Cabin in the Woods

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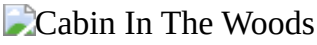
by tyrannic_puppy

Summary

Harry, Hermione and Ron find themselves a warm place to stay the night during the Horcrux Hunt. And realise that sometimes, there are books you should not read.
WARNING!: May be considered Ron!Bash.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes



"C'mon, Harry," Ron moaned as Hermione finished pulling down the tent, "let me do it. Just this once."

Harry looked at his best friend of seven years. He couldn't believe he was behaving like a child about this. But of the three of them, he was the only one to have been splinched while apparating. He glanced over to his other best friend and saw her smiling to herself over the argument.

"Fine, Ron. You can do it."

Ron beamed as he hurriedly threw the rest of their things into the tiny bag and bounced like a house elf as he waited for the other two to be ready to depart.

He managed to keep his silence as he waited, not wanting to give either of them a reason to regret the decision. But at long last, the Trio were packed and ready to go.

Hermione waved her wand, dropping the enchantments, as Ron grabbed both her and Harry by the arm, and with a loud crack, they disappeared.

Well, all but a pair of bright red, bushy eyebrows that were slowly falling through the air to land on the empty ground.

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Upon touching down, the Trio got right to their usual procedure, checking to ensure no one had heard their arrival, before heading off to find an area to set up camp. In the densely wooded area they now found themselves, this proved to be a much harder thing than usual. It was with great relief to all three when, after nearly an hour of walking from touching down, they finally found a break in the trees.

A slender pathway broke through the trees, leading to a small cabin at the far end. It looked completely abandoned as the ground surrounding it was thick with dead leaves and small bushes. Even the cabin itself looked half reclaimed by the woods around it.

Hermione was about to suggest they keep moving when an angry growl broke the silence. A very familiar growl that caused her to sigh audibly. Ron was hungry.

His eyes pleaded with her to let him check for food inside. As prepared as she had been upon setting out on this journey, they were beginning to run thin on supplies. She just nodded as she pulled out her wand once more and crept toward the front door with Ron as Harry stepped around the side.

Hunger was a powerful force, especially Ron's, but they never let that stop them from being thorough when approaching anywhere that might have other people present. Not since their departure from the Ministry.

The small cabin certainly looked deserted on the inside. A thick layer of dust clung to almost every surface. Ron immediately headed for the kitchen as Hermione cast a dozen detection spells. There was nobody home.

Harry appeared at the far end of the short hallway and gave her a silent thumbs-up. He had found nothing out back. Relaxing a little, she decided to see if there was anything else useful they needed while Ron raided the kitchen. Though she would check the food before they departed. Ron was a little broad in his tastes when it came to food.

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Their exploration of the house only yielded some basic medical supplies in the bathroom and a few empty bedrooms. The only well-stocked part of the house appeared to be the kitchen. Ron belched loudly at his two friends as he finally finished stuffing down the piles of food he had prepared.

"I'm stuffed," he cooed softly, "why don't we crash here tonight and carry on tomorrow?"

"Just because there is no one here right now, Ron, doesn't mean someone won't come by later."

"C'mon, Hermione. This place is abandoned. No one is coming by." He pleaded.

"Fine."

She stormed back to the open lounge area and perched on the dusty couch. Flicking a locking charm at the door as she sat. It would not do to be unprepared. As the trio settled into the different chairs, snuggling down for the evening, Hermione found a book spread open on the table in front of them.

"Trust you," Ron scoffed, "to find a book in an abandoned shack."

She just glared at him darkly and began reading the open pages.

"I don't understand. This book is nothing but gibberish. Listen." She set the book on the table and leaned forward, reading the text aloud.

"Khandar estrada khandos thrus indactu nosfrandus khandar dematos khandar. Tantir-ah-mis-trobeen-ha-zar-ta. Tantir-man-ov-mis-hazen-sober. Kanda."

The cabin creaked noisily as the wind outside picked up fiercely, and a horrid howl came from somewhere deep in the woods.

"Maybe this is one book we should leave alone, Hermione," Harry called, looking at the now vibrating front door.

Hermione opened her mouth to contradict him when the door flew inwards, and a man in a tattered blue shirt stepped inside. He eyed the three of them before recognising the book Hermione was still bent over.

"NO! You must not read from the book!" He shouted at them.

"Why?" Hermione questioned, "No harm ever came from reading a book." Clearly forgetting about all the trouble caused by Tom Riddle's diary. "Besides, it's just a bunch of gibberish."

The man took a step forward and opened his mouth to respond when a bunch of vines wrapped themselves around his body from head to toe, crushing his figure as they pulled him back toward the door. Ron screeched loudly, and Hermione yelled as Harry leapt to his feet. Believing the vines to be Devil's Snare, he cast a powerful light spell at them, but it had no effect as the limp body of the man was wrenched out the door with a horrid crunching sound. Harry quickly flicked his wand again, swung the door closed once more, locking it with the strongest charm he knew.

They all silently decided to abandon the front room and retreat into the bedroom opposite the kitchen. Harry looked at Hermione, silently asking her what in the hell was going on as Ron looked around the room. He spotted a small crib in the centre of the floor and stepped over to it curiously.

As he stepped to its side, he saw a small baby inside staring up at him intently, a fearful look in its eyes. "Hey guys, look at this," he called over his shoulder, reaching into the crib to calm the wee child.

Harry glanced over at Ron as he reached down. His red-headed friend shouted in pain and yanked his body back, but now there was a deformed creature of some kind latched onto his hand. It appeared to have sunk long, sharp teeth into his hand and was holding on only by those. Harry tried to grab the small monster as Ron flailed about, trying to throw it loose.

Hermione flicked her wand, casting *relashio*, and the teeth came loose, but the child scrambled up Ron's arm until it reached his face and spat a dark red fluid into his face as he continued to wail at his friends to get it off.

The tiny form grabbed deep handfuls of Ron's hair and appeared to be riding him around the room as he hopped about in pain. Harry was having a lot of trouble getting close to his friend without being hit by his flailing arms. But he, at last, managed to latch onto the monster and pulled it away, taking a few clumps of Ron's hair with it.

Ron glared at the figure in Harry's hands, which now looked once more like a small, innocent baby. The three friends were momentarily shocked at the change. Ron recovered first, grabbing the smiling baby from Harry and rushing to the bedroom window. He tossed it with all his might through the glass as Harry and Hermione shouted at him.

"Bloody menace. It frigging bit me!"

Harry repaired the window as Hermione checked on Ron's wounds, fishing for potions in her beaded bag. Just as her hand closed on them, she was knocked over as the chest of drawers

by the door charged her from behind, sending her sprawling on the floor. The trio was stunned as the furniture in the room began to shift and snarl at them.

"C'mon, Ron," Harry yelled as he grabbed Hermione's hand, pulling her up from the floor and blasting the door open, running through it as he dodged the crazed furniture.

Ron whipped out his wand and began blasting away at the furniture, sending lumps of wood and shards of metal flying throughout the room. Harry and Hermione weren't faring much better back in the living room as all the furniture in there sought to crush and break them. Finally, they all succeeded in reducing them all to small enough chunks that they could do no more damage. The trio stood panting heavily in the large room as they recovered from the exertion.

"Ron? What are you doing, mate?" Harry asked as he saw Ron's wand pointed at his face.

Ron looked down at his wounded hand in surprise, unsure what was going on as a red light built at the tip of his wand. "Look out!" He shouted as the light burst forth, missing Harry by mere inches.

"Ronald! That's not funny." Hermione scolded as she batted aside another spell.

"I'm not doing it!" He called back as his wand pointed at his own feet, and with a flash, his feet began to jig.

It was as though the arm had a mind of its own, firing off curses and spells wildly. Flashes of light filled the room as the three friends blocked and redirected the spells. There was nowhere to hide with all the furniture now in pieces. Ron shouted and cursed loudly as his wand fired off all over the room. Harry and Hermione were forced to duel the crazed appendage.

A green glow began to build on Ron's wand as he turned on Hermione, and Harry saw red. He dashed forward and punched Ron in the wrist, knocking the spell wide, where it blasted open the window, letting in the biting wind and lashing rain that was falling outside. Having had enough of this fight, Harry cast a strong disarming hex at Ron at point-blank range, sending him spilling across the wide room as he caught his friend's wand.

Panting heavily, Harry checked on Hermione as he tried to catch his breath. They'd barely had a moment to breathe since Hermione read that blasted book, which was nowhere to be seen in the destroyed room. As the pair stood and looked over at Ron, they saw his hand clutching at his throat. The hand was strangling him, and his face had turned a very unnatural shade of purple.

Harry rushed to his side, struggling to pull the crazed digits from Ron's throat as Hermione again tried to magic something off her lanky friend. None of the spells had any effect, and Ron's eyes rolled back in his head as a horrid creaking left his constricted windpipe.

The pair froze in horror as they looked down on the now deceased form of their former best friend. Tears formed in their eyes as the hand released its grip at last and began reaching towards them, grotesquely stretching Ron's arm. Harry and Hermione backed away from the

grasping fingers, huddled together on the floor as the elements poured in through the window behind them.

A moment of clarity burst through Harry's mind as the hand began to forcefully drag Ron's dead body in their direction. He was a wizard. "Hold tight, Hermione." And with a loud crack, the pair vanished from the room.

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They landed heavily in an empty meadow, the noise of the unholy storm they had just departed leaving a ringing in their ears as they were sprawled apart by the impact with the ground. Harry couldn't move as grief clutched at his insides. He had lost his best friend. There had been nothing he could do to stop it. Just like with the…

Oh fuck…

"Hermione…"

Harry crawled over to where his remaining friend was huddled, crying on the grass. He wrapped her in his arms and let his tears fall as he drew some small comfort from her presence.

"Please tell me that Ron wasn't wearing the locket today."

Hermione's body froze as his words sank in. The Horcrux was still in that hellish cabin. And neither she nor Harry was aware enough of its location to apparate back there. One of Voldemort's Horcruxes was basically lost to the world. How were they going to vanquish him with a remaining soul anchor? Renewed tears burst forth as all of this registered in her mind.

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Red eyes opened. Casting their gaze around the room, they took in the destroyed state of the room as the body felt a strange tugging on its right arm. He rolled roughly over, squashing the nuisance under his chest as he stood and glanced at the mirror on the wall.

He was as tall as he last remembered, and a lot less deformed. The magic that had extended his life had adversely affected his physical body, but that was gone now. His vibrant red eyes did clash ferociously with this body's garish red hair. And was he missing his eyebrows?

He gasped angrily as his own right hand slapped his face roughly as he stood there. Glaring down at the rudely gesturing body part, he found himself confused. What was going on with this strange new body he found himself in?

The hand clenched and rocketed up, catching him in the jaw before he could move.

Lord Voldemort was furious. Reborn in this subpar form, and now his right hand was assaulting him. This would not stand.

Glancing back at the mirror, his reflection grinned widely. Soon, he would once again show the world what it meant to fear.

End Notes

A/N: Just a silly plot bunny that I had, thanks to today being Friday the 13th. Though I do get a giggle out of the idea of Lord Voldemort running around trying to take over while his right-hand keeps screwing with him.

Obviously inspired by The Evil Dead series.

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