

Harry Potter

A Real Life Fairytale

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Harry's has big plans for the weekend, if only the universe would cooperate.

A Fanfic of
Harry Potter

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Ron sticks his head into my office just as I send the last stack of files soaring toward my filing cabinet. The smile he wears reminds me of when we were eleven and planning on using the Invisibility Cloak to find mischief around the castle, or when we were fifteen and trying to keep some secret from Hermione.

“Everything ready?”

I mentally check each little box in my head, running down the list, and give a firm nod. “Yeah, I think so.”

My smile grows to equal his and we stare at each other like loons for a minute.

“I can’t believe I’m doing this for you.”

I sigh and push away from my desk before snatching my robes off the back of the chair. “It’s not like I asked you to... to...”

“Leave my family behind, traipse all over England with you existing on Hermione’s vile mushroom soup while living from a tent and hunting down bits of demon soul?”

Our eyes meet again and smiles widen. “Something like that,” I agree. “And I didn’t ask you to do that either, if you remember.”

Ron leans against the door frame casually and crosses his arms over his chest. “Yeah, but this feels that big.”

“I’m not asking you to be his father, for Merlin’s sake!” I say. “Just take him for a couple of days. Ginny and I haven’t been away in months.”

“I know.” He nods and I know he isn’t backing out of our deal; he is just nervous. “It’ll be... it’ll be good.”

“Besides,” I say, “one of these days you *will* be someone’s dad, and then all the nappies and feedings and midnight crying *will* be your responsibility.” I can’t resist getting that one dig in just to see his face pale.

Ron doesn’t disappoint and even adds in an audible gulp with his nod. I wonder if he and Hermione have been talking about having a kid. They’ve been married for almost as long as Ginny and I have. I’m sure somewhere in her things, Hermione has a chart all laid out, planning every major event in their lives. Color-coded, no doubt.

“You ready to go?”

I snatch the envelope off my desk that came by owl just this afternoon and tuck it

safely away in my pocket. All the details are set. All I need now is my wife.

“I can’t believe I’m doing this,” Ron mumbles again as we join the teeming masses headed for the lifts and then the Apparition points.

“Get over it,” I say quietly. “You agreed—”

“Not that,” Ron says. He grimaces and glances around before whispering. “I’m helping you get *laid*.”

I laugh loudly and clap him on the back. “It’s happened before, you know. I rather think your nephew was the glaring hint there, mate.”

“Yeah but... but I didn’t have to *know* it was happening, you know?” Ron seems to push the thought away. “Think Ginny knows?”

“Not at all. Hermione wouldn’t say anything. And Ginny would’ve told me if *you* had ruined my surprise.”

A thrill of excitement shivers through me as I think about the surprise I have for Ginny: two whole days away at a bed and breakfast. Two whole days where she won’t have to change nappies, clean up messes that James has made, or chase after James as he gets into more trouble. We won’t even need to pack before I whisk her away; clothing is definitely not going to be needed this weekend.

“Urgh. I do *not* want to know the thought that just put that smile on your face.”

I laugh at Ron’s grumble and let it go before rubbing it in. I am in far too good a mood to take him seriously right now, anyway.

“I’ll go home and tell Ginny before I bring James over,” I tell him just before we both Apparate away. “She’ll want to throw a few things together for him.”

“Great.” Despite his earlier misgivings, Ron looks genuinely excited to have my son for the weekend. And I know he’ll be great with James. Ron’s a great uncle. All the kids love him. But he’s always been best at the uncle things—slipping them biscuits before dinner, filling them full of sugar when he thinks we’re not watching, getting them all wound up before bedtime and then gleefully disappearing to his own, quiet, chaos-free home. Dad things are going to be a whole new world of experience for him. My smile widens as I anticipate the uncle things I can do for Ron’s future children.

The house is wholly still when I Apparate to the lane in front of it. Wrapped in a blanket of winter white, draped in the stillness of the moment, I marvel to see how perfect it is, with a slow, lazy twist of smoke dancing up from the chimney, and the little shutters happily welcoming me home.

When Ginny and I found this little cottage more than four years ago, it needed a lot of work, but we knew it was the one for us. It was just so... cheerful. We spent three years of weekends and stolen evenings fixing it up before James came along. Now the DIY projects are relegated to the back of our to-do list, in favor of taking James flying and hearing him giggle excitedly, or spreading a blanket in the back garden and watching as he toddles around, discovering bugs, flowers, rocks, and garden gnomes. Painting and repairs can wait for a few months, anyway.

I enter through the kitchen door—we rarely use the front entrance—and find the kitchen a shambles. Now, Ginny and I aren't known for our housekeeping skills, but the place is rarely a disaster. James must have been in tornado mode today if this is the outcome.

“Ginny?”

I take just a quick moment to nudge James' toys out of the way and give one last glance to the cluttered kitchen before heading to the living room. I'm excited to see Ginny's face when I tell her that we don't have to clean anything up before we leave tonight. Just this once, we can leave the mess behind and forget that the dishes aren't done, and the rubbish bin is almost overflowing. All of that will keep. I just want some alone time with my wife.

The scene of the destroyed kitchen carries over into the living room—when did James get so many toys?—and I find my two favorite people lying on the sofa, cuddled together, asleep.

The reality of Ginny's day spreads out before me as I survey everything around them: used tissues discarded on the coffee table, a forgotten cup of cold tea, a stack of children's books, a bottle of Pepperup Potion, James' favorite toys, his cuddly blanket wrapped tightly in his fist, and his small face, scrunched in discomfort, even as he sleeps.

I banish the rubbish and clear away the tea before letting my fingers trace the line of Ginny's furrowed brow. Her eyes blink open and she peers up at me before her lips quirk in a small smile.

“Hi.”

“Looks like you’ve had a battle today.”

Exhaustion paints her face and she yawns widely. “Jamie has the flu.”

I wince and lay the back of my fingers along his cheek, then his forehead, feeling his elevated temperature.

“Should we take him someplace?”

“I floored the healer earlier,” Ginny explains. “He said I was doing everything I could do. He’ll be fine given some time.”

Pictures of my wife wearing lacy bits of lingerie, the dozen red roses I had specially ordered, and the bottle of wine chilling next to the bed at the little inn slowly fizzle from my brain. Ginny won’t want to leave when James is sick. For a moment I’m tempted to ask if perhaps her mother will take him, but I know that’s not fair. It’s not anyone’s fault that my surprise has been ruined; it’s just one of those things.

“I’m sorry,” I say and kiss her forehead.

“I wanted to have dinner all ready for you and have Jamie down early tonight.” A tear sparkles in the corner of her eye and I realize how truly upset she is. Ginny doesn’t cry easily, but she’s been besieged today.

“It’s fine. You’ve been overwhelmed. You should have floored me, Gin.”

She gives a frustrated growl and shifts James in her arms. He whimpers and I lift him against me, easing her burden just a tiny bit.

“Daddy.” His whispered word melts my heart and I curl around him, melting back into the sofa. Ginny takes my hand in hers and folds into me. We sit together, almost one person, and watch the glow from the low fire paint shadows on the wall.

“I thought I was fine. I thought he’d feel better after I gave him some potion, but nothing seemed to settle him.”

“Shhh.” I kiss her head, leaving my lips pressed there for a long, quiet moment. “Everything will be fine.”

The plans I had are forgotten, pushed aside for this quiet moment right here, with my family. They need me, and I need this just as much as I need time alone with Ginny. She and I can go away another day.

I almost tell her about the trip I planned, but now it seems too cruel. There will be

other days. We only have this one moment like this and I can't imagine pulling myself or Ginny away from it.

"Go upstairs and take a few minutes," I say. "Take a deep breath; let me take care of James."

She hesitates but I can see the war on her face. She *needs* to have a calm moment where she's not a mother, not a wife, not anyone but Ginny. She gives so much to James and me... she often forgets to take time for herself.

"If you're sure..."

"I am." I kiss her softly and raise my wand. The fire grows larger with my spell. Ginny hurries up the stairs and I lay James on the sofa, making sure his blanket is still curled into his embrace. He never sleeps without it.

Quickly, before Ginny can come back, I kneel beside the fire. Ron's face appears in the flames when I connect the floo.

"Hey."

"Hi."

"You coming through?"

"You've been given a reprieve."

His forehead scrunches in confusion. "What? Ginny doesn't want to—"

"James is sick. Nothing too bad—the flu."

Ron swears softly and ruffles his hair. "Do you need anything?"

I glance back at my son and give one last look toward the stairs before I sigh and rub my eyes under my glasses. "No. We'll be okay. But... do me a favor?"

"Anything."

I grasp the fire tongs and send the envelope with my reservations for the bed and breakfast through to his side of the connection.

"Have fun. Reservation is under the name Roonil Wazlib." I smirk at my own brilliant use of an alias.

Ron stares at the paperwork with wide eyes. "You're serious?"

“Someone should enjoy the weekend.”

“Maybe they could reschedule?” He gives a half-hearted shrug even though I can see the excitement in his eyes.

“Just take it. I need to go; Ginny’s coming back any second.”

Ron’s eyes meet mine and even through the shoddy floo connection I can tell he understands me. He knows I haven’t told Ginny that I had a romantic weekend planned, that I had even arranged for him and Hermione to take James. And he understands why I won’t say anything now.

He’s a good friend.

“Okay, mate. I... I appreciate it.”

“I’ll try not to think about what you’re doing up there,” I say, just to see him smirk. He laughs and gives me a nod.

“Take care of my favorite sprog, will ya?”

“Will do.”

The connection closes and I stare at the flames for a minute. James is fine on the sofa, so I quickly move into the kitchen and cobble together a plate of sandwiches and fresh tea. The idea of being anywhere besides cuddled with my family right now doesn’t fit.

When I get back, Ginny is just coming down the stairs. Her hair is wet from a fast shower and her eyes are bright and clear.

“Thank you. I feel mostly human again.”

We share a soft smile and gravitate toward the sofa once more. Before we snuggle back down, I steal a kiss. I want to tell her how much these past years have meant to me, how much she means to me, how much I love her for all that she’s given me—not just James, but, by extension, her whole family. But the words aren’t coming. I can’t think of anything that doesn’t make me sound like an idiot.

“Not the most romantic night, is it?” Ginny devours one of the sandwiches I’ve made and sits, curling around her knees. I lift James into my arms and rest my head against her shoulder.

“It’s perfect,” I say. And, I realize that it really is. I mean, I don’t like that James is

sick. It hurts me that he feels any pain or discomfort at all, but being here with them... Once again, I feel that my words are inadequate. Maybe if I was Hermione I'd have the right words pop into my head to explain to Ginny what I feel. But I'm not. I've never been like her, and I never will be.

"Warm house, family, fire, snow falling outside..." I tilt my head to the window and Ginny's eyes light up at the drifting flakes dancing against the glass panes. It never fails to amaze me how excited she gets over the littlest things—snow falling, a hot cup of cocoa, sharing a blanket on the sofa. Little things that I never even contemplated before she and I fell in love. Now those little things mean the world to me. "Seems perfect to me."

"I hate that he's sick," she says and presses a kiss to Jamie's head, "but it's nice to have this quiet." She rests her head back against the sofa and her eyes slip closed. She's quiet so long I wonder if she's fallen asleep, but then she rocks her head to look at me.

"I remember lots of nights like this when I was younger. When one of us was sick, Mum would sit on the sofa and rock us. She'd sing lullabies, or tell us stories."

In my head I can picture all the details. I'm sort of jealous that she got that kind of connection growing up, but it's a momentary pang and melts instantly when I look into her brown eyes. I want that for her. I want her to have those types of connections, those memories that made her into who she is today. Because I love who she is.

"Tell me a story, Harry."

Her mischievous smile makes my heart twist, but I still shake my head. I don't have anything like that in my past, so I have no idea what type of story she wants. The idea of telling her anything to amuse her completely escapes me.

"Come on, just a little one." Her cajoling doesn't move me much. I know she'll pull out the heavy artillery soon and I'll be gone. Seriously, how can I resist those puppy dog eyes and that thing she does with her lip, where it's half-smile, half-pout? Any man would be a goner.

"Like... Babbity Rabbity or something?"

Her nose scrunches at the end and she tilts her head. "You can do much better than Beedle the Bard, Harry."

The eyes and the pout don't come out to play. Instead, Ginny does something

infinitely worse. She wraps her hands around my upper arm and curls against me, letting out a completely contented sigh.

“I love the sound of your voice. I love it when we sit and talk for hours.”

You see what I mean. I’m dead.

And I’m left scrambling for an idea—any idea—of what I can tell her, because the thought of continuing to deny her anything is absurd.

“Let me think of something.”

She smiles and presses a kiss to my shoulder. James’ breath comes in short puffs against my neck and I shiver at the pure contentment of the moment. The only sound in the room is the fire crackling.

My eyes trace the entire room, searching for some inspiration. I honestly can’t remember a single story that I heard during my childhood that I would want to tell Ginny. And I never really paid attention to stories when I was a teenager, so there’s nothing there I can pull from that time, either.

Just as I’m about to tell her I’ve failed, I see our wedding picture, right in the center of the mantel, barely lit by the low light of the room. We’re smiling—I can’t remember being more excited in my life, except for when James was born—and I can tell we’re both so in love, so perfectly at peace with the world in that moment.

That’s the story I want to tell her. Our life together.

But how do I start?

“Once upon a time,” I whisper, “there was a boy.”

Ginny doesn’t laugh at my awkward beginning, but snuggles against me, warming me all over.

“Was he cute?”

I startle at her interruption and blink a few times, trying to decide what she means.

“Er... I don’t... I have no idea.”

“Come on, Harry,” she says. “You have to do way better than that. Give me details that really pull me in.” The teasing tone of her voice lets me know this will not be the last interruption tonight; she’s having far too much fun to stop the absurdity

completely.

My approach has been shot to hell, but I stammer on, unsure if this is going to work now. Details? I have to include details?

“Er... Once upon a time, there was a *cute* boy. He had to work hard to earn his meals and wore hand-me-down clothing, but it made him into a person who valued hard work and—”

“Wait. Is this going to be one of those stories with a moral?” She doesn’t lift her head from my shoulder, but opens one eye to peer at me.

I can’t help but laugh. James lets out a whimper and I soothe him back to sleep on my shoulder.

“Are there any other sort?”

“I want a fairy tale,” she says. “With kings and queens, castles and dragons. You know... fun stuff.”

I blow out an exasperated breath and consider telling her to read one of James’ books then, but I don’t. Instead, I take her demands and force them into my story. It twists and turns in my head until it’s completely unrecognizable but, oddly enough, still mostly true.

“Fairy tale?” I grimace. “Kings and queens?”

She gives a nod and an impish smile. “Yep.”

“Once upon a time, there was a *cute peasant* boy. He had to scrub the floors in the castle he lived in every day and every night.”

“See?” Ginny says smugly. “I knew you could do it.”

I grumble slightly, but soon the story is unfolding from me. “One day a letter arrived for him, inviting him to go to a... erm... a special castle.”

“How special?”

“Are you going to let me tell the story?”

“Continue.”

“A *really* special castle,” I say in exasperation. “One where they would teach him, er... teach him to be a prince.”

“I’m liking this already.” Ginny snuggles down further against me and sighs happily.

“When he was there at the castle, the boy learned lots of important things... like how to tame a dragon, how to duel, how to protect himself, but most importantly, how to play... royal sports.”

“Did he meet any princesses at this special castle?”

“Do you ever want to find out?” Her interruptions are more amusing as they continue, but the story has now ventured so far away from where I began that I’m floundering.

“Shutting up now.”

I smirk and kiss the top of her head. “The boy met lots of wonderful friends at the castle. He learned everything he needed to know there to become a prince, but he still felt... like an imposter. No matter how much he tried, he would never be a real prince. He was just the little boy from the cup—er... just the peasant boy.”

I bite my lip at my almost-slip and continue on. I have a feeling Ginny knows exactly where I’m getting this story, but she’s done breaking into it for the minute.

“What he really wanted, more than anything else, was for somebody to love him.”

“Aww, a love story.”

“Ginny.”

“Okay.”

“The boy was forced to kiss a few frogs along the way, but—”

Ginny sits up and stares at me, her eyebrow arching. “A few?”

“Remember this story is a fairy tale?” I ask. “Would it be realistic if he only kissed one frog before he found his true love? That’s not reasonable at all.”

“It would be best if he skipped the frogs completely,” Ginny cautioned. “But if he must kiss a frog, let’s stick to only one. And she was more of a bullfrog than a cute, sweet little frog.”

I can’t help but chuckle at her description. “Okay. Fine. He kissed one frog, but he didn’t enjoy it at all.”

“Much better.”

I grin and close my eyes, resting my head against the back of the sofa. “So, after he kissed that one frog—and it was really more of a peck than a real kiss, mind you—he swore off all other frogs for quite some time. He was quite busy, you see, learning the rest of his lessons to become a real prince.

“But one day, out of the blue, he came face to face with the most beautiful, the most wonderful, the most athletic—”

“No need to overdo it, Harry.”

“—most feisty princess he’d ever met.” I laugh and Ginny pokes my ribs gently, urging me on. “And he fell in love. But... there was a problem. She was kissing a few frogs of her own, you see. So the boy needed to be patient—not an easy thing for him to do. So he waited. And he waited, and he waited...”

“Getting the picture,” Ginny chides.

“But finally, one day, when he came back from a... er... from somewhere important, their eyes met across the room and the boy knew he’d never feel that way about anyone else, ever. And so he kissed her.”

“I like to think of it as she got tired of waiting for the prince to get his head out of his arse and took matters into her own hands, kissing him.”

“It’s my story, though.”

“Yes, but you’re messing it up.”

“When you tell it, feel free to tell it how you remem—er, know it,” I say firmly. “The boy was the one doing the kissing.”

“Fine.”

“Fine.”

We’re quiet for a minute while I gather my thoughts and stop laughing. “So, after that, the boy and the princess were together as much as they could be.”

“Until he had to act like a prat.”

“Until he had to go and save the world,” I correct.

Ginny was quiet as the heaviness of the moment descended. “Okay, I’ll give you that. But he sure took his time about it.”

“Yeah, well, that couldn’t be helped,” I say. “But the princess waited for him.”

“Yes, she did.”

“And when he was done saving the world, she was there, rumpled frilly pink dress, crown askew and all.”

Ginny snorts against me and shakes her head at my silliness. “And they lived happily ever after.”

“Now, you’re getting ahead of yourself,” I say. “I seem to think there’s a lot more before that and the happily ever after bit.”

“But they do get their happy ending, don’t they?”

I stare at the wedding picture and think about that. “Well... let’s find out, shall we?”

She studies my face for a minute before nodding. “Okay.”

“Now where was I?”

“Done saving the world, the princess waited,” Ginny says quickly.

I shift James in my arms and feel his forehead. He’s not as hot as before and that makes me feel so much better.

“So then the boy was there—he had everything he’d ever wanted: no more evil would-be-king out to kill him, the best friends in the world, and the princess he loved by his side.”

“Sounds like a happy ending to me.”

“But he couldn’t help but want more,” I say over her.

She laughs softly. “Ah, he’s a greedy little prince.”

“Quite,” I agree. “Now that he had his princess, the boy wanted a family. Luckily, the princess had plenty of her own to share with him.”

The softness of Ginny’s look makes me quiver all over. “Lucky him.”

“Indeed. She took him back to her castle—which was a perfectly crooked one, complete with a horde of princely brothers, and a wonderful king and queen.”

“And a ghoul in the attic.”

“Can’t forget him,” I say.

“So that’s the end of their story,” she says happily when I pause.

“Of course not,” I scoff. “That’s just the beginning.”

She laughs. “Of course. I didn’t realize we were going for novel length here.”

“Are you going to be picky?” I ask.

“I’m a picky person.”

“I thought you wanted details? Should I skip over them?”

She thinks about this for a minute before shaking her head. “No, the details make the story.”

I blow out an impatient breath and shake my head. “The boy still didn’t feel like a prince, even though he had his princess and lived in a wonderfully wacky castle, surrounded by a royal family.”

“He always was a bit of a git,” Ginny says. She narrows her eyes at me, but I ignore it.

“He felt like the luckiest bloke in the whole kingdom, though.”

“This prince is growing on me.”

“One day, the boy asked the princess if she would marry him. Amazingly, despite his spotty vision, knobby knees, and perpetually messy hair, she said yes.”

“Now he’s a prat again.”

“But she had some conditions,” I point out. “She had a royal mission of her own; things she wanted to accomplish before she settled down and began popping out little princes and princesses.”

Ginny snorts and pinches my side again.

“So it was the boy’s turn to wait for her. And even though other frogs came and went, trying to catch the attention of both the boy and the princess, none of them ever mattered, because the boy and the princess were in love.”

Ginny rests her finger against my chin and turns my face to look at her. “Did the princess ever tell him how much it meant to her that he waited?”

“She did,” I say. “Maybe not in so many words, but the boy always understood.”

“Good, because that princess was never really good with words, you know.”

“No, but she was much better with her tongue—”

“Harry!” Ginny slaps my shoulder and I wince playfully and laugh. We wake James again and take a moment to switch him into Ginny’s arms. He settles down, but stares up at her with watery, dark eyes as she rocks him back and forth.

“And then, after a couple of years, when her important princess duties had been fulfilled, the princess and the boy settled down. They’d been married at the crooked castle several years before and were incredibly happy. But they wanted more.

“They found their own castle one day—a small one, with a leaky roof and cupboard doors that stuck—and they made it into a home.

“And before they knew it, a little prince came along to join their family.” James looks over at me when I brush the hair away from his forehead. “He was a wild little thing and wore his parents out every day, especially the princess, who was never known for her patience, anyway”

“Careful there, Potter,” Ginny warns.

“But they couldn’t love the prince any more than they did.”

“Did the boy ever realize that he really *was* a prince?” Ginny asks.

I think about it for a long minute. “He started to, I think. Eventually. After all, how could anyone but a prince be that lucky?”

“But you know... since they had their own prince, now the boy was king.”

I think about that for a minute before a smile spreads on my face. “He felt like a king.”

James whines for me and I take him in my arms. “About time for another dose of Pepperup,” I murmur.

“Is that it?” Ginny asks. “That’s the end of the story?”

I think about it for a minute before shrugging.

“That can’t be the end,” she says. “Stories have to have a beginning, a middle, and an end.”

“It’s not the end,” I assure her.

“Then let’s hear it?”

But I only smile at her. “I can’t tell you the end.”

Ginny glares at me. “Why not?”

“Because it hasn’t happened yet,” I whisper. “There’s still plenty of life left for the boy and the princess in the story. Anything could happen, you know.”

“King and queen,” Ginny corrects.

I nod my head in acceptance. “Besides, isn’t it more fun not to know the ending? Isn’t it more fun to think about all the possibilities that could still be out there for them?”

Ginny’s look tells me she’s not completely convinced, but she kisses my cheek anyway. “Come on, little man, let’s get you some more potion.”

James screams the whole time she’s coaxing the dropper of potion into his mouth. His face is bright red with indignation as steam pours out his ears. If he wasn’t so miserable, I’d probably laugh at the whole picture. Together, Ginny and I gather him into our arms and cuddle him between us, swaying slowly in the center of the room. His cries finally die into whimpers, and then into shudders, and finally into deep breaths against us.

“You look exhausted,” I tell Ginny as I brush my fingers over her cheek. She feels warm to me and I peer at her, hoping she’s not going to be sick also. “Maybe you should take some potion just to be safe. Wouldn’t want you getting sick, as well.”

A strange look settles on her face, but she shakes her head. “I’ll be fine.”

“Ginny…”

“I can’t take it, Harry,” she whispers.

A dozen questions fly through my mind as I try to figure out what she means. I know she’s taken it in the past—I made fun of her last time because the steam kept shooting out of her ears and with her red hair it looked like her whole head was on fire.

“Why?”

She’s quiet for a long minute before she looks up at me. The expression she wears

makes my knees wobble.

“I know the next chapter to your little story, Harry.”

I lick my lips, heart pounding, and wait for her to continue.

“You see, one day the little prince was being a handful and his grandmother came to take him for a couple of hours. And while he was gone, the queen and king took advantage of the quiet castle.” A wicked smile appears and Ginny’s cheeks flush pink. “So, in a few months, the little prince will have another prince or princess to play with.”

I can’t help but smile. A baby. Another baby.

“Yeah?”

Ginny gives a little shrug. “I was going to tell you tonight anyway, but I had something a bit more... romantic in mind.”

I kiss her forehead, then both of her cheeks, before finding her lips. “As soon as James is well, I’m taking you away for a weekend. Just the two of us. And we’ll celebrate.”

“It sounds brilliant.”

We stay connected, kissing softly and cuddling James between us for a long time. When I open my eyes again, the fire’s light is almost gone. The snow has gathered in the corners of the window, decorating each pane perfectly for a cold January night.

As much as I would have enjoyed taking Ginny away from this tonight, I know this moment is perfection right here. I have everything I need right here in my arms. And I *feel* like the king in my silly little story. A king with the whole world, everything he could ever dream of laid out in front of him.

“Thank you for being the princess in the story,” I whisper.

Ginny looks up at me and pretends to be confused. “You mean it wasn’t a fairytale after all?”

I smile and give a small shrug. “Maybe it was, maybe it wasn’t.”

“As long as I don’t have to wear a pink dress and a crown, I’ll always be your princess, Harry.”

In my arms, James gives a contented sigh and we both look down at him. “I couldn’t have said it better myself,” I tell him.