

Ending Maker: Fate Wizardry

Chapter Intro:

*This fic's premise is inspired by the webtoon titled **Ending Maker**/엔딩메이커 by **Chwiryong** and their illustrator **chyan**. Please check them out.*

Story Starts

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Ch 8.1 - Pardon my French

The cabin door slid shut behind them with a satisfying click, and the noise of the platform—trolleys clattering, parents shouting, owls screeching in their cages—dropped to a muffled hum.

Fleur was the first to surrender. She collapsed onto the bench whilst Harry and Hermione wrestled their carry-on luggage into the overhead compartment, and by the time they turned around, she'd already claimed the window seat with the boneless grace of a woman who had simply stopped caring about dignity.

Harry and Hermione dropped onto the bench beside her. Hermione leaned into Harry's side, which pushed his shoulder against Fleur's, the three of them compressing together like dominoes falling in slow motion. Hermione caught his eye and winked—she'd been teasing him extra this past few days as she was able to monopolise Fleur's time.

The sigh came out of all three at the same time. Unprompted. Perfectly synchronised.

The cabin held the sound for a beat, and then Hermione snorted.

"That was—"

"—tiring," Harry finished.

"I was going to say 'catastrophically amusing,' but yours works." She nudged his ribs with her elbow. "At least I didn't have a French ICW judge and his bodyguards glaring at me the entire time."

Fleur closed her eyes and let her head rest against the window. Harry's shoulder was still pressed against hers, and from this angle—her head tilted, afternoon light catching the line of her jaw—she managed to look like a Renaissance painting even with dark circles under her eyes and upholstery creases on her cheek. His circuits flushed the Veela allure before it ever reached conscious thought—but that had never been the point. Even diluted, even controlled, even rendered functionally moot by his magecraft, the Veela bloodline had given Fleur a beauty that didn't need supernatural help. His eyes were drawn to her the same way they'd been drawn to her the first time they met in his shed that bright moonlit night.

"We did do our shopping at ze last minute," Fleur pointed out, not opening her eyes.

She wasn't wrong. He and Hermione had bought most of the books and supplies before Hermione left for her vacation with her parents, but potions ingredients and wands had waited for Diagon Alley. Harry and Hermione still needed a final fitting at Madam Malkin's for their uniforms, and Fleur's had to be expedited entirely—a rush order that had cost extra, though Madam Malkin hadn't seemed to mind. The woman had looked positively delighted at the prospect of fitting a quarter-Veela.

"How many times was Fleur propositioned during our shopping trip?" Hermione asked, not looking up from her reading.

Fleur tutted, resting her chin on her palm with her elbow propped against the windowsill. The pout she wore could have curdled milk.

"—and I 'ave not slept more zan two hours today." Fleur cracked one eye open. "Zis is worse zan Camlann."

"You died at Camlann," Harry pointed out.

"Exactly."

Hermione had already kicked off her shoes. Her stockinged feet curled beneath her on the bench, and she'd produced a textbook from the makeskin pouch—*An Appraisal of Magical Education in Europe* by Phyllida Spore. She cracked it open to a dog-eared page and began reading with focus.

'Good luck to the Hogwarts professors.' They were going to either love her, hate her, or both—quite possibly within the same lesson.

Harry leaned back and let the quiet wash over him. The cabin was small, panelled in dark wood that smelled faintly of polish and old tea. Afternoon light fell through the window in pale bars across the carpet. Hermione's shoes lay at crooked angles by the door. Fleur's trunk sat perfectly aligned in the overhead rack. His own bag—the smallest of the three—occupied the corner of the compartment like an afterthought.

For the first time in days, nothing was happening.

No misanthropic goblins. No irate French fathers with wands up their sleeves and murder in their eyes. No Andromeda mothering Sirius about nutrition whilst simultaneously force-feeding him potions. No Moody screaming "constant vigilance" and the subsequent tripping of Tonks at her surprise. No Arcturus with his double-speak and sharp biting tongue. No portkeys at ungodly hours to ungodly places for ungodly reasons.

Just a cabin. Three people. Silence.

He could hear Hermione turning pages. The faint scratch of Fleur's nail against the windowsill where she was tracing idle patterns in the condensation. The rhythmic clatter of the tracks beneath them as the Express gathered speed, leaving London behind.

Harry closed his eyes.

'This is good. This is enough.'

The silence lasted approximately forty-five seconds.

"At least we'll have the weekend to ourselves," Hermione said, her voice carrying the particular lightness that meant she was about to say something outrageous. "I propose that we find a quiet, secluded corner of Hogwarts and properly celebrate our reunion by playing tonsil hockey with our sexual goddess here."

"Zat's razher crude, 'Ermione."

"God, I love it when you call my—"

"—don't care what your mother said, Weasley, Harry Potter isn't going to want to associate with someone who dresses like a house-elf's laundry pile—"

"Rich coming from someone whose hair needs more maintenance than your house, Malfoy—"

The voices filtered through the cabin door with the unmistakable quality of two people who had never learned that volume was not a substitute for wit. Harry recognised both—they'd encountered the pair in Diagon Alley, and neither had improved in the interim.

"Oh, bloody wonderful." Hermione's eyes hadn't opened. "A canon event—well, not exactly, but close enough."

Harry felt Fleur's body shake with silent laughter against his shoulder.

The argument outside escalated. Something about blood status. Something about Quidditch. Something about whose father could beat whose father in a duel. Harry pinched the bridge of his nose and considered his options.

Then—beneath the bickering—a knock.

Not a bang. Not a hammering fist. A single, soft, deliberate tap of knuckles against wood.

The three of them exchanged glances. Hermione raised an eyebrow. Fleur tilted her head a fraction. Harry shrugged.

He nudged Hermione upright—she made a noise of protest but allowed herself to be displaced—and stood. Hermione immediately slumped sideways into Fleur's lap with the territorial satisfaction of a cat claiming a warm spot. She blew a raspberry at Harry's retreating back. Fleur's hand settled into Hermione's hair by what appeared to be pure reflex.

Harry stepped over Hermione's discarded shoes and slid the cabin door open.

The corridor had attracted an audience. Students lined up on either side like spectators at a particularly undignified tennis match, and at the centre of it stood the two combatants.

Draco Malfoy occupied the left—platinum hair shellacked into geometric submission, cheekbones that could cut glass, a sneer that probably required daily practice in front of a mirror. Flanking him like mismatched bookends stood two boys: one thick, one thicker. Ron Weasley held the right—tall, ginger, freckled, wearing robes that had clearly belonged to at least two previous Weasleys and fit him the way a tent fits a flagpole—as it seemed the previous owner was a lot bulkier in size. And between them sat a toad, nonchalant as anything, as if it were his God-given right to be there.

But none of them had knocked.

The person who had knocked stood directly in front of the door, occupying the narrow gap between the two warring factions as though she'd simply materialised there. Shorter than both boys by a good half-foot. Platinum blonde hair fell past her shoulders—the same shade as Draco's, identical in the way that only shared blood could produce. Pale bluish grey eyes. Sharp jaw. Fine-boned features that mirrored Malfoy's so precisely they might have been cast from the same mould.

But she carried them differently.

Where Draco's face projected studied contempt, hers held something quieter. Something watchful. She stood with her weight balanced evenly, her chin level, her hands folded in front of her—not clasped in deference, but held with the precise, composed stillness of someone who had been taught that

fidgeting was beneath her. No sneer. No bluster. She wore Hogwarts robes that actually fit, a detail that, given the general sartorial catastrophe of the corridor, bordered on miraculous.

She looked up at Harry.

"Would you happen to be Harry Potter?" A pause. The ghost of recognition in those grey eyes. "It seems this isn't the first time we've met."

Malfoy and Weasley stopped mid-argument, apparently only now realising the door had opened. Both turned toward Harry with expressions that suggested they'd been rehearsing their opening lines and were furious at being upstaged.

Harry looked at the girl. He looked at Malfoy. He looked at Weasley. He looked at the toad. The toad blinked twice at him. He looked back at the girl.

He inhaled slowly through his nose. The sigh pressed against his ribs, and he didn't let it escape.

'...'

His mind drifted back—past the platform chaos that morning, past the sleepless night of last-minute packing, past the Hogwarts Express tickets that had arrived by owl at the château, past Sirius's bark of laughter and Gabrielle's tearful goodbye—all the way back to a sunlit arcade in Paris where the whole beautiful disaster had started.

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The morning began normally.

Cooking breakfast with the Delacour house-elves: check. The sweet Apolline Delacour, with an amused smile permanently etched on her face, as she watched Harry navigate her kitchen: check. An equally grinning Hermione spreading jam on her pastry with one hand whilst the other teased idle patterns across the back of a still-sleepy Fleur's neck: check. Gabrielle, bright and cheerful, claiming Harry's lap before he'd even sat down and waiting

expectantly whilst he placed a piece of croissant and some sliced fruit on her plate: check. A tired-looking Sirius who was nevertheless grinning wide enough to crack his face in half: check. An exasperated Andromeda, shaking her head at all of them: check. Jean-Paul Delacour, ICW judge and loving father, gripping his butter knife with an intensity that suggested he was mentally calculating whether he could embed it in Harry's forehead from across the table and claim diplomatic immunity: check.

Just another normal morning at the Delacour estate.

But today was their last day here. Over the past week, Fleur, alongside her mother and an increasingly slumped father, had been going back and forth between England, Scotland, and France arranging her unprecedented enrolment at Hogwarts—a process that had involved enough paperwork to deforest a small province and a meeting at the Three Broomsticks with Professor McGonagall that Jean-Paul had attended with the enthusiasm of a man walking to his own sentencing.

Today was the final push: wands, remaining supplies, and everything else they'd need for the upcoming school year. All of it crammed into a single day that would span two countries and approximately seventeen arguments.

At half seven, the Delacour estate's gravel drive resembled a staging ground for a minor military operation. Two black Citroëns idled behind an enchanted carriage that shimmered between visibility and transparency—the driver testing its concealment charms in preparation for the day's route. Jean-Paul stood at the lead vehicle in charcoal robes trimmed with silver thread, consulting a leather folio with a man whose neck was thicker than Harry's thigh. The man wore a pin on his lapel—a silver fleur-de-lis crossed with a wand—and nodded at whatever Jean-Paul murmured with the solemn gravity of a general receiving deployment orders.

It was a shopping trip.

Harry adjusted the makeskin pouch at his hip and watched three more security wizards materialise from the treeline, each one broader and more

humourless than the last. They formed a loose perimeter around the vehicles without acknowledging his existence.

Harry slumped.

"Oooh, another day of Harry being passive-aggressively shadowed by the Delacour bodyguards," Hermione announced brightly, stepping out of the château in a loose white blouse with short sleeves, high-waisted trousers, and sandals. She looked entirely too pleased about this.

The Delacour security detail were not French Aurors or Ministry hires. They were the family's own—handpicked, long-serving, and every last one of them vetted for resistance to Veela charm. Some had been with the Delacours for decades. They'd watched Fleur take her first steps. They'd carried Gabrielle on their shoulders at family picnics. They had, by all accounts, the fierce protective instincts of men who considered both Delacour girls functionally their own nieces.

And then Harry Potter had shown up.

He could feel every stare. Heavy, constant, radiating the specific brand of hostility reserved for a boy who had designs on someone these men had sworn to protect. Harry couldn't help but slump—a posture he didn't realise was identical to the one Jean-Paul adopted whenever Harry wasn't looking.

Over the past week, the routine had become grimly predictable. Every time Fleur, Hermione, and the rest of the women entered a boutique, two bodyguards would materialise in the doorway like a pair of sentient wardrobes, blocking Harry's entry with the wordless efficiency of nightclub bouncers. A grunt. A thick finger pointed in the direction of Jean-Paul, who could invariably be found at a nearby café terrace, smoking a cigarette and drinking his coffee with the quiet fury of a man who had been outmanoeuvred by his own daughter and was taking it out on a perfectly innocent espresso.

Harry had tried making small talk during these exiles. He'd received grunts. Monosyllabic grunts. Grunts that, in their tonal range and emotional depth,

suggested the bodyguards had collectively decided that acknowledging Harry as a person capable of speech would be a concession too far.

Hermione, of course, shot him a smug smirk through the shop window as she locked arms with Fleur.

Fleur could only manage an apologetic smile over her shoulder. She was picking her battles with her father, and dragging Harry into a women's boutique was evidently not the hill she'd chosen to die on today.

Harry glanced toward the courtyard fountain. A man in a dove-grey suit held *La Gazette Sorcière* at an angle that made it quite obvious where his actual attention was.

"Subtle."

Hermione couldn't help but giggle.

But today wasn't a boutique day. Today was wands.

The estate doors swung open. Apolline descended the steps in lavender silk, her allure dimmed to a warm glow that still made the nearest security wizard walk into a Citroën door. Behind her, Andromeda carried a light leather satchel and the expression of a woman who had accepted her fate.

And then Fleur emerged.

She wore a white sundress that stopped above the knee, her silver-blond hair loose around her shoulders. Her Veela allure slipped its leash for a heartbeat—rolling off her in waves as excitement broke through her composure—before she reined it back in with the practised ease of someone who'd spent a lifetime managing what she was.

Harry felt Avalon hum beneath his sternum. The warmth was familiar now, a resonance he'd carried since childhood without understanding its source. The sheathe of the Holy Sword, somehow intact across realities, still recognised the Once and Future King—even wrapped in silver-blond hair and a sundress.

Fleur caught his eye and smiled. Not the polite diplomat's smile she wore for her father's colleagues, nor the blazing grin she'd unleashed at dinner when she'd announced her Hogwarts transfer. This was quieter. Private. The smile she wore when she let go of her burdens and chose something for herself.

Harry returned it.

"Ow cute," Apolline's voice carried across the gravel, warm and teasing.
"Don't you remember our youth, mon ami? Innocent times when our love burnt bright with ardour."

She was speaking to Jean-Paul. Harry could see him in his periphery—jaw clenched, teeth grinding with an audible precision that suggested his dental bills were significant. The bodyguards' attention sharpened. Harry could feel every set of eyes recalibrating onto him like targeting charms locking on.

Apolline was having entirely too much fun with this. Harry was beginning to suspect she'd been having fun with it all week, and that Jean-Paul's suffering was at least partially by design.

"HARRY!"

A blur of silver hair and flailing limbs launched from the doorway. Gabrielle Delacour—eleven years old, half-Veela, and apparently rocket-propelled—crossed the gravel in three bounds and attached herself to Harry's left arm with the structural integrity of a limpet mine.

"Are you ready, Gabrielle?"

"You promised to sit with me in the carriage."

"I don't remember promising that."

"You said 'we'll see,' which in English means yes."

"It absolutely doesn't—"

"Papa! 'Arry said 'e'll sit with me!"

Jean-Paul's eye twitched. A single, precise spasm of the left eyelid that Harry had catalogued seventeen times since arriving at the estate. He turned from his security chief, folio in hand, and regarded his youngest daughter barnacled to the arm of the boy whose future children his eldest daughter had pledged to Beauxbatons—over ratatouille, without warning, between bites.

"Gabrielle. Release Monsieur Potter."

"But—"

"Now."

Gabrielle released Harry's arm with theatrical reluctance, then immediately seized his hand instead. Jean-Paul's eye twitched again. Eighteen.

Hermione materialised at Harry's right side, threading her arm through his with proprietary ease.

"Morning, Gabrielle."

"Bonjour, 'Ermione! I like your earrings. Are zose real rubies?"

"Garnets."

"Zey're very pretty. 'Arry, don't you zink zey're pretty?"

Harry opened his mouth. Hermione's grip on his arm tightened—a warning calibrated to the exact pressure needed to communicate *'choose your next words with extreme care.'* Fleur, approaching from behind, placed a hand on his shoulder. He stood pinned between three women whilst Jean-Paul Delacour stared at him with the expression of a man watching his house burn down and being told the arsonist would be staying for dinner.

"Yes," Harry said, smiling with the careful neutrality of a hostage reading a prepared statement. "Very pretty."

Hermione's grip relaxed a fraction.

"Bon," Jean-Paul announced, snapping his folio shut with a crack that carried across the courtyard. "We depart. Monsieur Potter rides in the second vehicle. Fleur, 'Ermione, you are with your mozzer and me."

The thick-necked security chief—whose name Harry had never caught and suspected was classified—materialised at Harry's shoulder and steered him toward the rear Citroën with a hand that could have palmed a Quaffle.

Gabrielle trotted alongside, still holding Harry's hand, until Apolline gently extracted her daughter with the practised grace of a woman who had performed this manoeuvre several thousand times and guided her toward the lead vehicle.

"I'll see you zere, 'Arry!" Gabrielle called back, waving furiously.

Harry found himself deposited in the back seat between Andromeda and a burly, bald-headed guard with his arms crossed and nicotine-stained fingers. The man introduced himself as Gascon in a voice like gravel being poured into a cement mixer, then immediately began weaving detection charms around the vehicle's interior without another word.

Andromeda patted Harry's knee.

"Be strong."

Harry glanced at her. "How long until they stop treating me like a security threat?"

Andromeda considered this with the gravity it deserved. "Gabrielle's wedding, possibly. If you behave. Or maybe once you give them grandchildren."

A low growl rumbled from every French throat in the car. The two English occupants exchanged a glance.

Harry could only sigh.

La Galerie des Sortilèges occupied the spine of the Passage des Panoramas, the oldest covered arcade in Paris. To Muggle eyes, the passage was a charming if slightly faded collection of stamp dealers, vintage postcard shops, and bistros with chalkboard menus. The entrance to the magical quarter hid in plain sight—an oil painting mounted in an ornate gilt frame between a philatelist's window and a café awning. The painting depicted the Galerie itself: an iron-and-glass arcade stretching into impossible depth, warm light pooling between shopfronts that didn't quite hold still if you looked too long.

The trick was not to look away.

You fixed your eyes on the vanishing point. You let the edges of your vision soften—the stamp shop blurring, the café dissolving, the sounds of the passage fading to a hum. You held it until the painted light felt warmer than the real light, until the ironwork in the frame seemed to breathe, until the world outside the canvas lost its claim on you.

Then you blinked.

And you were inside.

Harry's structural analysis had dissected the enchantment on his first visit—a layered compulsion woven into the paint itself, each brushstroke carrying a thread of intent that guided the viewer's focus inward until the boundary between observer and painting simply ceased to exist. It was elegant. It was also, he'd noted with professional admiration, completely irreversible once you'd committed to the stare. You couldn't half-enter. The painting didn't negotiate.

Harry stopped.

The arcade stretched before him in a cathedral of wrought iron and glass, the vaulted ceiling soaring three storeys overhead. Morning sunlight filtered through enchanted panes that shifted colour with the hour—currently a pale gold that drenched everything in warmth. The floor was a continuous mosaic, thousands of tiny tiles depicting scenes from French magical history: the founding of Beauxbatons, the Flamel wedding, the liberation of Paris's ley

lines during the Revolution. Each tile hummed with a faint resonance Harry could feel through his shoes.

Shopfronts lined both sides, their façades a riot of Belle Époque excess—carved stone, gilded lettering, awnings of enchanted silk that rippled without wind. A parfumerie exhaled clouds of scented mist that formed fleeting shapes above the heads of passersby. A boulangerie's window displayed croissants that folded themselves in real time, each layer visible as it formed. An apothecary's sign depicted a snake eating its own tail in continuous animation, the scales catching light that shouldn't have existed at that angle.

The place thrummed with layered magic. Harry's structural analysis picked up centuries of accumulated enchantments, each generation building atop the last. The ironwork alone contained seventeen distinct ward schemas, nested like matryoshka dolls.

Hermione had stopped beside him. Her lips were parted. Her eyes—

Harry sighed. "Please, Hermione."

"Please, Harry."

"Her—"

It was the same routine every time they'd visited La Galerie. Every single time, without fail, as predictable as the sunrise and twice as dramatic. Hermione would plant herself in front of the gem shop—Maison Lumière, purveyor of enchanted stones and crystallised mana since 1743, its window display a constellation of softly rotating crystals that threw prismatic light across the mosaic floor—and execute what he had come to think of as the Dickensian Manoeuvre.

Harry could feel it coming the moment her pace slowed. Could practically hear the gears turning behind that formidable intellect as it pivoted from scholarly wonder to calculated emotional warfare. The lip would tremble first—always the lip, that was her opening salvo. Then the hands would clasp, fingers lacing together in a gesture so practised it might as well have been choreographed.

The faux tears would arrive last, glittering in the enchanted gold light with an actress's precision, catching every beam as though they'd been placed there by a lighting director. And then would come the voice—that pitiful, quavering thing she summoned from somewhere deep in her theatrical reserves—as she begged Harry for "allowance" in tones that could have sold matchsticks on a Victorian street corner and wrung pennies from a stone-hearted workhouse master.

He knew it was manipulation. She knew he knew. And yet some treacherous part of him fell for it every bloody time, which only encouraged her further.

But this time she'd recruited backup.

Gabrielle stood beside her, doe eyes deployed at maximum intensity, hands clasped in an identical pose that suggested extensive rehearsal. And beside them both, Fleur—expression perfectly blank, hands pressed together in prayer like the other two, executing the routine with the mechanical precision of someone honouring the letter of an agreement whilst making it abundantly clear she considered the entire performance beneath her dignity.

Three women, begging him for gem money on a Parisian street. He didn't stand a chance.

Harry looked up at the sky. Fluffy clouds. Bright sun. Gorgeous weather that, for reasons no meteorologist had ever satisfactorily explained, refused to cross the English Channel.

He exhaled. He had earned quite the mint after selling the manticores' meat and parts to the goblins.

"Fine—but after we get our wands. It'll take an hour to make them, right?"

Hermione and Gabrielle cheered. The two exchanged double high-fives, then proceeded to dance on the spot with the giddy, uninhibited joy of two people who had just successfully extracted money from someone and felt no shame about it. Passersby stared. The bodyguards stared. Jean-Paul, somewhere behind them, was probably having a minor cardiac event.

Fleur shook her head at their antics as she fell into step beside Harry. He could already feel the bodyguards tightening their perimeter, their attention sharpening at her proximity to him.

"Are you sure about zis?"

"Yeah, I did sell most of the manticore meat and some of its magical parts to the goblins."

"Oh—'Ermione did say you managed to kill quite ze old manticore."

Somewhere behind them, something crashed.

"Yes, the goblins estimated it was probably the escaped manticore from one of the Triwizard Tournaments. Close to three hundred years old."

Crash. Crash. Crash.

Neither of them turned around.

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End

Glossary:

La Galerie des Sortilèges — "The Gallery of Enchantments." The French magical shopping district, hidden within the Passage des Panoramas in Paris.

Passage des Panoramas — The oldest covered arcade in Paris, built in 1799. Located in the 2nd arrondissement.

Maison Lumière — "House of Light." Gem shop in La Galerie des Sortilèges, established 1743.

La Gazette Sorcière — "The Sorcerer's Gazette." The French magical newspaper.

Belle Époque — "Beautiful Era." Period of French history (1871–1914) known for ornate architecture and cultural flourishing. La Galerie's shopfronts reflect this style.

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