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Soon, a christmas love story

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Inhaltsangabe

Ron has never looked forward to Christmas Eve more. | A Christmas-themed love story in the form of an advent calendar, filled with snow, socks, and fairy lights.

Vorwort

Merry crimbo, wifey. x

Inhaltsverzeichnis

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FIRST

On the first of December, he asks her if she remembers the socks.

His mum had sent them alongside a new Weasley jumper, on his very first Christmas at Hogwarts, and they fit it in every respect: They were thick, and cosy ... and maroon.

And he'd tried to like them. He really had.

“Well, you don't have to wear them if you don't like them”, Hermione had reasoned with him.

“You wear them, then”, he had said, pulling off the socks. They fit his large feet almost perfectly.

“I'll pass”, she said. “Oh, don't pull that face, Ron, it's Christmas, and these socks are really cute. Mince pie?”

Ron remembers grinning, and turning the socks in his hands, and suddenly not minding them as much anymore.

He has never looked forward to Christmas Eve more.

SECOND

“Are those fairy lights?”

“... possibly.”

“Ginny, it's December 2nd.”

“Are you telling me it's too early for Christmas decoration?”

“Well ... yes, I am.”

“Sorry, I can't find ... damn, where's – hold on – “

“Where's what?”

“WHERE I ASKED FOR YOUR OPINION, HARRY.”

Ron doesn't stop laughing for half an hour.

THIRD

'I just realised I never asked', says Hermione, 'so – is Christmas your favourite holiday?'

'Well, I'm fine with any holiday', says Ron. 'But if you're making me choose, then, yeah, I guess I'd go for Christmas. Why, is Christmas not your favourite holiday? What's cooler than Christmas?'

'I'm not picky, either', she says. 'I was always rather fond of Halloween, though.'

Ron shakes his head.

'You didn't grow up with Fred and George.'

FOURTH

“How many more days until Christmas Eve, Ron?”

“Twenty”, Ron says promptly.

“Damn it.”

'Like I'll ever not know the days', he tells Hermione later that night. 'Like I'd forget.'

'Of course you wouldn't', she answers, and he can sense the hidden smirk in that reply. 'It's Christmas, after all.'

Ron grins into the darkness.

FIFTH

'I'm counting the days, too', she tells him the morning after that. 'It's Christmas, after all.'

Ron smiles through the rest of the day.

SIXTH

“Ron! You've got to come and look at this.”

“Gin– *what?*”

“C'mon. Kitchen.”

“Wh-oh. Adorable. Those edible, Harry?”

“Oi, Teddy's already tried the cookie dough, and it's great, right?”

“YEH!”

“See? Maybe do go and fetch Andromeda though, we, er, went freestyle on that icing.”

“Wait a sec, I've got to go tell Hermione. Just – just out of curiosity, is there a reason you're covered in flour?”

“Well, we – DON'T TELL HER ABOUT THE ICING!”

SEVENTH

Even the joke shop is beginning to look a little festive. Everyone notices it with relief.

'I mean, he's still not selling anything', Ron has told Hermione, who has heard all of this before. 'But he's letting us put up baubles. That's something, right?'

'Yes', says Hermione. 'That's something.'

EIGHTH

'Teddy's good for Harry', Ron tells her the day after that. 'Keeps him busy. And happy, or, well, the closest thing to happy he can be at the moment, if that makes sense. I'm not saying he's doing *well*, but he's doing better than expected, or it looks like he is. You know?'

'I do know', she replies. 'And I agree that Teddy's probably good company at the moment. I really hope Harry is doing as well as he appears to be, too.'

'Yeah. He's been coping with Halloween being over surprisingly well.'

NINTH

'You're impossible', she tells him.

TENTH

'It's weird', Ron tells her. 'This house already resembles a Christmas shop, but it still doesn't really *feel* like Christmas.'

'I reckon that's normal', she replies. 'And I'm sure you'll start feeling like Christmas soon.'

Ron clings to the last word. Soon, soon, soon.

ELEVENTH

“Hi, boys. You look hungry, there's stew in the kitchen, you know, I do believe Kingsley is making you work way too long – ”

“Evening, Molly.”

“Don't you want to take off your jacket, Ron?”

“Ah – I'm not staying, I've got to go – somewhere.”

“Do do what?”

“Er ... stuff.”

Harry leans over and whispers in Ron's ear. “18 Hamilton Road?”

“SHHHH.”

TWELFTH

'In your life, how many white Christmases have you had?', asks Hermione.

'Three', Ron tells her. 'The first one I don't remember, I was only a baby, but there are pictures. The second one was when I was six. Fred and George wanted to build a gigantic snowman, but – well, they failed miserably. Honestly, I think they slightly overestimated the amount of snow there was. Oh, and there was a little bit of snow in our second year, remember that? For about an hour.'

THIRTEENTH

'I'm not sure if that counts', she tells him. 'But it was nice while it lasted.'

Ron just nods, a grin tugging reluctantly at his lips.

FOURTEENTH

'Maybe we'll have a white Christmas this year', he argues. 'You never know.'

'That would be nice, wouldn't it?', she says. 'I don't think it'll matter all that much, though. It's going to be a nice Christmas either way.'

Ron smiles and nods to himself before he replies: 'It's Christmas, after all.'

FIFTEENTH

'I don't want it to be over', Hermione tells him on the fifteenth. 'I'm really looking forward to Christmas, but I am really, really scared of it being over.'

Ron's heart aches at the thought. 'Don't be', he tells her, and then –

'Me too.'

SIXTEENTH

Some days feel grey despite the fairy lights Ginny has put up all around the Burrow.

'They will pass', Hermione tells him. 'Dark days always do.'

Ron rolls around on his bed and replies: 'I just want it to be Christmas Eve.'

SEVENTEENTH

'Me too', she tells him, and then: 'Soon, Ron. Christmas Eve is so soon.'

EIGHTEENTH

On the morning of the eighteenth, a yell disrupts the cosy morning hustle, and Harry and Ron, still drowsy from sleep, nearly drop their cereal bowls.

“SNOW! THERE'S *SNOW!*”

The yell belongs to Ginny.

Ron rushes up the stairs straight away – to tell Hermione, and to ask if she can see it too.

NINETEENTH

'There's this Muggle song', Hermione tells him. 'Honestly, I never liked it much, it's really cheesy, but it popped into my head the other day and it reminded me of you. I'll show you on Christmas Eve.'

'I can't believe you're keeping me in suspense', Ron replies, but it's no good.

Christmas Eve, he tells himself. Just five days to go now.

TWENTIETH

'Why are the last days before Christmas always the longest?', Ron says. He's excited, yes, but he's tired. 'I want it to be Christmas Eve. *Now*. How is it *still* four days?'

'They're as long as all the other days', Hermione reminds him. 'They just feel longer because you're really,

really looking forward to it, and now you're getting so close. Just remember, they're as long as all the other days. And Christmas is so soon, Ron.'

'Yeah', he replies. 'Soon.'

TWENTY-FIRST

On Monday, he signs the lease.

TWENTY-SECOND

The only person in the universe who is as excited for Christmas as Ron is Hermione. She has been counting the days, too, and recently she has taken up counting the hours, as well, because Christmas Eve is coming closer and closer and she wants to be fully aware of the hours passing, and the hours left until they get to open their presents, until everyone sits down in the Burrow's kitchen, elbows tucked tightly next to each other, until they all sit in the living room avidly ignoring Celestina Warbeck's annual Christmas podcast.

She, too, has never looked forward to Christmas Eve more.

TWENTY-THIRD

Ginny puts up fairy lights inside 18 Hamilton Road.

It's beginning to feel a lot like home, and a little bit like Christmas.

TWENTY-FOURTH

24th December 1998

The snow's all gone on the morning of the twenty-fourth, but Christmas is only just arriving, and Ron feels warm for the first time in months despite the cold clawing at his cheeks.

“Hi”, whispers Hermione into his jacket, “hi – ”

“Hey”, he breathes, “hey – hey, bloody hell, you're *here* –“

“I've missed you”, she squeaks into his neck, and Ron realises her feet haven't touched the ground in what feels like a little eternity and a single second all at once. He loosens his grip around her waist and watches as, she, too, reluctantly lets go and straightens her coat.

“I – hi”, he splutters. “Hi.”

“Hi, Ron. Hi. *Hi*. I've missed you.”

“I've missed you too, I – you – you're – you're – you look pretty.”

Hermione's cheeks turn crimson. "You – you look nice too. You've got snow in your hair, by the way, did you know?"

Ron looks up at the the grey sky. Tiny, icy snowflakes get caught in his eyelashes. "Oh."

Hermione is staring at him when he looks back down. "I've missed you", she repeats, "I've really, really, missed you, I – "

She steps closer and wraps her arms around his neck again, and Ron hugs her in return and grins into her hair.

He's missed her hair. And he's missed hugging her.

"Hey", he breathes, "hey, don't freak out, I got us a flat."

She lets go stares up at him, all pink cheeks and ruffled hair and chapped lips. "You – you got what?"

"For – when you're done with Hogwarts. In the summer. I can still get rid of it", he adds. "That's fine, really, I wouldn't mind, but Ginny's already put up fairy lights, so she's going to be pissed, but – "

Hermione's cold nose bumps against his cheek as she kisses him."Shut up."

"I – okay."

And he's missed kissing her. God, has he missed kissing her.

"I've missed you. I've missed you so much, you idiot."

"I've missed you too – me too – Herm- hi."

"Hi", she says, beaming, pulling back, both gloved hands still resting on his cheeks. "Hi."

"Hi", says Ron, his grin too big for his face and his arms still wrapped around Hermione's waist. "Hi, I – I – I – love you."

She wraps her arms around his neck and kisses him again, all chapped lips and icy cheeks and freezing gasps of air forming in the air between them.

"Ron?"

"Hmmm?"

"Love you too."

"Love you too."

"Ron?"

"Yeah?"

"Where's that flat you mentioned?"

“It's – it's here – I mean, it's not *here*, I didn't – we're not moving into Platform nine and three quarters, I mean, *if* we're moving – ”

“No, I didn't think so”, she says. The corners of her mouth are twitching.

“I, it's, it's in London. 18 Hamilton Road. It's nothing fancy, really, but I thought ... when you're done with school ... and there's loads of bookshelves”, he adds hastily, blushing as brightly as the scarlet tinsel Ginny's strangled the Christmas tree with.

“We'll stop by sometime, won't we?”, asks Hermione. Her lips stretch into a smile, and her front teeth dig into the cracked skin. “I mean, we've got time to do that now. I know it's not much”, she adds, “I know. It's not even two weeks. But it's time, right?”

“Sure”, says Ron. He's still busy watching her mouth, but her words sink in eventually, and he blinks. “Time. Yeah. Sure. We've got lots of that.”

Hermione briefly dips her head to the side as though saying, 'Huh'; then, she reaches up and brushes a few flyaway strands of hair out of Ron's face. “Just snow”, she whispers.

Ron reaches up to his hair and finds it damp with melted snowflakes. “Hey, you haven't told me about the song.”

“What song?”

“The Christmas song. You said it reminded you of me.”

“It reminded me of us, really”, says Hermione, and Ron is surprised to find the pink of her cheeks has brightened considerably. “It's this really, really cheesy song that came out a few years back. *All I want for Christmas is you* by Mariah Carey.”

“Aw.”

“Shut it, you. Let's go home, yeah?”

“Sure. Er – Hermione?”

“Hm?”

“Merry Christmas.”

“Merry Christmas, Ron.”