

# Always and Forever

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::A/n:: One-shot. Very fluffy. :]

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Ron dropped his briefcase on the linoleum kitchen floor in a huff. It had been a really tough day at the Auror office—twelve on a scale of ten for awfulness. First, he'd overslept and been late for work. Then, his department head (a weaselly man with a tiny goatee named Wardwick Dapshan) had yelled at him in front of the man he most disliked in the Auror office—Ignus Pettyfield. After, Ignus had made snide comments and smirked at him from across the room. And, to top everything off, right as Ron was about to leave, Wardwick had informed him that the Dark wizard hunt at the end of the month no longer included him.

Ron just wanted to relax. He wanted to lie down, drink, and watch the television. Yes. That was his new plan. "I'm home, Hermione!" he called upstairs while reaching into the fridge for a beer.

"Hello, love," Hermione greeted her husband, sweeping down the stairs. "Tough day?" she asked kindly after seeing the expression on Ron's face.

He nodded glumly. "You don't want to know." He uncapped the beer with a wave of his wand and took a long swig.

She frowned in sympathy. "You want to talk about it?"

He shook his head. His pre-thought plan ran through his head, and he looked longingly in the direction of the living room. The couch was calling his name longingly, lovingly.

He turned towards the living room. "I'm going to lie down, okay? I just want to rest."

"Sure you don't want to talk? You might feel better."

"Hermione, I am *fine*. I just want to rest."

Hermione pursed her lips in a very Mrs. Weasley-ish way. Ron almost groaned aloud. He didn't need Hermione to be his mother. She was his wife, for God's sake. He'd feel better tomorrow, a Saturday, but now he just wanted to get some rest.

"Look, 'Mione, I'm sorry. I've just had a hellish day, and I'm tired—"

"It's quite all right, Ronald," she replied coldly, crossing her arms and tapping her wand (clutched in her right hand) on her left forearm.

"Hermione, I don't want this crap right now! I've had a long day, and I am *allowed* to sit on my own damn couch and *rest!*"

Hermione's lips pursed, if possible, even more outwards. "You most certainly are, Ronald. No one said you couldn't."

Dear God. Ron could tell that Hermione was really getting pissed. Her eyes were narrowed, and the expression on her face was unreadable.

"Her... Hermione, I'm sorry. Really, I am."

"Well, Ron, it seems like every day is a 'hellish day' for you, and every night you just want to 'rest'—leaving no time *four*s.

Ron, who had been trying to cut in and defend himself, suddenly stopped. "'Mione, I never meant to do that," he said after a long pause, placing his beer on the kitchen table and moving towards her, intending to hug her. He'd never tried to do anything of that sort. He hadn't even noticed this pattern of behavior.

She ducked away from him angrily, arms still crossed tightly so her wandtip was cutting into the flesh of her upper arm. "Ron, you do what you want," she said in a low, unforgiving tone, almost growling. He stepped away, taken aback. Hermione had never, *ever* spoken to him that way, and truthfully, it scared him a little.

"I'm going to bed."

With this conclusion, Hermione stomped upstairs, slamming the door to their bedroom shut. Ron stayed in the kitchen, only his lonely beer with him. He cradled his face in his hands for a few moments, moaning inwardly, *Hermione... ah, Hermione...* Then, he picked up his drink, stomped into the living room and switched on the TV.

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Ron awoke with a sticky, sour taste in his mouth and an excruciatingly painful throbbing at his temples. He opened his eyes and groaned, arching his back. His neck and shoulder blades were aching from sleeping on the couch all night. And on the coffee table beside him, a row of empty beer bottles were lined up like squatting frogs, studying him intently.

He checked his watch. It was about eleven in the morning, so Hermione should be up... Oh, God, Hermione. Ron moaned aloud. He remembered their argument from the previous night. He wished he could take it all back. He just wanted his old 'Mione back.

He stood up and walked over to the kitchen, headache forgotten. Hermione was sitting at the kitchen table, eating eggs and drinking coffee. Her eyes were a little puffy with obvious traces of an Anti-Redness Charm. She'd been crying. Ron recognized it right away.

"'Mione... I'm sorry."

She looked up suddenly, and her face softened. "Me too, Ron," she whispered, standing up so her chair almost toppled over onto the floor. She ran over and hugged him, despite his unkempt demeanor and booze breath.

Ron suddenly pulled away and grabbed Hermione's ring finger. She yelped, then giggled as he slowly removed her ring, tickling the palm of her hand as he went. He turned the ring so the inside inscription was visible under the kitchen lights.

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Tears filled her eyes as she looked up at her husband.

He kissed her, then pulled back and wiped away her tears with his thumbs. He slipped the ring back on her finger slowly and lovingly.

"Always and forever, 'Mione. I promise."