Ron's warm welcome

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Ron's warm welcome

by NextGenFangirl

Summary

It is right after the Yule ball. Ron has made a fool of himself, and reckons there is no way Hermione will ever be his friend again.
What happens when he is sent twenty years into the future?
Will he come to terms with meeting his future children?

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It was a bit chilly for his liking. The stone tower always had been. But Ron did think his duvet had been slightly thicker than this. His hands clenched the material before he pushed himself up on his elbows, his eyelids fluttering open. The muted winter sun shone straight into his eyes. He had forgotten to close his bloody curtains. Through the window, the Durmstrang ship was nowhere to be seen. Morning fog drifted across the lake. Harry had left his curtains wide open. Ron picked up his uniform from the floor next to the bedside. Harry was probably trying to crack open that egg. Quickly he sniffed the armpits… That would do. Ron knew Harry hadn't been sleeping much. Ever since the Yule Ball he'd been obsessing over that stupid egg. And now… There was only a day until the task.

Ron had his own troubles muddling his brain since the ball, but he pushed those down.

The only bed still occupied was Seamus'. A deep snore echoed through the room. Ron's stomach growled. Breakfast first. Then he could find Harry. He pulled on his shoes, tying the laces as neatly as he could. They pressed uncomfortably against his feet. They were Percy's old ones and a size too small.

From the top of the stairs the common room looked rather full. He spotted Ginny just as she exited the portrait hole. If he ran he could catch up with her.

His feet dragged across the worn stone steps. Hermione was probably at breakfast. His steps quickened. Except Hermione probably didn't want to see him. Ron clutched the railing. She hadn't even wanted to play a game of chess with him when Harry was at Quidditch practice.

He stopped at the bottom of the stairs. There was Harry, nailing some parchment to the pegboard.

Ron moved closer. He could just barely make out the word *Quidditch* on the parchment.

Then Harry turned around.

"I'm not helping you with try-outs."

Where was his scar? The boy was too preoccupied to see Ron's stunned expression.

"Wha—,"

The boy looked up. Brown eyes met Ron's. "You gotta make it on your own merit. If any of the others see me coaching you before the try-outs…" The boy dragged his hands through a mop of black hair.

"But—," Ron stared intently.

"Hugo, stop asking. Al or Rose can probably do it."

Before Ron could even react, the boy disappeared through the portrait hole, leaving Ron with more questions than he could answer.

Ron rushed after him. He could hear the Fat Lady as he moved through the corridor. “Long time since I’ve seen–”

The boy was just a few steps ahead of him. Was it Malfoy? Nobody had noticed when Ron and Harry sneaked into the Slytherin common rooms concealed by Polyjuice. But there could be no fooling Ron. That was not Harry.

His concealment must be wearing off soon, but the bloke was in no rush to find a hiding spot. He led Ron straight to the Great Hall, down through the shortcut on the fifth floor. Ron stopped as his stomach growled. When he looked up the boy had disappeared into the hall.

Ron pushed his way into the Great Hall. The smell of freshly baked bread and bacon hit him immediately. His eyes swept the room. Nearly every chair was occupied, yet he couldn’t spot anyone familiar. He turned towards the Slytherin table. Malfoy was there. Ron frowned. Then who was impersonating Harry?

His eyes narrowed at Malfoy, edging towards him. There was no way he wasn’t involved in this.

Dainty hands caught his sleeve and pulled him back. The same red hair. Freckles all over her face.

“Why are you protecting him?” Ron stopped to look at his sister. Had she always been that tall?

“Honestly. You’re the only backwards one.” She tugged him towards the Gryffindor table. She took a seat and piled food onto two plates.

“Are you gonna stand there like an idiot, or are you going to have breakfast, Hugo?”

Hugo?

Ron stared at her. She was already dividing the last hash browns between two plates as though nothing unusual had happened.

That wasn’t Ginny.

His stomach growled and he reluctantly sat down next to the imposter.

“Fred, you pass me the beans,” he said instinctually to the boy across from him. As he spread his beans onto the toast he paused for a moment. Was that really Fred? His eyes studied him. It was strange seeing the twins separated. Ron had always prided himself on being able to tell them apart. George had a small freckle below his left eye and Fred’s ear bore a scar from when he had attempted to capture a falcon. This boy had neither.

Could Fred and George be behind it? Some sort of product they were testing out. A cruel joke at Ron’s expense.

Surely he couldn’t still be asleep? He pinched his arm and let out a small yelp. He rubbed the spot he had just pinched.

“What in Merlin, are you an idiot,” the girl turned to him. “Actually don’t answer that, I know you are.”

Ron glared at his not-sister.

“Hugo probably hit his head after that duel yesterday,” the boy said.

“Duel?” Ron questioned.

“See,” he pointed at Ron with a chicken leg. “Got some brain-damage for sure.”

Somehow this boy acted just like Fred. Normal. He wasn’t standing up for Malfoy, simply making fun of Ron. Perhaps he could trust him.

Ron took a bite of his toast.

* * *

“Wait,” Ron went running after the boy as he exited the Great Hall.

“What do you want Hugo.”

There it was again. Hugo. He dismissed it. “I need your help,”

The boy strode out towards the Hogwarts grounds. “I’m not going to help you with the Quidditch try-outs,”

Ron stopped in his tracks. “Why does everyone keep saying that,” Ron muttered. He looked after the boy, but he had scurried off towards the Quidditch pitch. The trees all bore leaves. Some yellow. Some red. Where would Hermione be? She could definitely solve this. The library. He turned on his heel, sprinting at full force towards the grand library.

Once inside his eyes scanned the shelves. She would be at her usual table.

He spotted her bushy hair. The light shone on it through the windows, making it almost look a deep shade of auburn.

For a moment, relief flooded through him.

Finally.

Hermione would know what was happening.

“’Mione—”

“Go away, Hugo.”

The words were harsh. Her eyes met his. It wasn’t her. Ron was trapped in some nightmare.

He searched her face for any clue. Her cheeks and the bridge of her nose were dotted with freckles. Her eyes were the same shade as his own. The tie around her neck. Blue.

Her eyes softened just as he turned to leave.

“Wait, I’m sorry Hugo.” She reached her hand towards him. For a moment, he couldn’t move.

“I’m sorry for yelling earlier… Just,” she dropped his hand and looked down at the page of her book. “You just shouldn’t have sent that letter. You had no right.” She looked defeated at him before sighing loudly. “Can you just give me some space,”

She gave him a weak smile. There was recognition in her eyes, but Ron didn’t know this girl.

“Where–, where’s Harry,”

She rolled her eyes. “I don’t know Hugo. Why don’t you try the DADA classroom.”

She returned to her work and Ron left her. His feet stumbling out of the library.

He didn’t knock as he entered the classroom. For all Ron knew Harry had successfully cracked the egg and released some curse on Hogwarts.

“Harry,” his words rang out into the empty classroom. He shuffled his feet towards the back of the room.

Harry’s wand laid at the edge of the cathedra. Ron picked it up and studied the grain. That was definitely Harry’s wand. The door to professor Moody’s office opened. A man stepped out. The dark room concealed his features.

“Hugo, did you need something.”

Ron stared at him. He wore round glasses. His hair speckled with grey hairs. The faded lightening scar on his forehead.

“Harry…,” Ron let out a gasp.

The wand dropped to the floor, small sparks emitting from it.

“Careful with that,” Harry rushed down the stairs and bent down to pick up his wand. “You know, at the end of the war my wand broke in two and I had to—”

Harry looked up.

His eyes widening.

“Ron?”

Ron looked at him. The words felt foreign coming out of his mouth. Harry wasn’t… “What is happening?”

Harry pulled off his glasses, wiping them clean with the edge of his sweater. “I have no idea.” He put the glasses back.

“Did you... age yourself?” Ron asked.

Harry blinked.

“What?”

“The egg. Did you open it? Did it do this?”

A laugh escaped Harry’s mouth–

“Dad, have you seen Hugo?” The girl from earlier burst through the door.

Harry froze. “Not now Lily,” he tried to interrupt.

Ron looked at Harry.

Then back at the girl.

Dad?

“…I thought I saw him near the kitchens, but—”

Lily stopped.

Her eyes moved from Harry to Ron.

“Oh. There you are.” She grabbed a hold of his elbow and dragged him with her. “I need your help with the divination homework.”

Ron caught only a glimpse of Harry’s weathered face as Lily dragged him through the door.

“Lily, wait–”

“…Lily–Lily let me go,” Ron struggled out of her grip. “I need to talk to Harry,”

Her eyes narrowed at him. “So you can spill more secrets that aren’t yours,”

Ron flustered. “–What no,”

She gripped his hand tightly, leading him to the grand staircase. “We’ll sit outside, I’ve had enough of this stuffy castle.”

She didn’t let go of him until they were situated outside on the hill overlooking the Black Lake. The fog had dispersed, but the Durmstrang ship was nowhere to be seen. By the banks of the water he spotted two figures.

“Right,” she pulled out a large crystal ball, “I need to read someones’ future,” She sat down and crossed her legs.

Beside them was a large white slab of marble.

“What’s–,”

“Sit down, will you,” Lily tugged at his robes.

He focused on the crystal ball as her hands glided across it. Mist swirled around inside. He caught a flash of Hermione’s smile. He looked up at Lily. Her brows furrowed in concentration. George was bleeding from the side of his head.

“The thing is useless,” Lily huffed. “I can’t see anything.”

A pink baby held in arms dusted with light, swirling scars. His head was spinning. His hand reached for the cold white marble, steading himself as he got to his feet.

“Hugo, where are you going.”

Ron put both hands on the smooth surface. He breathed in deeply. His eyes were adjusting and the letters screamed out to him. *Albus Dumbledore, 1881 – 1997.*

He whipped his head around, meeting Lily’s.

“Are you okay, Hugo.”

No poison laced her breath, only concern.

“I–I can’t…,”

She turned away from him. “You don’t have to help me if you don’t want to.” Lightly she rubbed the crystal ball.

“I can’t breathe.”

His vision blurred once more and he stumbled to the ground, falling hard onto his lower back.

“Help!” Lily called out.

Ron only registered footsteps ruffling in the grass. A light touch of a hand. The glow of a wand. He regained his vision. The girl from the library had her hands on his face. Her hair was a much sharper shade of red than he had realised. The shape of her face so familiar. His eyes a glimpse at the figure beside her. Malfoy.

“Malfoy,” he spit out.

The girl got up from beside him. “Are you serious, Hugo.”

Malfoy looked at him with tired eyes. “Looks like your face survived,” Malfoy observed. “I didn’t mean to send you flying into that trophy cabinet,”

He stretched out a hand for Ron to grab. Ron refused it.

“I’m glad to see you’ve recovered.” Malfoy awkwardly dropped his hand. Ron watched him as he ran up to the girl, resting an arm over her shoulder.

“You know, your sister is right. You are being ridiculous,” Lily said as she pulled Ron to his feet.

His sister? He brushed off the dirt on his trousers. “What did I do wrong?”

Lily rolled her eyes. “Gee. I don’t know,” She covered the crystal ball with a small linen cloth. “Duelling her boyfriend, telling Uncle–”

“–Her boyfriend? He is a Malfoy,” he uttered in horror.

“Scorpius. And yes, he’s a Malfoy. And yes, Rose is dating him. Get with the times.”

Ron stared at Lily, silent.

Lily sighed.

“Just go talk to Rose, Hugo.”

* * *

He found the two of them sitting on the Grand Staircase.

The image of Hermione flashed before his eyes.

This was where he had found her just weeks ago. Crying. Because of him.

Rose wasn’t crying. She looked tired. Her voice was low as she spoke to Malfoy.

Ron cleared his throat.

“Can I, uh—” He shuffled his feet. “Talk to you?”

Malfoy and Rose shared a look. Silently he got up and walked towards the upper floors. Ron sat down, taking the spot he had just occupied.

“I’m not the one you need to apologise to.”

Ron’s eyebrows shot up. “No…” he uttered in confusion.

“Scorpius’ the one you hexed.”

“I hexed Malfoy–,”

“–Scorpius,” She sighed at Ron.

“He probably deserved it,” Ron muttered under his breath.

Rose stood up. “Why did you come here Hugo.”

She began to climb the stairs.

“No wait, sorry,” He leaned his whole body towards her, barely touching the edge of her robes. Rose let out a deep breath before taking her seat next to him once more.

“You are just as stubborn as dad.” She bumped him with her shoulder.

“About what?”

“Everything.” She rolled her eyes. “The Cannons losing. Mum at the Yule Ball. Uncle Percy and that ridiculous Christmas pudding. Pick one.”

Rose smiled tiredly.

He recognised that smile.

Hermione had worn it before. That tired, fond exasperation she got whenever he and Harry were being impossible.

“I’m… sorry,” He answered sheepishly.

“It doesn’t change anything. You still sent that letter to dad,” she crossed her arms.

“Maybe he won’t be mad,” Ron questioned.

“He despises Draco Malfoy, Hugo. Mum has forgiven him for what happened at Malfoy Manor. Dad would never accept a Weasley dating a Malfoy. He’ll probably hex Scorp so he gulps up slugs.”

He shuddered and clenched his eyes. The memory of slugs pouring from his mouth in second year twisted his stomach.

Rose frowned.

“Are you alright?” She rested a hand lightly on his shoulder.

His head was pounding. Why had he been dragged into this. A Weasley dating a Malfoy and Rose’s father. Perhaps Harry could help him, he hadn’t had the chance to ask when Lily, his daughter…

Harry had a daughter.

Lily.

She looked just like Ginny.

Lily had called Harry ‘Dad’.

Hugo.

Rose was Hugo’s sister.

Ron looked at Rose.

The freckles.

The blue eyes.

Hermione's smile.

His breath caught.

Only the freckles and blue eyes were his.

Everything else belonged to Hermione.

"Dad would never accept a Weasley dating a Malfoy," the words echoed in his mind.

Me.

"Hugo–," Rose called out gently, "Do you need the hospital wing." Her brows furrowed and she instinctively bit her lip.

Ron stumbled to his feet. "I–I just need some air."

"Hugo, wait."

He let his feet carry him.

"I'm not..."

Once outside in the main courtyard, he doubled over as bile burned its way up his throat.

He felt arms holding his shoulders tightly.

"I'll get him to the hospital wing Rose." Ron turned to see Harry, steading him.

* * *

"Harry, what the hell is going on?" Ron paced the Defence Against the Dark Arts classroom.

Harry rubbed a hand across his face.

"It seems," he said slowly, "that somehow you've travelled twenty years into the future."

Ron stopped.

"Yeah," he muttered. "I'd worked that part out."

He collapsed into a chair, covering his face with his hands.

"What do I do now?"

Harry sat beside him. "I've already sent an owl to Hermione."

Ron looked up. “Hermione?”

“If anyone can figure out how to get you home, it’s her.”

Harry adjusted his glasses.

“How much do you know?”

Ron let out a humourless laugh. “Enough.”

Harry waited.

“Rose.” Ron swallowed. “Hugo.”

Harry’s expression softened. Ron sighed. When would this day end?

“And Malfoy,” Ron added bitterly.

Harry let out a quiet laugh.

“You really haven’t changed.”

Ron turned away from Harry in frustration.

Harry got up and searched for something in at his desk.

“At lot has changed since our time in school,” Harry continued. “And Scorpius is a good kid. I nearly fainted when Albus said he had made friends with Draco Malfoy’s kid.”

Harry opened a drawer and rifled through a stack of parchment before pulling out a battered photograph.

He looked at it for a moment.

Then handed it to Ron.

It was the Burrow.

“Albus brought him home one Christmas.”

His gaze darted across the moving figures.

Ginny.

George—or perhaps Fred. They moved too quickly to tell.

Harry.

Hermione.

Himself.

“Why are you showing me this,” Ron looked up at Harry.

Harry tapped three figures near the edge of the photograph.

One with untidy black hair.

One with pale blond hair.

One with red curls.

They were laughing so hard they kept drifting out of the frame, arms slung around one another’s shoulders.

Ron knew them immediately.

Somehow, despite everything...

They looked exactly as inseparable as he, Harry and Hermione once had.

An owl tapped lightly on Harry’s window. It wasn’t Hedwig, Ron noted.

“Hold on,” Harry strode across the office.

Ron fiddled with the photograph. He let his eyes wander to Hermione. Her glee as she pressed her lips to his cheek. His smile faltered. It could’t be true.

Harry returned with a small necklace in his hands.

“Hermione got you a time turner,” He lifted up the necklace revealing a small golden hourglass. “They’re a bit experimental, but assuming that the older you is still here. Well it’s our best shot.”

Ron grabbed a hold of it. Turning it slowly in his palm. He looked up at Harry.

“Can I– can I get to say goodbye.”

Harry paused. He scratched the back of his head.

“Dumbledore would’ve killed me,” he muttered.

A grin tugged at the corner of his mouth.

“Then again... the damage is already done.”

* * *

She was waiting outside the Gryffindor portrait.

At the sound of approaching footsteps, her head whipped around.

“Hugo!”

She hurried towards him, wrapping her arms around him before he could say a word.

Ron froze.

She held on for only a second before pulling back.

“I was so worried. I couldn’t find you in the hospital wing. Did Madam Pomfrey figure out __”

“Rose,” he said quietly, steadying himself.

“I just had to come check on you,” she ruffled his hair, “are you sure you’re doing alright.”

“Harry helped me.” He shuffled his feet.

“Alright, I need to get back to the Ravenclaw tower, I’ve got rounds later.” She smiled at him warmly.

“Rose,” Ron stopped her in her tracks. “About the letter–,”

“–its fine Hugo. I’ll handle dad.” She brushed him off.

“Yes, well… no it isn’t.” He rubbed his temples. “I’m sorry I overreacted. I wasn’t there for you.”

His gaze fell to the floor. Hermione, crying on the Grand Staircase, flashed through his mind.

“I didn’t trust you to make your own decisions.”

Rose wrapped an arm around him. “You’re a pretty good brother. And dad deserves to know, everyone else have been walking on eggshells around him since May,” she said.

Ron smiled sadly.

“I think he might surprise you.”

Her laugh echoed through the hallway. “Right, and the Chudley Cannons are winning the cup.”

She smiled at him one last time before disappearing toward the Ravenclaw Tower.

Ron watched until she vanished around the corner.

He stared at the Fat Lady. He didn’t actually know the password for the Gryffindor common room.

“Are you just gonna stand there and watch me,” she looked rather annoyed at him.

“Yeah, I don’t have the password,” he grinned.

A few moments later a boy looking suspicious similar to Harry appeared. “Are you just gonna wander outside, Hugo”

“I forgot the password,” he said sheepishly.

The boy let him in. Once inside Ron sat down in the comfy armchair by the fire.

“Hey, Hugo. Let’s play a round after I beat James,” Fred waved him over to the wizarding chessboard.

Hugo’s cousins came and went throughout the evening. They watched in awe as Ron beat them all in multiple rounds of chess.

Louis, Bill’s son, nearly cursed him when he lost.

“You’re almost as good as Uncle Ron,” Molly Weasley narrowed her eyes before she too lost against him.

Ron spent the evening laughing with his future nieces and nephews, they all none the wiser.

* * *

An owl tapped lightly at the window. A young, lanky boy unlatched the window and grabbed a crisp letter. His eyes skimmed the front. Tired feet dragged him to one of the four-poster beds. In one swift movement he pulled the curtains apart, startling the sleeping boy awake.

“This is for you,” he muttered, tossing the letter onto Hugo Weasley’s bed.

Hugo ripped open the letter, his eyes scanning every word.

He threw it aside, hurriedly dressing before grabbing it and running out of the dormitory.

He leapt down the stairs, into the deserted corridors and straight to the Great Hall.

“Rose,” he yelled out.

Rose looked up from her breakfast. “What—?”

His breath catching up to him, the letter still firmly in his grip. “I swear I didn’t send the letter.” He thrust the parchment into her hands. “It’s from Dad.”

Rose desperately grabbed the letter and carefully read it. Her hand slowly covering her mouth. “How on…”

Dear Hugo and Rose,

It’s about Scorpius.

Hugo, I hope you learn a lesson about interfering in other people’s lives. Though, unfortunately, I can’t blame you too much. You got that from me.

Rosie,
When I learned about you and Scorpius... well, I didn't understand it at first. A Weasley and a Malfoy. It was difficult to imagine.

But I have known for a very, very long time.

You and your brother are the two most important people in my life. There is nothing you could ever do that would make me stop loving you.

Rosie,
I know you probably think I won't understand.
Maybe because I didn't at first.

A Weasley and a Malfoy isn't exactly something I imagined when I was younger.

(Your mother would like me to point out that I was an idiot when I was younger. She is, unfortunately, right.)

But I've known Scorpius for years now. I've seen the way he looks at you. I've seen the way you look at him.

My job isn't to choose who makes you happy.
If Scorpius makes you happy, then I am happy too.

I trust you to make your own decisions.

You are my daughter. Nothing changes that.
Not a Malfoy name. Not a stupid family rivalry. Nothing.

Love,
Dad

P.S. I have a good feeling about the Cannons this year. This might finally be our year.

Rose lowered the letter. "He knew," she whispered.

Hugo looked at her. "Yeah," he said. "He did."

For a moment neither of them spoke.

"–Oi. Hugo,"

He whipped is head around. His cousin Lily had piled a plate of food for him at the Gryffindor table.

"Where were you last night, after your fall–,"

"–fall," Hugo looked at his cousin with confusion.

"You said uncle Harry helped you yesterday, after you puked." Rose folded the letter.

“Puked...” He furrowed his brow. “I didn’t see any of you yesterday,” Hugo said slowly. “I slept in, then I had detention until midnight. I spent the entire evening polishing trophies.”

He sat down, shovelling food into his mouth. Rose looked at him with stunned eyes. Her gaze dropped back to the letter in her hand. The pieces slowly fell into place.

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