Scent Magic

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Summary

Three and a half years since the Battle of Hogwarts and the Christmas season has come once again. The Weasleys are getting ready to celebrate the holidays at the Burrow and Hermione will be joining the festivities as she often does. Everything is going perfectly until some previously well-kept secrets are accidentally revealed. It is all an innocent mistake, brought on by an ancient magic that Hermione never even knew existed. Now her relationship with Fred has been drastically changed because this isn't something that either one of them can ignore. Then again, maybe they just don't want to ignore it.

Notes

Hi All!
Thank you so much for all the positive comments and support. I am happy to announce that I HAVE started part 3, and I apologize for the delay. My life has taken a lot of detours over the past few months, but I have never forgotten about this piece. In fact I have been super obsessed with doing it right!
I will also be looking for suggestions for future Hermione slash fics. I definitely prefer
Fremione, but LOVE so many other ships as well.
So if you have a unique plot or story you'd love to read, and think I could do it justice, I
would be honored if you would suggest it to me!

See the end of the work for more notes.
Three and a half years had passed since the Battle of Hogwarts and Hermione had finally managed to create a life for herself that was simple and fulfilling. Once the dust had settled she had gone back to finish her last year of education. It had been her first normal year at the school, and to no one's surprise but her own, she graduated with record breaking grades.

After saying goodbye to the castle she took a job as a clerk in the Department for the Regulation and Care of Magical Creatures. As a member of the “Golden Trio” she probably could have asked for any position she wanted, but that would go against every moral fiber in her body. She wanted to earn her place, just like everyone else. There was also the very real feeling of relief that came with having a simple, low profile job after so many years in the spotlight. She had her own flat a few blocks from the Ministry, she saw her friends and parents often. She was content.

Even The Daily Prophet was finally starting to run out of things to say about her. The last scandal was regarding her breakup with Ron over a year ago. Although completely mutual, there were some truly fantastical articles written on the topic. If she recalled correctly, one reporter even blamed the breakup on the involvement of jealous centaur suitor… or was it a vampire? In any case, “Granger and Weasley Breakup” seemed to be the story of the year. People really had too much time on their hands.

Despite all of the remarkable theories circulating in the press, she and Ron had simply grown apart. Post-war she tended to shrink from the limelight, whereas Ron reveled in it. He always wanted to go to various interviews and events. Hermione simply wanted to reclaim her anonymity and forget. The differences had started to put a strain on their relationship. It simply ended with a serious talk. In spite of the fact that it was somber and uncomfortable, their sense of relief meant only a few tears were shed. She was also extremely grateful they had remained friends.

At the moment, The Prophet claimed that Ron was dating Romilda Vane, which was news to her. She hadn’t seen him in a over a month. He was currently in Poland on the trail of some leftover Deatheaters that were supposedly holed up in some caves to avoid capture. Harry was with him of course and she was happy for that, even if Ginny wasn’t.

At this point it seemed apparent that both Harry and Ron would probably miss Christmas and possibly even New Years. It was a shame really, Hermione had started taking turns with the Christmas Holidays between her parents and the Weasleys and since last year was her parents year, if they didn’t make it back this would be her second Christmas without her two best friends.

She had arrived at the Burrow on December twentieth. The other Weasleys had started to trickle in since then. Now (other than Ron and Harry) only Bill and Fleur were missing, but they were due to arrive on Christmas Eve.

It was in the early morning of the twenty-third when Hermione’s eyes opened of their own accord. Based on the lack of light in the room she assumed it was about 6 am. She had gotten used to waking up early at Hogwarts in order to squeeze in some extra study time and the habit had stuck with her through the years. She had stopped grumbling about her inability to enjoy a lie in ages ago.

Hermione flipped off her covers and got out of her single bed carefully so she wouldn't wake Ginny. She changed into some jeans, a big Gryffindor jumper that used to be Ron’s and put on her slippers. She then silently left her room with a book.

Just as she was about to jump down the last few steps and into the kitchen for an early morning tea,
she somehow lost her footing. Her book went flying and she felt a sudden, sharp twist in her ankle. Hermione braced herself for a painful fall on her face. It was therefore a great surprise when the inevitable crash never happened. Something, or more accurately, someone, had caught her.

“Fred! Oh! I’m so sorry.”

“Finally falling for me, eh Granger?” She could hear the amusement in his voice.

“Did I hurt you?” She asked, not yet able to look up due to the odd angle he had caught her in. She truly was concerned she had crashed into him too hard.

“I’m fine Hermione.” He said as he helped her straighten up. Their faces were mere inches apart. She noticed there was a small smirk on his lips and his blue eyes were twinkling. “What about you? You aren’t normally the clumsy type.”

This was when she began to feel the pain in her ankle again. It was also when she saw that George was there too. She cringed a little. Of all the Weasley’s to see her at a weak point, George would be her last choice. This worry was fleeting however, as it was quickly replaced the realization that neither of the twins were wearing shirts and that they were both out of breath and a little sweaty.

“You know what?” She eventually stammered out, still being gripped by Fred. “I think I may have injured my ankle.”

Fred’s demeanor suddenly became serious. He put a hand firmly around her back and in one smooth motion he swung Hermione’s legs up into his other arm.

“Let’s take a look then.” He turned and began to cradle carry her over to the couch in the Burrows living room. He set her down gently before crouching in front of her and gingerly lifting her injured foot. It was already starting to swell. George had picked up her book and put it on the side table next to her.

“OK here Fred? I’d like to jump in the shower before the morning rush begins.”

“Yeah fine. I got this. You were always shite at this sort of thing anyway.” His voice was jovial, but his face remained fixed on Hermione’s left leg. He began to carefully take off her slipper to better inspect the injury.

George smiled at Hermione and wiggled his eyebrows a little. “Unless you need a chaperone darling. My brother is removing some of your clothing after all.”

Hermione sighed and gave George a small smile. “I don’t think that will be necessary. Fred has always been a gentleman. You’re the one with the reputation!”

“And rightfully so.” George winked, turned and went off to his shower.

In the quiet of his absence Hermione’s eyes shifted back to Fred. If she was a little flustered, she told herself it was because she had never seen him shirtless before. She couldn’t help but scan his body. Right? They were very close after all. She had to look somewhere.

Fred was lean and muscled. His chest and abs were well defined, but not chiselled. His shoulders were quite broad and his extremely freckled arms were much bigger than she would have guessed. Strong enough to lift her with ease at least. Probably from a mix of being an avid quidditch player and from lifting the boxes full of product at his shop.

He had not looked up to her face yet as he was still examining her ankle. His red, medium length hair
was still sweaty and some strands were clinging to his cheeks and his uncharacteristically furrowed brow. His lips were pulled tight as he cast a silent spell to determine the amount of damage done.

She was not used to seeing Fred so solemn. Only once, when George had lost his ear and it was making her uncomfortable. The lack of clothing and closeness weren’t helping either, she noted as well.

“So serious.” Hermione teased.

He smiled and let out a small bark of laughter at her comment. “Funny that the little prefect is teasing me about being serious.” His eyes raised and looked into hers, his mirth at the irony obvious. “Besides,” he continued, looking back down at her ankle, “healing is serious business Granger. Don’t want me to get it wrong do you?”

She had to agree with that. He ran his hand down the length of her ankle and foot. She decided to be grateful that he was being serious actually. Having him make jokes while touching her leg would probably make her even more nervous. She suddenly wished she had shaved more recently, for some reason.

“It’s just a sprain.” He said gently while still holding her leg. He had shifted and now sat on the coffee table in front of her. He was using both hands to keep her ankle secure while it rested softly between his knees. “I’d say you have three choices. You can stay off it for a few days and let it heal itself or you could go to St. Mungo’s and they can fix it right quick.” He paused then, and Hermione pressed him.

“What is the third option?” She asked.

“Well, I could take a crack at it.”

She visibly winced at the word crack.

Fred laughed. “Sorry poor choice of words. I just mean that I’ve healed injuries like this before on George and myself. Pranking can be very dangerous business you know. Would you like me to try?”

Hermione looked at him appraisingly. He seemed confident but then, the twins always did. “What would you do to fix it?” She asked.

“Just a spell, but it needs about five minutes to set in.”

“And you are sure it will work?” She questioned warily.

“Of course!” He said with mock hurt. “By your own admission I am a gentleman! I would never mislead a lady!”

She instantly felt more at ease. “OK if you’re sure then please go ahead. I really don’t fancy being in pain for a week, or leaving the house this morning.”

“As you wish.” He winked at her, told her to relax and carefully lifted his wand. He began chanting something slowly under his breath while his wand moved in circular motions above the offending area. It was over in a few seconds. Hermione looked at him a little puzzled.

“Now what?”

“Now we wait.” He said, finally looking up at her with a grin.
“It still hurts.” She tried not to make it sound like a whine. She was a war hero after all. “Are you sure it worked?”

“It did, trust me! I told you it will take at least five minutes.” He was faking offense again. He stood and carefully placed her foot on the coffee table. Then he took a seat next to her on the couch. He seemed to be sitting very close.

Get a grip Granger! She thought to herself. It’s just Fred. What is wrong with you? The silence between them started to become uncomfortable. To counter it she said the first thing that came to her mind.

“Why aren’t you wearing a shirt?” It was a little more frantic sounding then she meant it to be. She mentally kicked herself. She, Hermione Granger, getting frazzled over a topless Weasley.

Fred gave her a lopsided smile. “Like what you see Granger? I could start walking around like this more often if you like, but I’d have to demand you do the same.”

That brought Hermione back to her normal senses.

“That is not what I meant!” She swatted his arm in a playful way. The tension began to evaporate.

“Oi woman! Fine!” He jumped back a bit and was fully laughing now. “George and I go for runs in the morning. Usually before anyone else is up.”

“Really? You run? I had no idea.” Suddenly his athletic body was making a lot more sense.

“Well we don’t broadcast it. Wood used to make us do laps, you know? Wanted to get us in better shape for Quidditch. After a while we just realized we enjoyed it.” He grinned. “And it helps us think. Some of our best inventions have come to us during a run.”

She liked it when he told her about himself. She was always surprised by how much more depth he had than his outward swagger would have people believe.

“I didn’t realize any Weasley got up this early. It's not 6:30 yet!”

He smiled again and swung an arm around the back of the couch, almost around her shoulders. He laid his head on the back and was looking at the ceiling as he spread his legs apart and into a true lounge next to her. The change in position caused their knees to touch, which she was extremely aware of.

“Actually we usually go out at about 4 am and are back in bed for a few more hours of rest before we start our day. But George had a date last night, so he needed to sleep in a little.” He lifted his head and winked at her, apparently to ensure she understood the innuendo.

She blushed a little but didn't pursue the topic further.

“Well you are just full of surprises.” She smiled and turned to steal a glance at her injured ankle. Apparently sensing her question, he answered.

“It’s almost done. It should be getting warm now?”

“Yes it is!” She looked at him excitedly.

“Then I’d guess you’ve got about a minute left before you’re all set.”

“That’s amazing! You will have to teach me this spell sometime!” He seemed to perk up a bit with
her praise.

“Hey Granger I meant to ask. When you nearly killed me by barreling down the stairs, how did you
know it was me?”

“What do you mean? Of course it was you.” She never understood why people had trouble with this.

“But not even just me or George. You couldn't see who it was. It could have been any of my
brothers so how did you know it was me?”

“Well it was your scent obviously.”

“What?” He said suddenly. He sat up straight and was eyeing her cautiously. She looked up at him
with a confused face, not sure why he seemed so shocked.

“You know. Your smell… You have a distinct scent, just like Ron, but they smell different.” She
suddenly became more aware of how uncomfortable Fred looked. She started to ramble. “I mean
none of your other brothers or Ginny seem to have a distinct scent. Just you and Ron. It’s odd isn’t
it?”

Fred’s eyes grew wider. He was staring at her like she had grown two heads. “I mean you smell like
a grass meadow after it rains and Ron smells like apple cinnamon, but his scent has faded quite
dramatically in the past year or so…”

It was at this point that Fred leapt off the couch so quickly that Hermione bounced from the force of
the cushions adjusting to his weight leaving the space beside her.

“OK well!” He began to stammer, avoiding her eyes, one hand rubbing the back of his neck.“ You
should be all fixed up now. Mum will be down any second and if you still are a little stiff she can
help you.” He started to walk-run out of the living room.

“Fred! What in the…” She was cut off though. He frantically shouted a quick, “OK bye!” and
bounded up the stairs, narrowly missing a collision with his mother. She had just been coming down
to the kitchen to start breakfast as Fred was shooting up the steps two at a time.

“Dear, what's wrong?” She called up after him but he was already gone.

Molly came into the living room and saw Hermione there looking puzzled. “What on earth did you
do to Fred?” She asked quizzically.

“I haven’t the slightest idea...” said Hermione. Her foot was totally mended, but now her head was
spinning.
Her morning progressed quietly. In spite of being perplexed at Fred’s sudden vanishing act, she snuggled under a blanket from the couch and enjoyed the tea Molly had made her. She then happily dove into her book. It was a muggle fantasy called the Pawn of Prophecy. She always loved how muggles invented their own versions of magic and she liked the escape of reading about other people’s adventures. It actually helped her take her mind off of her own trauma.

Nobody had come away from the war unscathed and Hermione always tried to count herself lucky. Her story, albeit famous, was nothing compared to what so many others had suffered. Still, that didn’t stop the occasional nightmares she would have or the sudden paralyzing fear she would suffer if someone tried to restrain her. Even in jest. Ron had pinned her down while tickling her once and it had caused her to suffer a full-blown panic attack in the middle of the Weasleys living room. It was as if she had been placed directly back in Malfoy Manor and was being tortured by Bellatrix Lestrange. It had taken Harry, Mrs. Weasley and a calming draught to finally bring her out of it. She felt a little silly but she didn’t feel judged. Everyone understood. Similar things had happened to many in the family, although they were thankfully becoming less common.

She absently touched the spot on her arm where she had been branded but was suddenly jolted out of her thoughts by Molly calling everyone to breakfast. Most of the others were already there, save for Ginny who was a notoriously late sleeper and to her dismay, Fred.

“Where is your other half dear?” Molly asked, clearly unable to tell who she was addressing as Georges ear was hiding under his hair.

“Fred said he’s not hungry.” He shrugged. “I’ll bring him up some toast after.”

Molly looked concerned but didn’t press it. The twins were 22 after all and didn’t live at the Burrow anymore. Even she wasn't that overbearing. She settled instead for calling up the stairs for Ginny once again. Her daughter was still living at home full time and therefore, had to follow a certain schedule. “Ginerva Weasley if I have to come up those stairs…”

“I’m coming Mum!” Ginny shouted down. Molly seemed satisfied and breakfast began with
enthusiasm. Everyone tucked into yet another wonderful meal by the Weasley matriarch.

Fred was clearly avoiding her. The Burrow wasn’t that big and after breakfast he magically managed to vacate every room shortly after she would enter it. At lunch he sat as far away from her as possible and no matter how hard she tried, she couldn’t catch his eye. No one else seemed to notice. Except maybe George. She saw him raising his eyebrows at Fred every once and while but he refused to acknowledge his twins silent questions either.

She had no idea what she could have done. This morning they were having a very pleasant conversation one second and the next he was acting as if she was a terrifying beast. After lunch she became so frustrated that she simply retreated to her and Ginny’s shared bedroom. She figured at least this way his avoidance wouldn’t bother her and he could stop hiding in his own families home. It was about an hour before dinner before Ginny came into the room.

“Are you not feeling well Hermione?” She asked sounding concerned.

“What? Oh yes. I’m fine.” She said absently. Her eyes didn't leave her book. There was no way for Ginny to know that she had read the same line about ten times already.

“It’s just, well, did something happen between you and Fred? He’s been acting funny around you all day.” Ginny sat on her own bed facing Hermione.

She sighed and was both grateful and wary that Ginny had noticed.

“I don’t rightly know what happened.” She was not sure how to explain it. “This morning we were just sitting having a quiet conversation and then suddenly he looked at me like I was You-Know-Who and bolted.”

Ginny could see her friend was upset. She was far too sensitive for her own good. But having grown up with six brothers, perhaps she wasn’t the best judge of what qualifies as overreactions.

“Well what were you talking about?” She asked. “Something must have set him off because Fred never gets rattled. Hell he was joking minutes after waking up the in hospital when that wall landed on him, remember?”

“I do. He gave us all a scare.” Hermione muttered. She thought of how terrified she was when she saw the wall come down on top of him and how long he had to stay in hospital. It was months before he fully recovered.

“Honestly I don’t know what I could have said though. I had fallen down the stairs and hurt my ankle,” she began explaining, “but he caught me and saved me from more injury. He had healed my leg and was just sitting next to me on the couch. I guess I had called him Fred when I fell into him and he asked how I knew it was him and not one of your other brothers. So I told him. It’s his scent and…” She stopped because she saw Ginny go still and her eyes widened suddenly.

“What? That’s what Fred did!”

“You didn’t!” Ginny’s face was mixed with both humour and horror, as if she didn’t know which one to cave to. “You have never been so crass before! No wonder he seems so shaken! AND SINCE WHEN ARE YOU IN LOVE WITH FRED?”

Hermione could only look at her with complete and utter confusion. “What… love Fred? I am not crass… how… WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!”
It appeared at that point that humour had won over horror because Ginny had now tumbled backward in laughter on to her bed. “You explain this right now!” Demanded Hermione. She began to feel panicked and annoyed at the same time. What was this little twit laughing about? “What did I do?” She pleaded.

Ginny managed to stop laughing and wiped her eyes. She sat up and looked at Hermione with all the sympathy she could muster. The girl was still smiling though. “It’s… it’s not really your fault. Sometimes I forget that you are muggle born and you never got ‘the talk’”.

Hermione was confused. She most certainly had 'the talk' with her parents. She was also no virgin anymore. She had even had a few relationships after Ron. She knew all there was to know about that and she told Ginny so.

“Ew.” Said Ginny, “I really didn’t need to know that about you and Ron.” She shuddered a little and become a bit more serious. “Look, magical folk get a bit more of ‘a talk’ than muggles do. When a wizard falls for to a woman they have a unique scent they put off. But only when that woman is around.”

At that statement Hermione’s face officially drained of all colour. She could feel it. She knew what was coming next.

“The kicker is that only the witch he loves can smell the wizards scent and only if, well, the feeling is mutual.”

Hermione felt as if she was going to vomit. “But that makes no sense! Why would only women be able to smell the scent?”

Ginny shrugged. “They suppose it’s nature’s way of giving women a little more power. The lore is that long ago it wasn’t always easy for magical folk to recognize each other so the scent magic used to be far more common. More innocent. But as wizards began living in larger communities it seems to have fallen off and is now just attached to attraction. Not just a silly crush or lust. It indicates a deeper connection. You know, like um… romantic love.”

Hermione moaned and placed her head in her hands. “How did I not learn about this?” She was completely mortified.

Ginny seemed much more sympathetic now and moved beside her. She put an arm around her shoulder.

“Well it doesn’t always happen. Not all wizards emit a scent and not all witches have the ability to smell it. It’s not common but not smelling the scent doesn’t always mean there isn’t a love connection. Like when witches or wizards fall in love with muggles for instance. There are also weird exceptions. Mum told me that some LGBTQ couples can smell their partners scent. Some squibs can too. All while there are powerful cis witches who can’t. It’s a form of magic. An old and unpredictable one, but magic nonetheless. There’s also, well…” She paused, as if trying to figure out how to explain another point.

“What is it?” Hermione pleaded. By this point desperate to know how well and truly screwed she really was.

“Well it’s considered very… it’s very rude to discuss someone’s scent. Unless you are in a committed relationship, it’s a real faux pas.” She grimaced a little at Hermione’s obvious embarrassment but pressed on. “It’s just that its VERY personal and some witches and wizards don’t even talk about it until after marriage.”
Hermione’s stomach dropped even further. Not only had she and Fred realized that they both fancied each other. REALLY fancied each other. She had also crossed a very real social line. She was absolutely mortified. Even if she hadn’t known any better she still felt terrible for taking what should have been a very special moment away from Fred.

“Oh Merlin.” She muttered “Poor Fred. I told him about Ron’s smell too! Oh gods. I am completely embarrassed. What do I do? It’s Christmas! There’s no escaping this! I can’t just leave and dinner is in an hour.”

Ginny smiled softly. “It’s really not your fault. It isn’t something that is often written in books anyway. Unless someone told you there really is no way you could be expected to know. Besides, Fred knowing what Ron scent is isn’t a big deal. It means nothing to him.” She suddenly paused and glanced at Hermione mischievously. “So… what do they smell like?”

She knew enough by this point to be shocked. “You just told me how personal it is! Do you expect me to just tell you what Ron’s and Fred’s scents are?”

The redhead raised an eyebrow. “Why not? It means nothing to me and I’ll never tell. Do you want to know what Harry smells like? Kind of like a mutual destruction thing if one of us ever tells…” She trailed off.

Hermione was curious. She had to admit. “Well OK, but you go first. What does Harry smell like?”

Ginny went a little shy all of a sudden. “Well it’s hard to describe but you know that smell of a far away wood burning chimney in the winter? When its really cold outside and the smell of smoke has traveled on the wind? He smells like that.” She blushed.

Hermione smiled. It was a good scent for Harry. Homey and brisk and rare.

Ginny immediately rebounded. “OK what about Ron and Fred!”

Hermione started to warm up to this idea. It wasn’t often that she indulged in girl talk but this was quite fun. “Well Ron used to smell like apple cinnamon. Like if your mother was baking a pie and just pulled it fresh from the oven.”

Ginny laughed and rolled her eyes. “Trust Ron’s scent to be food related”.

“And Fred,” Hermione continued, “Fred, smells like a meadow, or like lush green grass after it rains. You know when the air is so fresh scented and a little lighter?” Hermione was a little taken away thinking about it.

Ginny waved her hand in front of Hermione’s face to pull her out of her trance. “That’s a good scent” She giggled, covering her mouth with her hand. “I’d say you’ve got it bad.”

Hermione groaned in frustration. “Yes but what am I supposed to do now? Fred is mortified. George will either be horrible in his teasing or be just as bad as Fred! Like a deer in the headlights!” She gasped, realizing something else. “What about RON! What will happen if he finds out I like Fred? AND YOUR MOTHER! AND…”

“HERMIONE! Snap out of it! Calm down! The world has never ended because two people liked each other. This is not a Greek tragedy.” She had moved across from her again and had both hands on Hermione’s shoulders, trying to get her to breathe. “Ron will be fine. Mum won’t find out unless you want her to know and George wouldn’t tease either you or Fred about something like this. The only people you need to worry about are Fred and yourself.”
Hermione took a deep breath. Ginny was right. She just needed to speak to Fred.

“I think the worst thing about this is you guys didn’t get to enjoy slowly realizing you like each other. You didn’t get to tease him and flirt like most women do when they smell the scent magic. It’s all just suddenly out there.” Ginny sighed. “When did you first start smelling it?”

She thought about it. “You know I can’t really recall when exactly? I suppose it would have been around third year.” She shocked herself, and apparently Ginny with how long ago it was. “He and George were being completely infuriating while pretending to be one another and I simply knew who was who. All because of the scent.”

Hermione hadn’t fully accepted that she truly liked Fred, but apparently it might have been because she always had. She simply didn’t recognize it as love. It was such a comfortable and easy feeling that she had always brushed it off as more of a fondness. She knew she enjoyed his company and he made her laugh. He was also the slightly more serious of the twins, which she liked. There was something more to it though.

He never gave her the joke treats, only real candies. He was always kind to her too. He touched her more than most men and always swung an arm around her when they walked near each other. His teasing never had any real sting. In fact, upon reflection it was downright flirting!

Even today with her ankle he had carried her so that her injury wouldn't get worse. It had been extremely chivalrous.

A pleasant shiver ran down her as she remembered how nice it had felt in his arms. She suddenly chuckled at her own reaction. Maybe she had actually known that she loved him.

“What’s so funny?” Ginny asked curiously.

“It’s just that this morning when I hurt my ankle Fred literally swept me off of my feet. It’s a little serendipitous, don’t you think?” Hermione’s face widened into an actual full smile.

Ginny grinned. “Well then I guess it's your turn now!”

Chapter End Notes

As per usual, comments and tips are always welcome!
Fred and George discuss the new revelations and consequences of Hermione's slip up

Fred had also escaped to his room after lunch. He couldn’t keep running out of every room he was in just because Hermione walked in. It looked odd and he knew George had picked up on it. Maybe Ginny as well. She was more observant than she looked that sister of his, he thought to himself with a scowl.

He was trying to distract himself with a unique potions book called 'Happy, Humorous and Healing: Potions for the Lighter Side'. He read often and this book had intrigued him because he was always looking for anything that might help with their inventions. Right now however, his mind kept drifting back to this morning.

How could she? He thought angrily. She HAD to know she had crossed a line! How could she not? Why didn’t she ever tell me that she fancied me too? Or at least had the decency to flirt like witches are supposed to! He put his book down, rolled over on his stomach and threw his face into his pillow. She must be ashamed, he grumbled to himself. Hermione is perfect. He started to think about her expressive brown eyes, her lightly freckled nose and the way her smooth skin was beautifully juxtaposed by her wild hair. These images only made him more frustrated though. There is no way she would ever actually want to date you anyway. Mutual connection or not, she's probably embarrassed by the knowledge that she likes you. She probably thinks your joke shop is beneath her too.

He knew deep down that Hermione wasn't like that. She had always praised their business acumen and seemed to love their inventions. She would often come by the shop with lunch for them and would let them show her what they were working on. He knew all this, but he was wallowing and he was feeling petty. In fact he was so wrapped up in his thoughts that he didn’t even hear George walk in, shut the door and sit on his own bed.

“Alright there Fred?”

Their common greeting made him jump. He turned his head to see Georges concerned face.

“Time to tell me what’s up brother. You’ve had all day to tell me yourself. I can’t wait anymore. What is wrong with you and Granger?” The corner of his mouth quirked upward involuntarily. “Did
you get a little too hands on while healing her?” He said mockingly. “Did she slap you down figuratively or literally?” He wiggled his eyebrows to drive home his meaning.

Fred groaned loudly as he sat up and twisted towards his brother. His feet hit the floor and his shoulders were slumped. He gripped the edge of his bed on either side and then lowered his head, deciding this would be easier to get out if he wasn't looking into his twin's eye. “If only it was that simple.” He didn’t want to talk about this to anyone but he and George had no secrets. He couldn’t start holding back now.

“Well what is it then? You’ve always been friendly with her, so why are you suddenly acting like she’s a basilisk?”

“Apparently we are more than friends.” He grumbled while still looking anywhere but his twin's face. Georges eyebrows shot right up at that. “More than friends you say. So, did she make a pass at you? That little minx, eh?” The only reason he wasn’t fully laughing yet was because of how pathetic Fred looked. He had put his head in his hands. George suddenly started to talk to him more carefully. “Hey it’s OK mate.” He said, reaching out a hand to rest on his brother’s shoulder. “She’ll forgive you anything! She’s always had a soft spot for you and it’s probably just because of Ron that she’s acting weird. If you really like her I’m sure she’ll come around.”

“You don’t understand. I know we like each other.” He sighed

“Well then what has got you acting like Moaning Myrtle?" He finally looked up at George. “I asked her how she had always been able to tell us apart. You know? How even from our fourth year we could never trick her. She always knew who each of us really was?”

“I always wondered how she did that too. Not even mum could figure it out.” It had always bugged George and it had ruined some of their best thought out pranks.

“Well I figured it out. She could tell by our… scent. Or more accurately, my scent. She even, um, told me… what I smelled like.”

The statement stayed heavy in the room. George went still, finally realizing what was upsetting his brother. No way. Little princess prefect would never do something so unladylike. He couldn’t believe it. He tried to recover quickly, seeing the look of despair on his brother’s face.

“Well don’t just sit there! Say something!”

He didn’t really know what to say, so he went with deflection. “Since fourth year? That’s a long time to be carrying a torch lover boy. How come you never told me? I’m surprised neither of you made a move. What held you back? Was it Ron?”

“Really? That’s what you have to say? She told me what my scent was!”

“So what?” George said with a casual shrug. He had decided to turn this into a win.

“What do you mean, so what? We just went from being friends to having her admit she bloody loves me!”

“Since when do you care so much about tradition and etiquette? It’s not THAT big of a deal.” He waved his hand at his brother, as if banishing any real tension from the conversation. “It’s probably not her fault anyway.” He continued. "She’s a muggle born, who would have told her about this type
of thing? Just because we had Dad to explain it doesn’t mean Hermione did. Who would she go to? Who would have told her? McGonagall?” He shuddered a little at the thought of having ‘the talk’ with a professor. “It’s not something that’s in a lot of books either. At least not the type Granger would read eh?” He finished it off with a wink.

Fred’s shoulders were still slumped. He knew his brother was right. It was a shock and he was disappointed, but it really wasn’t Hermione’s fault.

“I suppose I always just figured it would be a bit more of a natural progression ya know?” If Hermione and I do get together now, it’s something that’s already gone."

George shook his head. “You’re assuming she will even want to date you. I mean she’s clearly barmy. Going for you instead of me? I’m far better looking.”

Fred finally found the ability to smile again, if only a little.

“You didn’t answer me though. Since fourth year? Really? I mean she’s a good looking bird to be sure, but little know-it-all Granger? How come you never told me? I knew about all the other girls.”

He exhaled loudly. “I don’t think I knew it myself back then to be honest. I mean she was always my favourite of all Ron’s friends. The only one with two cents to rub together.” He chuckled. “I used to live for the way she would get all huffy and mad at our jokes and how she would call us out. No one else ever did. She would scold us with her hands on her hips. She was so small and yet so fierce. It was always so… endearing.” His smile faded a little as he continued. “I mean it wasn’t till after the war that I really realized what I actually felt for her. You know she came to visit me a lot in the hospital? She would read to me for hours and hours. Usually some muggle fantasy book, but by that point…”

“She was with Ron.” George finished.

Fred sighed a little. “Exactly. I couldn’t mess with that. Besides, who would ever assume that the prefect princess would ever have feelings for one of us anyway? I mean it’s almost amazing how different we are.”

George shook his head. “I don’t know about that. I think you are selling yourself short. You both love reading right? Well that’s one thing right there. You’re also both brilliant with charms and transfiguration.” Fred looked at him as if he was going to interrupt and disagree, but he pressed on. “I’m serious! You guys have way more in common than you think! You both love magical creatures as well and hell you both even have the same favourite dessert! Cherry tarts if I’m not mistaken.”

Fred rolled his eyes at that point “Cherry tarts? Really? That’s what you consider soul mate material? She’s so straight edge! Such a goody…”

George interrupted sternly, his hand in the air. “You’re daft if you believe that. Think about it. In all our time at Hogwarts, the Potter pals were the only other students who ever even came close to us in detention time and rule breaking. She’s as much of a troublemaker as you are. It’s just that you are both… motivated differently.” He winked again, very proud of his reasoning. “Besides, if I recall, you always liked the quiet girls who were secretly rebels. You know the ones who were always proper in public but happy to sneak off with you and…”

Fred threw a pillow at his brother, but began to feel a bit better about the whole thing. Maybe he did have an honest shot with Granger. He wasn’t optimistic yet, but the glimmer of hope was there.

“OK then Georgie, you’re so smart! What do I do now? I have no idea how to approach Hermione. I
probably need to apologize and she still might have no clue what got me upset. How can I…”

He was suddenly cut off by a note that had appeared from the crack under their door. It had been charmed to float around the room and finally settled by hovering directly in front of Fred’s face.

He reached for it but George was quicker and managed to grab it before Fred could react. He read it silently while pushing Fred away with one hand as they wrestled for the note on Georges bed. As they struggled George started laughing. “I don’t think you need to worry too much Freddie! It’s from Hermione! It says…”

“Give me that! He shouted, finally managing to snatch it away from George. He looked down and sure enough Hermione’s small practiced cursive sprang off the page.

-Fred,

I am sorry that I have made you uncomfortable. I learned some things today and would like to speak to you in person if you’re not too upset with me.

You don’t have to say anything, but if you could meet me outside by the broom shed at 11 perhaps we can talk things over.

If you will be there please let me know by sitting next to me at dinner? I’ll take that as a yes. I hope you will come out tonight, but if you need more time I understand.

-Hermione

Fred could only guess how goofy he looked after reading the letter. George was grinning from ear to ear as well. “I guess I’ve got a rendezvous with Granger this evening.” He smirked.

Chapter End Notes

Chapter three of the first thing I have ever written is done! I Hope you liked it, more fluff to come!
Ginny, Molly and George Have Thoughts

Chapter Summary

The evening of December twenty-third has been entertaining for some.

Chapter Notes

So, I fixed this chapter. Faster than I thought I would be able to. I was able to think about it on my way home yesterday, and I think its a vast improvement. I really like writing from multiple POV's as it give me a chance to pull in more relationships, and add more depth to the story.
Anyway, I hope you enjoy!

As ever leave any tips or comments. I'm new at this so anything helps.

The characters and circumstances in the chapter below do not belong to me.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Hermione and Ginny were the first ones down to dinner that evening. Ginny intentionally took a seat away from her friend and she could tell Hermione was nervous about what Fred’s answer would be. She watched as she sat herself at the end of the table just like Ginny had told her to do. Her brothers tended to fight for the middle seats so that they could better reach the food.

She watched as her brothers started to trickle into the dining area to sit at the heavily laden table. Charlie had taken the seat directly to her right and Hermione’s left, which meant there was now only one seat left if Fred wanted to make his move. Even if Charlie was her favourite sibling, at this moment she would happily kick him if she thought it would help the situation.

Ginny started to curse Fred under her breath. Surely if he had any interest in meeting Hermione tonight he would have come down earlier. When helping her friend plan, she never for a second thought that Fred would be so obtuse. What was he playing at? Regardless of any resentment he may have about the way things had transpired between them, Hermione was far too good for him. He should be begging her to be with him at this point. She decided that if Fred was going to be such a prat she would be having a very stern conversation with him after dinner. He may be older, but none of her brothers were a match for her in hexes.

She saw George come down the steps alone, which only hardened her resolve to bat-bogey Fred into oblivion. He gave Hermione a weak shrug and moved to take the other seat that was open on the left beside Ginny. She looked crushed. The red-head felt her temperature rising along with her temper. She seriously considered going up the stairs and screaming at her dolt of a brother right this minute. It was a true testament of her love for Hermione that she stayed put. Even if it would make her feel better Hermione would be too embarrassed to function if Ginny did any such thing.

Eventually the only ones they were waiting on were Percy and Fred. Her stomach dropped as Percy finally emerged from the living room and reached out his hand to pull out the seat to Hermione’s
right. Ginny watched as she gave Percy a weak smile as he began to sit down, but suddenly everyone at the table jumped. There was the distinct loud ‘crack’ of someone apparating and to the entire family’s surprise, Fred appeared in the seat directly to Hermione’s right.

“Dammit Percy get off of me!” Fred shouted. His sudden appearance at her side made her bushy haired friend smile widely. The rest of the Weasleys started to howl with laughter at the sight of Percy awkwardly perched on Fred’s lap. All except Molly of course, who began scolding Fred severely for his lack of manners.

“Completely unacceptable at the dinner table! You do not apparate into your seat!” She shrieked. “I raised you better than that Fred!”

Fred had the decency to at least pretend to look ashamed. Charlie guffawed beside Hermione and George was doubled over in laughter. Percy rose from Fred’s lap and was grumbling as he moved over to the other free seat at the table between Fred and his mother. Even Arthur had a slight smile on his face, but he was very careful to make sure his wife didn’t see it. Ginny was giggling as well. She suddenly felt bad for all the mean things she had imagined doing to her brother. She should have known he had planned to make an entrance. He was one of the twins after all.

Her mother’s shouts eventually turned to frustrated mumbling under her breath and they all started to place food on their plates. Hermione was silently celebrating and when she looked up, Ginny gave her a wink.

“Hey Granger! You gonna hog the potatoes all night?” Fred asked loudly. Hermione smiled a little and passed him the bowl.

If the plan they had come up with to help Hermione to charm Fred worked, she was sure her friend would have a lot to tell her tomorrow. Hermione had originally balked at her suggestion, but Ginny explained her reasons. If she really wanted to sweep Fred off his feet there was only one option. Eventually Hermione had decided she was right and agreed on what had to be done.

She looked over at Fred who was now giving Hermione one of his wonderfully charming smiles. She grinned as she saw her friend trying to act casual by turning away to talk to Charlie. Nope. Ginny couldn’t wait for tomorrow morning.

Something was up. She could feel it.

Molly loved her children dearly but was at a loss as to why they always assumed they could pull one over on her. She had raised seven of them after all. Even if it had just been Fred and George she would have more than enough sense to know that there was something going on in her house.

Dinner had ended at eight and Hermione had stayed back to help Molly with the clean up. She loved the tiny sharp witch like a daughter and having known her for over ten years, she could tell that she was excited about something. Hermione was almost vibrating with nerves. Molly had never seen her like this.

She was pretty certain she knew what it meant. She had seen the odd looks between her, the twins and Ginny all night. The four of them definitely had something on the go. It wasn’t a prank though. That was too unlikely. The twins would never be so obvious. They were too practiced at their art. By simple deduction therefore, Molly believed she had figured out the true cause of the electricity that had taken over the Burrow during dinner. She wouldn’t say anything though. It wasn’t her place. She would never meddle. No, not her…
“Everything alright with you dear?” She asked Hermione as she passed her another plate to dry. The girl took the soaking dish but didn’t answer. She was clearly lost in thought. So Molly spoke again.

“Hermione?” She lightly touched the younger witch’s shoulder and it caused her to give a little jump.

“Oh! I’m sorry Molly! Did you say something?”

“Nothing important dear. I just asked if you were feeling alright. You seem a little distracted.” She hid the smile that was aching to cross her face from Hermione. “Perhaps you met someone at work? It’s been a while since you brought anyone round you know.”

The young witch’s demeanor changed so fast it was hard for Molly not to laugh. She quite obviously was forcing herself to sound relaxed when she answered her question.

“Oh no, nothing like that! Um, I was just thinking about a project at work that I didn’t get to complete before the holidays. You know I hate to leave things unfinished.” She explained with a casual wave that Molly supposed was an attempt by the girl to seem nonchalant.

“Well if you do start seeing someone please let us know once you are ready? Won’t you dear?” She smirked into the sink and she thought she could practically feel Hermione’s cheeks getting redder.

“You are already family you know and you have a good head on your shoulders. Arthur and I would approve of anyone you were to date.”

She wasn’t sure if Hermione had gotten the hint, but it didn’t really matter. The only thing Molly wanted was for Hermione to know that she would always be a Weasley in her eyes. She dried her hands and pulled her into a firm one armed side hug. With the conversation over, Molly went back to washing the dishes and Hermione continued drying. Both of them standing in companionable silence, thinking about the days events.

Fred may have appeared calm, but his brother knew better. In fact he was far jumpier than he had been this morning. George had to admit it was hilarious to see him struggle to act so casual at dinner. He may have fooled everyone else, but George had never seen the poor bloke so nervous.

The two of them had always ‘done well’ for themselves in the love department. They never struggled for dates. They were lucky because women, and sometimes men, seemed to have a thing for their sharp wit, devilishly handsome looks and well let’s just say that the fact that they were twins seemed to be intriguing to a certain type of person. They had always turned down such inquiries however. It was the one thing Fred and George would never share. They were twins, but they never wanted to be THAT close.

Besides, they both liked completely different things in their partners. George liked the incorrigible
flirts. The cheeky ones with a quick laugh and bravado to spare. He didn’t limit himself to women either. In his opinion anyone who could spark his interest was fair game. Fred on the other hand had always leaned more towards the proper, reserved and clever ones.

He wouldn’t admit it to anyone but his twin, but Fred was actually the smarter one. He was extremely intelligent, which is why he and Hermione weren’t really that much of a shock to George. His brother would never date anyone who couldn’t keep up with him mentally and she was really the only witch he knew that could give Fred a run for his money.

Everyone thought that he and Fred were exactly alike, but they certainly had their differences. Those subtle quirks had only become far more apparent after the war. At least, they had to George. He personally began to see everything as even more of a joke than it had been before. He was ecstatic to have made it out with his whole family alive. He had been terrified at how injured Fred had been. He really had almost lost him. George still shuddered whenever he thought about it. The fact that his brother survived seemed to validate his belief that laughter was the best medicine. But Fred? Well…

The wall falling on top of him had changed him. Coming that close to death had made him more pensive, a bit quieter. He hadn’t lost his spark or quick wit, but it had been over three years and he still had nightmares. He would also start to panic if he was put in a small space. No one but George had seemed to notice these things, but that was probably because they spent the most time together.

He really hoped he and Granger would get on together. She was hurting too. He could see it. He was more perceptive than people gave him credit for. He noticed how she would tense up when suddenly grabbed. Even hugs sometimes made her face grimace. He never initiated any physical contact with her anymore and had even stopped doing any pranks that were loud or could startle her. She never seemed to mind when Fred would touch her though, now that he thought about it.

He watched his brother while smiling to himself as Fred got ready for his late night meeting. It was currently 10:30 and he was frantically trying to find exactly the right outfit and checking his reflection nervously in the mirror. For the first time in almost three years George was optimistic that maybe his brother could actually start to get back to his old self.

Chapter End Notes

I love when people are nervous before a date. You can be the toughest person in the world but still not immune to butterflies.
Tips and comments are welcome!
Cheers!
Fred looked at his muggle watch and 11:10 flashed across its face. “Bugger.” He swore to himself. He’d spent too long getting ready. He hoped Hermione hadn’t given up on him. He crept down the steps and silently towards the back door. Everyone else was in their rooms, but not necessarily asleep. Not that he couldn’t come and go as he pleased, he just didn’t want to have to explain himself. Luckily he had years and years of practice sneaking through the Burrow and knew exactly where to step to avoid making any noise.

Once he made it outside he started the walk down the hill towards the broom shed. About half way there he realized he was walking so fast he was practically running. He forced himself to slow down. Late or not, he could hardly be charming if he was out of breath. As he got closer to their meeting point he saw a little blue light emanating from inside the shed. He panicked a little, hoping that Hermione didn’t mean for them to chat in there. He wasn’t sure he could handle the small dark space. Even if she was hoping for a romp it would be a challenge for him.

When he came round the side he saw that the door was open and Hermione was inspecting the brooms. Apparently she was unaware that he had made it.

“Granger…?” He said. Not loud, but not quietly either.

She jumped and turned around, clutching her chest. “You scared me.”

They looked at each other for a second. It was as if they were evaluating one another and trying to see what the other was thinking. It was Fred who broke the silence.

“Are you surprised to see me?” He leaned casually against the outside of the shed as she emerged. “Were you expecting someone else perhaps?” He smiled and that’s when Hermione finally found her voice. The words started tumbling out and she apparently couldn’t stop.

“Fred! Of course! I’m so glad you came! Look Ginny explained… Things to me. I am so sorry! I had never learned! Please forgive me. I never meant to…”
“Hermione...” He tried to cut in.

“…to take something like that from you, or to you know, tell you that I...”

“Hermione! It’s OK!” He finally managed to silence her and although he forgave her for the faux pas, he still wasn’t keen on discussing it with her either. Not here, not yet. He just wanted her to know that he forgave her.

“I’m so sorry.” She said as looked him in the eye and reached for his hand. She squeezed it firmly and then immediately released it. He was a little taken aback by the innocence of the gesture. He clenched his hand. He was suddenly upset that her touch had left him so quickly.

_Get a grip Weasley._ He scolded himself.

As she looked at his face she definitely saw a little blush. It gave her the push she needed for the next part of her plan. “I want to make it up to you.” She said with a determined voice.

“Is that right?’ Fred’s teasing voice returning to him. “Is that why you wanted to meet in a broom cupboard?” He gave her a lopsided grin and looked at her suggestively, but he was secretly hoping that wasn’t her plan.

Now it was her turn to blush. “What? No!” But there was levity in her voice and her eyes. It made Fred smile for real. “I just thought that, well since I made you so uncomfortable perhaps if you did the same to me we could at least be even.”

Fred was surprised by this. “I don’t want to make you uncomfortable Hermione. It was an honest mistake.”

“I know, but I feel like we should do something to make ourselves even before we go... further.” She looked down at her feet and Fred was glad, because he was sure the wide smile that had developed on his face was ridiculous. He was extremely happy at her admission that there may be more to their relationship.

“Alright then. If you insist, what did you have in mind?” He was going to make another quip about the broom cupboard, but she looked very fragile all a sudden. She was still looking down at her feet. “Hey, look at me.” He put his hand to her chin and guided her eyes to his. “What do you need to make this right?” He asked gently.

A resolved look flashed across her face. “Fly with me.” She said firmly.

“What?” His hand dropping from her jaw in shock. “You hate flying.”

“I know but, I trust you and you love it so I thought maybe you would like it.”

Obviously he would be over the moon to take Hermione flying. He’d fantasized about it a few times and tonight would be perfect. The sky was bright and it was chilly, but not freezing. Even the stars seemed shinier than normal in the winter sky.

“Are you sure?” He asked again. He still did not understand why she wanted to do this, but he not willing to argue with her either. If this is what she said she wanted to do, he would happily comply.

She nodded heartily and Fred was internally ecstatic. “Alright then Milady! As you wish!” He went into a flamboyant bow and he heard her giggle. “Why don’t you grab us two brooms from the shed?”
“Oh I don’t want my own broom.” She said shyly. Fred’s heart skipped again. He had hoped she would say that. He swallowed. Loudly. “Um, brilliant.” His boldness faltering. “Alright then, one broom it is.”

She smiled brightly at him and Fred realized she was actually looking a little smug! Why you sneaky little witch... He mused to himself.

She turned, popped into the shed and quickly emerged with one of the newer cleansweeps. “So, how do you do this? Do I have to sit in front or behind you?” He found his smirk again. It was very cute how quickly she became serious about flying, wanting to do it correctly. Typical Granger.

“That’s up to you really.” He explained. “If you want to learn to fly you should sit in front of me so you can take control and guide the broom when you feel confident enough.” He could see her visibly pale at that thought however, and continued with a chuckle. “But if you are just along for the ride and want a better grip? You better get on the back little bird.”

She nodded, thankfully not seeming to mind the little nickname he had given her. He mounted the broom and she sat side saddle behind him. His breath hitched a little as she wrapped her arms around him, but if she noticed she didn’t say anything. He could feel her press her cheek tightly to his back and his chest fluttered a little more.

“Ready ‘Mione?” He asked, keeping his voice as level as possible.

“Ready Freddie” She chuckled nervously.

“OK then 3, 2, 1…” He cautiously kicked off the ground and started flying upward in a large, slow spiral. She was a famously terrified flyer and he didn’t want to spook or upset her. He stopped the ascent when they reached the treetops. She had squeezed him a bit tighter when they had reached that height so he took that as a hint that he had gone high enough. He moved one hand from the broom handle to gently cover her small hands, which were tightly interwoven around his navel. They were simply hovering and not moving. He could feel her relax a little when he had started holding her hands in his.

“It’s OK little bird.” He said softly, “Open your eyes.” He had instinctively known they had been shut. “I would never let you fall.” He felt her relax a little more. “I’m going it keep flying now, but we won’t go any higher OK?”

“OK.” She said clearly. He started moving forward slowly. Soon they were flying off and away from the Burrow.

Hermione seemed startled. “Where are we going?”

“It’s a surprise.” He smiled to himself and he continued his flight over the forest.

Neither Fred or Hermione noticed the silent figure watching them from an upper window in the Weasley home. The light in the room had purposely been kept off so as not to cast a shadow. She saw them disappear over the trees and then settled into bed next to her sleeping husband, smiling to herself as she drifted off to sleep.

Chapter End Notes
Flying sounds so romantic doesn't it? And I always thought Fred would give Hermione a nickname.

Hope you liked it.
As per usual, Comments and tips are very much appreciated!
The Point of Scent Magic

Chapter Summary

Fred and Hermione discuss their predicament and make some decisions on their relationship.

Chapter Notes

Last Chapter!
Well, for now. As mentioned before I am going to turn it into as series, so if you have liked my story, keep an eye out for more! The premise I will be working off of is described in the end notes.

If you've stuck with it this far I hope you have enjoyed it.
If you didn't like it I appreciate your dedication, as I know you could have just stopped reading at any time.
Regardless, any tips you have on making it better are always welcome!

Thanks for reading!

As previously mentioned, the characters and world of Harry Potter are not mine in any way. Mad props to J.K.

They had only been flying for about ten minutes, but it seemed like a lifetime to Hermione. Despite her initial fear, Fred did make her feel safe. He flew very steadily and not too fast. She was even starting to enjoy it a little. The world was quiet and the stars were bright. It had snowed this morning but it hadn't stuck. The normal brown of winter seemed beautiful while covered in the dark blues and purples of the night. The moon shone through gnarly bare trees, making for a uniquely stunning landscape to fly above.

Fred was very pleased at this pleasant turn of events. If you'd told him yesterday he'd enjoying a romantic flight through the sky with Hermione this evening, he would have thought you had gone round the twist.

“We are going to land soon.” Fred said quietly. “Hold on. OK?”

Hermione tightened her grip and lay her cheek against Fred’s back once again, but kept her eyes open. She could finally see where they were headed. He started descending by slowly circling downwards towards the top of what appeared to be an active lighthouse. The top was flat with a railing around the edge, but it wasn’t large. Maybe big enough for 5 people to sit comfortably. They landed softly and Hermione was instantly grateful to have her feet on something solid again. Fred smiled at her as she dismounted. She walked over to the railing and looked out over the at winter sea.

Fred took the opportunity to magically lock the trap door leading up to their little nest and cast a
muffliato charm just to ensure the muggle lighthouse keeper wouldn’t hear them. He then transfigured the broom into a large flannel blanket, spread it across the floor and sat down. He leaned against the metal railing and looked at Hermione’s back as she continued taking in the landscape.

When Hermione finally looked back at Fred he was sitting with his knees propped up and his arms were resting on them casually. He had clearly been watching her. She realized he’d been enjoying a different type of view than she had. Their eyes met and they both smirked. She moved to where he sat and took a spot next to him. It was funny. She had just been clinging to him, but now she felt so nervous and they were barely touching.

She played with her hands and shivered a little in the wind. Fred apparently noticed because he cast a silent warming charm on them both and snuck an arm slowly around her shoulder, careful not to move too fast and spook her. When she didn’t stiffen or pull away he gently began rubbing her arm in an apparent attempt to warm her up some more. The contact made her anxious, but to her surprise, not panicked as she had been with other men. He was so gentle it kind of took her breath away and she once again felt the need to fill the silence between them.

“So.” She started cautiously. “You come here often?” She relaxed a little when she saw a smile creep across his lips.

He gave a little laugh, “Nice line Granger, and yes actually.” He said while pulling her a little closer. “We used to use this place sometimes when we were broadcasting Potterwatch.” She straightened a bit at hearing that. She always wondered where they were hidden during their show. He sighed and continued.

“I kept coming here after the war because, well sometimes the Burrow, my office, or my flat are too small. If feel too cooped up and need to get out, I come here and it helps me relax. It’s so open here. I can see in all directions. It’s kind of like my own little castle. Like nothing can get to me up here.”

She was flattered that he was being so open with her. She knew he didn’t like to talk about how he had been affected by the war. He played things a little closer to the chest. She started to nod in understanding.

“I know what you mean. I’m OK in small spaces, but if someone gets in my personal space to quickly or grabs me unexpectedly, I kind of become unable to react. The whole world goes wobbly on me.”

At that, he seemed to start to withdraw his arm and she cursed silently. He thought she was talking about him. She prevented him from pulling away by scooting over closer and resting her head on her chest. She could tell it worked because he had stopped pulling away. She kept talking.

“I really am sorry Fred. I never meant to make things weird between us. I really didn’t know about…”

She couldn’t seem to finish the sentence. “You didn’t know about scent magic.” He finished for her. He sighed a little heavily. “I suppose Ginny filled you in and gave you ’the talk’”.

She knew he wasn’t smiling, but there was nothing accusatory in his voice either. “She did.” Hermione almost whispered.

He pulled her closer and kissed the top of her head, causing her to melt a little. Then he pulled his arm from around her turned to look at her in the eyes.

“’Mione, it was an honest mistake. It’s done. Besides, you’ve already made it up to me by letting me
fly with you. It was perfect.” He looked at her and smiled. “If you want to discuss it with me anymore though, you and I will have to do it the old fashioned way.”

He left the unspoken question floating in the air waiting for her to respond. She turned her head away from him and sat silently for a minute, as if taking his words in carefully. He started hoping that he had read the signs right and that she actually wanted this too. But the silence continued to stretch and just as he decided he was going to say something off hand or some quirky comment to relieve the tension...

“OK.”

He gave a noticeable jump at that. They both sat there evaluating each other like they had earlier. “You mean you really want to date me?” He asked again. He wanted to be completely sure she understood what he was asking of her.

“Yes I’m sure. I think I’d like that a lot. But Fred.” She started a little nervously and he waited for her to finish, “Just. I can’t. I mean, I know you and George date a lot of people. It’s not that I care about your past, or that I don’t have any experience myself. It’s just I don’t think I can date you if you are going to have other girlfriends…” She stopped suddenly when Fred let out a bark-like laugh.

“Hermione, I’m not George. I may not correct people if they get us mixed up or if they assume we are both the same,” he smiled widely, “but I’m a one witch man. I’ve never dated more than one woman at a time and I am not nearly as ‘experienced’ as you think. More than you I’m sure, but not as much as you’re probably imagining.”

“Really?” She said. “You’d want to date just me?”

“Really.” He replied. “Hermione, I love you. That's the whole point of scent magic. You will never have to question how I feel about you. Why would I want to be with anyone else?” He pulled her tight and kissed the top of her head again.

They both leaned back to look back at the ocean. Fred once again had an arm around her shoulders while hers was around his waist with her head against his chest.

"So, I smell like a meadow? Really Granger?"

She blushed, but he couldn't see it. "Or like fresh cut grass after it rains. Would you have prefered something else?"

She heard a low chuckle in his chest. "Nah, I mean it's better than apple cinnamon."

"Fred! Don't you dare tell Ron!"

"What if he doesn't get what I mean or..."

"Fred..."

He sighed dramatically. "Yes my love."

They were both smiling as she snuggled closer.

They stayed like that a while. When they pulled apart they sat back and cuddled together holding hands and watching the ocean. Neither felt the need to keep talking. The silence was finally comfortable between them for once.
After a while Hermione gave a great yawn. Wordlessly Fred stood up, grabbed her hand and helped lift her off the blanket. He then transformed it back into a broom and lifted the enchantments before mounting and having her climb back on behind him. He slowly started his ascent again, still careful not to scare Hermione.

“OK back there?”

She smiled and she responded with a very clear, “Yes, Fred.”

In fact the trip back was the first time she ever really enjoyed flying and it was actually over too quickly for her liking. As they softly touched down beside the broom shed again she was a little upset about having to let him go.

As if reading her mind, after he dismounted he tossed the broom to the ground and stood directly in front of her. He was just a breath away. He gently wrapped an arm around her waist and brought them flush together. His eyes only left hers when she saw them flutter to her lips and once she heard the hitch in his breath she couldn’t take it anymore. She jumped forward, threw her arms around his shoulders and kissed him soundly. He welcomed it gladly and wrapped his other arm around her waist to pull her closer still. They were completely intertwined, both kissing hungrily. Their lips and tongues were testing each other, as if trying to memorize every inch. She sighed into him and the kiss finally ended. Their faces pulled apart and as he took a step back he grabbed her hand.

“How Hera, Hermione.” He mumbled as he bent down to retrieve the broom. "Warn a guy next time, would ya?” He tossed the cleansweep into the shed and shut the door while never letting go of her.

They walked back to the Burrow together. Neither was saying much and both were a little red in the face. When they reached the back door he placed both hands on her cheeks and pulled her in again for another, softer kiss.

“You go in first love.” He said once he pulled away. “It’s easier for one person at a time to sneak in. Best to take it in shifts.”

“OK. She murmured. “Fred? Can we, um, not tell anyone but Ginny and George for now? Like until after the holidays? I just don’t want that much attention and…”

Fred was a little disappointed, but he understood. He was ready to tell everyone that they were together. He would wear a sign board and shout the news down Diagon Alley if she’d let him. But he did actually want to talk to Ron first. He also knew that she would get the fifth degree much worse than he would. Not to mention what would happen when this inevitably hit the press.

“Whatever you need little bird.” He bent down and kissed her nose. “I’ll see you tomorrow. Get in there now. It’s late.”

She hugged him quickly, pulled back and smiled. He gave her a wink and she turned to disappear through the back door of the Burrow, but just before she did, she stopped and looked at him once more.

"Fred..." She whispered up at him.

"Yeah Hermione?"

"I love you too." And before he could say anything else, she was gone.

He let out a long sigh, put his hands in his pockets and leaned his back against the outside wall of his
home. He was going to have to work extremely hard for the rest of the holidays to keep his joy under wraps. Not to mention his hands to himself. Yeah, he thought, but it's going to be fun sneaking around. In fact he was already thinking of ways to corner her over the next few days. He gave her a few minutes and then quietly slipped in the back door himself and crept up the stairs to bed.

Chapter End Notes

Cheers friends!
I look forward to seeing what kind of feedback this story gets. I'll probably keep writing fanfics either way, as this has been really fun and I already have like 10 more ideas for different F/H stories and other pairings.

Thanks again for reading!

End Notes

I have made two decisions
1. I've decided I really like writing and may even post a Dramione fic I have in my brain... we will see how this fic comes together.
2. For the other parts in the series, Right now I am thinking a part 2 (Dec 24- Sight) and part 3 (Dec 25- Taste), (Dec 26- Touch) -This one may get mature. Heads Up- Each will probably have about 6 chapters, and possibly an epilogue that takes place on New Years. Many more characters will be introduced and interact. Maaaybe Harry and Ron will make it back for Christmas as well... We shall see.

Thanks for the comments so far, and any tips you have about rating, tags or formatting are always welcome! I am not being modest when I say I am a Noob.
Cheers all!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!