

Smashwords Edition of Happily Ever After, by Naomi Kramer. Published 2010.

The Boring (aka Legal) Bits

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Happily Ever After

“There’s no such thing as happily ever after,” stated Kyle, placing his flat white back on the table.

“Too right,” agreed Merryl, playing with her vanilla-hazelnut-double-shot-latte.

They stared sadly at each other over the cafe table.

“This SUCKS!” Kyle exclaimed angrily. “Where’s our life of bliss, dammit? What the hell happened to us? We were so – damn – happy!”

“Cursed?” suggested Merryl, wearily.

Kyle pondered.

“Maybe the whole thing was a farce all along?” he suggested.

Merryl shrugged.

“Darling - I’m going to the pub... I’ll be back once I’m drunk enough,” she said, pushing away her coffee and standing up.

Kyle nodded and stared into his empty mug as she left.

Merryl and Kyle had well and truly lost their happily ever after. When they married, they had been in paradise. Every day was sweet and full of laughter. Now – just two years later – they were heartily sick of each other. Why? That was what they couldn’t understand. The omens had all been right. Their butt-tattoos matched perfectly. They were most definitely each other’s The One. OK, so the fairy godmother had been a bit overenthusiastic, but they would have managed to get together eventually anyway. So – why weren’t they still deliriously happy?

Kyle sighed, and pondered, and eventually decided that if things were really in the horrible state that he thought they were in, he might as well risk making it worse and call in the royal councillors. After all, a royal divorce caused chaos in the fantasy world, and he really didn’t want a bunch of fairies and imps mad at him. An insane godmother was bad enough.

A paparazzo snuck in the window and took a photo of Kyle, blinding half of the customers. Kyle had closed his eyes automatically as soon as he’d heard the window open. Life in the public spotlight did that to you. He sighed, and knew the headline would read: “Heartbroken Kyle Cries While Princess Parties.” Life had been easier as a nobody. No one had cared what he and Lachlan got up to when they were both broke, pothead uni students. Now half the bloody nation knew when either he or Merryl got a snuffle – and received full-colour glossy photos of the used tissues.

Kyle picked up the pieces of paper napkin he hadn’t noticed himself shredding, dumped them in the coffee cup, and shoved his chair backwards. It stopped suddenly, and someone said, “OOF!”. Alarmed, he turned to apologise – and the man raised a camera and took a photo. Paparazzo again.

Kyle smiled sweetly, carefully avoided apologising, and walked out.

He walked in the door of his and Merryl's apartment and instantly felt better. Three inch thick walls, reflective glass (bulletproof, too) windows. Safe. From strangers, anyhow, and Merryl wasn't due back anytime soon. A bottle of wine and a Bruce Willis movie, and surely he'd be back to feeling like himself.

As he watched mindless violence and got slightly drunk, Kyle thought about the royal councillors. Much as he cringed at the idea of sharing their deepest troubles with a bunch of paid assistants, he had to do something. And besides, most of the world knew their issues anyhow, what would a few more people hurt? He nodded his head, picked up the phone and scheduled an appointment before he could wimp out.

Kyle and Merryl stood in the middle of a circle of royal councillors – all of them strangers to Kyle, none of them more than acquaintances to Merryl. Minor royalty didn't often require such services.

“Oh, you poor dears!” clucked an elderly woman wearing a Chanel suit and ridiculously dangly earrings. “I think they need some magic back in their marriage! What do you think, Charles?”

“Oh, definitely,” Charles nodded sagely. “The Whooptiwowser?”

“Perfect!” beamed a middle-aged woman with green hair and a spike through her nose. “I’ll get right on it!”

The royal councillors bowed to the couple and disappeared.

Kyle and Merryl looked at each other nervously. They hadn't foreseen spells being used... and on them, what's more.

“What,” demanded Kyle, “would be wrong with an all-expenses-paid holiday in Bali?”

Merryl sighed.

“I could do with a beach and a suntan, too,” she said, “Oh well – if it goes wrong, remember this is all *your* fault, OK? What the hell's a Whooptiwowser, though?”

Kyle shrugged.

“No idea! Might as well give it a shot, though, love,” he said. “How much worse can things really get?”

A sparkle filled the air, and confetti rained down over them. Strangely, it vanished when it hit the floor. They closed their eyes and grimaced.

Kyle opened his eyes. “I’m scared to open up to you because you’ll be disgusted if you see the real me!”

Merryl opened her eyes and stared at him, horrified. “I always thought you’d decided I was a superficial bitch!”

Kyle grabbed Merryl and snogged her deeply. “Would I do that to a superficial bitch?” he demanded.

“Ummm...”

He snogged her again.

“But let’s be realistic,” she murmured a couple of hours later, nestling her head more comfortably on his naked shoulder, “this is all very nice, but it hasn’t fixed everything up, has it?”

Kyle sighed.

“Nah... but it was nice to pretend,” he groaned.

“Wussbag!” she teased.

Sparkles of fairy dust filled the air around them.

“OH lordy,” Kyle moaned, rolling his eyes, “again with the Whooptiwhatsit?”

Merryl giggled.

“I think we need to be fairer to each other,” Kyle whispered to Merryl, “I mean, I whinge about having to take the garbage troll outside to regurgitate, but you do most of the mundane housework.”

“Yeah...” agreed Merryl pensively, “but you work hard too, at... what’s that thing you do?”

“The Pizza Palace, love. But then, I only work there to prove to myself that I’m not an upper class twit with impotency problems.”

“But...”

“Yeah, but I’m not an upper class twit!” Kyle said, and laughed.

Merryl looked at him, eyebrows raised.

“We’re idiots,” he explained, “I mean, we’re more scared of each other than anything else... and you’d think we’d be nice to each other, wouldn’t you?”

Merryl grimaced. “I don’t do nice so well!”

Kyle grabbed her in a bear hug. “But you’re adorable when you’re being sarcastic!”

Merryl laughed.

“So...” she said, “Truce?”

“Nuh-uh,” Kyle demurred, shaking his head, “Surrender or nothing, baby. Come to papa!”

A snort issued from the direction of the ceiling.

“HEY!!” they yelled in concert.

“Who the hell is that and what the hell do you think you’re doing?” screamed Merryl, furious.

“Oh, lighten up,” twinkled Aunt Helgifna as she unfaded into view, “You think it was fun listening to all that? Sickening! And the sex! Oh lordy indeed! Couldn’t you stick a pillow over her face or something? Anyway, that’s beside the point, dearies. You’ve passed Marriage Crisis Talks 101! Happy loving, you smoochy honeys!”

Kyle blanched.

Merryl sighed.

“We need to keep being honest, you know,” she said, “that much truth in a short burst is dangerous!”

“So’s that mad aunt of yours, perving on us like that!”

She burst into giggles. “Oh god, put a pillow over my face!”

Kyle smirked.

“So, happily ever after, now?” he asked facetiously.

“Nah – but maybe being stuck isn’t so bad.” she said.

A month later, things had improved. Somehow, the nutty magic sharing had cleared the air between Kyle and Merryl, and they could enjoy being married again. Not blissful, but nowhere near miserable either. Kyle was feeling cautiously optimistic.

“Errr...” said Merryl. She was sitting on their sofa, staring at something in her hand, looking dismayed and confused.

“Huh?” queried Kyle, “what’s up love?”

“This is.” she said glumly, and handed him a small plastic stick.

Kyle looked puzzled.

“It’s a pregnancy test! Geez!” she explained, exasperated. “And it’s positive!”

“Ewww, you peed on this?” Kyle dropped it, revulsed.

Merryl rolled her eyes as she followed him into the bathroom.

“Do you think maybe you missed the point?” she asked.

“Huh?” he said distractedly, scrubbing his hands.

“I’m pregnant, you git!” she yelled in his face.

The soap went flying and he stared at her, stunned.

“Pregnant? But, umm, the... pills? Didn’t you take the pills?”

TINKLE! Ping!

“Hello, beautiful people!” said Aunt Helgifna with a cheerful smile, perched delicately on the edge of the bath and waving her trademark purple fluffy wand.

Merryl put two and two together.

“Auntie, you didn’t...?”

“Of course I did, darlings!” Aunt Helgifna sang merrily, “it’s about time you two produced an heir, you know... the kingdom’s getting worried!”

“You made me get pregnant?” asked Merryl, her voice getting louder with every word.

“Yes! Goodness, you sound as though I wasn’t doing you two a *special* favour!” Aunt Helgifna said, still cheerily but looking a little perturbed.

“Come OFF it!” screamed Merryl sending Kyle backing slowly out of the bathroom. “We’re nobody royalty, we don’t need an heir!”

Aunt Helgifna burst into tears. Merryl flung the pregnancy test at her and stomped out of the bathroom, slamming the door.

Kyle sighed. He’d sort of liked the idea of a baby.

**** The end... for now****

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