Ron is cleaning out the attic at the Burrow and runs across his late mother's diary. He idly flips through it and runs across a shocking family secret: the teenaged Molly Prewett had a brief yet torrid romance with a Muggle around the time she became pregnant with his eldest brother, Bill. Does Ron confide to someone what he has learned, or does he keep his deceased mother's secret?

I doubt anyone is going to go off and do any detective work, but I found these days at the Lexicon (*snort* they give two different years for Bill's birth). I just picked the earlier one, as it went better with the year the Weasleys eloped and gave me a possible date for the death of their brothers. I don't think Molly Weasley would carry on a longterm affair with anyone, so this helped to shorten the time she "saw" the other guy, but perhaps if it started out this way, she might have carried on some. Ah, well, it was a challenge to write, and I'm happy that I've done so.