

# Monsters and Mudbloods

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A Malfoy always wins...

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# Monsters and Mudbloods

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# On The First Page

## Sequel to Curls and Bruises

**Full Summary: *Dumbledore's death was just the beginning. Months spent on the run brought no solace and even though she gave it her all, the heart wants what it wants. She can fight tooth and nail, she can run, and she can hide, but a Malfoy always wins.***

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**Disclaimer: I OWN NOTHING**

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## Haunted

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Hermione stood in the center of the room, her somber gaze restless as her eyes flittered around from wall to wall, picture to picture... book to book. She gripped her wand and scarf tightly in one hand with her coat draped over her arm. She swallowed, throat thick with emotion and shoulders taut with tension as she took in her sanctuary, her room, for what would probably be the last time. She brushed her hand over her bed, struggling to leave this place behind as she made her way out and downstairs.

She was on auto pilot as she slowly crept up behind her parents until she was directly behind them. They were engaged in a quiet conversation and as Hermione watched her mum pour her dad a cup of tea, a hesitant feeling overcame her. She mentally shook her head and squared her shoulders. *This is the right thing to do, this is the right thing to do* , she chanted. She couldn't lose anyone else. *Ginny*

.

No one had seen or heard from her best friend since the night that Draco had let the Death Eaters into the castle. They had all been

sick with worry for months as they searched for her with no avail. It wasn't until a few weeks ago did it finally click in Hermione's head. *They* had taken her. She just knew it. *That night* , as they had stood in Knockturn Alley, Draco had told her that they were waiting. He didn't say what for, but now Hermione had guessed that they had been waiting for someone and she was willing to bet that that someone had Ginny with them. Of course, this was purely guessing on Hermione's part. That was simply one of the best cases. Sometimes Hermione feared that Ginny was dead or being tortured by you-know-who on a daily basis.

Shaking those thoughts from her head, she raised her wand and forced herself to think of nothing but their safety. She had to protect them from Voldemort, the Death Eaters... *him* . She had not heard a peep from him since that night. She was extremely grateful for that, but that also worried her. Draco had never been one to keep quiet, to not act. No, he was waiting, biding his time for the opportune moment. She wasn't going to make it easy for him though, she wasn't going to make it easy for any of them. With a newfound determination, Hermione focused her eyes and concentrated, uttering the word that would keep her parents safe.

"Obliviate."

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Everything had been going great, in fact, more than great. Bill and Fleur's bliss had done what it was supposed to; take everyone's minds off of what was going on in the outside world. The newlyweds had danced and danced and looked at each other with complete adoration. Hermione found herself smiling a few times, momentarily forgetting about the elephant sized weight that was on her shoulders. The atmosphere inside of the tent was...light. It was a pleasant feeling that she hadn't felt in months. She had danced and laughed and for once...Draco and the Death Eaters were at the very back of her mind. They were at the very back of everyone's minds. Until *it* happened.

Suddenly there was panic and everyone was running, screaming and apparating out of there. It all happened so fast and everything became a blur as she and Ron collided into each other. She had looked around for Harry, but everything was a blur. Everything was a blur except for one thing. It had happened so fast that she had questioned whether or not she had seen what she thought she had. Her frame had been frozen and her eyes fearful as the wind blew the opening of the tent, giving her a glimpse of the yard. His stance had exuded nothing but complete confidence as his dark hair ruffled in the wind. His obsidian eyes bore into her own as a Malfoy like smirk graced his lips. She had opened her mouth in shock, but before she could utter a word, her world was suddenly spinning.

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As Hermione set the enchantments, she could hear Ron's pained whimpers behind her. She had done what she could, but at this point all they could do was wait. As she waved her wand and murmured the words, she tried her best to hold it together. Nothing had gone like it was supposed to. They had gotten the locket, but Ron had gotten splinched in the process. She knew that until Ron was healed they would be forced to travel on foot. Her shoulders sagged at the thought of this setback. She forced herself to focus on something else.

*Like Zabini* . Her jaw clenched as she thought back to the wedding. She *had* seen Zabini; that she was sure of now and she knew that if Zabini had been there, then so had *he* . Why hadn't she seen him though? Why hadn't he had just snatched her up then and there, put her out of her misery? She shook her head. Those were cowardly thoughts. Those were the thoughts of someone who was ready to give up and she was *not* that person. Just because she... Just because she cared about him more than she had believed, it didn't mean that she was throwing in the towel. It was so much more complicated than that. She and Draco were completely wrong for each other in every way. He was toxic and whenever she was around him she couldn't think straight. They would destroy each other. She was determined to fight this with every fiber of her being.

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**This is simply a prologue so to speak. Let me know what you think...**

# The Future Seemed So Bright

## I Own Nothing

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"She and Weasley looked pretty cozy..."

Fair eyes met obsidian ones with a hostile expression attached as the pale boy rose from his chair. The room was dark, save for the flames in the fireplace, as he refilled his glass. His best friend was comfortably seated in the chair beside the one he had just risen from, his dark eyes watching his friend with an expectant gaze. The fair haired boy welcomed the familiar burn that traveled down his throat as he turned his glass up. The expensive dish, however, didn't fare well as he slammed it down onto the table with just a tad too much force than necessary. He took no mind to the blood that began to pool in and run down his hand. Draco Malfoy was not happy.

That was probably a very broad statement seeing as Draco was hardly ever happy. If he was happy, then someone else was extremely unhappy...or dead. He sank back into his chair, running his clean fingers through his hair, pushing it out of his eyes. He needed a haircut. He shook his head as his best friend referred to that poor excuse for a wedding.

"I'm not worried about the weasel, Blaise. I'm worried about the *boy-who-just-won't-fucking-die* having his hands all over her!"

That last part came out almost sounding like a hiss, forcing the darker young man's lips to curve upward. Draco ran his hands down his face, slowly exhaling. Horcrux hunting... They were searching for the bloody Horcruxes. He didn't question how Blaise had found this out although he had his suspicions. He only cared about the fact that she was going to be off the grid, probably cooped up in some small room, and with *him* for Merlin knows how long.

"Well, it's not like you can do anything about it. Unless..."

His friend trailed off with a perfectly arched eyebrow and Draco shook his head at what he was suggesting.

"No. I know that she'll make her way back to me, one way or another," he replied.

"You just...know this," Blaise slowly questioned.

Draco stood again and straightened out his shirt. He turned to look at his friend with an expression completely free of worry.

"Everything always works out in my favor. Wouldn't you agree?"

The corner of Blaise's lips turned up as he nodded. He had to admit that no matter what, things always seemed to tip in Draco's favor. With Lucius gone and Dumbledore dead, Draco had glided up through the ranks, into a position that rivaled his demented aunt's. Blaise was more than happy to just sit back and watch.

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*"Why did you do it," she quietly asked him as she stared him down.*

She frowned, turning over on her side. The tent was getting stuffy, she could feel it, even in her sleep.

*"I didn't trust Dumbledore nor the order to give me what I want," he said.*

*"You could have trusted me," she replied as a light wind blew by, reminding her of the weather.*

She exhaled, before turning over again to lie on her back. She was burning up.

*"I want you," he whispered.*



Hermione felt her heartbeat speed up to a dangerous pace. She was suffocating.

*"That's all I've ever wanted. Everything that I've done, I did so that I could keep you," he murmured against her lips.*

She couldn't breathe. She couldn't breathe!

*I think that you are in love with this monster.*

*I think that you are in love with this monster.*

***I think that you are in love with this monster.***

Hermione sat up in her small bed with a panicked gasp. She had barely opened her mouth before a pair of strong arms wound themselves around her. She buried her head into his chest, taking in the familiar scent. The events of that night, months ago, repeatedly played in her head. She couldn't have peace for more than fifteen minutes, not even in her sleep. She forced herself to take deep breaths as she was rocked back and forth.

"It was just a dream. Whatever it was, it wasn't real..."

But it was real and every single night she had to relive it again and again. She and Draco were so far away from each other, yet he still continued to haunt her. He really was the devil.

"Get her some water."

She pulled away as Ron's footsteps grew light as he went to do just that.

"That's really not necessary, Harry," she whispered guiltily.

Ron still wasn't completely healed. He looked at her through tired eyes. Months of searching for Horcruxes had aged him. It had aged all of them and her nightly terrors had not helped. Harry sighed before taking her hand.

"Are you ever going to tell me what happened that night," he asked for the umpteenth time.

"I told you, nothing," she lied with a shrug.

"Stop...stop lying to us. Something happened. We can see it," he snapped.

"Please, Harry. Please, drop it," she pleaded.

He sighed before pulling away, just as Ron reappeared with her water. She took a few sips before murmuring a quiet 'thank you.'

"Are you sure that you're okay," Ron asked.

Hermione nodded.

"I'm fine," she breathed as she sank back under the covers.

She heard Harry sigh again before walking away, Ron close behind.

Later that night, when she could do nothing but stare at the inside of the tent, she heard them talking...about her.

"You don't...you don't think he did something to her, do you? You know, like...," she heard Ron trail off, choking on his own words.

Hermione shut her eyes, the silence deafening.

"I don't know, Ron. I don't know. She won't tell me... *anything* ," Harry hissed.

She heard him hit something, the sound of his footsteps could be heard soon after. He was pacing. It seemed like he was always pacing these days.

"Gods, Ron, when we found her in Knockturn Alley that night...it was like- like she had seen You-Know-Who himself. She was so *pale* and she wasn't responding to anything. I didn't know what to think, but I

didn't pry. I never pushed her because I figured she would tell me in her own time. I thought that it would take weeks at the most, but not...not *months* ."

Hermione squeezed her eyes tighter, aching at what she was doing to her friends. They thought that Draco had done something to her, had hurt her in some way, but they couldn't be more wrong. Little did they know that Draco had done nothing to her except force the truth down her throat. He had forced her to see what her heart had known all along, it just took a minute for her head to catch up. She didn't know how to handle this and she couldn't tell *them* . There was no way they'd understand. Hell, she didn't even understand! She winced at the thought of what they would think of her if they ever found out.

*Traitor . Whore...a Death Eater's whore .* That's what they would call her as they looked at her with nothing but scorn...and pity. It would be nothing short of what she deserved. How had she allowed such a sadistic and malevolent being to take up residence inside her heart? Her shoulders shuddered as she held back sobs and with troubling thoughts like these, she finally drifted off into sleep.

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*Draco watched in complete disinterest as the doors opened, allowing the Triwizard champions to make their grand entrance. Note the sarcasm. Just the thought of Potter, of all people, a Triwizard champion made his blood boil. He was too young! Saint Potter had broken a major rule and here he was getting praised for it. Draco scoffed. If he were being honest, he had to admit that he was a tad miffed that he hadn't thought of paying one of the older students to enter his name. He could win this tournament, no doubt about it. He glanced down at hearing his date let out a small gasp as she tightened her hand around his arm.*

*He followed Pansy's blazing line of sight and found himself frowning in confusion. He noticed that all around him people were murmuring and 'oohing' and 'aahing' more than expected. He saw nothing out of the ordinary though. Fleur was walking in with her date for the Yule Ball, Roger Davies; he was a rather average looking fellow, Draco*

noted. He wasn't exactly sure why she said yes to him. To each their own, he guessed. Behind them were Viktor Krum and... Draco tilted his head to the side, not recognizing Krum's date. He found himself taking a step forward to get a closer look.

She was a petite witch, with honey brown hair piled up in a knot with stray curls resting on her shoulder. Her dress was floaty and blue, perhaps periwinkle. He noted that the dress not only complimented her skin, but her figure as well. And what a lovely figure it is, he thought with a small smirk. He could definitely see why Pansy was so bothered. His brows furrowed further as he heard the name Granger being thrown around the air. Granger? No, absolutely not... She had to be one of the Beauxbatons girls.

He took another step forward, ignoring Pansy's tight grip on his arm as he did so. His eyes raked over her figure once more before finally settling on her face. His heart seemed to have skipped a beat inside of his chest. Merlin... It **was** Granger! He stood frozen as a myriad of emotions coursed through him at once before he even had time to process it. He was in awe that the mudblood could clean up so nice and even more shocked that she had somehow swindled **Viktor Krum** into asking her to the Yule Ball. Then he found himself confused by the surprising amount of attraction he felt for the Gryffindor as he watched her dance. Disgust flowed through his veins for feeling such attraction in the first place.

The more he and Pansy danced, the more he watched **her** and the more he watched her the angrier he felt himself getting. Pansy going on and on about the mudblood was not helping in the slightest. 'How could she afford such a dress' this and 'why did he come with her' that. He was surprised that he hadn't gnawed his teeth to the gums with how much he was clenching and grinding them. He didn't understand why he was so angry. He just knew that he really wanted to bludgeon Krum as he continued to put his hands all over her. His eyes narrowed as Krum spun her around and around, prompting a laugh from the Gryffindor. He looked away in disgust. How Krum could sully himself with such filth was beyond Draco.

*He had always thought that she and the weasel were a thing; guess he was wrong. What a slut , he found himself thinking even though deep down he knew that Granger was probably the most frigid broad to walk the halls of Hogwarts. What the bloody hell was wrong with him? She was nothing more than a mudblood playing dress up for a night, made up to look like royalty when she was nothing more than filth. Even as he thought this, he could tell that his heart wasn't in it. He found his hands tightening along with... **other things** as he gazed at her again.*

*She hadn't looked in his direction once! Did she think herself above **him** now, just because she'd gotten all dressed up and didn't look like a sodding yeti anymore? His eyes widened as he watched her go off with Krum. Just where the hell were they going? An inexplicable emotion bubbled up inside of him as he imagined Krum's lips on hers, his hands never staying in one place too long. His eyes narrowed as he pictured her on her back with Krum above her, her once kempt hair a mess of unruly frizz. He clenched his jaw and exhaled, closing his eyes as he did so.*

*"Ow!"*

*He looked down just in time to see Pansy snatching her hands out of his, shaking them out as she did so. He hadn't realized that he'd been holding her so tight. He ignored the confusion filled glare she threw at him. The rest of the night was filled with Pansy yapping in his ear and he not paying her an ounce of attention. Even seeing Granger arguing with the blood traitor did nothing to quench his anger. Why were they arguing? Were they together after all and she had cheated on him with Krum? Had the weasel caught her in a compromising position? Or was her sidekick simply jealous of the attention the know-it-all was receiving? And where was Krum? Had he simply ditched her after getting what he wanted?*

*Thoughts like these continued to plague his mind long after many students had left the dance floor. That wave of anger still resided inside of him, eating him from the inside out. He didn't understand it, not one bit. Even later that night, when Pansy was writhing and*

*moaning beneath him, he could think of nothing but curls and a periwinkle dress. It took every ounce of strength he possessed to not call out **her** name. It wasn't until late in the night, when Pansy was completely unconscious in a deep sleep, did he come to a realization.*

*He sat up in bed, angered all over again as he realized that he was **jealous** . He shook his head as if trying to shake the thought from his mind. He, Draco Malfoy, the boy who had everything, was jealous. It would make sense that he couldn't place it at first because he was never jealous. He had never felt this emotion before. He had everything he could ever want! Until now... He wanted the mudblood; he wanted Granger in his bed. He was sure that this was just a one-time thing. He just needed to get her out of his system and everything would go back to normal. This was Granger though and he would have better luck bedding Blaise before the know-it-all. No, she would never go for it... For the first time in his life, Draco Malfoy wanted something that he could not have...and he didn't like it at all.*

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Draco exhaled as he sat on the balcony, one leg dangling over while the other was bent, his arm resting on it. He stared out into the night as he recalled that night at the Yule Ball; the night everything he knew had come crashing down. He could still remember the way his emotions jumped from one to the other as if he were hopped up on drugs. He smirked as he thought that he had gotten his first glance at a drug he was all too eager to try. From that moment on he had done any and everything he could to get her attention. And now...

She was the one craving for him; serves her right. She had had him acting like some inexperienced twelve year old strung out on drugs for years and she didn't even know it. The tables were turned now and Draco enjoyed it immensely. If there was one thing he couldn't stand, it was not being in control. Draco found himself smirking as he heard a rather loud moan coming from the closed balcony window next to his. The walls of the Zabini Mansion weren't as thick as those

in Malfoy Manor and it certainly sounded like Blaise was enjoying himself. At least someone was.

"In due time," Draco murmured to himself.

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"He's just worried, you know," Ron mumbled.

She sighed and looked ahead of them at Harry's rigid back. He was walking ahead of them, said he wanted to be alone. He had been doing that a lot lately. She weighed Ron's words inside of her head. She didn't need him to tell her that; she knew he was worried. They were all worried.

"I know that," she said.

"You know what I mean, Hermione."

She was quiet for a while because she did know what he meant; Harry was worried about her. Night after night she would hear the two of them talk while she was asleep. Their conversations always started out different, but always ended on the same topic; her. Part of her wanted to talk to them and spill everything, but another part of her was so scared. She figured if she didn't say it aloud then it wouldn't be true.

"I'm sorry. I don't know what you want me to say...", she said.

"How about the truth."

Hermione shook her head with a sigh. She wished that it was that easy.

"It's not that simple, Ron-"

"Yes, it is. You repeatedly claim that he didn't do anything to hurt you, so why can't you tell us," he asked.

"Because I just don't want to," she snapped.

"You can't avoid talking about something just because it makes you uncomfortable, Hermione," Ron said.

She looked at him in disbelief.

"Well, that's certainly rich coming from you," she responded.

Ron suddenly stopped walking, causing her to do the same. He looked at her with a frown.

"What is that supposed to mean?"

"You haven't mention Ginny once since we left. You try to act as if it isn't this giant elephant sitting right smack in the middle of the room."

Ron clenched his jaw as he glared at her.

"That's different. Talking about Ginny is uncomfortable for all of us-"

"And I suppose that talking about Draco isn't? Have you even thought about how it makes me feel every time you bring him up? No, you didn't. You only think about yourself!"

"I'm just trying to help..."

"No, you're being a nosy bugger. Not once did you consider my feelings every time you brought him up. I'm already stressed enough without thinking about him. Merlin, Ron you can be such a prick sometimes!"

She jumped as she felt something brush against her arm. She looked at Harry just as he fingered the locket around her neck. She hadn't even heard him come up.

"Take it off," he whispered.

Hermione blinked, hesitating, before slowly reaching for the damn thing and pulling it over her head. She exhaled as the pressure in her chest went away, her shoulders sagging with released tension.



She had forgotten about the stupid thing. Harry gently took it from her hands before pulling it over his own head. Hermione sighed before looking at Ron.

"I'm sorry," she said.

"It's fine. You were right. I didn't think about how it would make you feel, bringing him up like that," he responded.

He and Harry shared a look before Ron began to walk ahead of them. Harry put his hand on the small of her back as they slowly followed Ron. Hermione subtly pulled away from him as she rubbed her temple.

"I hadn't realized that I had been wearing it for so long," she sighed.

"I understand that you want to take some of the burden off of Ron and I, but you can't keep wearing it like that. You've seen what it does...", Harry quietly trailed off, looking away.

Hermione guessed that he was thinking of the incident from last week because that was where her mind had immediately headed. She absentmindedly rubbed her wrist as she thought about it. She had just had a particularly frightening nightmare and believed that both Ron and Harry were outside...

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*She jerked awake, vision clouded and heart racing, before sitting up and swinging her head around. It took her a minute for her to realize where she was. The tent was empty, but the boys had left a lamp on. She let out a sigh before dropping her head into her hands. She had dreamt about that night at Hogwarts again, the night their lives as they knew them, ended. It had felt so...real. Merlin, she could still feel his hands all over her and she was sure that if she took a deep breath, she could still smell him. She wiped at her eyes, feeling that familiar sting behind her eyelids. Draco Malfoy was haunting her and it seemed that there was nothing she could do about it.*

*"Why do you cry over him?"*

*She jumped and let out a small sound of surprise. She turned her head to see Harry emerge from the shadows. She sighed in relief and let out a small chuckle.*

*"Merlin, Harry, don't do that," she breathed.*

*"You didn't answer my question," he firmly stated.*

*She shook her head, frowning, and thinking.*

*"Wha...I'm not crying over anyone," she lied.*

*Harry walked towards her, a frown on his face.*

*"I heard you say his name in your sleep, Hermione. Don't lie to me."*

*She swung her legs, her feet touching the floor. She sighed as she thought back to the nightmare: the stairs, his hands, and the knife. She rubbed her head; it was like she had taken that tumble down the stairs all over again. She shook her head.*

*"It was just a bad dream, Harry," she quietly responded.*

*"A bad dream or a really good one," he questioned, accusations in his tone of voice.*

*She looked at him in confusion before standing. She stared at him for a long time, trying to pinpoint what was going on because something was definitely off. She glanced around.*

*"A bad one. Where's Ron," she asked, feeling extremely uncomfortable all of a sudden.*

*She wrapped her arms around herself as he closed in on her.*

*"He's outside. Why do you continue to let him plague your thoughts?"*

*She glared up at him. She really didn't want to talk about this.*

*"It's not like I do it on purpose," she snapped.*

*"Maybe you just need a distraction," he whispered.*

*"Harry," she protested as he brushed her hair away from her face.*

*"You know how I feel about you, Hermione. He's out of the picture now," he hinted.*

*No, he isn't, was what she wanted to say. Draco was so far into the picture that he was all she could see. What was she supposed to say, though? We can't be together now because I realized that I may or may not have incredibly strong feelings for someone I fear more than You-Know-Who himself ? She mentally shook her head. What a contradicting statement. She didn't see that going over so well, but Harry may have had a point. She had to get him out of her head. She just wasn't sure that this was the way to do it. However, she didn't have time to voice any of this because Harry's lips had claimed her own.*

*Her eyes widened in shock and she put her hand on his chest, pulling away, but his lips simply chased. She gasped as he wrapped his arm around her and pulled her closer. She couldn't do this; it felt so...wrong. She pulled away again.*

*"Harry, I can't-"*

*"And why not," he demanded.*

*"I don't have to explain myself to you," she snapped.*

*She shook her head at him with a sigh. Sometimes she wished that what she felt for Harry was as strong as what he felt for her. It would be so much easier if she could love him instead, but that wasn't the case. She walked past him, going to find Ron when he reached out and grabbed her wrist. She spun around to ask what was wrong with*

*him when he yanked her towards him. Her hands pressed against him to steady herself when she felt something that she hadn't earlier. The locket was dangling around his neck, resting beneath his shirt. She leaned away from him as she thought. How long had he been wearing it? She hadn't worn it in what felt like forever and she didn't remember seeing Ron with it on recently either. She blinked and let out a gasp.*

*"Harry, take this off," she demanded.*

*She made the mistake of looking up at him.*

*"Harry," she hissed against his lips.*

*"I love you, Hermione," he whispered as he tangled his fingers in her hair.*

*She hissed in pain as he tightly gripped her wrist when she reached for the cursed necklace.*

*"Harry, stop. Listen to me-"*

*She let out a gasp as her back connected with her small bed. She fought against him as his lips connected with the skin of her neck. She forced herself to not panic. This wasn't Harry; he was acting like this because of the locket. She had to get it off of him...and fast. She jerked against him as he bit down on her skin.*

*"Harry-"*

*"Isn't this what you like? Isn't this what **he** would have done," he whispered*

*"Harry, please..."*

*He pulled back to look at her. The look in his eyes terrified her and she began to fear that she would not be able to get the necklace off in time. She twisted her arm, but he held on with a vengeance. She could almost feel herself bruising.*

*"I can help you forget about him, Hermione. Isn't that what you want?"*

*"Not like this..."*

*She and Harry stared at each other for what seemed like a long time, her eyes pleading with him, before he began reaching for her shirt.*

*"Harry, stop this, now," she forcefully whispered as she fought against his hands.*

*She squirmed as he settled himself in between her legs, the feel of him pressing against her forcing her hair to raise on end. She shoved against his chest as he began to tug at her pants eliciting a slap from her. As his head was turned she used the opportunity to grab the locket. She gasped in pain as he yanked on her hair, his other hand holding her wrist in an iron grip. Despite the pain, she managed to jerk upwards on the chain, yanking it up to his chin. She struggled as her head was yanked back even farther. She suddenly kned him in the gut, but he took her down with him.*

*The wind was knocked out of her as she landed on top of him. She didn't loosen her grip on the locket even as he sat up, forcing her back to dig into the side of the bed. The palm of her hand was pressed into his face as she again tried to yank it off. They were a tangled mess of limbs as Harry persisted in trying to get her onto her back and her in trying to get the locket off. Luck was on her side as she was able to bring her foot up and kick him in his gut.*

*She sighed in relief as she threw it to the other side of the tent as Harry leaned over, clutching his stomach. Her breath came out very shallow and choppy as she scooted away from him. She looked at the dark hair of her best friend with cautious eyes.*

*"Harry..."*

*He didn't say anything, not a word. She reached for him, but retracted her hand, changing her mind. She wanted to say that it was*

*okay because she knew that it was the locket's influence. She knew that it in his right mind, her best friend would never do such a thing. It wasn't okay, though; Harry had scared her. She reached out again as she noticed his shoulders trembling. However, as soon as her fingers touched his shoulder, he fled the tent.*

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Neither one of them had mentioned it again, not to each other nor to Ron. The two of them did make sure to keep the locket in an even rotation after that though.

"Yeah...I know," she finally said.

"Hermione," he quietly began.

She turned to look at him.

"You don't have to say anything. I...I know and I forgive you," she said.

"No, I have to say it. I'm sorry. Merlin, you have no idea how sorry I am. I just...I don't want you to be afraid of me-"

"I'm not," she interrupted, too quickly.

His jaw clenched as he gazed at her.

"Yes, you are. I can see it. I just don't want you to see *him* whenever you look at me. I want you to see me, your best friend, and know that I would never do anything to hurt you."

"I know that, Harry. It's just..." she looked out into the trees "...I know how you feel about me and I- I can't give you what you want. Okay? I just can't-"

"Why not-"

"Because I just can't!"

Harry stared at her for what felt like a long time.

"It's him, isn't it," he demanded as he took a step towards her.

"No-"

"Yes, it is-"

She took a step away from him as he tilted his head down to stare into her eyes.

"What happened that night, Hermione?"

"Why do you do this? You keep pushing and pushing! What is this obsession that you have with anything Draco related? Anytime a discussion involves him I see it in your eyes. They light up and you get this crazed look. You turn into a dog with a bone," she snapped.

"It's not an obsession that I have with him it's an obsession that I have-"

He cut himself off with a huff before stepping towards her.

"Something happened that night between you and him. I know it. We don't keep things from each other, Hermione. That's not what we do," he harshly whispered.

"I'm not your daughter or your sister or your girlfriend. I'm allowed to have secrets! If I don't want to share something with you then you should respect my privacy," she snapped, looking away.

She sharply inhaled as Harry's fingers abruptly found her chin, forcing her to look at him. She could hear Ron walking towards them.

"Not when it could put everyone in danger," he hissed.

"Mate," she heard Ron whisper in warning.

She slapped his hand away and jerked away from him, feeling as if she'd just been electrocuted. She could feel an unfamiliar emotion brewing just below the surface.

"What the hell is that supposed to mean," she whispered even though she knew exactly what he was hinting at.

"You tell me," he demanded.

She could feel that familiar sting behind her eyes. She pushed Ron's hand away as he reached for her. Her attention was on nothing but Harry.

"You think we hooked up that night or something? You think he has some magical dragon in his pants that can turn me into a traitor within a span of thirty minutes? Is that what you think, that I'm somehow feeding them secrets and that I'm trying to plan my happily ever after with *him* ?"

Harry's silence was all she needed. She didn't even bother to wipe the tears away as they fell.

"You really think I would do that to you, to all of you. Is that what you think," she demanded, turning to face Ron.

"No! No, of course not. Look...Harry- Harry didn't mean that-"

"Yes, he did," she sadly replied.

She turned to glare at her raven haired friend.

"He meant every single word," she said in disgust, brushing past Ron.

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**I apologize to all you Harry lovers, but it's necessary. On the other hand I really wanted to give a glimpse as to how this whole thing started and I know that the Yule Ball is such a**



**cliche, but sue me. Speaking of, I decided to go with the book version of Hermione's dress simply because I prefer it over the pink. As for this split POV, I don't like it but it's only temporary until they're reunited. As for all of you asking about Ginny...in due time.**

**Don't forget to review!**

# **This Thing Turned Out So Evil**

**I had so much inspiration these past few days and I literally popped this out like a mom giving birth lol. Few things first: obviously things have been changed for the sake of this story, remember that and yes I did borrow some of the dialogue from the book but I added my own stuff as well. Also I tried to write Voldemort to the best of my ability. So forgive me if you think it is lacking.**

**AND PLEASE PLEASE REMEMBER THAT NO MATTER WHAT DRAMIONE IS END GAME.**

**OOC WARNING(?)- not really sure to be honest, but yeah I guess this needs to be here.**

**!NON CONSENSUAL WARNING!**

**Disclaimer: I Don't Own A Damn Thing**

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The following weeks were tense to put it lightly. Not just with her and Harry, but with Ron and Harry as well. Ron had made it very clear that he didn't like what Harry had said to Hermione nor how he had been treating her as of late. She could tell that Harry didn't exactly appreciate Ron standing by her instead of him for once. She had to admit that she was mildly surprised as well. For as long as she could remember Harry and Ron had always sided with each other and against her whenever an argument had arisen between the three. She was...relieved, but also a little weirded out.

In all honesty she just wanted things to go back to how they were. She didn't know how to handle the fact that Ron was on her side instead of Harry's. She didn't know how to deal with Harry's increasing protectiveness and suspicions concerning her. She didn't know how to face this new reality. Harry was her best friend. He had

always made her feel safe and no matter what, she always trusted him. She knew that all of this was because of the damned locket, she knew that, but the locket didn't force people to do its bidding like an Imperius curse.

It twisted your mind and played on your worst fears until you were nothing but a strung out mess. It forced your deepest and darkest desires to the forefront of your mind. It made you say things that you regularly thought, but wouldn't normally say, in fear of hurting one's feelings. So essentially, it hurt, a *lot*, to know that this was what Harry really thought. Now she knew that Harry knew what Draco was capable of, but to think that he could turn her into a traitor? That was downright insulting. Then again, Draco had managed to make her do things she never would have thought about doing in a million years. She closed her eyes. Harry would never understand what kind of torment Draco had put her through, still continued to put her through.

It was impressive really, how he could slither his way in, completely undetected until it was too late. How he could lay the ground work and set up residence while you were none the wiser. Draco had a way of making her question everything she had ever believed in. He knew what to say and what to do to keep her hooked. She was afraid of him, but she craved him. He was able to instill fear in her body like no other all the while beckoning for her to come closer like a moth to a flame. Draco was a walking contradiction. He had the appearance of an angel with his fair features and alluring smile. Merlin, that smile. Hermione had rarely ever seen it. She could probably count the number of times he had smiled on one hand, but when he did it was a sight to behold. Everything about his appearance invited you in. Everything but his eyes.

No matter how much of a friendly expression he had upon his face, Draco's eyes always told a different tale. They always sparkled with a sick humor as if he were a wolf in sheep's' clothing surrounded by nothing but unsuspecting prey. They glowed with intensity and no matter if they were still it always seemed as if they were moving, swirling with sinful intentions. They had the ability to hold you in

place, to captivate you even when all you wanted to do was flee. His eyes could seduce her own with silent promises of ecstasy and eroticism. Those twirling pools, the color of liquid silver, gave her visions of silk sheets and skin on skin. They held secrets of a world a girl could only dream of experiencing. His eyes alone could cast a shadow over the most attractive males out there.

Hermione shuddered as she pressed her hands into the earth beneath her, her back digging into the bark of the tree she was sitting at. She released a sigh as she leaned her head back. How was he able to still have this hold on her? Here she was, out in the middle of nowhere searching for Horcruxes and of all the things she could be thinking about, she was thinking of him. She suddenly jerked up, her eyes searching for the footsteps she began to hear. She slowly rose to her feet, taking cautious and quiet steps towards the barrier. Her eyes trailed across the expanse of trees before hearing a twig snap to her right. She turned her head, her eyes widening. She sharply inhaled and held her breath as they neared.

*Snatchers* , her mind immediately recognized. Her heart beat erratically as Fenrir Greyback walked past her, a limp body swinging from his arms. The snatcher beside him also had a body thrown over his shoulder. Hermione swallowed, her throat dry and stomach swirling as she gazed at the pale body. Her heart finally began to slow as the last snatcher walked right past her. Her shoulders sagged in relief as their footsteps began to grow lighter.

"Was that?"

Her head jerked to the left as he paused, her shoulders trembling as she heard him sniffing. She watched as he retraced his steps before stopping directly in front of her, his nose turning up as he continued to sniff. She leaned back as he slightly leaned in, a hairs width away from where she had set up the enchantments.

"Was that...smell?"

Her lips partially parted as her mind span. Her perfume! How could she possibly be so stupid? She could do nothing but stand as still as a statue as he stared directly at her, searching for the source of the scent. It felt like hours as he stared at her and she him. In reality, it may not have even been a minute. She flexed her hands and let out a breath as he turned away, distracted by the snatcher dropping the body. She didn't release all tension though until he walked away, scolding the other snatcher before they all headed off. She let out short, choppy breaths, feeling as if she had just escaped a heart attack.

Could she have been any thicker? She had almost just risked everything simply because she didn't enjoy smelling like dirt and leaves. She scoffed. Imagine, they lose the war all because she had been such a girl and worn perfume in the bloody forest. She stood there, staring after them in...shock? No, it was fear, definitely fear. She had made such a harmless mistake that could have had catastrophic results. She was slipping. Her eyebrows furrowed as she attempted to process this information.

"Snatchers...it's good to know that your enchantments work..."

She barely acknowledged that it was Harry who had spoken. She breathed.

"He could smell it...my perfume," she quietly replied.

She was shaken out of her trance as Harry's fingers connected with the sleeve of her coat. She stared at him with unfocused eyes before frowning.

"Wait...", he said as she turned to walk away "...please."

She remained quiet, but stopped nonetheless.

"I'm really sorry, Hermione."

"You know...I feel like I've been hearing that from you a lot this past year," she breathed.

"I know. I've been a real tosser, haven't I?"

She shrugged.

"I guess," she whispered.

She didn't know what to think of Harry anymore.

"You just...you have to understand that you make me crazy sometimes. You have no idea what you do to me," he said.

*Do you have any idea what you do to me?* Hermione shuddered and took a step back, recalling Draco's words that night of the Winter Ball. Harry either didn't notice this or chose to ignore it as he reached out and grabbed her hand.

"I just think about how much easier things would be right now if you and I...," he trailed off.

"But we're not. Can't you just accept that? For me," she pleaded as she threw herself away from him.

Harry opened his mouth before snapping it shut with a huff.

"Only if you answer one question," he proposed.

She let out a humorless chuckle.

"He kissed me and I kissed him back. There," she said as she crossed her arms over her chest.

She didn't lie, she just didn't tell him the whole truth. He didn't need to know everything that had happened that night. Harry frowned.

"That's it?"

"See! You hound me and hound me and hound me and you didn't even know what for. You have been on my case demanding to know what happened that night and now you have the nerve to act all offended that that's it. You wanted to know so badly, remember?"

She was praying that he couldn't see right through her. She was hoping that he would accept this answer and be on his way.

"It's just...well, the way you've been acting-"

"Look, Harry...I just felt guilty and disgusted with myself for it. It wasn't like before where I was completely in the dark about everything. This was after everything had happened, after he had murdered our Headmaster and let Death Eaters into the school. I felt sick to my stomach that I even allowed him to touch me. I was afraid of what the two of you would think of me," she said.

Harry sighed before looking down at his feet.

"I feel like such a jerk."

"You should. You accused me of sleeping with him and turning spy for his cause. That hurt... *a lot* ," she whispered.

"I was angry. That's no excuse, but I was. I'd had these thoughts in my head for weeks about what could have happened and you refusing to even consider discussing it had me thinking the worst."

Hermione looked away.

"Forgive me, Hermione..."

She inhaled before looking at him.

"I don't know if I can right now. I don't even know if I can trust you-"

"You can!"

"Can I? I feel like...I feel like you're mad at me for not returning your feelings and you're punishing me for it," she said.

"That's not...okay. Maybe I am a bit upset about that, but it's only because I know that if he hadn't have screwed everything up we would be together," he replied.

"You don't know that. Are you forgetting the part where you knew that Ron had feelings for me and you just decided that his feelings weren't as important as yours? Or how about the fact that you used my best friend and then broke her heart just to get to me."

"I didn't break her heart," he scoffed.

"You did! You did. She would never admit it to you, she would never tell you in a million years, but yes you broke her heart. She has been crazy about you for years. She looked at you like you hung the moon and you completely shattered her view of you. She loved you," she said.

Harry shoved his hands into his pockets with a shrug.

"I know what I did was wrong and I've apologized for it, but I won't apologize for my feelings for you," he snapped.

"Maybe you should," she snapped back.

He closed his eyes with a sigh. Hermione immediately regretted the words as soon as they had slipped from her lips. She opened her mouth but soon snapped it shut. She could see that she had hurt him.

"I'll take the next watch," was all he said as he walked back towards the tent.

Hermione looked down at her feet before looking up at the sky. The moon stared down at her, its light casting a spotlight on her as she



heaved a tired sigh. Tensions would only continue to rise. She could feel it in the air; trouble was brewing.

---

Draco watched the long serpent slowly slither along the table, its body moving like a wave as she approached her master. Said master continued on with his speech, his spine-chilling voice descending over the room like a dark fog. Draco's lips turned upwards into a smirk as he watched the other occupants squirm in their seats. Draco stared Nagini down as she briefly turned to look at him, her eyes boring into his own before turning away and continuing on her path, tongue flicking out to taste the air.

Draco's nails dragged against the arm of the chair, making a soft scraping sound. He had done everything he could to not think about the boy-who-couldn't-keep-his-hands-to-himself, but it was proving difficult. As the weeks went by his imagination kept running rampant with all of the possibilities that could be happening at this very moment. He feared that by the time he actually had her in his grasp again he would have to start from scratch. *Bloody Potter ...*

Draco had to keep himself from snickering as many of them almost fought to get out of the door first as they were dismissed. However, before Draco even had time to move...

"Draco."

He straightened his shoulders and stayed put as his aunt turned back to look over her shoulder, she being the last one out. Her eyes held his as she snaked her way through the exit. The darkest wizard to have ever lived slowly rose from his chair, causing Draco to do the same.

"My Lord," Draco responded with a slight bow of his head.

Ruby colored eyes bore into stormy ones before the fair haired boy found himself hunched over with a flick his Master's wrist. Draco shut his eyes and bit his tongue, anticipating this as spasms rocked his

body. He knew exactly what this was for. Soon it was over and he straightened himself, flicking his hair out of his eye with a jerk of his head. He rolled his shoulders as a cold laugh rang throughout the room.

"You never disappoint, do you?"

"No, my Lord," Draco immediately responded.

"That is a lie," this came out as a hiss.

Draco held eye contact with Voldemort as he sneered and approached him, seeming to glide across the floor. Draco indifferently glanced down at the snake moving past his feet before raising his eyes once again.

"I see that the... *mudblood* ," the disgust was evident "...still plagues your thoughts. Does she not?"

"She does, my Lord."

"You have potential. I cannot have you distracted by such... *filth* . If you want a pet so badly go out and get one," he spat.

"I only want her, my Lord," Draco firmly responded.

Neither one of them spoke as Draco's words lingered in the air. Draco suddenly smirked as Voldemort turned his back to him.

"After all, if she is here with me then she cannot help him. I happen to know for a fact that he fancies himself *in love* with her..." Draco scoffed out "...I'm willing to bet that he would lose his mind if he lost her."

"Of course it does not hurt that she would be here with you, no? I see right through you, young Malfoy, but your statement does hold truth nonetheless," he spoke as he turned back around.

"Very well. After all, you have proven your loyalty time and time again..." he continued as he stroked the wand in his bony fingers.

---

*"...But I face an unfortunate complication; that my wand and Potter's share the same core. They are in some ways...twins. We can wound, but not fatally harm one another."*

*Draco watched as he set his wand down on the table and stared around the room. His eyes falling on each and every one of his followers.*

*"If I am to kill him I must do it with another's wand. Come, surely one of you would like the honor..."*

*Draco looked over his shoulder as Voldemort's fingers brushed over his chair before moving onto the next. He was testing every single one of them and Draco was never one to fail. Draco reached inside of his suit jacket, the movement drawing attention to him. It wasn't easy, but he figured it would earn him favor and get him what he wanted. He was all for seeing Potter dead.*

*"Ah, Draco," he laughed, the icy sound sending a chill throughout the room as Draco pulled out his wand.*

*He watched as Voldemort weighed the wand in his skeletal hand with a hum.*

*"Hawthorn wood. And the core..."*

*"Unicorn hair, my Lord," Draco answered.*

*"Unicorn hair," he said appreciatively with a nod.*

*He made another humming sound.*

*"It will do. Since, after all, it seems as if Draco is the only one who wants to see his master prevail," Voldemort said with a sneer, his*

*eyes blazing as they fell over the other occupants of the room.*

*Draco's lips curved into a smirk as many began to shift in their seats.*

*"For those of you who do not know we are joined tonight by Ms. Charity Burbage..."*

*Draco watched with narrowed eyes as Ms. Burbage floated through the air, her body taut.*

*"...who until recently taught at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Her specialty was Muggle Studies..."*

*Soft chuckles rang throughout the room.*

*"It is Ms. Burbage's belief that Muggles...are not so different from us. She would, given her way, have us mate with them..."*

*Draco fought the urge to roll his eyes as his aunt made a disgusted sound, like a five year old, while loud laughter filled the room.*

*"To her the mixture of magical and Muggle blood is not an abomination..."*

*Draco's eyes focused on Voldemort as he said this, his lips curved into a judgment filled smirk.*

*"...but something to be encouraged."*

*Draco's eyes followed Ms. Burbage's line of sight and landed on Professor Snape.*

*"S-S-Severus. S-Severus please...we're friends..."*

*Draco's eyes remained on his Head of House's expression that gave nothing away. They narrowed as Snape said nothing, did nothing that would indicate his thoughts. Although, Draco supposed that his silence said enough. Draco's eyes flickered to Ms. Burbage's lifeless body as she collapsed onto the table before looking at his mother out*

*of the corner of his eye. He saw an expression that he knew all too well and rested his hand over her own, giving it a soft squeeze.*

*"Nagini...dinner."*

*Draco watched the giant pet make her way towards Ms. Burbage, her blank eyes seeing nothing. He quickly looked away. Watching a snake swallow a woman whole wasn't exactly stimulating to say the least. Besides, he had never liked Muggle Studies anyway; she had always given him a hard time.*

---

"...And loyalty must be rewarded."

Draco cleared his throat. He rested his hands behind his back as he took a step forward.

"My Lord, it was brought to my attention some time ago that you and Potter are connected somehow. That you have allowed him to see certain things in your mind and through your eyes, things you wanted him to see..."

Voldemort said nothing, but Draco knew that he had his attention.

"I was just...wondering, curious really, to see if it worked the other way around," Draco slowly proposed, allowing his words to linger in the air.

---

"We thought we knew what you were doing! We thought Dumbledore had told you what to do, we thought you had a plan!"

Hermione opened her mouth to interrupt, but she was foiled again.

"Well sorry to let you down, I've been straight with you from the start, I told you everything Dumbledore told me. And in case you haven't noticed, we've found one Horcrux-"

"Yea and we're about as near to getting rid of it as we are to finding the rest of them - nowhere effing near, in other words!"

Hermione had never seen Ron this mad before. Of course, she should have guessed that this fight was long overdue. She reached for him, desperate.

"Take off the locket Ron. Please take it off. You wouldn't be talking like this if you hadn't been wearing it all day," she pleaded.

"Yeah, he would. D'you think I haven't noticed the two of you whispering behind my back? D'you think I didn't guess you were thinking this stuff," Harry demanded, snapping at her.

She spun around to face him.

"Harry, we weren't-"

She turned to face Ron as he spoke.

"Don't lie! You said it too, you said you were disappointed, you said you'd thought he had a bit more to go on than-"

She faced Harry again.

"I didn't say it like that - Harry I didn't!"

"So why are you still here," he asked.

"Search me," Ron spat.

"Go home then," Harry said.

"Yeah, maybe I will! Didn't you hear what they said about my sister? But you don't give a rat's fart, do you, it's only the Forbidden Forest, Harry I've-Faced-Worse Potter doesn't care about what happens to her in there, well I do, all right, giant spiders and mental stuff-"

"I was only saying, she was with the others, they were with Hagrid-"

"Yeah, I get it, you don't care! And what about the rest of my family, "the Weasley's don't need another kid injured", did you hear that? Not bothered what it meant though?"

Hermione spoke up.

"Ron! I don't think means anything new has happened, anything we don't know about; think, Ron, Bill's already scarred, plenty of people must have seen that George has lost an ear by now and you're supposed to be on your death bed with spattergroit, I'm sure that's all he meant-"

"Oh you're sure, are you? Right then, I won't bother myself about them. It's alright for you two isn't it, with your parent's safely out of the way-"

"My parents are DEAD," was Harry's harsh reply.

"And mine could be going the same way!"

"Then GO! Go back to them, pretend you've got over your spattergroit and Mummy'll be able to feed you up and-"

"Protego," Hermione called out, seeing the two of them moving closer.

"Leave the Horcrux," Harry said.

Ron yanked the locket off as he turned to face her.

"What are you doing?"

Hermione frowned in confusion.

"What do you mean?"

"Are you staying, or what," he demanded.

Hermione opened her mouth in shock and stared at him in disbelief. No, she didn't want to stay here alone with Harry, that was the last thing she wanted to do, but they couldn't leave him. Not now. Ron couldn't really be asking this of her.

"I...Ron I- we said we'd help. We can't-"

"Yeah, I get it. You couldn't possibly leave *The Chosen One* by himself. Merlin forbid he get himself killed," he spat.

"Ron!"

She caught the necklace as he threw it at her.

"I get it. You choose him."

"Ron, no - please - come back, come back!"

She ran after him as he exited the tent, but she was too late. Hermione stared out into the forest as if that would will him to return. The cold bit into her skin, but she paid no mind. He was gone. Her shoulders trembled as she felt the heat of his body before he rested his hands on her arms. She put her hand over her mouth to hold in her sobs.

"He's g-g-gone! Dissaparated!"

Her feet allowed him to lead her back into the tent. Harry wrapped his arms around her as she cried into his shoulder. Ron had left. He had actually left.

---

Hermione finished setting up the enchantments with taut shoulders. She slowly lowered her hands before reaching up to finger her neck where her scarf had once been. It was stupid, really, but she had wanted Ron to know that they had left in case he came back. She heaved a sigh before turning around and heading back into the tent.



She stopped in her tracks at the sight of Harry's hunched back as he sat down at the table. She had to keep reminding herself that she wasn't the only one hurting. She sat down beside him.

"I feel like this is all my fault..."

"It's not...", she trailed off.

What she really wanted to say was that it wasn't all his fault. Yes, part of her did believe that he was partially at fault. His behavior as of late hadn't made things any easier for any of them, especially Ron. However, she said none of this because one could say that she had a hand in this as well. She rubbed his back in comfort.

"He'll be back. I know it," she reassured even though she hardly believed this herself.

Harry straightened up to look at her. The light caught his eyes and they glinted, forcing Hermione to focus on them, but he looked away.

"You don't know that," he whispered.

"I do," Hermione replied.

She had just reached out to grab his hand when he spun around and dove in. She pressed the palm of her hand against his chest as she leaned back.

"Harry I- no! Merlin, no," she snapped as she stood.

He stood with her, his expression dark.

"Why not? Ron is gone, it's just us," he said.

"Gods, I don't believe this! Your best friend, someone who is like a brother to you is gone, and this is all you can think about. He is Merlin knows where and all you can say is 'he's gone now so that means it's okay'."

Hermione shook her head in disgust as she took a step back.

"I'm sorry, but I have to go find him. I can't stay here. I'm so sorry," she whispered before she began to collect her things.

She had to get out of here and fast. She honestly had no idea as to where she would first start searching for Ron, but she knew that she had to bring him back. She couldn't handle this, not anymore.

"Hermione, wait..."

"I can't Harry. You just won't leave me be. You won't take no for an answer."

"But-"

"No, I'm leaving!"

Her back suddenly went rigid before relaxing as she dropped her bag, it landed on the floor with a soft thud. She slowly stood as an unfamiliar feeling washed over her like a fog. She blinked as her mind momentarily went blank.

*Harry, Harry, Harry ...* She looked over her shoulder as Harry ran his fingers down her arm, dancing like spider legs as they descended. A shiver went down her spine as he sunk his head into the crook of her neck, his lips connecting with her skin. There was a nagging voice in the back of her head that kept telling her that something was wrong, that she didn't want this. She pulled away to voice these thoughts, but Harry snaked his arm around her waist, pulling her back flush against his chest. She let out a breathless sigh as he nipped at her skin.

"Harry," she breathed.

He spun her around to face him before his lips covered her own. She closed her eyes, but not before briefly noting that his wand was

clutched in his hand. She shook her head and leaned back with a frown.

"Harry-"

"Ssh," he said as he pulled her back to him, the sound coming out like a hiss.

Her words were swallowed by his mouth as he leaned her back, her pelvis pressing against his own. Everything from that moment on was a blur. Before she knew what was happening, her back had connected with her bed. Her naked chest was flush with Harry's equally naked one and her bare legs were wrapped around his waist.

Thinking back, she couldn't remember much. She remembered that there was a brief moment of pain that was quickly over shadowed by pleasure. She could remember her back arching off of the bed as Harry dipped his head down. She could remember the sounds they made and the ecstasy filled haze she seemed to be in. Overall, she could remember a nagging voice telling her that she didn't want this and bright eyes where Harry's green ones should have been.

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**It's necessary to the plot, so once again, sorry Harry lovers.  
Don't forget to review!**

# In This Tug of War You'll Always Win

Yes I am back with another update. As usual, I have changed certain things to fit my story and I'm so glad that many of you caught on to what happened last chapter. I don't like to make things too obvious, but I do like to make the hints noticeable so that you can easily figure it out for yourself. I won't outright say what happened for those of you who were confused and it is clearer in this chapter but I will say this (IMPORTANT): *Harry* did not use the Imperius Curse on Hermione. You can always go back and reread the last chapter and this one if you are still confused. I didn't get a chance to thoroughly proof read and edit this btw.

*Italics = flashback*

Regular print = current time

DISCLAIMER: I Own Nothing

---

*"Good evening, Draco. What brings you here on this fine spring evening?"*

*Draco narrowed his eyes and glanced around the tower as he stepped forward. He was positive that he had heard someone else...*

*"Who else is here? I heard you talking," Draco demanded.*

*"I often talk aloud to myself. I find it extraordinarily useful. That which sounds sane at a whisper can seem utterly mad when said for all the world to hear. Haven't been whispering to yourself, have you, Draco?"*

*Draco looked at his Headmaster with unease. He's bonkers , Draco thought.*

*"You are no assassin, Draco," Dumbledore softly stated.*

*Pride and smugness coursed through Draco's veins as he sneered at the old man. The corner of his lip curved upwards.*

*"How do you know what I am? I've done things that would shock you," he mocked with pride.*

*"Like cursing Katie Bell and hoping she would, in turn, bear a cursed necklace to me? Like replacing a bottle of mead with one laced with poison. Forgive me, Draco, but these are attempts so feeble I cannot help but question if your heart has been really in them. I'm curious. When Voldemort gave you this task, when he asked you to kill me, was it in a whisper?"*

*Draco's lips thinned into a straight line as Dumbledore recounted all of his failed attempts at killing him. Draco's anger simmered beneath the surface as he thought back to what Theo had said at the very beginning of the year. You don't want to finish this as soon as possible? You're just giving people more reasons to doubt you...*

*"He trusts me. I was chosen," he hissed as he thrust out his arm.*

*He reached down and yanked the dark sleeve up to reveal the thing plastered onto his skin that had put his fierce lioness in such a tizzy. He almost grinned as he thought back to the horrified look upon her face as her eyes had opened to a comical size. She had looked so faint.*

*"Then I shall make it easy for you," Dumbledore said as he drew his wand.*

*"Expelliarmus!"*

*"Well done, Draco. But I warn you. Killing is not nearly as easy."*

*"We're going to have to agree to disagree on this one, Headmaster. I find it quite easy. Especially when you have a certain goal in mind,"*

*Draco replied as he took another step forward.*

*"Ah, yes. If it is Ms. Granger you want, by all means. She is a bright and beautiful witch-"*

*"I know that," Draco interrupted.*

*He didn't need Dumbledore to tell him that . Malfoy's always got the best.*

*"Wouldn't you rather do this the right way? Surely, she must not be pleased with you right now. We can help you, I'm sure she has told you that..."*

*Draco eyebrows furrowed as he mulled over his words. Yes, she had told him that, but he wasn't stupid. He knew exactly how it would go if they had their way. This was the only way... Malfoy looked into his Headmaster's eyes and then to the darkening sky as the clouds gathered, twisting darkly. He glanced at the stairwell.*

*"You're not alone, are you? There are others. How?"*

*Draco rolled his shoulders.*

*"The Vanishing Cabinet in the Room of Requirement," Draco answered.*

*"That cabinet has been broken for years."*

*"I've been mending it."*

*"Ingenious. Let me guess. It has a sister; a twin," Dumbledore stated, fascinated.*

*"In Borgin & Burkes. They form-"*

*"A passage, yes. Very good..." his eyes suddenly shifted "...I once knew a boy years ago who made all the wrong choices. Let me help you, Draco."*

*His eyes narrowed once more as her voice resonated within his head.*

*"We can help you," she whispered.*

*"Help me," he chuckled.*

*"Yes! Whatever it is that they threatened you with..."*

*He shook his head.*

*"I don't want your help, old man! Don't you see," Draco snapped as he stepped forward.*

*His fingers tightened around his wand as determination swam in his eyes.*

***" I chose this ,"** he snarled.*

*Draco suddenly glanced over his shoulder as footsteps grew louder, revealing his aunt, Greyback, and some of the others. He turned back around to face his Headmaster.*

*"Well...look what we have here," her sickening voice rang throughout the tower.*

*Draco's jaw clenched as she came up to stand behind him, her robes hissing like a snake as they moved along with her.*

*"Well done, Draco," she whispered before pressing a quick kiss to his shoulder.*

*"Good evening, Bellatrix. I think introductions are in order," Dumbledore greeted.*

*"Love to, Albus, but I'm afraid we're on a bit of a tight schedule," she spat the last word out.*

*She turned to Draco.*

*"Do it," she hissed.*

*He cut his eyes towards her, sending her a glare that could kill.*

*"He doesn't have the stomach. Like his father. Let me finish him. In my own way."*

*Draco turned towards the mutt, ready to gut him with the knife inside of his jacket when his aunt placed her hand on his shoulder as she turned towards Greyback.*

*"No! The Dark Lord was clear. The boy's to do it. Go on, Draco. Now!"*

*The curse was on his lips when...*

*"No."*

*Draco turned to his Head of House with blazing eyes. What on earth did he think he was doing?*

*"Severus..."*

*"Well, look who's here. Hogwarts own Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher. Come to see the slaughter," Bellatrix laughed.*

*"Severus...please..."*

*Draco's eyes darted between the two, narrowing, before he shoved Snape aside.*

*"No. I was chosen for this...", he hissed as he walked forward.*

*He raised his wand yet again and smirked.*

*"I made all the right choices. Avada Kedavra!"*

---



Hermione sprinted through the trees, her hair flying behind her as she forced her legs to push on. She could hear several pairs of footsteps crunching against the forest floor as they picked up the pace. However, Hermione wasn't concerned with the other snatchers pursuing her; only one. The long haired one who'd had her scarf around his neck, caressing it as if it were a precious kitten. Yes, he frightened her very much. She heard a grunt some ways behind her and the sound of chains followed by a thud. She didn't need to look back to know that Ron was down...

---

*Hermione stared at the ceiling of the tent feeling...empty. She felt so empty and just plain wrong. Harry's warm body was lying next to hers, his arm thrown over her waist. It was so odd. As soon as Harry had passed out everything had gone away and the disgust and regret came pouring in. She sat up, pulling the thin cover with her, causing Harry to stir. She stared into the darkness with so much confusion. She didn't understand...*

*She looked over at Harry as he groaned, shifting, before beginning to sit up. She recoiled, staring at him with wary eyes, waiting and hoping that he would be able to explain. She watched as he reached up to rub his eye before running his hand through his hair.*

*"Hermione...?"*

*She swallowed before quietly answering, heart pounding beneath her chest.*

*"Yes."*

*"What...? I-"*

*He cut himself off.*

*"Hermione I-"*

*"What happened, Harry?"*

*"I...I don't know," he lamely responded.*

*She tightened the sheet around her before standing up., ignoring the ache in her legs. She felt as if she were going to pass out.*

*"You don't know," she angrily questioned.*

*"I mean I do know. We both know, but you have to know that I wouldn't...I didn't-"*

*"You did," she snapped.*

*He stood, frantic.*

*"I didn't, Hermione, I didn't! I mean I did, but...I didn't," he whispered.*

*She turned away from him as she stared at the floor, tears spilling from her eyes.*

*"Hermione, I would never-"*

*He cut himself off with a sob. Her shoulders trembled as she collapsed, landing onto her but with a soft thud. She buried her face into the palm of her hand.*

*"Hermione, you have to believe me. You know me!"*

*"Do I," she mumbled into her hand.*

*She jerked away and glared up at him as he laid his hand on her shoulder.*

*"Don't touch me," she hissed.*

*She ignored the way his eyebrows furrowed and his bottom lip trembled. She turned away.*

*"Hermione...please..."*

*"I want to be alone," she whispered.*

*"Hermione-"*

*"Harry!"*

*She glared up at him as he quickly yanked on his pants and pulled his sweater over his head before exiting the tent. Hermione stared at the floor, her body swirling with every emotion known to man. She was angry, so angry, but Harry was right. She did know him and he had been a complete jerk lately, but he would never... She closed her eyes. She couldn't even bring herself to think it. Harry would never do such a thing, but he did. None of this made any sense. She let out a harsh sob as she shook her head. She didn't understand...*

---

*Draco walked along the corridors at a brisk pace. He needed to get back to the manor and quickly. Not only was Dumbledore's death on his hands, Hermione was a slippery one and he didn't doubt for a minute that she could slip past Blaise and Theo. Well, maybe not Blaise, but he didn't trust Theodore at all. That dark haired insect had had his eye on the curly haired Gryffindor for years. He heard footsteps not far away, but they seemed to be going in the opposite direction. He began to turn the corner when he saw her .*

*A rage like no other began to build up in his chest. What the bloody hell was she still doing here? Where were Blaise and Theo? His lip curled over his teeth with a small snarl. He was just about to tackle her when his aunt's laugh rang throughout the corridor, coming from somewhere behind him. He quickly backed up as he saw her spin around, wild hair flying. He pressed his back firmly against the wall as her footsteps sped up towards his direction. At the last minute he stuck his long arm out, satisfied as she ran into it, his arm sinking into her gut.*

*He threw her back and stepped away from the wall as she flew back, her back connecting with the stones of the floor. His jaw clenched as he walked towards her. He was angry he could hardly see straight.*

*"You mind telling me...why the hell you are still here...?"*

---

Draco walked through the manor with a purpose. According to Voldemort, everything had gone as it should have. He wasn't sure what he had done, but he had assured Draco that he had irrevocably severed whatever bond Potter and she had. He ignored the sneer Lestrangle threw his way before turning the corner. He had waited too damn long for this. It wouldn't be much longer now...

---

*Hermione emerged from the tent, blinking against the harsh bright light of the day. She spotted Harry and rubbed her arms furiously. Things between them had been so weird, she wasn't even sure what to call it. It was such a complicated situation. Hermione was constantly torn; she knew that Harry would never force her to have sex with him, but the fact of the matter is that he did. She shook her head. She didn't trust him, but she also didn't not trust him. She couldn't figure it out, but she couldn't leave him though. This world rested on his shoulders and she couldn't leave him now. The fate of the wizarding world was much more important.*

*"Everything all right," she quietly asked.*

*He had an odd look on his face.*

*"Fine. Actually...more than fine."*

*He stepped aside and she felt her arms fall as her heart thudded beneath her chest. She stared at the redhead with a mix of emotions that she didn't even want to begin to place. She swallowed, her throat thick, as he stared at her. No one said anything as she began to walk towards him. He raised his hand with a sheepish smile.*

*"Hey..."*

*And then...Hermione began to punch him.*

*"Wo-hey-ouch!"*

*"You complete arse Ronald Weasley! You crawl back here after all of these weeks and say, 'Hey'," she demanded as she reached down and threw a handful of dirt and leaves at him.*

*She punched him once more as she exhaled before glancing down.*

*"What is that?"*

*She stared at it more before looking up at him.*

*"You destroyed it?"*

*She glanced at Harry as he gestured to Ron. He nods and she opens her mouth to speak before closing it as her eyes shift once more.*

*"And exactly how is it you have the Sword of Gryffindor," she demanded.*

*"It's a long story," Harry mumbled.*

*Hermione stares at him for a minute before turning back to Ron.*

*"Don't think this changes anything."*

*"No, of course not. I only destroyed a bloody freaking Horcrux! Why would that change anything!"*

*Hermione pursed her lips as she crossed her arms over her chest.*

*"Look, I wanted to come back the minute I'd left. I just... didn't know how to find you," Ron said.*

*Hermione frowned, noting that he didn't find her scarf that she had left for him.*

*"Exactly how did you find us," Harry questioned.*

*"It's...a long story," he breathed as he glanced at her.*

*Hermione ground her teeth together before turning away, walking back towards the tent. As she passed by Harry they both shared a look with one another; Ron was not to know. She could hear them whispering to each other behind her, but she didn't care. She was just glad that Ron was back...*

---

The forest began to grow more dense, shadows thickening. Spells splintered through the trees, pieces of wood flying everywhere. Hermione forced herself to push on as she tightened her hand around her wand. She could hear footsteps closing in and while barely looking over her shoulder, she threw a curse. She was satisfied as she heard the explosion behind her...

---

*"I want to go and see Xenophilius Lovegood," she stated as she stood in the mouth of the tent.*

*"Sorry?"*

*She walked inside.*

*"See this? It's a letter Dumbledore wrote to Grindelwald. Look at the signature. It's the mark again," she pointed out.*

*She turned it in Harry's direction so that he could have a better look.*

*"It keeps cropping up. Here. In Beedle the Bard. In the graveyard in Godric's Hollow-what?"*

*Harry had a blank look in his eyes as if he were in deep thought. He suddenly blinked.*

*"Jesus, it was there too," he said.*

*"Where," she asked.*

*"Outside Gregorovitch's wand shop. On the alley wall..."*

*"But what does it mean," Ron questioned.*

*"Harry, you don't have a clue where the next Horcrux is. And neither do I, but this, this means something. I'm sure of it," she firmly proposed.*

*They all stared at one another as they processed her words.*

---

Hermione stumbled but regained her footing. She looked around and found herself in a clearing and noted the figures up ahead. She spun around to face Harry as he came running towards her. They both froze as she stared at him, the snatchers closing in. She reached out and snatched his glasses before lifting her wand towards his face...

---

*"That treacherous old bleeder! Is there no one we can trust?"*

*"They've kidnapped Luna because he supported me. He was just desperate," Harry softly replied.*

*Ron didn't reply, instead he looked towards the river. He spat, clearing the grit from his teeth.*

*"I'll do the enchantments..."*

*Hermione brushed her coat off as she took a few steps forward before pausing as she looked up. There, leaning against the tree in front of her, was the snatcher she had seen all those nights ago. He tilted his head as he gazed at her like she was under a microscope. Her eyes widened as her eyes zeroed in on the scarf around his neck; her scarf.*

*"ello beautiful," he softly stated.*

*She stumbled back, almost losing her footing as she looked around to confirm what she already knew; he was not alone. Simultaneously, the three of them took off.*

---

"They exist. The Hallows," he elaborated with a nod "..., but he only wants the one, the last one. That's what he's been looking for," he furiously whispered.

"What are you saying?"

"He knows where it is, You-Know-Who. He'll have it by the end of the night. He's found the Elder Wand."

Hermione's eyes widened as Ron was shoved down next to them as she was yanked up by her shoulder. She grunted in pain as she fought against her captor.

"Don't touch her!"

She gasped as a fist connected with Ron's gut, forcing him to keel over.

"Leave him," she snapped as she struggled.

"Your boyfriend will get worse than that if he doesn't learn to behave himself."

Hermione didn't bother to correct the long haired snatcher as she glared up at him. He walked towards them, pausing in front of Harry.

"What happened to you, ugly," he questioned.

Hermione watched as both Fenrir Greyback and Harry turned to look at him.

"No, not you," he told the wolf before looking at Harry once more.

"What's your name?"



"Dudley. Vernon Dudley," Harry told him.

"Check it!"

Hermione fought against the arms around her, but immediately began to still as he made his way over to her, a small smirk upon his lips.

"And you, my lovely, what do they call you," he questioned as he came to stand in front of her.

Hermione straightened up and leaned back, extremely uncomfortable. His clothing brushed against her own as he was practically on top of her.

"Penelope Clearwater. Half-blood," she shakily whispered as her heart pounded in her chest.

She shuddered as he stroked the nape of her neck, fingering a lock of her hair before burying his nose in it. He looked up and began to lean in, much to Hermione's horror.

"There's no Vernon Dudley on 'ere!"

The snatcher reluctantly turned away from her to face Harry.

"Hear that, ugly? The list says you're lying. How come you don't want us to know who you are? Hm," Greyback probed.

Hermione's eyes widened.

"The list is wrong. I told you who I am-"

The one wearing her scarf put a finger to his lips, silencing Harry. Hermione fought furiously as the snatcher probed Harry's face, taking a closer look. She bucked, her heart practically aching to jump out of her chest as tears began to form in her eyes. *No, no, please no*, she mentally pleaded. She kicked, her head shaking, on the verge of a panic attack.

"Change of plans. We're not taking this lot to the Ministry..."

*No...*

"Head for Malfoy Manor."

---

**It is almost time... Don't forget to review!**

# **It's sick that all these battles**

**The wait is ova, the wait is ova**

**I am back with another update. As you can see my other two stories are on hold, but that is only temporary. It's just until I get to a good resting point with M&M.**

**Um...with this chapter I must say that uh from now on I am going to hold nothing back. I've never mislead anyone into thinking that this story will be cheery and the type of story your mom would approve of. This is a dark and sexual story do remember that...**

**I must say that this chapter almost went in an entirely different direction.**

**I hope I don't dissappoint.**

**Disclaimer: I OWN NOTHING**

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**"Penelope..."**

**She clenched her jaw in anger at being back at this place again. Her heart beat like bird wings beneath her skin. It felt as if her entire body had been emptied out, except for her heart, its solo drum vibrating throughout her entire form.**

**"Penelope."**

**She jerked her head to the left to look at Ron as she realized that he had been calling her this entire time. She had almost forgotten what her "name" was.**

**"It's going to be okay-"**

She looked away, throat thick with emotion as she processed his words.

"Hey, look at me," he whispered.

She glanced at him.

"It's going to be okay. Everything's going to be alright..."

Hermione wanted to believe him more than anything. How could she not when he looked at her with such reassurance?

"I'm here. I'm here and...Dudley's here-"

Hermione flinched and looked away. She didn't even want to think about "Dudley".

" *Penelope* ..."

She looked at him out of the corner of her eye. He swallowed, a worried look crossing his features.

"What happened between you two...while I was gone?"

She looked away again. She had hoped that Ron hadn't caught onto the tension between she and Harry. She could still feel Ron's eyes on her for a minute or two before he reluctantly looked away. Hermione pressed her lips together as they neared the gate. Her feet practically dragged along the ground as they were hauled up the long walkway. She whipped her head around, looking over her shoulder at the scenery behind them. She stared with longing, knowing that she would probably never see it for a very long time. Hermione glanced up at the darkening sky before turning back around. She tightly clenched her fists, staring up at the huge mansion with a look that could kill.

Hermione's throat became frighteningly dry as her eyes fell on the wild, dark tresses that sat atop Bellatrix's head as the older witch pressed her face against the gate, eager. Hermione's shoulders

heaved with panicked breaths as the long haired snatcher, Scabior was what one of the others called him, pressed Harry's face into the gate. Hermione couldn't really see what was going on, but she did see him push Harry's hair back. It was silent as the crazed witch stared at Harry before she finally spoke in a hushed voice, her words almost coming out like a hiss.

"Get. Draco."

---

Hermione's eyes were fixated on the table beside them as they all waited for *him* . No, he couldn't even get their inevitable meeting over with. He had to take his sweet time, allowing her mind to run wild with worst case scenarios. Bellatrix's heels clicked along the floor as she paced back and forth, her eyes trained on Harry, who was now in Greyback's grasp. The long haired snatcher had moved behind her now, his grimy fingers digging into her skin where her shoulder and neck met. His hard chest was pressed into her back, making her cringe with every breath he took.

Narcissa sat in a chair near the empty fireplace, looking much better than the last time she had seen her, Hermione noted. The older witch's gaze was fixated on Hermione with an almost soft expression. Hermione shuddered as she thought back to the last time she was here. Lucius's gurgled gasps for breath still plagued her thoughts. If Hermione closed her eyes, she could still see the blood on the bed covers and hear Narcissa's pained cries. A voice broke her morbid train of thought.

"He's the only one ya need, right?"

It was *him* , the snatcher; Scabior. He was speaking. Hermione watched as Bellatrix narrowed her eyes, trying to figure out where he was going with this. Hermione, however, caught on quickly as he pressed into her some more, his fingers rubbing against her collar bone as he stuck his nose in her hair and inhaled. She looked to Ron and Harry in panic, both of them struggling against their captors' grips as they too caught on.

"You don't need 'er...right," he probed.

Hermione gasped as his fingers dug into her hair. Hermione was focused on him, this frightening snatcher who had taken a disturbing interest in her. She was too focused on the way he subtly pressed his pelvis against her behind and the way his left hand dug into her arm. She was focused on the way Ron and Harry protested, trying to dissuade Bellatrix from whatever answer they thought she was going to give him. Hermione was too focused on Bellatrix herself as she watched the older witch stare at the two of them with calculating eyes.

Hermione was too focused on what was happening that she didn't hear the footsteps outside of the door. She didn't hear the whisper of the door as it was opened. She didn't feel the slight whoosh of air that came through the room as it shut, sending a cold chill and ruffling her unruly hair. She didn't even hear it shut. She didn't hear the echo of footsteps that resonated throughout the room as they slowly moved across the floor. She didn't hear Harry's sharp intake of breath as he noticed what she did not. Hermione didn't even realize that goosebumps had broken out over her skin and that her hairs had begun to stand on end, her body automatically reacting to his presence before her mind had caught up.

She only noticed when Scabior's words were suddenly cut off, a pained gasp escaping his mouth before he coughed. His grip on her loosened and Hermione jumped as specks of blood flew past her before more landed on her shoulder and in her hair. She shuffled to the side in fright as the snatcher collapsed beside her, blood pouring from his mouth like a fountain. A dagger was still lodged into his neck and his blue eyes were blank as they stared at her, his body jerking. Before Hermione had a chance to even move, a firm, muscled arm snaked its way around her neck, pulling her back into a broad chest.

She reached up in panic, fingers clawing at his skin, but immediately stopped and let out a fearful gasp as his grip tightened. She could feel his calm heart beat against her back, a contrast to her own erratic one. That all too familiar scent clouded her senses as he

brushed her hair to one side with his free hand. Hermione let out a startled gasp as his mouth latched onto the skin of her neck. Hermione squirmed in his grip as his teeth gently grazed her sensitive flesh. She faintly recognized that there was some sort of commotion going on.

"I told you...I'll kill anyone who tries to take you from me," he whispered.

He finally loosened his grip and spun her around in his arms as she lifted her head to glare up at him.

Hermione had read many romance novels where the main character spoke of time freezing. Hell, Hermione had actually frozen time once, but nothing had prepared her for this. Hermione had seen those icy eyes in her dreams almost every night. She had kissed those sinful lips, touched that envious hair. His black suit hugged him perfectly, as if caressing his lithe form. His appearance was a stark contrast when compared to her own. It appeared that these last few months had had opposite effects on them both. Months on the run versus months in a mansion was bound to do that. For months Hermione had imagined what she would say to him over and over again whenever they would eventually cross paths. Now, she was at a loss. She stumbled back as he took a step forward, stepping over Scabior's form with zero regard, pressing Hermione closer to him.

His eyes bore into her own with an intensity she was not prepared for. She watched as they traveled over her from head to toe and then back again. The corners of his lips tugged upwards as he caught her eye and Hermione just knew that in his mind, he had taken her six different ways within that short time span of just a few seconds. Her head was spinning with the myriad of emotions that had begun to overtake her form. She was a lot of things at that moment and in the very center swirled an emotion that she had yet to name. However, one emotion overshadowed all the others, even that unnamed one, and that emotion was fear. She felt his fingers flex, as if he was debating whether or not to whisk her away or take her right here on this very floor.

Only then did Hermione notice the chaos around her. Apparently Greyback and the other snatchers didn't take too well to Draco killing their own. Hermione watched as Bellatrix shut them up, reminding them of why they were here. She grabbed Harry by the hair before shoving him to his knees, facing him towards Draco, head pulled back to showcase his face.

"Well," she impatiently questioned, as she stared up at her nephew with a hopeful gleam in her eye.

Hermione had almost forgotten why they were here. *Almost*. A shiver traveled down her spine as *he* pressed his back against her own, his arm tightening over her shoulder, his fingers tracing patterns onto her neck. She trembled and exhaled as his lips grazed her ear, his breath fanning over her like a fog. She hadn't been this close to him in months and had almost forgotten just how demanding his presence was. He whispered in her ear then, far too low for anyone other than her to hear.

"Mmm...what should I tell her, *Hermione* ?"

Her name came out like a purr, rolling off of his lips. She was Hermione Granger, Ron Weasley was to her left and in front of her, held by Bellatrix, was Harry Potter. She knew that and so did Draco. The real question, however, was why wasn't Draco screaming that to the high heavens? Why was he hesitating? Hermione wasn't going to look a gift horse in the mouth though. So without hesitation she whispered...

"Please..."

He chuckled, the vibrations traveling from his chest to her back.

"What's in it for me," he purred.

Hermione faltered. Whether or not he gave Harry away, she was staying here. That much was obvious. Either way, he would get what he wanted.



"That's alright, love. I'm sure that together we can think of something..."

He exhaled for what felt like minutes before finally giving his aunt an answer.

"I can't be sure..."

"Come over," Bellatrix beckoned as she waved Draco over.

With his arm still around her, he began to move, forcing her closer to Bellatrix and Harry as well. She stood beside him as he knelt down to stare at Harry.

"If this isn't who we think it is, Draco, and we call him, he'll kill us all. We need to be absolutely sure," she hissed.

"What's wrong with his face," Draco asked, briefly glancing up at Hermione.

She subtly began to back up, only to be caught in Greyback's arm. She glanced at Ron beside her.

"Yes, what is wrong with his face," Bellatrix demanded.

"He came to us like that. Something he picked up in the forest, I reckon," one of the snatchers piped up.

"Or ran into a stinging jinx...was it you, dearie," the crazed witch asked as she pointed her wand at Hermione.

Hermione gasped as she began to walk towards her with slow steps.

"Give me her wand, we'll see what her last spell was..."

Bellatrix began to laugh as she pointed at Hermione before stopping short as something caught her attention. Hermione followed her line of sight to the sword held in the snatcher's hand.

"What's that," she gasped.

The snatcher glanced down.

"Where'd you get that from," she quietly demanded, eyes widening, hair flying around her face.

"It was in 'er bag when we searched her. Reckon it's mine, now," the snatcher said with a smile.

Hermione gasped as Bellatrix suddenly struck, the snatcher flying backwards and the sword landing in her hand. She watched as the dark haired witch went on a rampage, attacking snatcher after snatcher.

"Get out, get out..." she began to shriek.

As the snatchers scurried out, Bellatrix walked over towards them before grabbing Ron by his jacket. She threw him at Narcissa as well as Harry.

"Put the boys in the cellar!"

Hermione stumbled back as she turned to her.

"I want to have a conversation with this one... *girl to girl* ," she screeched, her face not three inches away from Hermione's.

Hermione's chest heaved as she fought to control her rapid breathing. She glanced at Draco out of the corner of her eye.

"Actually...I'd rather have a few words with her myself..."

Both Hermione and Bellatrix turned to look at Draco as he leaned against the wall beside them.

"If you don't mind..."

Hermione's eyes cut back and forth between the two, trying to decide who the lesser evil was.

"Draco," the older witch hissed "...she has stolen my sword! I want to know how the thieving little mudblood got her hands on it," she snarled as she turned back to the curly haired with.

Hermione gulped as Bellatrix withdrew a dagger, eyes blazing.

"But I would much rather torture it out of her... Besides, I wish to have some fun and she doesn't really seem like your type," he hinted, causing Hermione to stare at him with wide eyes.

Bellatrix glared at Hermione before a cruel sneer fell over her face.

"I want to hear her screams, Draco...come along, Cissy!"

Hermione shuddered as Narcissa and Pettigrew walked through the doors followed by Bellatrix. The dark haired witch turned and grinned at Hermione as she shut the doors, the sound echoing off of the walls with a bang. The temperature in the room seemed to have risen a few degrees as the tension grew. They were alone and neither one of them said anything nor made a move. She stared straight ahead, trying to formulate a plan while he simply gazed at her. Her heart thudded beneath her chest at an alarming rate.

"Well...aren't you going to make me scream," she finally asked.

"Mm, no. I'd much rather save my energy for later on tonight..."

She spun around to face him, nostrils flaring as she took a step back. She shuddered as she thought of that night all those days ago. She still had yet to discern what had really happened between her and Harry, but the bottom line was that they'd had sex. Harry had taken her virginity. Now that she'd had more than enough time to simmer down and fully analyze it, she realized that she was equal parts angry and relieved.

Despite what Harry said he *had* used the Imperius curse on her, forcing her into something she had not been ready for...at least not with him. Even though she knew that Harry would never do such a thing, it didn't change the fact that he did. Something in her gut was telling her that there was more to it though. She had yet to come up with an explanation for that. However, if she had imagined giving that to anyone she would have imagined it to be Harry. She just wished that it had been under better circumstances. After everything Draco had said and done...he didn't *deserve* that part of her, plain and simple.

Still, she was scared to see how he would react when he found out. *Who cares*, she found herself thinking. She and Draco were not together and she was positive that there had been others when he was pursuing her at Hogwarts. That still wouldn't stop Draco from acting like a jealous bull. After all, when had she ever known him to be rational?

"Did you enjoy your little vacation," he mocked, taking a step towards her.

"I'd hardly call it a vacation," she hissed as she glared at him.

"Oh, don't tell me... You and the Dream Team had a little spat, did you? Did the weasel finally have enough of Saint Potter? Did *you* finally have enough," he probed.

Hermione continued backwards, heart drumming like a countdown.

"Did he say something you didn't like...maybe about me? No? Did he...maybe get a little too frisky?"

Hermione halted all movement at the smirk upon his face.

"Why would you say that," she demanded.

"I mean we all know how much he loves you. The two of you out there in hiding, probably cooped up in some tent, it was bound to be

too much for him. After all, he is practically an inexperienced fifteen year old boy when it comes to this stuff. He has no self-control-"

"Nothing like that happened," she interrupted.

She didn't want him to go on. She didn't want to hear anymore. Did he know? Draco was very skilled at Legilimency. Maybe he had seen it in Harry's mind? No, Harry had gotten much better at Occlumency. Heck, he didn't have much of a choice.

"You're right. The-Boy-Who-Lived would never do such a thing. Hell, even *I* would never do such a thing," he said with a chuckle.

That laugh cut deep into Hermione as his words rang true. No, even Draco would never do such a thing..., but Harry did.

"So...how *did* you get the sword?"

"It doesn't matter what I tell you. Your psycho aunt wants to believe we stole it...so that's what she will believe either way," she snapped.

*Ba bum ... ba bum ... ba bum ...*

Hermione swallowed as she continued to step backwards, Draco following.

"You know...I'm trying to think of the best way to go about this. After all, I'm sure she is right outside that door waiting to hear you scream like-"

"Well, go on then. You've Crucio'd me before due to something as meaningless as *jealousy* . I'm sure that torturing me for information will be a walk in the park," she interrupted with a sneer.

He smirked as he reached out and grabbed her arm, halting her movement. She watched as he stepped towards her, dipping his head down to trail his nose along her collar bone and all the way up to her neck. She was still as a statue as he slowly made his way behind her, his long fingers dancing along her hips and back as he

walked. Her eyelashes fluttered and she gasped as he gently trailed his index finger up the length of her spine, eliciting a shudder from her.

"You know...," he quietly began "...she didn't exactly specify what kind of screams she wanted to hear."

*Ba bum ... ba bum ... ba bum ...*

Hermione's eyes snapped open.

"Can you imagine it," he sharply whispered.

She pulled away from him, but he yanked her back, wrapping his arms around her. He exhaled as he buried his nose in her hair, his lips caressing her ear.

"You have no idea how... *excited* it makes me to think of taking you right here on this floor while your boys are just down there. I bet I could make you scream so loud they'd have nightmares about it for weeks," he chuckled.

Hermione's heart continued to speed up, nearing the end of the countdown.

"Oh the things I'm going to do to you," he purred.

*Ba bum ... ba bum ... ba bum ...*

"Draco..."

"The things I'll make you feel. I'll erase every bad experience, every bad memory, I'll make it all go away. Merlin, you won't be able to even walk when I'm done with you..."

She squirmed in his arms. No, she was stronger than this...

3 ... 2 ... 1

"What do you say, Hermione? How about we make you scream?"

---

**Please don't murder me... Don't forget to review!**

# Are What Keeps Me Satisfied

Guess who's back? Back again? M&Ms back. Tell a friend... Ok, I'm done. So many of you are probably upset with me because I posted another new story (WORST MISTAKE), updated *twice* and hadn't even updated this one. I am so extremely sorry for not updating for almost two months. I can't even begin to tell you how much I struggled with getting this chapter started off and here is the reason why. I tried to *not* make Draco an evil, manipulative asshole. But that's who he is! Ugh, I know, I know. This is what happens when you try to change people. It's kind of short, I apologize. So here is the manipulative, possessive, dark, borderline abusive Draco you all know and love. Forgive me...

**Disclaimer: I Own Nothing.**

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*"Draco..."*

*"The things I'll make you feel. I'll erase every bad experience, every bad memory, I'll make it all go away. Merlin, you won't be able to even walk when I'm done with you..."*

*She squirmed in his arms. No, she was stronger than this...*

*3...2...1*

*"What do you say, Hermione? How about we make you scream?"*

---

Hermione barely had time to register what was going on before she was forcefully spun around and immediately landed on the floor, cheek stinging. She let out a pained yelp as she landed on her wrist. Her vision was blurred as she pushed herself onto her hand and knees, attempting to stand when she felt a sharp tug on her scalp.



She sharply inhaled as he pressed his chest to her back, her eyes gazing at the ceiling as he ran his nose along her ear. His breath fanned into her hair and over her cheek, causing a chill to travel down her spine. She could feel every curve and edge of him as he wrapped his other arm around her stomach.

"Do make it believable. I have a reputation to uphold and my aunt will accept nothing less of torturing you to the point of insanity, so... consider yourself lucky," he purred just before shoving her away from him.

She fell into the chair, knocking her chin before pulling it down with her, landing on her back. She struggled to roll over onto her side, forcing herself to stand on shaky legs.

"So how'd you get the sword, honey?"

She tossed it at him, but with a flick of his wand it landed against the wall, exploding into splintering pieces. She turned away, shielding her head with her arms. She jerked away from him when he reached for her arm, causing her to stumble over her own feet. He took this opportunity to grab her other arm and slam her back against the wall. She winced as he slammed his free hand beside her head with a loud thud. She panted as he leaned in, jaw clenched and eyes searching.

"Come on, *Hermione* ," he whispered, her name rolling over his tongue.

She looked away from him, but he grabbed her chin in an iron grip and forced her eyes to reconnect with his.

"Just tell me. The sooner you do, the sooner this will all be over with and we can go upstairs...and I can welcome you home *properly*... ," he crooned, pressing his chest against hers, "...like a good little boyfriend."

She stared at him with fire in her eyes before spitting right in his face.

"You can go to hell," she whispered through clenched teeth, nose flaring.

He reached up to wipe his face with his sleeve before fisting his hand in her hair. She shrieked as he jerked her head down to his stomach level, forcing her to bend over. He tugged her away from the wall, backing up towards where the cellar was...where Harry and Ron were. She dug her hands into his, but the pain only seemed to egg him on.

"Only if you promise to come with," he laughed.

He dragged her down the stairs, her position causing her to stumble a few times. She could hear banging, as if someone was hitting or pulling on metal.

"Let go of her! Hermione! What have you done to her?"

Harry.

"Hermione?"

Luna! Luna was here! *Oh, thank Merlin she's alright .*

"Oh, nothing yet. I'm just getting started. Where did you get the sword," he demanded, tightening his grip on her hair.

"Don't-"

She was cut off as he yanked her back up to his level, pulling her head back, exposing her throat. His lips grazed her ear.

"Shut...up," he hissed in exasperation.

"We're not telling you a damn thing, Malfoy," she heard Ron say.

It was quiet for a moment, but her current position didn't really allow her to see much other than the ceiling. It seemed as if Draco was going to accept that they weren't going to talk. She wasn't stupid though. She knew that Draco was about to do something, something she wouldn't like.

"...very well."

Before she had time to even ponder what that meant, her forehead connected with the wall, *hard*. She gasped as she stumbled against the wall, sliding down it, her vision swimming. She landed on the stairs in a heap.

"Hermione!"

She raised her hand to touch her forehead, not surprised when she brought it back covered in blood. She breathed through her mouth, suddenly light headed. Dark spots began to dance in and out of her vision.

"I can do this all day," Draco said.

She blinked and looked at him through blurry eyes. The room was spinning, but she could see him standing in front of the cellar door, legs slightly apart and hands folded in front of him. Her blurry eyes connected with Ron's worried ones. Harry was glaring at Draco as if he were Voldemort himself. She felt herself falling over, her cheek pressed against the cold stair. She heard Draco heave a sigh.

She felt herself being hauled up, her back lazily pressed to his front, her head leaning against his shoulder, no longer having the strength to keep it up. She felt his hand graze her hip beneath her shirt. He pressed a slow kiss to her cheek and she could hear Harry and Ron's sharp intakes of breath.

"I will take her right here on this very stairway. As a matter of fact, nothing would give me more pleasure than to see the looks on your

faces as I bring her over the edge again and again and again. She'll enjoy it too and she'll scream for me just like I know she will."

Even in her hazed state she knew that he was bluffing. Draco was a lot of things, but he wasn't a rapist. She knew that, but Harry and Ron didn't. She opened her mouth to tell them that he was lying, that he was simply tricking them, but all that came out was a jumbled, incoherent mess.

"What was that, dear? You like that idea? Oh, I think she likes that idea," he mocked, a dark and husky chuckle escaping his lips.

She felt him rip the top of her shirt open as he pressed a kiss to her neck.

"Stop it! Stop-Hermione!"

She could hear them banging against the door, but it was becoming more and more faint. She sharply inhaled and her eyes flew open as Draco sank his teeth into her. She bucked away from him, but she hardly had any strength left.

"It was left to Harry! Dumbledore left it to him!"

Ron, no.

"...and the one in the vault," Draco demanded.

When they said nothing she felt him reach for her pants.

"It's fake! It's a fake! Dumbledore knew that the ministry would try and take it so he purposefully left the fake out in the open," Ron hurriedly said.

Draco made a humming noise before he backed up, leaving the cellar and taking her with. She could hear them calling her name. Her legs were barely functioning and she noted that she was barely hanging onto consciousness.

"I apologize for the little bump on your cute little noggin, but it needed to be done."

The last thing she remembered was being swooped up into his arms.

---

"Stop! Drop your wands...I said drop em!"

Bellatrix's voice traveled around the room in a low hiss. That was what woke her. Hermione blinked, her blurred vision coming into focus. Where was she? She was on her back, she was on the floor. Why was she on the floor? She turned her head and saw a black pair of shoes and slacks beside her head. *Draco*, she thought with a sudden realization. That's right. They had been captured and taken to Malfoy Manor. Draco had... She looked up and noticed a wand pointing directly down at her face. Bellatrix's wild hair came into her vision as she noticed the crazed witch standing over her.

"Pick them up Draco, now."

Hermione heard him do just that. She swore she even heard him chuckle.

"Well, well, well...look what we have here," she sang.

She groaned and forced herself to turn her head the other way. *Oh no*. Harry and Ron stood side by side, Harry's face now completely healed and back to normal. His green eyes gazed at the older witch with so much hatred.

"It's Harry Potter...and he's all bright and shiny and new again. Just in time for the Dark Lord," she breathed.

Hermione felt her heart speed up and began to lift her head only for it to fall back down onto the floor. She was certain that she had a minor concussion.

"Call him," she sweetly ordered.

Her eyes moved along the room to land on Draco who had already lifted his sleeve, the Dark Mark on full display. Her chest filled with dread and her eyes began to blur as he lifted his other hand, eyes trained on Harry with a smirk. A sudden tinkling of noise had Hermione focusing her attention on the ceiling. She looked up in wonder. Something was on top of the chandelier. No, not something... Someone!

"Dobby," she mouthed in relief.

Everything happened so fast. One minute, they were all gazing up at the elf in shock and fearful curiosity and the next it was falling, heading straight for Hermione and Bellatrix. Hermione didn't even have time to move before she was being hauled up into thin, but strong arms. Bellatrix's scream echoed throughout the room as she leapt out of the way. The huge object landed with a crash, glass flying everywhere as Hermione was pulled away from it and against the wall, a feminine form holding her own.

Harry and Draco were in a tussle, the blond on top of the brunette, keeping the wands in an iron grip. She watched as Draco sank his fist into Harry's face just before the latter rolled them over. Draco brought his knee up, knocking the wind out of Harry before rolling them over again. With a gasp, Hermione forced herself out of Narcissa's grip before throwing herself on Draco's back. She wrapped her arms around his neck, causing both of them to fall backwards. Harry took this opportunity to snatch the wands out of Draco's grip.

The two of them rolled around in the glass before she finally found herself on her back, his knees on either side of her as he pinned her down. Harry was pulled away from the two of them by Ron.

"Stupid elf! *You could've killed me !*"

"Dobby never meant to *kill* . Dobby only meant to maim or...seriously injure," she heard the elf respond.

Narcissa swung her arm, curse ready when, at a snap of his fingers, Dobby disarmed her, her wand landing in his little hands. The older witch let out a surprised yelp. Hermione clenched her teeth and threw her hand in Draco's face as he wrapped his hands around her neck.

"How *dare* you take a witch's wand! How dare you defy your *masters* ," Bellatrix shrieked.

"Dobby has no master. Dobby is a free elf and Dobby has come to save Harry Potter...and his friends."

"Hermione!"

"Go, go," she forced herself to yell from beneath Draco.

They didn't have time for this. She was one person. They could and would go on without her. She heard Harry call her name once more before the sound of their apparition filled the room. All was quiet as she and Draco glared at one another before she heard the sound of Bellatrix's heels, signaling her approach.

"Well, Draco...what do you suppose we do about this one," she whispered, her voice already filling with glee at the thought of bloodshed.

She watched as Draco slowly looked up at his aunt, jaw clenched.

" We aren't going to do anything. I am taking her to the Zabini mansion. She is my responsibility," he firmly stated, standing and hauling her up with him.

She watched the standoff between the two with worry and a gulp. She shrunk and pressed herself more into Draco as Bellatrix stepped towards them, so close that Hermione could smell the other witch's shampoo. She blew a dark curl out of her eye as she stared Hermione down.

"Don't let *that* distract you from your duties, boy," she hissed.

Draco wrapped an arm around Hermione's chest.

"Believe me... *she* won't."

---

Hermione heard the door shut behind her just before her blindfold was ripped off. She blinked, her head still fuzzy, as she took in the grandness that was the Zabini Mansion. Everything was either white or silver, it was so *bright*. Hermione felt like she was dirtying the place by just standing on the marble white floors. Draco's grip tightened on her arm as he hauled her through the house. He had to practically carry her up the stairs. She was certain that she had faded out a few times on the way up.

She barely registered the sound of a door opening before her bottom landed on something soft. She blinked a few times, taking in the red and gold colors of the room she was in. Before she had time to dwell on the color scheme, Draco reached up to graze her forehead. His fingers trailed down the side of her face, twisting her head this way and that.

"You might have a concussion," he murmured.

"Gee, I wonder why," she spat.

He gripped her chin.

"Don't get cross with me, my little spitfire."

She smacked his hand away and he in turn smacked hers away from him. She reached out to slap him, but he simply caught her hand. Her condition forced her to lose her balance on the bed and she fell into him. She tightly gripped his shirt and shoved him into the wall, the pictures on the wall shaking from the brunt of the force.

"Cut it out," he scolded.



He gently pushed her away from him and she stumbled before falling onto her bum. Her vision began to swim again, forcing her to lay her head down on the floor. Draco heaved a sigh.

"This is why I tried to put you in the bed. A house elf will be by shortly," he said in exasperation.

She heard the sound of a door opening, her eyes closing just as it did.

---

"Master Draco says you must eat. Please," she heard the elf beg.

---

She saw a head of blond hair and a strong jaw structure. A small smile graced sinful lips as her eyes connected with grey ones.

"It's good to know you're not dead."

Everything blurred.

---

She sank deeper into the covers as she felt fingers graze her arm.

---

"Miss, we must wash you. We have to take care of you while you recoup..."

---

She heard the sound of glass shattering.

"Merlin, Hermione! Do you want to hear me say it? I'm sorry! I'm sorry, okay? I apologize for bashing your head into a wall. It was wrong. Now, wake up. Wake up, dammit!"

---

Her back was against something warm...warm and moving. Her eyelids barely parted to look up into his face. He looked down at her,

eyebrows furrowed. He brushed her hair away from her face. She frowned and went back to sleep.

---

Hermione had been in and out of consciousness for Merlin knows how long. She could remember glimpses here and there. Mostly of the house elves begging her to eat. The first thing she noticed was humming. Somebody was humming. She felt fingers running through her hair and over her face. Someone was trying to wake her up.

She stirred, taking note of the fact that her head was in someone's lap, her fingers clutched around somebody's arm. She finally opened her eyes. She was still in the red and gold room. How long had she been here? The person was still humming. She turned her head and groaned with the effort.

"Shh, shh. Relax...you've been out of it for days," a quiet voice soothed.

She turned her head upwards and stared. No... *no* . She tilted her head in disbelief and confusion.

"Am...am I dreaming," Hermione croaked.

"No, Mione...you're not dreaming."

Hermione sat up, too fast, and her vision began to sway again, but she didn't care. She hesitantly reached out, soft fingers entertaining with her own. A plethora of emotion began to build up within her. Hermione's eyes began to involuntarily water and her lips trembled as she stared into the bright brown eyes of her best friend.

"Ginny?"

---

**Whaaaaaaaat? Don't kill me**

# Glass Is Shattered From The Fight

Many of you guessed it...

---

*She turned her head upwards and stared. No...no. She tilted her head in disbelief and confusion.*

*"Am...am I dreaming," Hermione croaked.*

*"No, Mione...you're not dreaming."*

*Hermione sat up, too fast, and her vision began to sway again, but she didn't care. She hesitantly reached out, soft fingers intertwining with her own. A plethora of emotion began to build up within her. Hermione's eyes began to involuntarily water and her lips trembled as she stared into the bright brown eyes of her best friend.*

*"Ginny?"*

---

Hermione opened and closed her mouth several times. She was sure that she resembled a fish on crack right now, but she didn't care. She couldn't believe what she was seeing. Ginny was here... with her...in the Zabini Mansion. Hermione blinked, staring at the redheaded girl, trying to process this new information. *Ginny is alive* ...Hermione ran her eyes over her best friend... *and she looks more than okay* . In fact, Ginny looked great. She looked...well taken care of.

Her best friend was alive and well. Hermione's mind was spinning and Ginny saw this.

"Mione, breathe, please. You look as if you're about to faint," Ginny said, taking Hermione's face in between her hands.

"You're-how...wh-what-I," Hermione couldn't even get a full sentence out, blinking about fifteen times per second.

Her heart was going a mile a minute. She felt so light headed. Hermione had never fully understood the term 'mind fuck' until now. She just couldn't wrap her head around all of this.

"Hermione, I'll explain everything, okay? You need to rest-"

"You're alive. You're okay. We-I...Ron! Ron was so w-worried and I, I was so worried. We didn't...I mean-"

"It's okay, it's okay."

"We didn't know where you were. You were gone! You vanished and we couldn't-and we had to leave and...", Hermione broke off with a sob, gasping for breath.

"I know, I know-"

"And then...and then we heard on the radio and... But...you're here."

Hermione pressed the palm of her hand to her forehead.

"You're here? Why are you here? *How* are you here?"

"Hermione, I promise, I'll explain everything-"

Hermione cut her off by throwing her arms around her. Ginny immediately responded by wrapping her arms around the curly haired witch. Hermione sobbed into Ginny's neck as the younger girl rubbed her back.

"I was so worried," Hermione cried.

"I know. I'm sorry," Ginny whispered.

Hermione continued to cry as Ginny rocked them both from side to side. Hermione wasn't sure how long they stayed like that. It could

have been minutes, hell, it could have been hours. Hermione didn't care. All she cared about was the fact that her best friend was okay. She was alive and she seemed to be okay. Hermione tightened her arms around her. Somehow, they had ended up in a similar position to the one they were in when Hermine woke up.

"How have you been, Hermione?"

Hermione tensed, not sure how to answer that question and she told her so.

"I don't even know how to answer that," she whispered as she sat up.

Ginny tucked her hair behind her ears and looked at her best friend.

"I know...I know that you guys took off to...," Ginny trailed off.

"Yeah," Hermione said with a nod.

"H-how did you...," she trailed off, gesturing to the room.

Hermione sighed as she sat up further before pushing herself to sit against the headboard. She brought her knees up to her chest and wrapped her arms around them, clasping her hands together.

"Xenophilius Lovegood said... *his* name. Long story short, we were caught. I want to be angry with him, but I can't. He was just desperate. They had Luna," Hermione said matter-of-factly.

Luna was safe now, though. She got out with Harry and Ron. She was okay.

"...and Ron and Harry?"

"They got out. Dobby helped them escape. At the time, I wasn't exactly in a position to leave with them. I'm one person, you know and Harry needed to get out of there."

"I'm sorry," Ginny whispered.

"I'm not. I mean, I'm not ecstatic, not even content. I'm just... accepting of the situation. I guess...I just knew that Draco would have his way in the end. Somewhere along the way, I think I realized that I was fighting a battle I had already lost," Hermione asked.

"But...I m-mean you care about him though...right," Ginny timidly asked.

Hermione glanced at her with a frown. Was it just her or did Ginny look almost hopeful? Hermione shook her head.

"I don't want to talk about this, Ginny," she whispered.

"But you do, don't you," Ginny desperately pressed.

Hermione sighed.

"It doesn't matter if I do or not. He is a manipulative, sociopathic, borderline abusive...tormentor. My feelings, that may or may not be there, doesn't change who he is," Hermione said.

Ginny remained silent for a while.

"People change, Hermione," Ginny whispered.

Hermione's train of thought immediately jumped to Harry. She bit her lip and turned her head away.

"Yes, I suppose they do," she agreed.

---

She exhaled as she opened her eyes, staring up at the dark red ceiling. After she and Ginny had talked for a bit they simply sat there in silence, not having the need to fill it with senseless chatter. They were both just happy to be within each other's presence. Of course, there was still the big elephant in the room, but Ginny had assured Hermione that she would tell her everything when she was ready.

Hermione understood that more than anyone, so she did not push, no matter how much she wanted to.

Of course, this didn't stop Hermione from coming up with her own theories. She still stood by her original notion that Ginny had been kidnapped. Now, it was obvious that Blaise was the one who had done it. Of course, it could have just as easily been Nott or both of them. Either way, Hermione was sure that Blaise was behind all of it. Her fists clenched at the thought of the half Italian boy. Her dislike for him was right up there with Draco.

She heaved a sigh before stretching. She blinked and looked around in wonder, realizing that Ginny was gone. She sat up in fright before common sense kicked in. Ginny probably had gone to get something to eat or something. *She's okay, Hermione* . The rational part of her knew that. The irrational part, however... She took a deep breath, forcing herself to calm down.

She suddenly perked up, realizing that there were voices outside. She frowned and looked at the ajar door before gently throwing the covers back and sliding out of bed. She took quick steps to the door and poked her head through the gap. Her eyes widened when they landed on Ginny...and Blaise. They were a little ways down, but still close enough for the sound of their voices to be heard. Hermione's jaw clenched. The last time she saw him was at Bill and Fleur's wedding, standing pretty pleased with himself in the midst of chaos. His hair was a bit shorter, the wavy ends curling at his neck just under his ears, a few strands falling into his eye. Other than that he looked the exact same; as put together as ever. She narrowed her eyes.

Hermione was just about to throw the door open and demand he step away from her friend when she paused and her eyes widened in disbelief. He had gently grabbed Ginny's hand, pulling her closer and whispering something to her. She watched as Ginny shook her head and lowered it, visibly upset about something as her shoulders trembled. Hermione's eyebrows furrowed as Blaise wrapped his

arms around her and pulled her against him. He rested his chin on top of her head, lips moving.

Hermione retreated a bit, not believing what she was seeing. She gently shook her head. *No, Ginny would never ...* Hermione gawked as Ginny lifted her head and pressed her lips against Blaise's, burying her fingers in his hair. Hermione stumbled back in shock, away from the door, head spinning. She kept backing up until her back connected with the bed post. *No, no, no...*

She pressed a hand against her chest and ran the other through her hair. She felt like she had just been punched in the gut. Ginny and... Blaise? Was this...was this some Stockholm syndrome thing or-or had Ginny willingly left with him? Hermione kneeled down, hanging her head in between her knees. She was dreaming, this had to be a dream...well, nightmare. This wasn't happening. She refused to believe otherwise.

She stood and turned around, resting her forehead on the post. She squeezed her eyes shut, demanding that she wake up. Oh, Merlin. *Oh, Merlin!* She fought back a sob.

"Oh! You're up."

Hermione's shoulders tensed as her eyes flew open. She glared at nothing as she felt Ginny approaching her.

"Are you hungry? I'm sure you are. These past few days..."

Ginny trailed off as Hermione slowly turned to face her, a blank expression on her face. Ginny stared in confusion as Hermione simply looked at her. Hermione felt like she was having an out of body experience. The minute her eyes laid upon her best friend, something in her snapped. Hermione felt as if there were now two of her and Hermione watched as she raked her eyes down Ginny's form and up again, eyes flashing.

"Hermione," Ginny questioned.



Hermione slowly glanced at the door before looking back at her friend, head tilted in question. Ginny looked back, and seeming to catch on, turned back around with a gasp. Ginny's eyes widened as she opened her mouth.

"Hermione-"

"Get out," she whispered.

"I can explain. I-"

"You know what? That sounds like a much better idea. Please, do explain," Hermione interrupted, tapping her chin.

Ginny sighed.

"Explain to me how I have been worrying myself sick and you've been here just living it up," Hermione laughed, throwing her hands around.

"Hermione, please..."

Hermione took a step forward. Ginny took one back.

"Explain to me how I had to watch *your brother* lose his mind as he practically stayed glued to that damn radio, listening for something, anything about you," she whispered.

"Hermione," Ginny tearfully whispered.

Another step forward. Another one back.

"Explain to me how I had to listen to him cry himself to sleep almost every other night. How we had to wake him up from the nightmares that plagued him night after night about his poor, sweet baby sister and all sorts of danger she could be in," Hermione continued.

Ginny's cheeks were streaked with tears as she looked at Hermione, silent and pleading. Her back hit the wall as Hermione stepped

closer, her eyes boring into Ginny's. The next time Hermione spoke, her voice had dropped, a calm, chilling tone that gave Ginny frostbite with her next words.

"Explain to me, *Ginny* , how we drove ourselves crazy with worry, wondering where you were...if you were okay...if you were even alive while you were here spreading your legs for *him* ," she said with a sneer.

Ginny shoved Hermione away from her.

" *That is not fair!* That isn't fair, Hermione! You act like I wanted this to happen. I didn't ask for this, okay? This hasn't been easy for me. I have struggled *so much* with this," she cried.

Hermione slammed her hand against her chest with a gasp.

"Oh! Oh, no! I- I'm so sorry. You're right, I can see just how much you've been struggling with this," Hermione mocked as she gestured to the door.

"Hermione, stop it!"

"I can't even look at you, right now," Hermione said, turning away.

Ginny reached out, grabbing her arm. Hermione spun around and slammed the other girl into the wall by her shoulder.

"Don't. Touch me," she hissed.

Ginny sobbed.

"Hermione-"

"Get out."

"You're not thinking clearly. You're mad. Please, please, just let me explain," Ginny cried.

"I don't want to hear any explanations. I don't care," Hermione shrugged "...you want to be a Death Eater's whore, you go right ahead."

The words had barely left her lips before the sound of a slap resonated throughout the room. Hermione stared at the floor in shock as she slowly reached up to touch her burning cheek.

"Oh, God. Oh, no. I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm... I didn't mean that, Hermione. I didn't..."

Hermione flicked her hair out of her face as she stood upright. Ginny was shaking her head, her hands on her cheeks.

"I didn't mean to do that, I didn't! I'm so sorry, Hermione. I just... Talk to me about this. Please... I thought that out of all people you'd understand-"

"What is that supposed to mean?"

"It just means...I know why you're acting like this. I know that you're just displacing your own feelings-"

"I'm what," Hermione quietly questioned, warning in her voice.

Ginny seemed to finally collect herself as she sighed.

"I represent what you fear most. You saw Blaise and I and it was like...like looking into a mirror. You saw yourself and..." Ginny trailed off.

Hermione crossed her arms over her chest.

"Who? Who did I see, Ginny," Hermione demanded.

"Malfoy! You saw yourself and Malfoy. I'm doing what you're afraid to do and it makes you angry because you want to do it. The fact that you want to do it scares you."

"Well, aren't you just the little therapist now," Hermione mocked.

"Hermione, stop-"

"What I want to know is, what could you possibly be getting out of this? I mean, with Blaise it's obvious that he's a sick son of a-"

"It isn't like that, Hermione! I love him! He loves me too!"

Hermione stared at Ginny and blinked, before bursting into a fit of laughter. She doubled over, the crazed cackles filling the room as she clutched her stomach. She straightened up after some time, the laughter dying.

"Oh my! Oh, Merlin. I get it. I definitely get it now. You're right, Ginny. Now, it all makes perfect sense. You're just *stupid*," she said, lighting hitting her forehead.

"Hermione-"

"He's using you! Believe me, I've been there..."

"No, no, he's not like that. At least, not with me. He cares about me and...and after that whole thing with Harry, I never would have thought that I-"

"My, my. He really did a number on you, didn't he," Hermione questioned, squinting at her friend.

"Hermione..."

"He's got you wrapped around his dirty little finger. I never would have pegged you for this type of girl, Ginny. What, is the sex *that* great?"

"Shut up! You don't know anything. You don't understand and you don't want to. You're afraid of what's going to happen if you do-"

"Stop diagnosing me. You're dead to me," Hermione spat.

Ginny closed her eyes and breathed.

"You're upset and confused and conflicted. Everything you say in this room is going to stay here. I understand, Hermione. I thought the same things about myself. Sometimes I still do. You just need time."

Hermione leaned against the bed post.

"Tell me, what exactly are you going to do when he tosses you aside in the end," Hermione questioned.

"Hermione, he loves me-"

"And how can you be so sure? He's just like the rest of them, Ginny. In my opinion, he's the worst of them all," Hermione said with a shrug.

Ginny scoffed, taken aback by that statement.

"Excuse me? Have you *met* Malfoy?"

"I have and Draco has always been very upfront about who he is. I may have questioned it once, but for the most part, he's pretty open about the fact that he's a manipulative, possessive, sadistic, selfish piece of crap. Blaise on the other hand..."

Hermione stared Ginny down.

"Well, I can happily say that he is the shadiest son of a bitch I've ever met."

Hermione shoved Ginny away from her as she charged.

"Don't talk about him like that!"

"I'll say whatever I want about him because it's the truth."

Hermione caught Ginny's hand in her own, tightening her grip.

"I've asked you twice already. I'm not going to ask again," Hermione said, nodding towards the door.

"Take it back, Hermione," Ginny demanded.

She scoffed and was just about to tell her to shove it when Ginny slammed her hand into Hermione's face, slamming the back of her head into the bed post. Hermione reached out and grabbed the fiery tresses, slamming Ginny's face into her knee. She tackled the other girl to the ground before she had time to recover. She pinned the girl down with her knees, gripping her shoulders and shaking her.

"How could you, Ginny? How could you do this? Look what he's done to you!"

Ginny fought to get Hermione off of her, but Hermione didn't go gallivanting off hunting for Horcruxes without being properly trained.

"You are my sister! You're the closest thing I've ever had to one! How could you do this," she cried, the dam finally breaking.

"Get off of me!"

"What will Ron say? What will your friends and family think," she shrieked.

"Hermione!"

She hadn't heard the door open. Didn't even notice they had company until she was being hauled up. She kicked and flailed against the hold.

"Let me go," she screamed.

She recognized the body that was against her back and that only drove her crazier.

"Get her out of here, Blaise," he growled.

Hermione's eyes landed on the dark haired Slytherin with fury as he consoled a crying Ginny. As Draco pulled her away from the couple, she grabbed a book on the nearby coffee table and hurled it at Blaise. It missed and she reached for the table itself.

"I'll kill you! You hurt her and I'll murder you!"

It smashed against the door just as they closed it in time.

"Stop this, now."

She screamed, jerking in his hold, taking them both down. She turned on him, clawing at his face and neck, anything she could get her hands on.

"This is your fault! I hate you," she screamed as she shoved him.

He caught one hand, struggling with the other. She twisted out of his grip and hurled her fists at him, satisfied when she struck again and again.

" *You took everything from me* ," she shrieked.

She had him on his back now as she fought.

"My education..."

Swing.

"My friends..."

She dug her nails into his neck.

"My sister..."

Punch.

"My sanity," she bawled.

She sagged, all the fight leaving her as she scooted away from him, her back connecting with the wall. She tangled her fingers into her hair as she sobbed, inconsolable. She rocked back and forth, mind spinning. Her heart...her heart was breaking. She didn't notice Draco crawling closer to her, not until he touched her leg. She kicked out, not wanting him anywhere near her. It seemed that he didn't care. He grabbed one arm, ignoring as she scratched him up with the other and pulled her into his arms.

She fought against him, definitely leaving bruises. He tightened his hold as he rested his chin on the top of her head, her back to his front.

"Stop, Hermione."

This only spurred her on as she thrashed against him.

"Hermione, stop! Cut it out," he harshly demanded.

He flipped them over, his form pressed against her own. He pinned her down, hand pressed against the small of her back, her face turned towards the door. Her vision blurred again as she started to cry, all movements halting. Her nails scratched against the floor. Her form trembled as he pulled her up into a sitting position. She hung her head and let out wheezing breaths, Draco's arms tightening around her. He used one hand to brush her hair to the side, running his nose long the back of her neck before pressing his lips against the skin. His breath warmed her skin, causing her to shudder as he whispered:

"You still have me. You'll always have me, Hermione."

---

**Don't kill me. I've had this scene between Ginny and Hermione written out in my head before I even had the first chapter done. Believe me, it's necessary.**



# Watch Me Burn

I'm not particularly happy with this chapter. To me it's more of a filler, but the next few chapters will be very Dramione-centric. Yay!

---

*"Hermione, stop! Cut it out," he harshly demanded.*

*He flipped them over, his form pressed against her own. He pinned her down, hand pressed against the small of her back, her face turned towards the door. Her vision blurred again as she started to cry, all movements halting. Her nails scratched against the floor. Her form trembled as he pulled her up into a sitting position. She hung her head and let out wheezing breaths, Draco's arms tightening around her. He used one hand to brush her hair to the side, running his nose long the back of her neck before pressing his lips against the skin. His breath warmed her skin, causing her to shudder as he whispered:*

*"You still have me. You'll always have me, Hermione."*

---

Hermione sat up with a gasp, eyes unfocused and hair flying everywhere as she let out shaky breaths. She blinked a few times as she swallowed, finding her throat incredibly thick and dry. She hesitantly reached up to rub her neck as her eyes finally settled. Her skin was damp and sticky with dried sweat. The room was dark, the only source of light coming from the moonlight that bled through the dark red curtains, creating eerie shadows. Hermione sniffed as she reached up to push her hair away from her face. Her eyes filled with tears again while she bit her lip. Waking up now wasn't like before. She remembered everything...and she wished that she didn't.

"How are you feeling?"

Hermione yelped in surprise and nearly fell off of the bed as she hurriedly tried to scoot away from the voice that came from right next to her. Before she could land on the floor, however, a firm hand grabbed her arm and pulled her back onto the king sized bed as the room was bathed in light.

She glared at him, the action making her aware of the tightness around her eyes. She turned her nose up and looked away as she remembered that she had fallen asleep...crying in his arms. *How romantic* , she thought with a sneer. She wet her lips and swallowed before speaking.

"Since when do you care about my wellbeing," she snapped.

She cringed as soon as she spoke. Merlin, her voice sounded like nails on a chalkboard. She jerked away from him as he ran a finger down the side of her face. She clenched her jaw and frowned at him.

"I always care about your wellbeing," he said.

She let out a humorless chuckle.

"You sure do have an interesting way of showing it," she hissed.

"I just want to make sure that you don't still have a concussion..."

She rounded on him.

"Gee! I wonder how that could have happened," she sarcastically replied.

He smirked, wagging his finger in front of her face, warning in his eyes.

"Don't get smart with me, Hermione," he mocked.

Hermione jumped off of the bed before turning to face him, arms folded over her chest.

"I'll do what I bloody well please! After all, everybody else is going around and doing whatever the hell they want, without thinking of the consequences or anyone else. So, why can't I," she threw out.

Draco crawled across the bed before reaching out and pulling her towards him, his nose skimming the neckline of her shirt. *Well, his shirt*, she noted. How had she not noticed before that her clothes had been changed while she had been in and out of consciousness the past few days?

"Is that an offer," he murmured against her skin.

Hermione scoffed before shoving him away and turning around, wrapping her arms around herself. *Ginny...* Hermione blinked, a stray tear skipping down her cheek as she thought about her best-former best friend. *How could she do this?* Hermione swallowed and looked down at her feet through blurry eyes, face crumbling. Her jaw suddenly clenched and she tensed as she felt his presence behind her just before his hands settled on her shoulders, massaging them a bit before sliding his hands down to settle on her arms. His lips pressed against the side of her head.

"Want to talk about it," he murmured into her hair.

She laughed, humorlessly.

"With you," she incredulously asked as if the idea was preposterous.

She shuddered as he breathed into her hair.

"Who else are you going to talk to, the house elves," he questioned.

Hermione glared at the wall as his statement rang true. As crazy as it sounded...in this house, Draco was all she had. *He's all you have left*, a dark voice whispered. Hermione twitched before shaking her head, snapping out of it. She clenched her jaw again as she exhaled, shoulders sagging in defeat.

"She was my sister," she quietly began.

Draco made a humming noise, signaling for her to continue.

"I love her so much, Draco. Probably more than I love Ron and...and Harry," she choked out.

She took a deep breath as she thought about him. She shook her head, suddenly angry. *He took advantage of you*, that same voice hissed. She scrunched her eyes together before snapping them open.

"Everyone just keeps surprising me, you know. It's just...it's frightening. You think you know people...and then they surprise you," Hermione said, scoffing.

Draco wrapped his arms around her, but before he had time to do anything else, Hermione had thrown herself away from him.

"This is all your fault, you know," she sneered as she turned to face him.

Draco tilted his head to the side. His hair fell over his forehead as he stood before her, shirt unbuttoned at the top and hands stuffed into his pockets. He looked down at her, eyes swimming with poorly concealed amusement.

"Really? Pray tell..."

Hermione puckered her lips before darting her eyes away. This was very probably not Draco's fault at all, but hell, she needed to blame someone. *How about those who are actually at fault?* Hermione frowned.

"I don't know. It just is," she pitifully replied.

Draco let out a husky chuckle before stepping towards her, hands shoved into his pockets. She unconsciously raked her eyes over his form, throat becoming even tighter, if that were possible.

"You can try and blame me all you want, princess, but I had no part in this little plot. The night that I killed Dumbledore, you and I were supposed to be meeting Blaise in that alley, but he never showed. I don't hear from him all night and the next morning he summons me, demanding that I come over because he needs help with... *a little problem ...*"

Hermione looked up at this. He gazed down at her with that damned smirk gracing his lips.

"Imagine my surprise and amusement to find the she weasel here, raging like a drunken Hippogriff," he explained, eyes dancing with laughter as if he was in on some joke that she just didn't get.

Hermione mulled over his words.

"Why did he take her," Hermione demanded.

Draco reached behind her neck to pull her closer, his lips brushing against hers.

"It seems that we Slytherin men can't resist that Gryffindor fire," he purred, tilting her head up.

Hermione let out a shaky breath as she backed up.

"S-so what are you saying? He's been carrying a torch for Ginny for years and decided to take a page out of your book and just...kidnap her," she questioned with a shrug.

Hermione didn't want to believe that her friend had fallen prey to Stockholm syndrome. However, that would mean that the only other explanation was that Ginny may have had feelings for Blaise long before now. Hermione knew that to be practically impossible though. Ginny loved Harry for as long as she could remember. Maybe she was under the Imperius curse? Maybe Blaise had slipped her a love potion? All of these were possibilities. Draco shrugged, a devilish smirk on his lips.

"You know something," she said.

"It's not my story to tell, sweetheart," he said with a rare smile.

Hermione huffed.

"You want to know so badly, go ask him yourself," he continued.

Hermione scoffed, anger flaring at the thought of Blaise Zabini.

"I can't do that. If I see your best mate again I *will* stab him in the face," she snapped.

Draco suddenly let out a loud laugh, backing her into the wall before resting his hands beside her, caging her in. He sucked in air between his teeth as his eyes roamed over her. He licked his lips before tapping his nose against hers.

"I must say...I'm enjoying this side of you," he breathed.

Hermione blinked before looking up at him from beneath her lashes.

"You like your girls insane, huh," she quietly questioned as she tilted her head up towards him.

"Just a little bit," Draco said with a smirk as he leaned in.

"Well...you're going to love me then."

She brought her knee up to connect with the prominent bulge in between his legs. She stared at the wall on the other side of the room as he let out a loud groan before sliding down her body to crumble in a heap on the floor. She looked down at him as he glared up at her, nostrils flaring.

" *That* was for slamming my head into a brick wall and nearly killing me," she hissed.

She hurriedly stepped around him and towards the bathroom.

"I'm taking a bath," she announced just before slamming the door behind her.

---

Hermione sat in the large tub, the scent of vanilla clouding her senses. She heaved a sigh as she sank deeper into the hot water, her mind going a mile a minute. Ginny was a lot of things, but Hermione knew that Ginny was anything but weak-willed. Stockholm syndrome was definitely out of the question. Then there must have been something already going on. No way did Ginny just wake up one day and decide she has the hots for Blaise Zabini. She wouldn't just throw all caution and feelings for her family to the wind for him. Ginny would have told her though...right? Hermione heaved yet another sigh, desperately trying to analyze this situation. There was more to this, Hermione could feel it.

Just like she knew there was more to...to what had happened between her and Harry. Harry wasn't a rapist, he just wasn't, but it didn't change the fact that he... She frowned, trying to recall if he had been wearing the locket. Even if he had been wearing the locket, it didn't control people. It didn't work like an Imperius curse. Harry was supposed to be her friend...it just didn't make any sense. She closed her eyes, desperately trying to remember. She suddenly slapped the water in frustration, eyes flying open. Everything about that night had been a blurry mess. Everything but...

She straightened up and blinked as she remembered staring into bright eyes. Bright eyes that *weren't green*. Hermione's mouth fell open as she stared into the water in shock. That didn't make any sense. Was she remembering wrong? Of course she wasn't remembering wrong! Unless... Hermione raked her hands down her face. She was iffy on the details of how possession actually worked. It's not like there were ghosts floating around out there and one decided to just...you know. Of course, it was possible if Harry had a strong mental connection with someone-.

Hermione eyes widened as she cut her train of thought off. She hurriedly stood, the sound of water sloshing rang throughout the

bathroom as she stared at the wall in a mixture of shock and horror. She paid no mind to the cold air creating goosebumps on her bare form. Harry could see things through *his* eyes, things that he wanted Harry to see. He *had* possessed Harry at the Department of Mysteries, but that was different! They were face to face, actually in the same room with one another. *But what if it's possible though?* That would mean that You-Know-Who had figured out a way to use their connection to possess Harry without even being near him. It was definitely possible, but it was also a bit of a stretch. *Just accept that Harry is scum, Hermione!*

Hermione shook her head. She couldn't just accept that because she knew who Harry was and that person that he had been that night wasn't him. She shakily exhaled before letting the water out and stepping onto the cold floor. She quickly dried off and dressed herself, her mind nowhere near being at ease. Now that this theory was in her head she was sure that she wouldn't be able to let it go. What if he did it again while Harry and Ron were in the middle of a dangerous situation? Of course, this was assuming that her theory was true. Either way, she had to let Harry know. First, she had to get out of there though.

Hermione exited the bathroom, briefly glaring at Draco as he sat in the chair, nursing his wounds with Firewhiskey.

"You know, you should be a lot nicer to my family jewels, Hermione. After all, don't you want to be more than properly taken care of when we finally make the beast with two backs," he spoke behind the glass.

She scoffed and walked back towards the bathroom, intent on brushing her hair.

"Don't hold your breath. Actually, that sounds like a marvelous idea. Do hold your breath," she proposed as she walked back into the bathroom.



She faced the counter and picked up the brush that had been left there before looking into the mirror. She dropped the brush with a gasp and it fell from her hands and clattered to the floor. Hermione took in a deep, shuddering breath as she stepped closer to the mirror. She hadn't looked into the mirror before she bathed and the steam from the hot bath had finally cleared off of the reflecting surface. She reached out to run her finger over the smooth surface where her face was before reaching up to touch her cheek. She lifted her chin...

Her hair clung to her face, the curls starting to frizz. Her eyes were swollen and red from all of the crying that she had done. Despite how much sleep she had gotten, there were awful bags underneath them. Her lips were red and cracked from how much she had been chewing on them. She slowly turned her head to the side. One side of her face was slightly swollen and red from when Ginny had slapped her earlier...yesterday...? Hermione shook her head. She needed to know how long she had been out all those days and how long she had slept last night. She looked like a junkie... *Or a battered wife* , she bitterly thought.

Her eyes zoomed in on movement behind her as Draco stepped into the bathroom. She watched as he stared at her reflection with an unfamiliar expression before stepping up behind her, pulling her hair away from her face and behind her shoulders. His hands rested there as his chin came to rest on top of her forehead.

"You're still the best looking witch there is," he whispered.

Hermione let out a very unladylike snort.

"I mean it," he snapped, forcing her eyes to connect with his in the mirror.

He brought his head down to rest his cheek against hers.

"No other girl in this entire world could compare to you," he murmured.

Hermione frowned at him in the mirror.

"Stop trying to butter me up. It's not going to work," she snapped.

She watched as his hand gently ran down her arm, the other dancing along her neck. She moved her head away as he grazed the other side of her neck with his nose. She swallowed, an involuntary shudder traveling down her spine as he let out a husky chuckle. Her eyelashes fluttered and she forced herself to remain still as he nipped at the skin of her neck, pressing his chest against her back.

"I don't need to butter you up. I've already got you," he whispered.

She suddenly pushed against him, forcing him to let her go. She whirled around to face him with a frown, glaring up at him from beneath her lashes. Her face heated and her heart raced as he stared down at her with that haughty smirk.

"We'll see about that," was her only response before she exited the bathroom.

---

Hermione.

*Hermione.*

" **Hermione!** "

She sat up with a gasp, taking in big, deep breaths of air. She panted, hands shaking and body trembling as brown connected with silver. It took her a minute to realize what she was staring at before she immediately shut her eyes and turned her head away. She pushed her hands against his chest as he gripped her face, turning her back around to face him.

"Look at me," he demanded.

Hermione shook her head, the nightmare still fresh in her brain. She didn't know what he was going to do, but she needed to get her mind right and prepare herself just in case he decided to take a mental dive into her head.

"No," she whispered as she tried her best to turn her head away.

"Hermione, look at me, now," he hissed.

She made a noise of protest as he forced her eyes open. She stared at him in a mixture of fearful anticipation and curiosity. He simply stared at her though, a hard look in his eyes and a clenched jaw to match.

"What were you dreaming about?"

*Harry, no!*

"Nothing," she quickly responded.

"You're lying-"

"No, I'm not," she protested.

"You were dreaming about *him*, screaming his name," he growled through clenched teeth.

*Harry! Harry, please!*

Hermione did her best to avoid his eyes.

"He's my best friend. I miss him," she forced out the lie.

His hands moved down to her arms as he leaned in closer.

"What did he do to you?"

The question was so quiet that Hermione barely heard herself. Her eyes slowly rose to meet his.

"W-what," she shakily asked.

"You heard me," he whispered.

Hermione winced as his grip tightened on her arm.

"I-I-"

"You were screaming for him to stop."

Hermione froze, throat closing up and lips going dry as the nightmare came back to the forefront of her mind. It was about *that* night, but instead of Harry using the Imperius curse, he just took her, no regard for her feelings or physical wellbeing at all. His teeth had been sharp and his eyes had glowed in the darkness, the color of blood as his cold laughter rang throughout the tent.

"Draco...I was on the run, in hiding for a long time. I'm bound to have some crazy dreams-"

" *Stop fucking lying* . What happened out there-"

"It's none of your damn business!"

Her jaw clenched and her nostrils flared as she glared at him. He stared back at her, face void of any emotion, no anger in his eyes and no smirk on his lips. Hermione knew that look all too well...

Before she even had time to react, she found herself on her back, Draco's knees pressed into her stomach and hands clenched to the side of her head. She squeezed her eyes shut, turning her head this way and that as he tried to pry them open. She bucked her hips, kicking her legs out as she tried to get him off.

He growled in frustration and Hermione feared that he would get exactly what he wanted. Hermione wasn't ready to tell him, to tell anyone. She still had a lot to figure out herself and the last thing she needed right now was Draco going on a rampage or killing spree. She wasn't ready to face his reaction, to deal with his reaction. It

didn't seem like the odds were in her favor thought, so she did the only thing that she could possibly think of.

She didn't even give Draco enough time to register what was happening as she wrapped her hand around the back of his neck and pulled his face down to connect with hers. The two of them had only kissed a handful of times, but each time felt like the first time, all those months ago, in the Prefect's bathroom. Even though Hermione had done it to distract him, she couldn't help the way her body reacted, shuddering at this form of contact that the both of them had gone without for so long.

Draco's reaction was immediate. His body relaxed, seemingly melting against her own as his fingers twisted into her hair. His other hand rested on her hip as they lips moved together in unison: pushing, pulling, and nipping. Hermione's hand ran down his arm, clenching around it as she breathed into his mouth. The moment was brought to an abrupt halt when she found her neck exposed, her eyes staring up at the ceiling.

Draco exhaled against the skin of her neck, a sound of utter disappointment.

"It must be...quite bad if you took such measures to distract me," he breathed.

Hermione panted as he shoved her away from him, back reconnecting with the bed as he slowly got off of her.

"Rest assured, Hermione, that I will find out. When I do...you're going to wish that you had told me yourself," he sneered just before leaving the room, the door slamming shut behind him.

---

**"You think you know people...and then they surprise you."-**  
**Alison DiLaurentis**

**"You like your girls insane..." -Lana Del Rey**



# Violent Words and Empty Threats

Yeah, that's right. I updated at 3 in the morning

**Disclaimer: I Own Nothing**

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The next few weeks, Hermione found herself alone quite often. At first, she had enjoyed it, immensely. It had been nothing but the lovely scenery of the back end of the property which was visible through the balcony window, herself and a few books. She had been alone with her thoughts and nothing pleased her more. She wanted nothing to do with Draco and sometimes it was easy to forget where she was. When she wasn't thinking of how to best get the hell out of there, she was thinking of Ginny...and Blaise and Ron and Harry and the school.

After the week or so though, these thoughts became depressing and Hermione wanted nothing more than a distraction. She actually found herself *wanting* Draco's company. Of course, this was only because without him around to manipulate, she'd never get out of here. At least, this is what she told herself as she lay awake at night in that big King sized bed with nothing but her thoughts.

Some nights she had nightmares, nightmares about any and everything. Sometimes they were about Voldemort and sometimes they were about Harry. Sometimes, though, she would do nothing but cry. Her body would tremble with poorly concealed sobs and she'd cry herself to sleep, waking up the following morning with swollen eyes and a sore throat, alone in the big bed.

Here and there though, when she wasn't crying, instead of nightmares she'd have dreams, dreams that would force her awake in the middle of the night. She'd wake up panting, legs twisted into the sheets and uncomfortably aroused. She'd lie there, staring at the ceiling in confusion and conflict, insides twisted into knots. In

these dreams, there was only one subject. She'd never see his face, just the reflecting light off of his pale hair or the expanse of his broad chest. Sometimes all she'd see is just his eyes, the color of storm clouds, boring into her own so intensely that it forced her awake.

These nights were the worse. These nights forced her to see what her subconscious and conscious mind both wanted. In these dreams the Battle of the Astronomy Tower never happened, those months on the run never happened. In these dreams there was no war, just purely he and her, tangled and twisted together in the throes of passion. It was always a much simpler reality, one she sometimes yearned for, and then the next morning, without fail, she would be forced to face the more complex reality that was her life. Some mornings she is relieved, glad to still be her and glad that he is still him, glad that nothing has changed. Some mornings she'd awake in anger, anger at herself for wanting such things. Hermione would call herself all sorts of names, things she'd imagine Ron would call her if he ever knew the truth.

Then some mornings, more often than she would like to admit, she'd wake up and realize that the dream wasn't real...and then she'd cry. She'd get this awful, hollow feeling in her chest that would creep up on her. It would never hit her all at once, instead drifting over her like a fog until she'd have no other choice but to wrap her arms around herself and squeeze her eyes shut. Her body would shake and tremble and then she'd cry because she wanted him, but she couldn't have him. Like a detrimental drug, she craved him, but he scared her to her very core. Every time she was in his presence, she longed to reach out and pull him closer, but every time she was in his presence, she also had an unrelenting urge to Crucio him to the high heavens.

She wanted to punish him for all of the pain that he had caused her and her friends. She wanted him to feel how she felt, wanted him to know what it was like to be at war with himself so much that he didn't know which side was winning. She wanted to slap him and curse him, make him suffer like she suffered. But there were times when



she wanted to wrap her arms around him and beg for him to leave this path behind. Maybe it was stupid, but a small part of her still believed in him. She wanted to offer him anything and everything to get out of this black hole that had become his life. She wanted him to see that he couldn't have it all. He couldn't have her *and* this life. She wanted him to choose and she wanted him to pick *her* .

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Hermione's eyes shot open in surprise as a rush of cold air hit her bare legs, forcing her out of unconsciousness with a jolt. She bent her knees, folding into herself as the cozy duvet was ripped away from her. She was suddenly forced into a sitting position and she immediately jerked away from the firm hands holding her. She looked at her intruder with a mix of confusion and anger. She'd been asleep, in a deep sleep too, and it was one of the few nights where she actually got a decent amount of sleep and he had ruined it.

"Get dressed. You're having breakfast with my mother in thirty minutes," was all he said as he walked towards the closet on the far side of the spacious room.

Hermione blinked as her brain took longer than usual to process the information. She was having breakfast with *Narcissa Malfoy* ?

"What," she found herself asking.

She watched as he exited the bathroom sized closet with two dresses on his arm.

"The last time I checked, your hearing was quite good, Hermione. I'm not repeating myself."

His snippy attitude made her bristle with anger. He barged in the room and ruined what was probably going to be her only night of decent sleep in Merlin knows how long and actually had the audacity to be smart with *her* ?

" *Excuse me?* I don't remember agreeing to this," she responded.

She jumped in surprise as he threw the dresses onto the bed with way more force than necessary. She swallowed as her eyes rose to meet his hardened ones, the temperature in the room taking on a chilly tone. He gazed at her with a clenched jaw and his hands on his hips, his suit jacket open and resting behind his hands, looking every bit of the Malfoy that he was. She shrank where she was sitting, suddenly very uncomfortable under his piercing stare. He simply stared at her like that for a painful amount of time before taking a deep breath and finally speaking.

"You've been in here alone for weeks with nothing but you and your thoughts and your damn books. I decided to be *nice* , for once, and let you adjust. I left you alone so that you would have all of the proper time you needed to come to terms with your predicament, because let's get one thing straight, Hermione..."

She took shaky breaths as he moved closer to her, his words coming out harsher and harsher by the second. She clenched her jaw as he leaned towards her, his eyes boring into her own.

"You are not leaving this place anytime soon."

She swallowed, looking away at the finality in his words.

"Do you want to know why I decided to be so gracious...? No? Well for once, I decided to listen to my mother," he snapped.

Hermione looked up at this. The irritation all over his face made it very clear that he had been reluctant to do so and was probably regretting his decision.

"She suggested that I leave you be for a while and I listened, so you can thank her for your welcomed peace these past few weeks."

She gasped in shock as he grabbed her arm, snatching her closer as he narrowed his eyes at her.

"That is why you are *going* to get your pert little ass out of this bed. You are going to put on one of these *lovely* dresses that I picked out and you are *going* to have breakfast with my mother. Are we clear," he hissed.

Hermione licked her lips, drawing Draco's attention to them.

"Crystal," she said through clenched teeth.

He let her go and she glared at him.

"Besides, it isn't fair for me to take my anger out on her. She's done nothing wrong. *Your* face is the one I want to maim every time I see it," she continued.

Draco smirked.

"Cute."

Before Hermione had time to react, she found her hair tangled around his fingers and her back flat against the bed. She took in a shaky breath as he pressed his body into hers, his lips grazing her own as he gazed into her wide eyes.

"I can think of many ways to put that smart mouth of yours to use aside from irritating the shit out of me. Keep it up, Hermione and I'll show you just how mean I can be," he purred.

He let go of her and was walking out of the door before she even had time to process what had just happened. She laid there, taking deep breaths and gathering her bearings before eventually sitting up. With a shaky sigh, she turned to look at the two dresses he'd picked out and found herself absentmindedly fingering the green one.

---

Hermione sat uncomfortably in her seat as the light breeze blew her hair past her face. It was surprisingly nice out and the scenery only added to that. She was in the gardens behind the mansion, a maze

of hedges and flowers, reminding her of something out of Alice in Wonderland. It had always been a childhood favorite of hers and the table at which she sat only solidified her train of thought. She was sitting at a decent sized round table in the gardens, the chair she was in was quite comfortable with a plush cushion. The reason for her discomfort, however, was sitting across from her, bringing her cup of tea to her lips.

Narcissa Malfoy was the perfect picture of Pureblood aristocracy. Her blonde and black hair was pulled back away from her face, brushing her shoulders. She wore an elegant dark green dress that stopped just below the knees, the round neckline resting just beneath her collar bone. Her arms were covered with a thin matching jacket that was the same length as the dress, large black buttons lining the edge. Hermione watched as her perfectly manicured hands set down her cup and saucer, before she folded them in her lap, legs crossed at the ankles.

"Have you been enjoying your stay," the older witch asked.

Her voice was strong and controlled, demanding respect and attention.

"Yes, Mrs. Malfoy. Blaise's mother has a lovely home," Hermione answered, forcing herself not to vomit at the mention of *his* name.

She let out a small, airy chuckle with a wave of her hand.

"Nonsense. Call me Narcissa. It is my name after all..."

Hermione simply nodded.

"Yes, she does have an eye for design, doesn't she? How do you like your room?"

"It's nice."

It was nice. It was grand and a perfect color scheme of deep red and gold.

"Draco spent ages getting it just right for you. It was quite comical, really," Narcissa said.

Hermione felt her heart skip a beat before she briefly closed her eyes and forced it to still. *It's just a room, it doesn't mean anything.*

"That was very kind of him," Hermione forced out.

Narcissa made a humming noise, signaling her agreement.

"How have you been," Hermione found herself awkwardly asking.

"Quite well, thank you for asking. My husband's unexpected departure was surprisingly what I needed, I suppose. I have more time for myself and for my son. It took me by surprise to realize that we are much better off without him, but I welcomed it nonetheless."

Hermione said nothing to that. *Draco is very good with altering one's memories I see.*

**" What have you done ,"** Narcissa cried.

*All of Hermione's thoughts went blank. Her voice caught in her throat as she entered the room. The end of the beautiful bedding was a bloody mess of handprints and the floor fared no better. Her eyes followed the blood to the barely alive form of Lucius Malfoy, his hands desperately clutching at his throat but it was no use; the blood just kept pouring out. She sucked in a breath and covered her mouth with her hand as she watched Narcissa's hunched over form trying to heal him with her wand but it wasn't working...*

Hermione shook her head, forcing away the gruesome memory of Lucius Malfoy's death at the hands of his own son. Hermione gazed at Narcissa, wondering what would become of the older witch if she ever knew the truth. The sunlight reflected off the necklace hanging

around Narcissa's neck, obscuring Hermione's vision for a moment, forcing her attention to the diamond. Hermione watched as she reached up to place her hand on it, catching onto Hermione's line of sight.

"It was a gift from Draco," she said, lovingly.

"It's lovely," Hermione said, honestly.

Narcissa gave a short, warm chuckle before focusing her attention onto Hermione.

"That's a beautiful dress you're wearing. It suits you," she said.

Hermione fingered the light green knee length sun dress, the thick straps connecting behind her neck and the square neckline showing a tasteful, yet respectable, amount of cleavage.

"Draco picked it out."

Narcissa gave a small smile.

"He has wonderful taste, doesn't he?"

Hermione got the feeling that they weren't talking about clothes and accessories anymore as the blonde witch eyed her. Hermione looked away, suddenly really uncomfortable.

"I'm aware of the nature of your relationship with my son..."

Hermione's eyes snapped towards the other woman, wide and confused, eyebrows furrowed. Narcissa took a sip of her tea before setting it down with a confirming nod. Hermione, surprisingly wasn't angry, instead she felt...defeated. She swallowed, blinking away the tears that had begun to spring to her eyes.

"And I suppose you aren't going to do anything about it...are you," Hermione quietly asked as she glared at her.

"Draco loves you."

Hermione scoffed, looking away and crossing her arms over her chest.

"Yeah...sure," Hermione flippantly replied with a nod.

"Hermione."

Hermione immediately looked back at Narcissa at the authority within her voice. The other witch stared her down with an intense gaze that matched her son's. *Now I know where he gets it.*

"I know my son. Even though he may not realize it, he may even deny it, but he loves you," she said.

"With all due respect, you're wrong. That is not love. Your son isn't capable of it," Hermione responded.

"Everyone loves differently, Hermione. I didn't say that I agreed with how he handles it, but it still doesn't change the fact that it's true. His feelings for you terrify him, probably more than they terrify you. All he knows is that he doesn't want to lose you and you are probably the only thing he knows he's capable of losing. That makes him... desperate."

Hermione huffed in irritation, confused and conflicted all over again.

"Why are you telling me this," Hermione demanded.

"I do not want this life for my son, I never did. Despite everything, I see that you do care very deeply for him and that gives me...hope."

Hermione stood, scoffing in disbelief as she stared down at her.

"So what, you think that I can...change him," Hermione quietly asked.

"When it comes to Draco, I think that you can do a lot, if only you had more faith in yourself."

"I tried that once before, Narcissa and do you want to know what happened? I ended up with a knife in the back and a dead Headmaster! *Draco betrayed me*. I put my faith in him and was proven wrong in the most... *horrible* way possible. Every day I live with the fact that I am partially, if not solely, responsible for Dumbledore's death. That is something that I have to live with because of him," Hermione snarled.

"Hermione-"

" *Your son* ...broke my heart."

She stared the older witch down as Narcissa heaved a small sigh.

"...and I can't even hate him for it," Hermione finished before turning around and walking back towards the mansion.

---

"My mother has been nothing but hospitable to you and this is how you thank her," he snarled as he followed her into the room.

Hermione suppressed a sigh as she kicked off the darn heels. As soon as she had stormed back into the house, she had been met with Draco's angry stare and she knew; he had seen everything. Draco slammed the door shut behind him as she turned around to face him.

"You shouldn't have been such a nosy little-"

She was cut off as he suddenly grabbed her arm and pulled her against him.

"I was looking forward to the two of you getting along and wanted to see for myself. Imagine my surprise at you storming off like a spoiled



brat simply because she said something that you didn't like," he hissed.

"Don't presume to assume. I surprisingly find myself quite fond of your mother actually. It was the topic of our discussion that had me in a tizzy and I'm sure you can already guess that it was you. What else would make me want to curse everything in sight," she spat.

"If that was meant to upset me then you failed. You should already know that the knowledge of the extent of my effect on you will only serve to turn me on, Hermione. So unless you plan to be on your back spread eagle for me within the next two minutes I suggest you shut your trap," he said.

Hermione used her free arm to hurl her fist at him, but he simply caught it before spinning them around and slamming her back into the wall. Hermione winced as he trailed his nose up the curve of her neck.

"Try that again. I dare you," he whispered.

She glared at him as he raised his head to smirk at her. Her gaze fell to his lips and she scolded herself for not looking away. She pressed herself into the wall as he ran his fingers up her leg, bunching the dress up around his fist when he stilled.

She watched as he closed his eyes and heaved a very long, irritated sigh before pulling away. She breathed a sigh of relief as he backed away, fists clenched beside him.

"It seems that I have business to attend to. Consider yourself lucky," he said as he grabbed his jacket.

Hermione knew what that meant and she found herself both relieved and scared. At this rate, her heart was literally going to rip itself in two. She said nothing as he brushed past her before exiting the room, the door slamming shut behind him.

---

She huffed as she sat on the bed, disappointed and angry with herself for not pushing him away earlier. *You're letting him get to you.* She clenched her jaw at that thought. It was true, she was slowly, but surely crumbling and that was dangerous. She had enjoyed the feel of his body against hers and she had wanted his hand to continue its journey, wanted him to erase the memory of her first time and replace it with something she knew only he could give her.

He had been gone for the rest of the day and the sun had long gone down. She found that she couldn't fight the worry she had begun to feel at his prolonged absence. She couldn't help it and at this, she shook her head. He was getting to her, this place was getting to her. Without her friends here she was losing that constant reminder as to why it could never be and that wasn't good. She glanced at the door before sprinting to the closet, mind made up, and immediately stripping and throwing on the most casual thing she could find. She spun around the room, looking for something, anything before her eyes landed on the desk in the dark corner.

She rifled through the drawer, a sinking feeling in her gut before her fingers finally touched something cold and metal. She closed them around the letter opener with glee before glancing at the balcony. She'd be stupid to even try. Even if she did fashion a rope made of sheets, it would take too long and someone would surely spot her before she even made it down. She turned her gaze to the door with determination before marching out of the room.

The wing was dark and quiet, no sign of life anywhere and Hermione took slow, quiet steps through the halls. She had paid extra attention on the way down to meet Narcissa and back. She had memorized the layout and soon found herself at the top of the stairs. She could hear voices carrying from the foyer, on the other side of the kitchen and she was careful to slowly take the steps two at a time. The back door was past the dining area and she maneuvered around the table with ease.

She forced her heart to still upon finding the door locked. She took a deep breath before looking over her shoulder and back. Wandless magic wasn't her strong suit, something that had always greatly embarrassed her, but she could do a select few spells. She took another deep breath before focusing on the door knob. She had to get out of here, she had to try.

"Alohomora," she whispered so quietly that it almost felt as if she simply mouthed it.

She sighed in relief as it unlocked with a soft click and she immediately tuned into the voices that could still be heard. Satisfied with the fact that they were none the wiser, she slipped out of the back door, closing it without a sound. With letter opener clutched tightly in her hand, she printed away from the mansion. Her best bet would be to run towards the front of the property and that was what she did. She wasn't sure how secluded it was, but if the rumors of Mrs. Zabini were true, then Hermione knew that she would never have a mansion that was too far away from any sort of potential suitors.

The tree limbs swiped at Hermione and tugged at her hair as if they were trying to pull her back, but she paid them no mind. She wasn't exactly sure how long she had been running or even how far. She just knew that she couldn't stop. Hermione was afraid of what going back to that mansion meant. Her best friend had been dragged there and was now more than happy to stay. She had lost Ginny and Hermione couldn't lose herself too and that was exactly what was going to happen if she didn't get out.

Her conversation with Narcissa Malfoy played on repeat in her head. Hermione couldn't let herself be fooled into believing that Draco actually loved her because if she did then she was done for. She would be just like his mum and believe that there was still hope when the truth was that there was very little hope left.

She suddenly stopped as some leaves rustled behind her. She looked over her shoulder, staring into the shadows that were created

from the full moon hanging above her. Her fingers tightened around the letter opener as she gazed into the darkness, desperately hoping that it was just some animal. She listened for a few more seconds and sighed upon hearing nothing else. She spun around and immediately gasped, stumbling back.

Draco leaned against the large tree, one leg crossed in front of the other as his hair hung over his forehead, the moonlight emphasizing its fair color. He heaved a rather long saddened sigh as he stroked his wand.

"I must say...I'm kind of disappointed in you."

Hermione took a step back.

"I never had any business to attend to. This was simply a test and... well, you failed," he said, lifting his head.

She swallowed.

"...or passed, depending on how you look at it, really. Seeing as I expected this I guess that means you passed."

He pushed away from the tree, walking towards her.

"But I prefer to look at it as a fail. How does that feel, to actually fail at something, Hermione," he asked.

She didn't respond, simply glared at him. She jerked away as he reached for her.

"Let's not be dumb," he said in exasperation as he reached for her again with a chuckle.

He pulled his hand away as she swiped at him, his somber expression immediately transforming to one of absolute glee as his eyes landed on the letter opener. His gaze settled on her, eyes twinkling with mirth.

" Oh? "

"You want to take me back to that mansion, then you better be prepared to drag me back," she said through clenched teeth, holding the letter opener out in front of her.

Draco licked his lips before spreading his arms out and leaning over to set his wand down onto the forest floor.

"Let's make this a fair fight, shall we," he proposed with a smirk.

She took another step back as he walked towards her.

"Come on. Aren't you going to slice me? Sock me in the nose again," he questioned with a laugh.

She never took her eyes off of him as she raised the letter opener.

"Come on, I'm giving you a free shot," he said as he unbuttoned his jacket, teeth barred and face suddenly twisted in anger.

He yanked his arms out of the sleeves before throwing it onto the ground with a loud thud, dirt flying around his feet.

"...and you better make it count, *baby* ."

---

**When he calls you baby #justgirlythings**

**Don't forget to review!**

# So Maybe I'm a Masochist

Apparently updating in the middle of the night ( or early morning...?) is my new thing. Don't get used to it. I just want to say that I love this chapter hahaha!

**Disclaimer: I Own Nothing**

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*She took another step back as he walked towards her.*

*"Come on. Aren't you going to slice me? Sock me in the nose again," he questioned with a laugh.*

*She never took her eyes off of him as she raised the letter opener.*

*"Come on, I'm giving you a free shot," he said as he unbuttoned his jacket, teeth barred and face suddenly twisted in anger.*

*He yanked his arms out of the sleeves before throwing it onto the ground with a loud thud, dirt flying around his feet.*

*"...and you better make it count, **baby** ."*

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Hermione took deep, shaky breaths as she stepped back, Draco's height emphasized as he towered over her. Her eyes darted around, considering her options. She needed to do something that would cause the most damage and Hermione immediately grimaced when her mind went down a certain train of thought. It was low, but she was desperate. She gulped, staring at his angered face, his eyes holding threatening promises.

With a huff, she swiped at his pretty face and as soon as he leaned away, she raised her foot, aiming right in between his legs. She winced as he caught her leg in an iron grip, pulling her close and yanking it up so that it rested against his hip. He playfully pressed his

pelvis against hers. The letter opener was pressed against his throat as he brushed his lips against her own, his grip tightening. He let out a low, husky chuckle, before whispering:

"I said free shot, Hermione, not cheap shot."

Before she had time to even respond to that statement her world was spinning and she was flying sideways, her back connecting with the tree he had been previously leaning against. She painfully bounced off of the tree before landing on her stomach, the impact knocking the wind out of her. She hurriedly pushed herself onto her knees, but she wasn't fast enough.

She yelped in pain as his fingers twisted into her hair, forcing her into a standing position. She brought her foot down, digging it onto his own before throwing her head back. She was satisfied when he grunted in pain and his hold on her loosened. She spun around, hand outstretched and caught his shirt with the letter opener. The sound of ripping fabric reached her ears and she briskly backed up as he looked down.

Draco fingered the material before lifting his head to glare at her. Hermione felt her heart freeze at his hard stare.

"Consider that your free shot," he sneered, striding towards her.

Hermione swerved and her eyes widened at the sound of his fist hitting the tree. She glanced at the dent in the wood in fear before bringing her arm up just as he brought his down. She stumbled back from the force and it became very clear to her that he was determined to drag her unconscious body back if he had to. She shoved her fist into his face before bringing her knee up, taking satisfaction in his immediate stumble.

She tightened both of her hands around the letter opener and brought it down, aiming right for his shoulder when he grabbed her arms and slammed her back into the tree. Her heart sank and she winced as the rough bark dug into her back. She pushed against

him, but he simply pushed back, pressing her back even harder against the tree. He began to bend her wrists back and she had a brief flashback to a year ago, that night in the corridor, the night when she should have run for the hills.

*He emotionlessly stared into her eyes as he began to bend her wrists back in retaliation, causing her to yelp in extreme discomfort before being forced to her knees.*

*"If I am not your superior...then why are you on your knees before me, my sweet lioness?"*

If only she knew then what she was getting herself into. She glared at that cruel and haughty smirk that graced his lips before bringing her head forward, slamming her forehead into his. He stumbled back and blinked, but his hold didn't loosen for a second. Without warning, he did the same and she saw stars as the back of her head collided with the tree. He let her go and she fell onto her knees, vision swaying. Her hand held onto the letter opener with an iron grip as Draco came behind her and knelt down.

She shrieked, kicking out as his arm constricted around her neck. He leaned back, pulling her with him as his hold tightened, cutting off her airway. She gasped for breath as he began to back up, her flailing feet dragging along the ground, kicking up leaves and dirt. She used her free hand to repeatedly hit his head, resorting to digging her nails into his face when that didn't work. He jerked his arm, forcing tears to her eyes as his grip got tighter and tighter. She was *not* going down this easily.

Suddenly an idea struck her and she closed her eyes and became dead weight in his arms. She felt him slowly loosen his hold before letting her fall into his arm, bringing the other one up under her legs. She forced herself to keep her breathing light and even, almost failing when she heard him heave a long, tired sigh. It became even more difficult when he pressed his lips to her forehead, lingering there and breathing in her scent.



*I know my son. Even though he may not realize it, he may even deny it, but he loves you.*

For once, Hermione felt bad, she felt really bad for what she was about to do and she meant that. Not a second later, she had raised the letter opener and sank it into his hand. With a loud, painful hiss, he dropped her and she landed on her back as he gripped his hand. With a grunt, she forced it into his thigh, letting go and hurriedly scooting back as he fell to his knees. She shakily stood and watched as he snatched it out with a groan before raising his eyes to meet hers.

If looks could kill, Hermione imagined that she would be nothing but dust at the moment. Blood pooled in his injured hand and more began to trickle from the wound in his thigh. He flung the weapon behind him with a sneer and Hermione knew that she was done for. She glanced to her left at the direction in which she had been originally heading. He was injured and she wasn't. This was the perfect time to make a run for it and that was exactly what she did.

Limbs burning and hair flying behind her, she took off like a shot in the dark. Branches smacked her in the face and drew blood on her arms as twigs and vines clung to her feet and hindered her movement, but she forced herself to push on. Her breathing was hard and her heart hammered within her chest, begging for a respite, but Hermione *could not* stop. She could hear his footsteps behind her and she briefly wondered if she had even stabbed him deep enough. Up ahead she could see a dip in the ground and guessed that there was a hill up ahead. She was soon proven right when she was rammed into from behind, a heavy weight slamming her down.

They rolled down the hill, Draco's chest pressed into her back and his arms caging her in. She bucked in his hold as they landed at the bottom of the dip in a heap, legs entangled. They rolled until he was on his back and she was staring up at the night sky. She brought her elbow back to connect with his gut, but he simply tensed and rolled them over until the side of her face was pressed against the ground.

She winced as he twisted her arms behind her back and whimpered in pain as he pressed his knee into the small of her back. She twisted, trying to force him to loosen his hold. This only served to make him tighten his grip, removing his knee and yanking her to her feet. She pulled against him, attempting to turn around when he bent her arm. She cried out as a sharp pain shot throughout her arm, but she refused to stop.

She brought her foot back to kick him and in retaliation he stepped on it, forcing her ankle to twist at an uncomfortable angle. She panted as she leaned away from him, ankle sprained and arms uncomfortably twisted behind her back. She thrashed again, but immediately halted as he pushed her forearm back. She felt his chest graze her back as he brushed his lips against her ear.

"Cut it out or I swear on Salazar's grave that I will *break your arm* ," he hissed.

Hermione closed her eyes in defeat, she was sweaty, hurt, and tired. However, she was more than happy that she wasn't the only one. She could hear Draco's labored breathing and did nothing to hide her prideful smile. Her smile fell, however, when he nipped her ear, his teeth grazing her skin. A shudder traveled down her spine as he forced her to her knees, his own resting on the ground on either side of hers, chest pressed into her back.

Her body trembled as he brought his free hand up to trail a finger along her collarbone, bringing it down to graze the top of her shirt, dangerously close to her heaving chest. He snatched it away, instead lifting her hair away from her neck and pressing his lips to her skin.

He exhaled, his breath fanning over her heated skin, before pushing her hair to the side and slinging his arm over her shoulder. He bent his forearm across her chest, brushing his fingers against her other shoulder as he rested his chin on her head.

"Do you have any idea how bad things can get," he quietly asked, his words coming out slow.

Hermione swallowed.

"Do you? You're lucky that I actually give a rat's ass about your feelings. You're lucky that I... *care* . Because if I didn't..."

Hermione was suddenly free, but her freedom was short lived as she soon found herself on her back, Draco's form pressed against her own, her hands pinned beside her head. His once pristine white shirt was stained with dirt and blood, his chest visible through the large tear.

"...I would have had you in every room in that house by now. I would have taken you on every square inch of that property," he purred, his nose brushing against her own.

She heaved shaky breaths as he let go of her wrist and hooked her leg around his waist, pressing into her. He pressed his lips against her neck, nipping at the flesh, no doubt taking notice of her increasing pulse.

"In fact, I could have you right now. I could have every little nook and cranny of your body right here on this forest floor. Your legs would open for me so fast and I would hardly even have to utter a word," he hissed against her skin.

His fingers tangled into her hair as he turned her head, pressing his lips to her cheek, breathing hard as he pressed his pelvis into her own.

"I could have you *begging* for me, Hermione."

"What's stopping you," she demanded, challenging him.

He laughed, a dark and arousing sound that went straight through her. He sat up, pale hair glowing in the moonlight and piercing eyes

shining though the shadows.

"You're right. What is stopping me," he murmured, ripping her shirt straight down the middle.

She shrieked in surprise, eyes wide as he pressed the palm of his hand against her stomach.

"You are absolutely right, Hermione. What *is* stopping me from having my wicked way with you on these leaves? I bet that I could make you scream so loud that Blaise and your little backstabbing friend would hear it."

He leaned down, trailing his tongue from her bra to the edge of her pants and she involuntarily arched her back.

"Mmm, I could have you *purring* for me. We'd both enjoy it, so why not," he huskily asked again.

He suddenly sat up again, shoving her stomach back down and gazing down at her, eyes swirling with sinful thoughts and erotic intentions.

"I'll tell you why, Hermione. When I'm inside of you, oh when I finally give you what the both of us want, it'll be because *you* came to *me* . I'll have you panting after me, squirming for me without rest, begging for what only *I* can give you."

He stood, pulling her up with him and yanking her against him. She looked up just in time for his lips to crash against hers, his teeth nipping and pulling, taking her breath away. He tilted his head, tongue slipping past her parted lips to stroke her own, hands digging into her hips. She gasped as his hand traveled down before gripping her butt, pressing her against him as he attempted to suck her soul out of her. Just as quickly as it began, it was over. He pulled his lips away with a smack, letting her go, causing her to stumble and she reached out to grip a tree to regain her footing.

She fought to catch her breath as she looked up. He gazed at her with a look that made her legs shake, his lips pink and swollen, and eyes penetrating through her.

"Don't you forget that, Hermione."

---

The both of them were met with a rather loud gasp as they stepped into the foyer, the door slamming shut behind them.

"What happened? What the hell did you do to her," Ginny shrieked.

Hermione glanced up at the frantic redhead as Blaise held her back with one arm. Her eyes were wide and eyebrows furrowed into a frown as her eyes danced between the two of them. Blaise stood behind her, one hand holding onto one of Ginny's arms much like she and Draco. Hermione suppressed a sigh as she looked down as Draco pulled her past the two of them.

"Just a lovers' quarrel. Don't get your knickers into a twist," Draco snapped as they walked towards the stairs.

"That looks like more than a lovers' quarrel. *Let go of me!* "

"Well, our relationship has always been a bit more epic and explosive than yours, *Ginevra* ," he spat.

Ginny called her name as she and Draco climbed the stairs, his grip on her arm not loosening for a second. Hermione's mind was spinning as they walked down the long hallway that held her room. She was angry, so very angry, but even more conflicted than she was when she ran out of the house. He let her go as they stopped in front of her door, smirking at her glowering stare.

"You don't want to make another run for it? You might actually make it this time, I'll even give you a head start. We both know that nothing would give me more pleasure," he mocked.

"I despise you," she spat.

Draco rested his hands behind his back, raising an eyebrow as he took a step towards her.

" *Despise?* I thought you hated me..."

He made a humming sound, thoughtful as he slowly raked his eyes over her. Hermione swallowed, deciding to ignore his comment and turned to open her door when she felt the heat from his body. She kept her head down as he rested his hands on the door jam, caging her in.

"Don't forget what I said, Hermione. It's only a matter of time," he chuckled.

She angrily shoved the door open, slamming it shut in his face, his loud laughter piercing through the walls, suffocating her.

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*Hermione arched her back, mouth open in a silent moan as his hands grazed down her sides, gripping her thighs. She let out a long mewl as he slowed down his pace, forcing her to feel every bit of him, chest brushing against hers as he did so. She tightened her legs around him, bringing him closer as he sank his teeth into her neck, sucking on the sensitive skin. Her hands ran over his back, holding onto him as she came, trembling beneath him as he burst within her, running his hands all over her as if she would disappear.*

*She reached up, gripping his hair and pulling his head up so that her lips could meet his. He reached behind her, resting his hand on her back and pulling her up. She gasped as he flipped them over, still inside of her, her hair falling down around them like a curtain. He reached up to cup her face within his hands while she leaned over him, palms pressed into the mattress.*

*She pulled her lips in between her teeth, gazing into his eyes. The moonlight from the balcony window cast an eerie glow over the*

*room. Brown and silver clashed as he stroked her cheeks with his thumb, those sinful lips pulled into a rare smile. She felt her already heated face taking on an even hotter temperature as he ran his eyes over her face, drinking her in.*

*"What," she quietly asked as she smiled down at him.*

*He didn't answer, instead continuing to stroke her face, fingers running over her lips and nose. He traced her eyes, brushing them over her eyebrows before he let out a soft, thoughtful chuckle. She watched as he swallowed blinking, running his hands down her arms, brushing her hair behind her shoulders, making them visible to the world again.*

*He lifted his hips, sending a shot of pleasure through her body. She gasped and her eyelashes fluttered as she rested her hands on his chest, digging her nails into his skin as she brought her hips down to meet his. He ran his hands up her back, rolling them over again. He pressed his lips against her shoulder as she thrust into her, murmuring:*

*"Merlin, I love you."*

---

Hermione's eyes shot open, landing on the deep canopy that fell over the bed. She swallowed, the dream still fresh in her mind as she brought her hand up to cover her eyes. Her face twisted as she held back a sob, realizing that this morning was one of *those* mornings. She figured that Narcissa's words were responsible for her dream, making her subconscious believe in something that wasn't real.

Her chest tightened and she rolled over onto her side, wrapping her arms around her stomach, shoulders trembling. It wasn't fair that in her dreams they were happy, that he loved her and cherished and when she woke up... She sniffed, shaking her head. It just wasn't fair.

"It was either a really good dream or a really bad one."

Hermione shot up, eyes wide and heart hammering within her chest as her eyes landed on the figure sitting in the chair by the coffee table. One leg was casually draped over the other and his fingers were connected as he rested his elbows on the arms of the chair. His dark skin stood out against his all white suit, obsidian eyes gazing at her with a hardened stare.

Blaise Zabini was the perfect definition of suave as he slowly rose from the chair. He parted from the chair with a grace that rivaled his best friend's, stepping around the room with a wandering eye. He finally gave an appreciative nod before resting his eyes on her. He exhaled, shoving his hands into his pockets.

"Where's Draco?"

"He's taking care of stuff for our dark father. *We need to talk* ."

Hermione narrowed her eyes at him, lips twisted into a frown as she scooted back up against the headboard. She wasn't sure if she had ever hated someone so much in her life.

"I have nothing to say to the likes of you," she spat.

"No matter to me. You listen and I'll talk then," he responded with a shrug, unfazed by her hostility.

She huffed, glancing away.

"There's no easy way to say this, so I'm just going to come out and say it," he began.

She reluctantly returned her eyes to him, her interest peaked. He gazed at her with an expression full of nothing but exasperation.

"I need you to stop being a hypocritical bitch."

Her eyes widened and her anger flared almost immediately.

" *What* did you just say to me," she demanded.



"You heard me loud and clear. Ginny is quite...unhappy," he said.

Hermione cruelly smirked.

"Oh, I'm sorry. Is that cutting into your sex life," she sneered.

Blaise threw her a haughty smirk of his own.

"Quite the contrary. It seems to be her favorite pastime when she's trying to forget about you," he boasted.

Hermione's smirk fell as she rolled her eyes at him.

"Look, you can believe whatever the hell you want, Hermione, but I love Ginny-"

Hermione scoffed, interrupting him.

" *I do* . I love her and even though I've made mistakes in the past where she is concerned..."

Hermione frowned in confusion, staring at him.

"In the past...? What are you on about," she demanded.

Blaise sighed, shaking his head.

"Doesn't matter. The point is that I'm doing my best to make up for it now. I'm doing everything that I can to make her happy and right now, that's kind of impossible when she's crying on a regular basis about her best friend," he said.

"Former best friend," she corrected.

"Damn it, Hermione! Get your head out of your ass for one minute. She loves you and no matter how you may feel, she still sees you as a sister. She's already felt bad enough about her and I. She's beaten herself up over it, believe me, and you acting like *this* is only

confirming her worst fears about us. You're treating her exactly how she feared she would be treated," he explained.

Hermione threw the duvet away from her before sliding out of bed, walking past Blaise towards the bathroom.

"What else did she expect," she murmured.

She sharply inhaled as he gripped her arm, spinning her around.

"You are supposed to be her best friend. Start acting like it!"

She snatched her arm away, glaring at him.

"Just what did the two of you expect from me, huh? If you're looking for a blessing, you're barking up the wrong tree," she hissed.

"No, we weren't expecting a blessing, but maybe a little compassion, a little understanding, you *selfish bitch*," he spat.

She swung her hand and hissed in anger when he caught it in his hand, he shoved her away, forcing her to stumble into the table as he glared at her.

"Draco and I are best friends for a reason, Hermione. I don't know how your Gryffindor boys handle it, but I don't tolerate that crap either. Hit me and I'm hitting you back," he firmly stated.

Hermione felt her anger flare and her next words flew out of her mouth.

"I can't wait for the day that Ginny finally comes to her senses."

"Watch it," he warned.

"You're a lackey to a Death Eater and even though you don't have the wretched thing on your arm, you're still just as bad," she hissed.

He took a step towards her, eyes blazing.

"You shouldn't talk about things that you don't understand," he said.

"I understand that eventually she's going to see you for what you are. She's going to realize what a waste you are and run off into the sunset with Dean or someone who can give her what she needs."

No sooner had the words escaped her lips when Blaise raised his hand. She flinched as he stopped himself, balling it into a fist as he clenched his jaw, glaring at her.

"Hit a nerve? What do you know, the great Blaise Zabini *does* have insecurities," she whispered.

He lowered his arm with a small smirk before backing up and exiting her room without another word.

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**And the plot thickens! What did Blaise mean by in the past? When are Hermione and Draco going to bang? And where the heck is Theo? Don't forget to review!**

## Going Up in Smoke

I'm only going to say this once because apparently there are still people that are confused. DRAMIONE IS ENDGAME. That has been stated several times and that isn't going to change. Apparently, I had an anon reviewer who didn't like the idea of that which just baffled me to be honest. Why did that confuse me? Because I've been saying it since C&B. This person clearly doesn't know how to read and if they're reading this and get offended...GOOD. Feel offended because Author's Notes are a thing for a reason. I don't understand how they thought anything but Dramione would be endgame. I've stated it so many times it's not even funny. This person clearly didn't believe me or was in denial and concocted their own idea of what would happen in this story. The fact that they actually had the nerve to even write that review is laughable to me because, like I said before, they clearly can't read. I mean this person was just SO disappointed as if I somehow misled them. As if it were *my* fault that they didn't believe me when I said Dramione was endgame and that they were going to have a happy ending. M&M is going to be so much longer than C&B guys, I plan to have at least 30 chapters. There is going to be major character growth. Obviously I wouldn't have Dramione as endgame with a Draco that wasn't even halfway deserving of Hermione. I mean, I don't think I've misled anyone. I'm almost positive that I have been very clear about what is going to happen with this story. I know that this story is dark, very dark and to be fair I gave everyone a fair warning, several actually in C&B. I've even given warnings in M&M. Why? Because I know that these kinds of stories aren't for everyone. Not everyone can handle stories like these and that's okay! There's nothing wrong with that guys. Just don't sit there and get mad at me because the story isn't going in the direction you expected, especially when I gave ample warning. \*shrugs\* Not my fault if you've been kidding yourself this whole time. This only applies to THAT anon and

**others like that anon who are holding out for something that's not going to happen. I'M NOT ACKNOWLEDGING THIS AGAIN.**

**That was super long, but anyways I lot of you loved the fight scene between D/H and I'm here to tell you that there are plenty more of those and not just D/H.**

**Disclaimer: I Own Nothing**

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"...we could take a walk through the gardens as well. It's a maze, so I think that'd be rather exciting. I haven't exactly been out much since I've been here. There's also the library. Blaise has a wonderful collection of books that I'm sure would impress even you."

Hermione didn't respond, instead staring out of her balcony windows, allowing Ginny's chatter to go in one ear and out the other. It was silent for some time and Hermione could imagine Ginny staring at her with that constipated look on her face at the awkward silence.

"Um...well, when I was still at Hogwarts I could tell you what you missed..."

Hermione heaved a sigh, pushing herself off of the wall before turning around to face the younger girl. She crossed her arms over her chest, flicking her hair out of her face as she stared Ginny down. Ginny sat cross legged on the bed, shifting uncomfortably as Hermione turned to face her.

"Do you purposefully ignore the not so subtle hints I've been giving that tell you that I don't want to talk to you or...do you just enjoy hearing the sound of your own voice," Hermione venomously asked.

Ginny winced, shrinking in on herself as Hermione stared her down. The redhead looked down, twiddling her fingers.

"Hermione...I'm trying, okay? I'm really trying here," she quietly said, rapidly blinking.

"I don't want you to try. I want you to go away."

Ginny sniffed, huffing and looking away towards the bathroom.

"Blaise told me that you two talked," Ginny said.

Hermione let out a humorless chuckle.

"Is that what he called it? Your boyfriend came in here practically demanding that I be nice to you, like he's my father or something. Unlike you, I don't let him control me," Hermione snidely commented.

"And I suppose that you're here because you want to be, huh," Ginny threw back.

Hermione pursed her lips, biting her tongue as she looked back outside.

"I'd be stupid to try and escape again so soon. Unlike you, I'm not an idiot."

Ginny heaved a sigh and Hermione heard her slide off of the bed, walking towards her.

"Please, Hermione... I don't want to fight. I'm sorry, okay? I'm sorry. I don't know how many times I have to say that. I don't know what you want me to do. Please, I need you...I really need you. Now, more than ever," she pleaded.

Hermione clenched her jaw, eyes watering as she stared at the vast backyard. She swallowed before exhaling.

"Well, I guess that's the difference then between you and me, Ginny. I don't need you..."

Hermione looked over her shoulder.

"...and I don't want you. I'm perfectly capable without you because unlike you, I can survive on my own," she spat.

Ginny flinched, eyes watering as she glared at Hermione. Hermione turned back around, forcing herself to ignore the other girl until she left. Hermione was confused as she didn't hear the sound of the door closing and was about to turn around when Ginny spoke.

"Well, how was Horcrux hunting?"

Hermione laughed, really laughed this time as she turned around to look at Ginny.

"Are you really *that* desperate to talk to me? Horcrux hunting? Really, Ginny? You're that stubborn that you can't just admit defeat and leave? You don't want to go running and crying to Blaise, complaining that the big old mean Hermione hurt your feelings and have him coddle you and tell you that everything will be okay?"

Ginny heaved a sigh.

"I'm genuinely curious, Hermione. I'm sorry, but despite what you think, your attitude isn't nasty enough to scare me off just yet. I still want to know what it was like out there," Ginny said.

"Fine. We had a big feast every morning and we stayed in luxurious Inns and sang campfire songs every night while roasting marshmallows by the fire. How do you think it was? It was tiresome, dangerous, and stressful. Among other things," Hermione grumbled.

Ginny swallowed.

"How was Ron? And Harry?"

"Ron got splinched, we all fought a lot, and Ron and Harry got into a fight that was so bad that Ron eventually ran off," Hermione spat.

Ginny's eyes widened in concern.

"Yeah, so now you know what we were doing while you were here living it up in luxury," Hermione said.

"How many times do I have to say it? I didn't ask for this. Please, believe me when I say that this has tortured me. I'm not asking for your blessing, I just want a little bit of understanding," Ginny cried as she walked towards her.

"Well, I hope that you enjoy disappointment, but hey, you're dating Blaise so it can't be too foreign to you."

"Stop! Will you just stop? You're not even trying. You probably haven't even really thought about this. You're just blindly hating it because you can, because you don't want to understand. Hermione, it won't make you a traitor, okay? You won't be turning your back on anyone," Ginny said.

"Maybe that's how you see it in your little fantasy world, but that's not how the rest of the world works. Do you think Ron is going to see it that way? What is he going to say, Ginny, when at the end of this, you show up at the Burrow with *him* on your arm? Haven't you thought about that?"

"I think about that every day, Hermione, believe me," Ginny whispered.

"Right. I forgot, you two are in love, so it'll be worth it," Hermione mocked.

"I do love him. Hermione. I don't know that it will be worth it, but I know that he's worth fighting for."

Hermione nodded.

"Yeah, you keep telling yourself that."

Ginny shook her head, turning around and walking towards the door. She paused, her hand resting on the door knob as she opened the



door.

"I feel sorry for you, Hermione..."

Ginny looked over her shoulder as Hermione glared at her.

"...I really do. You're in so much denial, about everything, and I don't want to be around when the truth finally hits you," she said, closing the door behind her as she left.

---

Hermione *reluctantly* found herself in the library a few days later and was, once again, *reluctant* to admit that Ginny was right. Blaise's library was rather impressive. It was on the first floor, a room all the way in the back of the mansion, the bloody thing extending three stories high. Hermione heaved a sigh as she walked along the aisles, eyes scanning the spines of the books as she went along.

She suddenly paused as she heard a rustle of fabric a few aisles over. She frowned, looking through the shelves to see if she could spot anyone. She saw nothing though, and cautiously turned back around to continue her search for a proper book to read. She looked up, spotting one that looked promising and reached up to grab it when someone else beat her to it.

She gasped in shock as a hard chest pressed against her back, pushing her against the shelf as the person reached up. She watched as a fair hand grabbed the book she had been eyeing, long arm outstretched as they brought it down in front of her face. She hesitantly reached up to take it, eyeing their long fingers as she struggled to turn around, the other person still being rather close.

Hermione's eyes widened in shock as she took him in. He had a rather boyish smile on his pink lips as he tilted his head to the side, gazing at her through eyes the color of blueberries. His black hair was pushed away from his face, looking as if he'd just stepped out of the 50s with one, single black strand falling just over his eye. He, like Draco and Blaise normally were, was covered head to toe in black,

only making his fair skin and blue eyes stand out more. Hermione clutched the book to her chest as she looked up at him.

"Nott..."

"Hermione," he responded, her name rolling off of his tongue like water.

She swallowed, narrowing her eyes at him. It must have been him that she'd heard. She hadn't seen Nott since...since he and Blaise had tried to kidnap her back at Hogwarts. Her jaw suddenly clenched at the memory and his eyes caught that.

"I take it you're still upset with me about that whole trying to kidnap you thing," he said.

She forced herself from in between him and the bookshelf, walking towards the set of chairs and love seats in the center of the room.

"Not at all," she spat, sinking into the plush furniture.

"I'm sure you can understand that denying Draco is like...well, it may as well be equivalent to denying You-Know-Who himself," he stated, following her, resting his hands on the back of her chair.

"Well, that should tell you something about your friend then," she said, opening her book, determined to ignore him.

Nott chuckled.

"Now, you know that Slytherins don't have friends, Hermione. Besides...", he quietly began.

Hermione swallowed, tensing as he leaned down, hovering over her so that his chest was right over her head.

"You know that Draco and I are sort of...competing."

Hermione looked up at this, staring past her book as Draco's words echoed in her head.

*"Teddy isn't your friend," Draco responded.*

*Hermione crossed her arms over chest.*

*"He's your friend," she pointed out.*

*Draco shook his head with a humorless laugh.*

*"Slytherins don't have friends. Teddy has fancied you for years so trust me when I say that he isn't your friend. He's just as bad as I am and he would steal you right from under my nose given the chance."*

Hermione cleared her throat, scooting forward.

"Is that so? This is news to me..."

"Mm, I don't think that it is," he said, straightening and slowly walking around the other chairs.

She looked up at him as he made his way around the circle of furniture, coming towards her.

"What could the two of you possibly be competing for?"

Her question came out cautious as it became all too clear that she was alone in this huge place with him. She didn't know Nott very well, but at one point she thought that she had been able to call him a friend. He had saved her after all and had been determined to look out for her after the incident with Pansy. Of course, this was all before she realized where his true loyalties would always lay. Besides, Draco had said...but Draco was also easily jealous. He could have been lying, for all she knew. He was very good at that, lying.

Nott's smile grew as he sat down in the chair across from her, leaning over and resting his arms on his knees, clasping his hands

together. He gazed at her with a look that was so unfamiliar and Hermione couldn't tell if it was good or bad. She blinked, staring at him in confusion as she tried to place that look.

"Oh, you know, practically everything. We have similar interests... and *tastes* ," he finally said.

"I see. So where have you been?"

She didn't want to make small talk, but she was rather curious about this. He exhaled, sitting up and leaning back against the chair, arms outstretched along the back.

"Taking care of some business. Why? Did you miss me?"

Hermione scoffed, thinking about something she'd read stating that when people hung around each other too much, they tended to pick up each other's personalities and habits. She could definitely see some Draco in him.

"No, I didn't. I'm sorry to say that you didn't cross my mind, not once," she replied.

"Hm. Pity," he said, picking at something on his jacket.

She suddenly shut her book, fed up with the chit chat.

"Why are you here, Nott?"

"Excuse me," he asked, glancing up at her.

"Why are you talking to me? What is it that you want?"

He folded his hands in his laps, glancing down before looking up at her from beneath his lashes, blue eyes practically glowing.

"Honestly?"

"Yes, honestly," she snapped.

"I want to be your friend," he quietly stated.

"You want to be my friend? Yeah, okay," she said, standing up.

He too stood and stepped in her path as she prepared herself to leave. He looked down at her with nothing but sincerity with that same unfamiliar look on his face.

"I'm serious. We all know how Draco feels about you and I...I know how he can be. I just think that you need a friend, is all. Am I wrong?"

Hermione looked away, wanting to deny the truth in his words. She *didn't* have anyone to talk to and Nott...Nott seemed genuine. He wasn't like Blaise or Draco and Hermione found herself wondering how on earth he'd gotten mixed up with those two. She suddenly frowned as she thought about the fact that he'd clearly gotten mixed up with those two for a reason. *Birds of a feather*, she thought. She pressed her lips together, clutching her book tighter.

"How do you think Draco is going to feel about us being friends?"

It was a valid question. Nott shrugged, a smile tugging on his lips.

"I don't care. How do *you* feel about us being friends?"

Hermione blinked and looked away, realizing that for the first time in a long time, someone was asking for her opinion on something that involved her.

---

"It's just dinner, Hermione. For Merlin's sake, you're acting as if you're walking to your death," Draco said as they walked down the stairs.

She clenched her jaw, resisting the urge to tell him that she felt like she was walking to just that. Draco, and she was sure Ginny, had noticed the growing tension between she and Blaise. Hermione

didn't have the heart to tell him that this was because she wanted to stab Blaise repeatedly. Now, because of this tension, Draco had decided that the four of them should share a meal together like some kind of twisted double date. Did she have a say in this? No. Did she honestly even care anymore? No. She was learning to choose her battles wisely.

They walked into the dining room, Blaise and Ginny already seated and waiting. Hermione repressed her disgust as Blaise held Ginny's hand on top of the table, his thumb smoothing over her skin as they talked. They hadn't noticed the two of them yet and Hermione found herself frowning in uncertainty at the complete look of adoration on his face. Draco cleared his throat and the two looked up in surprise.

"Well, it's about time," Blaise complained as she and Draco sat down.

Hermione avoided Ginny's eyes as she sat across from her.

"We're here, aren't we," Draco said, settling very comfortably into his chair.

Hermione, on the other hand, was very uncomfortable and was stiff as a board. She eyed the food spread out along the table with a frown. She wasn't even feeling all that hungry, actually. She reluctantly followed everyone else's lead and dug in though, trying to get the lightest foods possible.

Draco and Blaise conversed with one another as Hermione nibbled on what little food she had put on her plate, doing her best to ignore Ginny's expectant gaze. Hermione didn't want to be there and no one could actually force her to make conversation. Instead she thought about her conversation with Nott yesterday, her mind lingering on his...invitation.

She was extremely skeptical seeing as past events made her weary of trusting...well, anyone. However, he did seem rather sincere and Hermione seriously found herself wondering why he was mixed up in

all of this. He wasn't like them, she could tell. She was brought out of her thoughts by a female voice.

"...I made the turkey as well. I had to practically beg Blaise to let me in the kitchen. He kept insisting that it was the House Elves' job but..." Ginny trailed off as Hermione gave her a blank stare.

Ginny looked away and Hermione looked back down at her plate, picking at her food. Hermione could hear Ginny saying something else and Hermione huffed, resisting the urge to roll her eyes as she ignored the other girl. It was then that Hermione noticed that Draco and Blaise were no longer talking. She could feel all three pairs of eyes on her, the tension slowly climbing.

"I believe that Ginny was speaking to you, Hermione," Blaise quietly said.

Hermione looked up at him in mock confusion, unfazed by his poorly concealed anger.

"Was she? My apologies..."

Hermione looked at Ginny who was staring with wide eyes, slowly looking back and forth between Hermione and Blaise.

"What did you say?"

"I uh...I said that Nott came by yesterday. He, Draco, and Blaise had talked for a bit. I was just wondering if you had run into him..."

"Yes, I did," Hermione said.

"Really," Draco stated as if that were the most interesting thing in the world, setting down his fork.

Hermione looked at him, raising her eyebrow as he narrowed his eyes at her.

"Yes, really."

"Where?"

"In the library."

"What happened in the library?"

"We talked."

"About?"

"Books," she spat, annoyed.

He simply stared at her before returning his attention back to his plate and Hermione looked away, taking note of the smirk that graced Blaise's lips. She was thankful that the interrogation was over.

"How does the turkey taste, Hermione?"

Hermione rolled her eyes at Ginny's question.

"It's a bit dry, but thanks for asking," Hermione said.

Hermione heard Blaise harshly set his utensils down and she looked at him.

"Do you have a problem, Hermione?"

"Not at all. Do *you* have a problem, *Blaise* ?"

She raised an eyebrow as he picked up his glass, taking a sip of whatever was in there before roughly slamming that down too.

"Yeah, I kind of do, actually. Ginny is being very polite and you're acting like a child," he spat.

"Forgive me if I have more pressing matters on my mind than your oversensitive girlfriend. In case you forgot, I was practically dragged



here against my will," Hermione said, throwing Draco a scornful smile.

The young Malfoy simply smirked, eyes flickering between the two of them in amusement.

"How could we forget with your lovely fiasco last week? Keep it up and next time I'll be right there with him, happily watching as he drags you back," he sweetly said, cutting into the meat on his plate.

"You know, Blaise, just because you have one, doesn't mean you should act like one," she threw back, just as sweet as she gestured towards his lap.

"Hermione....," Ginny said.

"Funny, I never hear you telling Draco that," Blaise said.

"You don't know what I say to him when we're alone. For all you know, I could be cussing him out every time we're behind closed doors. In fact, I'm pretty sure that's exactly what I do."

"Draco, when are you going to shag her already? I'm getting real tired of-"

" *Excuse me?* "

"Blaise," Ginny warned.

Blaise looked up.

"You heard me. That bitchy attitude might do it for him, but I'm sick of it. Are you jealous? Is that what it is? Are you mad that Ginny's happy and you're not? Does it bother you that she has somebody to sleep next to every night while you cry yourself to sleep almost every other night," he threw out.

"Screw you, Blaise. I'm upset because you've taken her away from me," Hermione shrieked.

"She does have a mind of her own, you know," Blaise snapped.

"She was weak and vulnerable and you took advantage of that."

"Hermione!"

"What a great way to think of your best friend," Blaise remarked.

"That disloyal slag is *not* my best friend," she hissed.

Blaise jumped up, his chair falling backwards, jaw clenched.

" *Do not* talk about her like that," he threatened.

Hermione stood too.

"I'll say whatever the hell I want to say. Who's going to stop me? You?"

Blaise leaned forward, resting his hands on the table, a cruel smirk gracing his features.

"You're lucky Draco's here. If he wasn't, I swear on Salazar's grave that you'd be picking yourself up off of that floor so fast..."

Hermione's eyes narrowed, anger flaring and before she knew what she was doing, she had reached across the table and grabbed his knife, sinking it straight into his hand. Ginny screamed, jumping back. Blaise yelled in pain, jerking his hand and hissing once he realized that the knife was lodged into the table. She backed up, glaring at him as his blood began to stain the wood.

Ginny hurriedly yanked the knife out, staring at Hermione with wide eyes. Blaise clutched his hand, glaring up at Hermione with a look that could kill. Out of the corner of her eye Hermione saw Draco pinching the bridge of his nose, head bowed.

"You *bitch!* "

He began to leap over the table, Ginny holding him back. Hermione was too focused on the two of them to see Draco wave his hand, one end of the table lifting up and the whole thing flying into the wall with a loud crash. Hermione shrieked in surprise, hurriedly backing up as it just barely missed her face. Her chest heaved as she looked back and forth between the table and Draco. Blaise stared at Draco with wide eyes, his left eye twitching.

" *What the hell* , Draco? That was imported from Italy, you *asshole!* "

Draco slowly stood, looking between them.

"Are the two of you done acting like children now? Yes? Good," he said.

He stepped closer to Hermione, resting his hand on her shoulder and looking down at her like a disappointed parent.

"Hermione...it's quite rude to stab your host," he scolded, but he couldn't hide the amused smirk.

She huffed, jerking away from him.

"Wouldn't you agree? Now, Blaise...", he began.

He turned to face him, Blaise still clutching his hand.

"Talk to her like that again and I will cut out your tongue. That I can promise you," Draco warned, lips set into a hard line.

He looked between the two of them one last time before grabbing Hermione's arm and dragging her out of the dining room. Hermione didn't even put up a fight, more than ready to get the hell out of there.

---

Hermione exited her bathroom, eyes immediately taking in the figure standing in her room and dropping the towel around her head with a

sigh. Ginny stormed over to Hermione, hair flying.

"What the hell is wrong with you?"

"Me? I don't remember inviting you in here," Hermione said, walking past her.

"I'm talking about dinner! How could you do that?"

"You heard what he said to me."

"I heard what you both said to each other! Hermione, please... I need you two to get along-"

"Why? Why is this so important to you," Hermione demanded, spinning around.

"It just is. Hermione, I am begging you...try, just try. That is all I'm asking for," Ginny begged.

"This is getting quite pathetic, don't you think?"

"Hermione, I'm pregnant!"

Hermione paused, eyes widening as she took in Ginny's words. She stared at Ginny like that for a painful amount of time, her eyes lowering to Ginny's stomach.

"Blaise doesn't know yet," Ginny shakily said.

Hermione looked back up, a million thoughts swirling through her head. Ginny stared at her through glassy eyes and Hermione could see that this wasn't new news to Ginny. This was something she'd been struggling with.

"I don't care how things are between us. You're still my sister and I had to tell you...I wanted you to know and with you and Blaise going after each other's throats...", Ginny trailed off with a shake of her head.

Hermione still had not moved, blinking and breathing picking up as Ginny's words sunk in. Ginny laid her hand on her stomach.

"I was at Hogwarts earlier in the year, but when I found out I came back here. I didn't tell Blaise why. I'm only about two months along... I'm not even showing yet. Hermione, I'm really scared. I want to be excited but..."

Ginny shook her head again.

" *I need you* , Hermione. Please...say something," Ginny quietly begged.

Hermione swallowed.

"I think I'm going to be sick," Hermione choked out, running into the bathroom, leaving Ginny to stare after her in sadness.

---

**Let me just say right now that no, Hermione isn't pregnant. I feel like some people are going to get that out of that last scene and no she's not. The reality of what Ginny said sank in and made her physically ill.**

**Anywho, Teddy is back, Hermione and Blaise are literally ready to kill each other and Ginny's knocked up. It's never a boring day with these kids...**

**Don't forget to review!**

# Crazy in Love

Let me just say that I love the reviews from last chapter. About half of you are like "Hermione's being a bitch. She needs to be more understanding..." and about the other half are like "I totally get where she's coming from. Her feelings are justified..." and the rest are just conflicted. Why do I love it? Because it means that M&M is doing what it's supposed to. You're supposed to love and hate everyone, you know. You're supposed to be conflicted. Hermione isn't some angel. She isn't always going to act the right way or make the right decision. Mistakes are normal, they're what makes us human. I don't know about you guys, but I hate Mary Sue main characters. They're boring and there is hardly anything complex or interesting about them and I'm so glad that a lot of you understand that that isn't who this Hermione is.

On another note, a lot of you missed Draco and all I gotta say is...be careful what you wish for. I have no excuses for this chapter. My only excuse would be that I'm still a bit messed up in the head from watching Suicide Squad last night. I...it wasn't even supposed to go this far man. Well, here you go.

## Disclaimer: I Own Nothing

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Pregnant. *Pregnant*. Ginny was...pregnant. Hermione could hardly wrap her head around that sentence let alone the actual reality of it. Merlin only knows what was going on inside of Ginny's head. She was the one with...with a *baby* growing inside of her. With that thought, Hermione's stomach heaved again, throwing up what little food she had eaten, her fingers gripping the toilet bowl.

A fleeting thought crossed her mind, wondering if Blaise had planned this. Hermione still didn't understand the dynamics of their

relationship, but she wondered if Blaise had done this to keep Ginny away from the battle, to keep her trapped here...with him.

Hermione's eyes suddenly widened and she forced herself to stand on shaky legs only to collapse again in front of the toilet. Was...was that what Draco planned to do as well? Was Ginny's fate her own? Draco was a manipulative son of a bitch and she would not put it past him. It would only take one time. He would only have to get her to sleep with him once and then it would all be over.

Her eyes watered and she leaned over again, stomach heaving. Her vision was blurry and her body began to tremble. She looked down at her shaking fingers, eyes wide and panicked. Her breath came out in short gasps and her chest was beginning to constrict. She blinked, rapidly, bringing her hands up to her throat. She couldn't breathe. *She couldn't breathe!*

"Hermione...?"

Ginny's voice sounded a million miles away although she was probably right at the door. Hermione clutched the toilet, gasping for breath, horrifying hiccup sounds coming out of her mouth.

"Draco!"

Hermione gripped the wall, attempting to pull herself up only to slide back down. If it wasn't for a thin pair of arms wrapping around her mid-section that is.

"Hermione, I don't know what's wrong. What's happening? Draco," Ginny shrieked.

Hermione fell to her knees, Ginny's arms still around her.

"What happened?"

"I-I don't-"

" *Move.* "

Hermione felt a hard chest against her back and she clutched the arms around her as they both slid down, digging her nails into his skin as she jerked away from him. She shut her eyes, fighting for air as his lips grazed her ear.

"Breathe," he whispered.

*I'm trying to!* That was what she wanted to scream, but she couldn't, she couldn't breathe. She felt him press his lips to the back of her neck as they swayed back and forth. She felt one of his hands slide up, inching towards her throat.

"Shh," he murmured and Hermione felt a brief, dull pain in her neck.

Her head dropped and her eyelids closed as everything went black.

---

*Hermione tilted her head in confusion, stepping forward towards the scene before her. Her eyes darted around, eyebrows furrowed. Hordes and hordes of Death Eaters ran through the crowd, wands at the ready and curses flying from their lips. She looked around as her friends fought back, drenched in sweat and covered in dirt. They looked tired and damn near defeated.*

*Hermione shrieked as Luna collapsed, her blonde hair fanning out beneath her as a Death Eater stepped over her, her blank eyes staring up at the sky. A biting breeze blew by, twisting Hermione's hair around her head and blowing the tears away from her cheeks. Her heart thumped with a horrifying realization; they were losing. One by one, her friends, her classmates, and her teachers were falling at the hands of the Dark Side, their bodies covering the ground.*

*Hermione went to step forward to help them, save them, but found that she couldn't. She wanted to reach for her wand but she couldn't. Her body would not let her. She cried in frustration as she watched those that she loved die and it was then that she felt something touching her hand.*



*Hermione looked down and blinked at the small boy beside her. He stared up at her with big brown eyes that were framed by blonde eyelashes. His unruly, curly hair was platinum, so pale that it looked almost silver in the moonlight. Moonlight?*

*Hermione turned back around and saw the deserted castle now. Even in the dark she could see that everyone was gone. No bodies littered the ground, there was no fighting. Everyone was gone. Hermione felt herself being pulled back. She looked down at the adorable boy, his dark eyes trained on her as he walked backwards.*

*"You can't leave me, mummy."*

*"Wha...No. I have to help them...", she trailed off, turning back around to look at the castle as it began to drift away.*

*"You can't leave. You have to stay with me."*

*She turned back around and tugged at the small hand that gripped her own, frowning in surprise when his grip didn't loosen.*

*"You can't go," a much deeper voice said.*

*Her eyes widened and she watched in horror as his brown eyes began to fade, a lighter color replacing them. Brown and silver clashed once again.*

*"I won't let you!"*

---

Hermione shrieked as her eyes flew open, immediately darting around. Her fingers gripped the bed sheets beneath her, her chest heaving in fright. The room was dark, save for the moonlight coming in through the balcony doors. There were shadows everywhere and Hermione half expected a small blonde boy to jump out into the light. She put her hand to her chest, slowly pushing herself up into a sitting position when she heard it.

Someone was breathing and from the sounds of it they were asleep. She reached over, flicking on the light on the nightstand and almost screaming in shock. Draco was laying down on the plush black couch across from the bed. His feet were thrown across one and while his head was at the other. His chest slowly rose and fell with deep even breaths. It was then that Hermione registered that he was on a black couch. The room she had been normally staying in didn't have a black couch.

She looked around and realized that the room they were in was much larger. The walls were black, matching some of the furniture in the room while the rest was a royal green. Behind Draco was a double door, it was open, allowing her to see that it led to an equally impressive study. She looked down at the bedding beneath her, her fingers running over the silky black material. *This must be Draco's room*, she thought.

She swung her feet over the bed, taking in the grandness of the room as she slowly walked towards the couch. She briefly wondered what time it was and how long she had been asleep. The events came back to her as she gazed down at him. She remembered having a full on panic attack at the thought of being in the position that Ginny was in now.

"Are you actually going to do something or just stare at me?"

Hermione jumped, startled, as he spoke, one eye opening and then the other. She took a step back as he swung his feet to rest them on the floor, reaching out towards her.

"Damn it, Hermione," he snapped.

He immediately stood up and gripped her arms, pulling her closer. She glared at him as her chest brushed against his, her mind immediately going to how he had held her, rocking her to calm her down. *Yeah, right before he knocked you out.* She avoided his eyes as he bent his head down, eyes raking over her face.

"Are you alright," he finally asked.

"I'm fine," was her immediate response.

He sighed, rubbing his hands up and down her arms, something that she was reluctant to admit was actually soothing.

"Ginny told Blaise the big news..."

Hermione didn't respond. She was sure that Blaise was *ecstatic*.

"Is that what all of that was about," he questioned.

She ignored him, yet again, and winced when his hands tightened on her arm. Her heart beat sped up as he leaned in. His next words came out low and mocking, slithering off of his tongue like a snake.

"Are you *scared* , Hermione?"

Hermione's eyes slowly rose to meet his icy gaze, a smirk dancing on his lips.

"Scared of what?"

He chuckled.

"You are, aren't you? Look at you, practically shaking at the thought of being in Ginny's place," he cackled.

Hermione pushed against his chest, frowning in frustration when he didn't budge. She tensed as he leaned forward some more, breath tickling her ear and cheek.

"You think I'm going to knock you up and trap you here forever, don't you? That's low, that's...dirty," he whispered.

He pulled back, bringing his hands up to rest on either side of her head as he stepped forward, forcing her back. His expression

suddenly changed, going from mocking to threatening in a matter of seconds.

"...and we both know that I'm not above fighting dirty. So...maybe you *do* have a reason to be scared," he cruelly laughed.

Her eyes widened as his hands came up to wrap around her throat, he didn't tighten them, instead they were just there as a warning, letting her know that her life was in his hands at the moment. She gasped in fright as he pushed her onto the bed, his hard body immediately aligning with her own. One hand remained on her throat while the other was pressed into the bed beside her head. He gazed down at her with an unreadable expression, bright eyes piercing into her own.

"Luckily for you, however, I want you all to myself, so it will be years before I even *think* about children. Know what that means? That means you're safe for now..."

Before Hermione could even relax he continued.

"However, like I said before...I'm not above fighting dirty. Desperate times will call for desperate measures and if I put my mind to it...I can have you," he purred.

He took her bottom lip between his teeth, trailing one hand down her back, forcing her to arch it up. He let out a husky laugh as if he had just proven his point. He suddenly sat up, smirking down at her as she stared at him with wide eyes.

"Do well to remember that," he sweetly said just before exiting his room, the door slamming shut behind him.

Hermione stared up at the ceiling in panic as the full gravity of his words sank in. She had to get out of there before it was too late.

---

Hermione walked down the long hallway, books gripped tightly in her hand as she made her way from the library. It seemed that Blaise had books on...well, pretty much everything. She should not have been too surprised, but it was a relief to find what she had been looking for even if it had taken her ages to find it.

She could hear voices coming towards her from the other end of the hall and forced herself not to turn around as she recognized one of them as Draco's. She hadn't seen him since that night and quite frankly, she didn't want to. His words had haunted her, taking residence inside of her head and refusing to get out. She was determined to walk right by him without giving him the time of day when she heard another voice as well.

"Hermione," Nott said as they came into view.

"Nott," she acknowledged, prepared to be on her way when he reached out and touched her shoulder.

She stopped right beside him, looking up at the small smile on his face. Her eyes slowly traveled to Draco who stood behind Nott like a dark angel, eyes boring into her own.

"How are you feeling? I heard that you had a bit of an episode the other day," he said.

Hermione watched as Draco's eyes snapped to the back of Nott's head. His expression was completely unreadable, but his eyes however, his eyes had grown darker.

"Um...I'm fine. Thank you for asking," she replied, clutching the books tighter to her chest.

She was quite surprised at the genuine concern that Hermione heard in his voice. Draco said nothing, opting instead to stare Nott down, his hands shoved into his pockets. Nott nodded.

"That's good. I'm glad to hear that," he said.

She was forced to look into Nott's blue eyes as he laid his hand on her shoulder.

"It was nice running into you, but Draco and I have some business to tend to," Nott said, nodding over his shoulder.

A slow smile spread along Draco's face as he returned his eyes back to her.

"That's right, so we should be going," Draco said, voice low.

He began to lead Nott down the hall when he suddenly stopped.

"I almost forgot," Draco said, raising a finger and turning around.

Before Hermione had time to realize what was happening, his hands were on her face and his lips were on hers. She sharply inhaled as he pressed her back into the wall as he moved his lips against hers. The stack of books in between them was the only thing that kept their bodies separated. Hermione whimpered as he pulled her bottom lip in between his teeth, tilting her head back before roughly letting her go. He snatched his lips away from hers with a loud smack and Hermione stumbled back, lightheaded.

Hermione turned to see Nott staring at Draco with an unreadable expression before looking away. Hermione felt her face flush with anger as she realized what had just happened.

"Shouldn't you be on your way? You know where my study is," Draco snapped.

"Right. See you around, Hermione," Nott said, avoiding Draco's eyes before walking down the hall.

Draco lingered, staring her down before slowly raking his eyes over her. He said nothing, simply making a short humming sound before eventually following behind Nott. Hermione swallowed, shaking her head before continuing her journey. Ugh, she could throttle him! How

dare he! She huffed, forcing her anger down, instead choosing to save it for another time, a more...opportune time. Hermione knocked once she had finally made it to her room and was told to come in. She shut the door behind her, holding the books in one hand as she leaned against the wood.

"Hermione," Ginny said in surprise.

Hermione briefly glanced around, taking in the room and immediately realizing that this was the room Ginny and Blaise shared...together. Hermione swallowed, forcing down whatever nasty thoughts she had before walking towards Ginny.

"You're in bed," Hermione observed.

Ginny gave a sheepish, nervous smile, tucking her hair behind her ear.

"Yeah, Blaise is being a bit...overprotective," she responded.

Hermione nodded.

"Right," she quietly said.

"What are you doing here, Hermione? You've made it perfectly clear how you feel about all of this. You puking your guts out at the thought of me being pregnant was a dead giveaway," Ginny suddenly said.

Hermione sighed, pursing her lips.

"...and nothing has changed. You're pregnant, Ginny. This isn't going to be easy and I decided to not let my personal feelings get in the way of doing what's right. So, these are for you..." Hermione said.

Ginny hesitantly took the stack of books from her, eyeing Hermione before looking over them.

"I found those stashed away in the library. I also wrote out a list of things that I've read that aren't in those books there. This is going to

be a difficult time, Ginny and I want you to be prepared," Hermione finished.

Ginny stared at the books, gently running her hands over them before looking up at Hermione.

"You're going to try and escape again...aren't you," Ginny quietly asked.

"Yes," Hermione said, looking away.

Ginny was quiet for some time before she heaved a small sigh and slid out of bed. Hermione watched in confusion as Ginny walked over to a dresser, kneeling down and pulling the very last drawer out. She reached her hand in, pulling something out before standing back up. She stared at whatever was in her hand for a while before turning around and walking towards Hermione. Hermione recognized the plant in Ginny's hand. *Valerian*.

"This is Valerian. It's mainly used in potions, most commonly known for being used in the Draught of Living Death. It can also be used as a *sedative and sleep aid* ," Ginny pointedly said.

Hermione stared at Ginny in disbelief. Hermione already knew all of this, what she didn't know was why Ginny was giving it to her.

"Use it wisely," Ginny said, handing it to her.

"Where did you get this?"

"Blaise has a greenhouse at the back of the gardens," Ginny guiltily replied.

*I obviously wasn't clued in on this for obvious reasons* , Hermione thought.

"Are you setting me up?"

"No," Ginny snapped.



"Why don't I believe you," Hermione questioned.

"Believe what you want. You don't want to be here with Draco...with me. You've been very vocal about that and I want you to be somewhere where you're happy. Besides, *they* need you more than I do."

Hermione stared at Ginny, skeptical, before finally nodding.

"Thank you," Hermione forced out.

"You're welcome. I will convince Blaise to take me out tomorrow to get stuff, you know, for the baby," Ginny said with a shrug.

Hermione nodded again, taking the hint before turning towards the door when Ginny spoke.

"Please, be careful, Hermione. They're out there looking for all three of you, but catching one will do just fine for them. I love you and... and I really want you to be safe," Ginny choked out.

Hermione exhaled, opening the door.

"I will. I promise."

---

"Draco wishes to speak with you."

Hermione glared up at the young man standing in her doorway, a very Malfoy like smirk gracing his lips. Hermione recalled the last time she saw him, sinking a knife through his hand and had to force herself to keep a straight face. Of course, that was easy as she registered his words.

"He couldn't come see me himself? What are you, his errand boy now," Hermione spat.

"I guess he thinks that putting us in the same vicinity will force us to get along," he replied with a scoff.

Hermione rolled her eyes. Blaise suddenly held up his hand.

"My hand is all better by the way," he sneered.

"I didn't ask," she sweetly responded.

His smirk suddenly dropped as he glared at her before turning around and walking down the hall.

"Hurry up, I don't have all day," he called.

Hermione sighed, closing her door behind her before following. Hermione wondered what on earth Draco could possibly want to talk about. It was Draco, so there was honestly no telling what was going on in his head. Her eyes suddenly widened. What if Ginny had lied? What if she *had* set her up? What if she had told Blaise that Hermione was planning to escape and he, in turn, had told Draco?

She took a deep breath, forcing herself to calm down. There was no need to jump to conclusions that would only serve to worry her. Ginny had seemed truthful, so Hermione seriously doubted that the younger girl had turned her in. Blaise opened a door for her and she stepped inside, spinning around in fright as it slammed shut behind her. She felt a chill travel down her spine as the lock clicked into place.

"I'm glad that you could join me."

His cold voice rang throughout the dimly lit room and Hermione briefly closed her eyes, taking a deep breath. Hermione slowly turned around to face him. There was a lamp on in the corner, shedding very low light across the room and Hermione forced herself to calm down. She couldn't help it though. She didn't like this, she didn't like it at all. Something just wasn't right. Draco was seated behind his desk, leaning back in the chair, stormy eyes trained on her.

She glanced around, realizing that this must be his study, or at least his temporary one. Then again, he and Blaise were so close that he probably did have one of his own at Blaise's house. She turned around and saw the double doors behind her, wide open, showcasing the bedroom she'd been in the other night, confirming her thoughts. She turned back around when she heard him move and watched as he stood to his full height, staring at her from beneath his lashes.

"What do you want?"

"I want a lot of things, but right now I only want to talk to you," he quietly said.

She crossed her arms over her chest, skeptical about his calm tone.

"About what?"

"Theodore. Theodore Nott. Good old... *Teddy* ," he spat, walking around his desk, fingers trailing over the wood.

Hermione blinked, her eyes following the movement before she looked back up at him.

"You're kidding me right? I know where you're going with this and I'm honestly feeling like I've wasted my time by coming down here," she snapped.

" *Don't you dare get smart with me!*"

Hermione stumbled back at his outburst, swallowing in fright. His chest heaved as he walked towards her.

"What did the two of you talk about in the library?"

"Nothing-"

"Don not lie to me," he hissed.

Hermione felt her anger rise.

"Why not? You lie all the time!"

"Fine. Okay. I guess I'll just have to ask Theo myself then," he threateningly said.

Hermione huffed, not even sure why that bothered her. Why should she care what he does to Nott? Nott had tried to kidnap her! Still, she found herself conflicted as she thought about Draco having a *talk* with Nott. Nott honestly wasn't so bad as far as she could tell and besides, Draco would just be taking his anger at her out on him.

"We just talked about...friendship," she reluctantly said.

Draco stared at her with a blank face.

"Friendship. What about friendship, Hermione?"

"Friendship! I don't know, your friendship with him and he and I being friends-"

"You and him being friends," he said, interrupting her again.

"Yes."

"Do you want to be friends with him," he demanded, stepping towards her.

"I don't know," Hermione snapped and that was the truth.

She really *didn't* know. Draco's face twisted into something scary, something she had never seen before.

"You don't know? *You don't know?* What the *fuck* do you mean you don't know," he spat, teeth bared.

"It means that I don't know! Why does it matter?"

Draco's face suddenly wiped itself clean of all expression before he began to laugh. Hermione felt herself tense, chills rolling down her spine as he laughed and laughed.

"Why does it matter? She wants to know why it matters. Have you completely forgotten about our conversation last year at Hogwarts," he quietly asked.

Hermione swallowed.

"No, I haven't," she whispered, genuinely worried for her life.

"That's why it matters! He is not your friend. He wants you," he sneered.

"Why should I believe you? As a matter of fact, why should I believe anything you say? You lie about *everything* ! That's all you ever do, lie, lie, and lie some more. It's what you're best at. So, once again, why should I believe you? Besides, we both know that you get jealous over practically *nothing* . Nott probably genuinely wants to be my friend and you're ready to murder him because of it," she spat.

Draco shook his head, a dazzling smile breaking out over his face.

"Merlin, how naïve can you get," he whispered.

Hermione fumed.

"We're done here," she said.

She turned around, walking towards the double doors. She was leaving through his room since Blaise had locked her in. She refused to waste another minute with this pointless argument. He was acting like a jealous bull and she wasn't putting up with it.

As she reached the doors, they slammed shut before her with a loud bang. She gasped and stared at the doors with wide eyes, feet glued to ground. Hermione recalled him flipping over the table the other night with wandless magic and she now began to realize just how

powerful he had become, training under Lord Voldemort. The silence was deafening and her heart thudded erratically beneath her chest.

"You're not going anywhere."

She glanced over her shoulder as he walked towards her. The atmosphere in the room had dropped to a chilling setting and she trembled. She stayed completely still as he brought a hand up to trail along her shoulder. He was right behind her, chest grazing her back and he rested his chin on top of her head.

"The other night I told you that I want you all to myself. I meant that...", he quietly began.

Hermione swallowed, resisting the urge to pull away. He trailed his fingers down her arms, leaving goosebumps in their wake.

"I'm selfish, Hermione. I'm an incredibly selfish man. I don't like to share, never did. When I was ten a distant cousin of mine once took one of my toys and I pushed him down the stairs," he murmured.

Hermione bit her lip, eyes watering.

"Theo doesn't want to be your friend. He wants to take you away from me, but that's what you want, isn't it? You want him-"

"No, I don't want him," she argued.

"I don't believe you," he hissed.

She gasped, reaching up as his arm snaked around her neck. She began to cry when she felt the tip of his wand pressing against her temple as he walked forward. Her feet dragged along the floor as she fought to stop him.

"Why should I believe *you*, Hermione? You'd say anything to leave, to get away from me," he snapped.

The doors flew open and he drug her into his room, her loud sobs the only sound in the room. She twisted in his grip as he pulled her past the couch.

"Draco, I'm telling you the truth! I'm not interested in Nott," she screamed.

She suddenly screamed as the balcony doors flew open, banging against the wall and she kicked and flailed as she realized what was happening. Her heart dropped to her stomach. This wasn't happening, this had to be a nightmare.

"No, no," she begged.

"You want to leave me? Huh? Is that what you want," he demanded.

"No, no, Draco. Draco, please," she pleaded, digging her feet into the floor.

This proved to be futile as he reached down and swung her up into his arms. She screamed, kicking out and arms flying, hitting him numerous times, but he did not loosen his grip, not once. She pleaded as he walked towards the balcony, her hands catching onto one of the doors. *He was going to kill her.*

"No, you want to leave so badly, right?"

"I don't want to leave-"

" *Shut up!* You want to leave...this is the only way you're ever going to leave me," he snarled, snatching her away from the doors.

" ***Draco!*** "

He stood right beside the balcony and Hermione almost threw up as she looked down.

"I don't want to leave! *I don't want to leave!* "

"Is that supposed to convince me," he quietly mused, leaning over the balcony.

Hermione didn't want to die. She'd never willingly choose death. She was a fighter, a survivor, and she was going to do what it took to survive. Without warning, she turned around in his arms and threw herself at him, her lips crashing into his. He went to pull away, more focused on tossing her over the balcony, but she held on, tightening her arms around his neck. His hands suddenly moved, gripping her waist as he moved his mouth against hers, backing up.

He stopped, his back hitting the wall as he dug his fingers into her skin, no doubt leaving bruises. She wrapped her legs around him, determined to take him down with her if he suddenly decided to throw her over the balcony. He ran his hands over her, as if he couldn't get enough.

"I don't want him," she chanted against his lips.

He growled, twisting her hair around his hand and pulling her head back, teeth nipping at her throat.

"I don't want to leave. I want to stay with you," she lied as he dropped to his knees, taking her with him.

He gripped her face in his hands, resting his forehead against hers as he gazed into her eyes.

"You want to stay with me," he murmured.

"Yes," she whispered, body trembling from the shock of almost being dropped to her death.

His hands tightened on her face and she winced as he leaned away, looking down at her with a hard expression. His eyes were glassy and one lone tear escaped, skipping down his cheek.



"Talk to Theo again and I will *cut* him open. I will string him up from one of these trees and I'll gladly do the same to anybody else who tries to come in between us," he whispered.

As Hermione stared into his red, tear filled eyes, it was then that she knew; Draco was absolutely, unquestionably crazy. His love or obsession or whatever the hell he felt for her had driven him absolutely insane. So Hermione did what any smart person would have done. She smiled at him and nodded.

---

Hermione hurriedly sat down as she heard his footsteps and she picked up her fork. She pushed her food around, making it appear that she had been eating for quite some time when he stepped into the dining room. She avoided his eyes as he stopped in front of the table.

"What's all this?"

She glanced up as he gestured to the food on the table.

"Dinner. I was rather hungry," she answered.

He smirked, resting one hand on the back of the chair.

"Mind if I join you?"

His question came out like a purr and she looked away, frowning in displeasure.

"Yes, actually I do mind," she replied.

Just as she predicted, he ignored her, instead pulling out the chair across from her and sitting down. Hermione fought to keep from smiling, instead heaving a rather loud, irritated sigh. Her eyes were focused on her plate as he dug in, humming in appreciation.

"I wonder if Ginny is having a boy or a girl," Hermione mused.

Draco scoffed.

"Since when do you care?"

She looked up at him.

"I don't. Just curious is all. I do like children and it's just such a shame that I probably won't see her child for some time," she said.

Draco stopped eating, glancing up at her.

"What is that supposed to mean," he demanded.

Hermione's eyes widened.

"Nothing. Nothing at all, just me...talking," she shrugged off.

He let out a chuckle, shaking his head.

"I see right through you. You're not getting out of here. Besides, I think we already covered the only way that's ever going to happen," he said.

Hermione grimaced, nodding.

"Right. I promise, I'm not *trying* to leave you, Draco."

*I'm **going** to leave you.* She picked at her food, cutting the steak up and pushing it around. She glanced at him, her eyes brushing over his plate before picking up her glass.

"This is excellent. The House-elves really outdid themselves," he commented.

"Oh, the House-elves didn't make it," she said.

He paused, looking up at her.

"Excuse me?"

"I said that the House-elves didn't make it. I did," she responded, bringing her glass up to her mouth.

She stared him down as he narrowed his eyes at her. He slowly put down his fork, eyes lingering on her plate of food, not a single portion missing. She set her glass down as he glared up at her.

"Hermione," he warned.

She jumped up and backed away just as he reached over the table at her. He stood up, only to stumble, bracing himself on the table. She took cautious steps back as he attempted to make his way around the table only to trip and stumble over and over again. He finally fell to his knees, hard eyes lingering on her. He reached out to her and collapsed, his fingers just brushing her shoes.

She moved into action and grabbed the knife on the table, all of her anger swirling up inside of her. He had tried to kill her. He was completely unhinged, fine one minute and hostile the next. She rolled him over, straddling his waist as she tightened her fingers around the knife. *This is the only way* , a dark voice whispered. Was it though?

Narcissa was convinced that Hermione could save her son, but then again, it was *her son* . Narcissa would probably do anything, say anything to make him happy. However, it was obvious that Narcissa disapproved of his lifestyle and she obviously wanted to do whatever it took to drag him away from it.

*He tried to kill you* , that same dark voice whispered. He did, he did try to kill her and who knows if it would be the last time. *He's not well* , Hermione argued. It was true, she could see now what she knew all along; Draco was *not* well.

*"...His feelings for you terrify him, probably more than they terrify you. All he knows is that he doesn't want to lose you and you are probably the only thing he knows he's capable of losing. That makes him...desperate."*

Narcissa's words rang in her ear. Even if that were true, Hermione couldn't sit around risking her life trying to bring him back from the brink of insanity. There was a war going on and her friends needed her. *Do it.* Hermione shook her head. She couldn't, she wasn't a killer. *But he is! One less Death Eater on the battlefield, Hermione* , that dark voice hissed. Hermione clenched her teeth, raising the knife, cutting through air as she brought it back down.

She stopped an inch away from his chest and dropped the knife with a sob. She collapsed, laying her head on his chest as the weapon clattered against the floor. She couldn't do it. She couldn't do it. She clenched her fingers into his shirt, her tears soaking the material. *Weak.* She was weak. Draco didn't hesitate to try and throw her off of the balcony when he thought she was going to leave him for Nott and he wouldn't hesitate to do it again.

She cried, her breath coming out in harsh pants as she fought to compose herself. *You're not weak, Hermione. You know why you can't kill him* , she thought. She shook her head. *Despite everything, you know why you can't kill him.* Her sobs dulled, decreasing to quiet sniffles as her shoulders trembled. She ran her hands over him, through his pockets, searching. Her hand wrapped around the thin piece of wood and she sat up, looking at it in triumph.

She looked down at him, her fingers running over his lips and cheek before she hurriedly stood with a shake of her head. Narcissa would understand. Hermione ran out of the dining room and through the foyer. She was getting out of there. She unlocked the door and sprinted outside, hurrying down the steps, fingers tightly clutched around his wand. A voice suddenly stopped her in her tracks.

"I'm sorry, Hermione, sweetheart, but I can't let you leave."

---

**Every time. Hermione can't get out of this mansion to save her life...**

**Don't forget to review!**



# I'm Not Myself

Hey guys! I just want to inform you that college is back in session so my uploading schedule might be a little wonky, but I will do my best. Do to school I didn't have much time to reread as much as normal, so I apologize for any mistakes. You notice anything and just let me know. Also, a few of you have made some pretty accurate assumptions as far as where this story is headed haha. I actually started out hating this chapter, but after I was done I realized that I actually quite like it and I hope you do too. Enjoy!

## Disclaimer: I Own Nothing

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*She cried, her breath coming out in harsh pants as she fought to compose herself. You're not weak, Hermione. You know why you can't kill him, she thought. She shook her head. Despite everything, you know why you can't kill him. Her sobs dulled, decreasing to quiet sniffles as her shoulders trembled. She ran her hands over him, through his pockets, searching. Her hand wrapped around the thin piece of wood and she sat up, looking at it in triumph.*

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*"I'm sorry, Hermione, sweetheart, but I can't let you leave."*

---

Hermione sharply inhaled as she stared at the figure in front of her. She glanced over her shoulder at the door before closing her eyes

and taking a deep breath. She raised Draco's wand, slowly opening her eyes as she turned back around.

"Narcissa...please. I don't want to hurt you," she begged as she stepped down one step.

And that was the truth. Hermione really *didn't* want to hurt her because she didn't hate the older witch. In fact, she may have even liked her a bit. Did she and Narcissa have extremely differing opinions when it came to Draco? Of course, but no matter what Hermione may have thought, she couldn't deny that she at least understood the woman. Narcissa's love for Draco was unlike anything she'd ever seen and Hermione almost found herself pitying her for it. The older woman stepped closer, her own wand raised, a pained expression on her face.

"I cannot allow you to leave, Hermione."

"Stupefy!"

Hermione's jaw clenched as Narcissa rebounded the spell with a Protego. Hermione really didn't want to hurt the woman, so she took another deep breath.

"Please...please, Narcissa. I'm begging you," Hermione tearfully pleaded.

Narcissa desperately shook her head.

"No. You can save him, I know you can. Do you want to know what I see when I see you? I see hope. I see a happy future for my son that does not involve the Dark Lord. You don't have faith in yourself-"

"Stop it!"

"You are giving up on him!"

" *Your son tried to kill me* ," Hermione shrieked.

Narcissa took a step back as Hermione's voice grew shrill, tears running down her face.

"Draco tried to throw me over a balcony because he thought I was going to leave him for Nott. I can't stay here! I won't," Hermione said with conviction.

"Hermione," Narcissa tried to reason.

"He tried to kill me. He tried to kill me," she tearfully chanted.

She blinked the tears away as her heart beat erratically inside her chest. She had forced herself to not linger on the incident, but she couldn't do that any longer. The fear she had felt as he dragged her to those double doors... Hermione shook her head.

"He's fine one minute and then murderous the next. He's completely unpredictable and my life is in danger the longer I stay here," she said.

"You can change him. *I know it.* He...he *cares* for you, Hermione. He cares for you a great deal, he...he's just-"

"Not right in the head? Yeah, I kind of figured that," Hermione interrupted, glancing over her shoulder.

She was wasting time. She didn't exactly measure it out when she was cooking, so there was no telling how long he'd be out.

"Narcissa, I am leaving this property whether you like it or not," Hermione firmly stated, walking towards her.

"No, you're not."

Hermione suddenly paused as a much deeper voice that was *not* Narcissa's came out of her mouth. Hermione watched as Narcissa tilted her head to the side, blue eyes bleeding into grey as everything around Hermione began to bend and shift.



"You're not getting out of here. Ever."

The color began to bleed out of everything around her and Hermione found her world tilting. No.

*No.*

*No!*

"Wake up, Hermione."

"No," she mumbled as her eyes began to blink open.

Her throat was so incredibly dry and she had a raging headache. The side of her face was pressed against something hard as she sat down. What was going on? Where was she? She mumbled incoherently as she struggled to lift her head which felt like it weighed a ton.

She heard movement, a chair scraping against the floor, before footsteps could be heard. They were coming towards her and she soon felt herself being pushed upright. The room spun and Hermione fought to get away from the hands that were grabbing at her, but her movements were sluggish. Her limbs felt extra heavy. Soft lips brushed against her ear as someone pushed her hair away from her neck, their fingers trailing against her skin.

"It's quite comical really that you thought you could drug me so easily. Have you forgotten who I am? What am I going to do with you?"

His tone came out patronizing and Hermione forced herself to not cry in frustration. No! She had gotten out...hadn't she? She had succeeded. He was there, on the floor and she had almost killed him, stopping at the last minute...right? Everything was swaying, but her eyes fell onto his plate, not one chunk of food missing.

No, this didn't make any sense. He had dug in right away! She noted that her plate matched his. If neither one of them had touched their food, then how...? Her eyes slowly drifted to the red wine spilled across the table, crawling away from a glass that had been turned over. *Her glass*. The glass that she recalled sipping out of. The truth hit her like a slap in the face.

No, none of what she thought happened actually happened. She didn't succeed in drugging him. She had not almost killed him. She had not taken his wand. There was no confrontation with Narcissa, no showdown that was about to happen. How did he do it? *When* did he do it? She weakly protested when he scooped her up into his arms.

"No," she mumbled.

She feebly reached out, trying to hold onto anything that would slow him down. *How* had he done it? This question and nothing but this question rang throughout her head as she glared up at him as best as she could. The last thing she saw was stormy grey eyes looking down into her own.

---

Hermione's eyes flew open as she sucked in a deep breath of air. She went to sit up, but was gently pushed back down.

"You need to rest. I'm not exactly sure what that bastard slipped you, but it did a number on you," Ginny quietly said.

Hermione slowly blinked, bringing her hand up to her forehead. She felt groggy, sluggish, and...heavy. She felt as if her entire body were composed of sand. She groaned as Ginny smoothed her hair back. She swallowed, throat incredibly thick and tongue feeling incredibly dry.

Did she really think it was going to be that easy? Hermione repressed the urge to cry. She did, she really did think that it was going to be that easy. How was it that he always seemed to be one

step ahead of her? How? She was Hermione Granger, dammit! It wasn't...fair. It seemed that she could never catch a break. What was with that hallucination anyway? Why had her mind conjured *that* of all things? Was it her subconscious' way of telling her what her heart already knew?

Hermione swallowed again as she stared up at the familiar deep red canopy hanging over the bed. She was back in...in her room. *Her room*. Even in her mind she had come up with something that prevented her from leaving. She couldn't even escape in her imagination. Draco had really taken over just about every aspect of her life. Her body shuddered as she held back a sob.

"I'm never getting away from him, am I?"

The question just barely made it past her lips, so low that she questioned whether or not she had actually said it aloud.

"Hermione..."

"It's the truth, isn't it? He's going to win...and I'm going to lose," Hermione whispered.

"Hermione, you don't...you don't know that," Ginny replied.

Hermione forced herself to sit up, ignoring Ginny's protests as she turned to face her. Hermione stared the redhead down through blurry eyes.

"But that's what you want, isn't it," Hermione demanded.

Ginny blinked, caught off guard by Hermione's sudden change in attitude.

"What...?"

"Admit it, Ginny. You have this fantasy in your head of the four of us living happily ever after," Hermione said.

"No, that isn't-"

"I can almost see it playing out. You think that you and Blaise will get married and have your perfect little family and that Draco and I will be right behind you. You probably have visions of Draco and I living in a manor not far from yours, our children growing up with each other while we reminisce about how comical and silly I was for resisting Draco and how he won me over in the end," Hermione spat.

"Where are you getting this from?"

"How did Draco know," Hermione asked, ignoring Ginny's question.

Ginny shook her head, looking away.

"Hermione-"

"Did you tell him?"

"No," Ginny snapped, visibly offended.

"Why don't I believe you?"

"Because you don't want to! I didn't say anything, Hermione," Ginny said.

"But you know something," Hermione accused.

Ginny opened and closed her mouth with a sigh. She blinked before looking away again.

"Blaise knew about the Valerian. I didn't know that he knew, I promise. If I had known that he was aware that I had it, I wouldn't have given it to you. Still, I was prepared to lie if he did notice that it was gone, just in case, but that was when I expected him to come to me first when he noticed. Only...he didn't, he went straight to Draco. Draco put two and two together," Ginny said.

"Great," Hermione said with a somber nod.

"I'm so sorry, Hermione. I know how much...", Ginny trailed off.

"Can you leave...please?"

She heard Ginny's sharp intake of breath.

"Are you serious, Hermione? I tried to help you escape! I...this is the thanks I get? You can't be this...this stubborn," Ginny spat, shaking her head.

Hermione closed her eyes, repressing the anger that began to build up inside of her. Ginny *did* try to help her escape and she was very grateful for that, but Hermione was upset with her failure...yet again. She just needed some time to herself and it was pissing her off that Ginny didn't understand that.

"I just want to be alone," Hermione whispered.

"Fine."

The bed shook with movement as Ginny hopped off and stomped over to the door. Hermione looked up at Ginny's gasp as she barely got the door open, something on the other side stopping her in her tracks.

"W-what are you doing here? You can't be here. Draco will-"

"Let me in, Weasley."

Hermione's eyes widened in confusion as Nott's voice sounded from the other side. She turned to fully face the door.

"You know that you aren't supposed to-"

"What are you, his lapdog now? Are you fucking *him* too? No? Didn't think so. I just want to speak to her. You can stand right beside us the whole time if it makes you feel any better," he spat.

Hermione had never heard him speak so harshly before since she had officially met him. Ginny didn't move for some time before she eventually sighed and opened the door wider, albeit reluctantly, letting him through. Hermione blinked in confusion as he strode over to her, hurriedly sitting on the edge of the bed. He stared at her for a bit with that same unfamiliar expression she kept seeing before he eventually blinked, the peculiar look gone.

"How are you? I heard that you've been in and out for almost two days," he said.

Hermione's eyes widened even further.

" *Two days?* "

What the hell had Draco drugged *her* with, because it definitely wasn't Valerian that was for sure?

"I think he intended for you to be out much longer though because... he's away ," Nott quietly hinted, leaning closer.

Hermione nodded, blinking in understanding. Draco didn't exactly trust her here without him around and she didn't blame him. She'd made her hatred for this place quite clear. She had tried to escape twice already. Hermione watched as Nott slowly reached out towards her face before snatching his hand back, dropping it in his lap. A torn expression flashed across his features so fast that Hermione wondered whether or not she had actually seen it.

"Is that why you're here, because *he's* not?"

Nott's lip curved into a crooked smile, dazzling her as he looked at her from beneath his lashes. Hermione bit her lip, shaking her head.

"You're a somewhat decent guy, Nott. He'll kill you if he finds out about this. He...he seems to be under the impression that I want you," she quietly said, glancing at Ginny who stood on the other side of the room, eyes trained on them.

"Do you?"

Hermione's eyes snapped back to his. His blue eyes were trained on nothing but her as he waited for her answer. She shook her head, frowning in confusion.

"No, of course not," she said.

He looked away, jaw clenching with a nod.

"Right," he said just before grabbing her hand.

Hermione's eyes widened as she felt a small piece of paper brush against her skin.

"Get well, Hermione. I hope you have a speedy recovery," he said at a much more normal tone.

Hermione glanced at Ginny again as she closed her fingers around the small piece of parchment.

"Thank you," Hermione said as he stood and walked towards the door.

He looked over his shoulder, throwing her a small smile before leaving the room. Hermione sighed, resting her hands in her lap as she looked up at Ginny. Ginny stood there, a shocked expression on her face as she gazed at the door, where Nott had once been.

"What," Hermione demanded.

Ginny slowly turned to face Hermione, the same look of amazement on her features before blinking, slowly shaking her head.

"Nothing, Hermione. It's nothing, I think that I'm just...imagining things."

And with that cryptic retort, Ginny was out of the door, leaving Hermione alone with her thoughts.

---

"I didn't think that you'd meet me," Nott said as they walked along the maze that was the majority of the backyard.

The tall hedge walls obscured them from sight, giving them a chance to talk without worry of Blaise seeing them. Draco was still off tending to...business. Nott had said that he was expected to be gone for another few days. Hermione wrapped her arms around herself as a biting breeze blew by them, stinging her cheeks.

She had pondered over the note that Nott had given her for days, debating whether or not to see him. Like she had told him before, he was a decent guy and she knew just how jealous Draco could get... and how cruel he could be. She didn't want to risk Nott's life, but yet, there she was doing exactly that.

"I didn't think I would either," she whispered.

"I'm glad you did," he said, looking down at her.

"Why are you doing this, Nott? You're not stupid, you *know* how Draco feels about you and you know what he's capable of," Hermione quietly said.

Nott rolled his eyes.

"I'm not afraid of him. Are you?"

"Yes," Hermione said with a humorless chuckle.

Before Nott could speak, she continued.

"Not for the reasons you think though. I'm afraid...I'm afraid of the hold that he has over me. Not necessarily what *he* can do, but what he can make *me* do. I'm telling you, Nott, ever since I got here I just feel like I'm losing myself more and more."

"What do you mean?"



Hermione looked up, surprised to find genuine worry and curiosity splashed across his features as he gazed down at her. Hermione swallowed.

"I have dreams...", she quietly began.

"Dreams? What about?"

Hermione nodded.

"I have realistic dreams about who he really is, well nightmares really. It's always either about that night at Hogwarts, the night Dumbledore died, or just about how awful he can be. Then sometimes...sometimes we're happy. The Death Eaters never happened, the Astronomy Tower never happened. He chooses me. He chooses me over this life and...and we're happy. Sometimes I wake up and I'm relieved that nothing has changed and then sometimes I'm angry at myself for even entertaining such rubbish..."

Hermione licked her lips, turning her head to stare at the greenery before her.

"Then sometimes I'm so sad and upset that it isn't true. Do you want to know what I do then?"

She turned to look up at his wide blue eyes.

"I cry...", she said, tilting her head to the side "...I just cry and cry, Nott. I cry for myself, I cry for him, for Dumbledore, the school. Hell, I even cry for his mum. She loves him so much and she's convinced that I can save him, but I disagree. I believe that a part of me, and her, is holding onto something that doesn't exist."

"What makes you think it doesn't exist?"

Hermione blinked, smiling at him without humor. His question had definitely thrown her.

"You're joking, right?"

Nott scoffed, stuffing his hands into his pockets. Another breeze blew by, ruffling his obsidian hair.

"Believe me, I want nothing more than to tell you that he's not capable of love...", he spat, eyes flashing.

He suddenly shook his head.

"...but then I would be lying and I'm not a liar," he said.

"Even if he is...even if he can change, I don't want to wait around for it. There's no telling how long that will be and I could be dead by then," she spat.

"Why do you say that, that you'd be dead? You think he'd actually kill you? Draco is completely obsessed with the two of you living happily ever after," he scoffed, almost disgusted with the thought.

Hermione didn't reply, instead staring ahead. The only person that she had told about what had happened was a figment of her imagination. She had done her best to not dwell on it, but once she let her mind actually wrap around what had happened... Hermione swallowed, taking in a deep shuddering breath.

"...He did try to kill me," she eventually said.

"What...?"

Nott stared at her with wide eyes, fully facing her now.

"He thought that I was going to run off with you or something...so he tried to toss me off of the balcony. He told me that that was the only way I'd ever leave him," Hermione spat, eyes blurring.

She heard Nott's sharp intake of breath as he processed this information.

"That's why you tried to escape again so soon," he whispered.

"That worked out wonderfully, didn't it?"

Nott didn't reply, his mind entirely somewhere else as he stared ahead, gazing at something she'd probably never see. He suddenly looked towards her and pulled her into his arms. Hermione was so taken by surprise that she didn't even have time to react before the tears fell.

"He tried to kill me...he actually tried to kill me," she whispered.

The reality of it set in and Hermione's body trembled with poorly suppressed sobs. She always knew what Draco was capable of, but she had guessed that she was always safe with him to some degree, right? She had always thought that he'd do anything to keep her by his side, so of course he would never *really* put her life in danger. How wrong she had been. Draco was insane, that much was clear now, and the worst part was that Hermione feared that she wasn't far behind.

"I just want to thank you...Hermione. Thank you for confiding in me, trusting me," Nott finally said.

She pulled away from him. She didn't realize how much she needed someone to talk to until now.

"I need a friend. I need someone to talk to or I'm going to go crazy. I don't know who to trust, I...Ginny helped me with my escape plan and she said that she didn't say anything to Blaise or Draco, but I just don't believe her. I can't tell you why I don't, but I just don't. I honestly do believe that she has some twisted fantasy in her head about the four of us," Hermione said.

"Weasley loves you, Hermione. She really does and if you're right, then I'm sure she's doing it because she believes she has your best interests at heart," Nott said, surprising her with his words.

Hermione was quiet for some time, mulling over his words.

"Do you think I'm being too harsh?"

As Hermione asked him this, she thought back to that night at dinner. She recalled how completely enamored Blaise had looked when he thought that he and Ginny were alone. It had...completely thrown her for a loop. Hermione couldn't wrap her head around Ginny actually being right when she said that she and Blaise were in love. Hermione didn't understand any of this.

"I think you're angry...and I think you deserve to be," he answered.

"That didn't exactly answer my question," she said, looking up at him with a frown.

Nott looked down at her with a sad smile.

"We all make mistakes, Hermione."

---

Hermione brought her hand up to her face, eyeing the bubbly foam that clung to her fingers. The steam from the water wafted around her, clinging to her skin and face. She'd been sitting in the large bath for quite some time now, her mind going a mile a minute. Theo's words from their meeting days ago still rang in her head on a constant loop.

*"We all make mistakes, Hermione."*

Hermione scoffed, shaking her head. Didn't she know it...? Within the past year or so she had become the queen of poor judgement. She really did believe that everything that had happened on the Astronomy Tower that night was her fault. Hadn't Harry warned her that she was making a mistake with Draco? He had seen right through him, so why was it that she had not? She wasn't one to be deceived by a pretty face. Did that mean that Draco was right?

She did care for him, that much was true, but she honestly believed that was because she had been fooled into thinking that he was

changing. She cared for the Draco who would do anything to protect his mum. She cared for the Draco that was going to leave it all behind just to be with her, the Draco that would touch her with such tenderness. She cared for a Draco that didn't exist. She closed her eyes.

---

*"Wh-what about me," she quietly asked.*

*He regarded her out of the corner of his eye.*

*"What are you on about?"*

*"I mean...what if...what if I stopped fighting you? What if I agreed to try and make this work if you gave it all up? We could go to Dumbledore together..."*

*He turned to fully face her now, a skeptical look upon his face.*

*"...You would do that?"*

*Hermione carefully thought about this while he regarded her. Would she? Could she really do this?*

*"Well...yes. We're both intelligent, something I admire greatly in a partner. When you're not being a complete arse you're somewhat pleasant to be around and I know that you can be...romantic when you want to be and...you're not...bad looking," she finished lamely.*

*She found that what she was saying was actually true. She realized that if circumstances had been different (i.e. her not being muggle born or him being raised differently) she would have been interested in Draco for quite some time now. It was just too bad that he had been a complete arse throughout the entirety of their school days or else she would have found herself smitten with him ages ago. He was, sadly, about the only boy in the entire school who could match her in marks and anytime they exchanged insults she could almost feel the cogs in her brain being oiled. There was never a dull*

*moment. Of course Hermione couldn't just forget everything he had done and said. He had Crucio'd her for Merlin's sake, that wasn't something she could just look past. He'd also hurt Ron and Harry too and obliviated Ginny. Hermione rested the palms of her hands on each side of her head, suddenly torn. Dear Godric...*

*"Hey," he whispered as he gently grabbed her wrists and pulled her closer.*

*Her heart began pounding and she wasn't sure why. He used one of his hands to tilt her head up by her chin.*

*"Are you saying...that if I gave it all up, turned my back on Voldemort and went over to the light, you would try to make this work between us?"*

*She opened her mouth before slamming it shut. If she said yes there would be no going back for her. Ever.*

*"Y-yes," she whispered after some time.*

*She gulped with anticipation as he backed her up towards the couch in the corner of the room. The fire in his eyes was undeniable.*

*"You mean that?"*

*"Yes."*

*"You promise," he asked as he laid her down, his body immediately aligning with hers.*

*"Yes," she breathed just as he fiercely pressed his lips against hers.*

---

Hermione let out a shaky breath as she opened her eyes. Yes, she cared for someone that no longer existed. She dropped her hands in the water, causing it to splatter a bit as she fought to hold it together.

She had to forget about that, all of it. He was a liar, a manipulative bastard who was showing his true colors more and more.

"What are you thinking about?"

Hermione yelped in surprise as she sank further into the water, spinning around to face him with wide eyes. Her back had been towards the door, but she was positive that she had locked it. She mentally rolled her eyes at that statement. Right, when had a lock ever deterred him?

He leaned against the counter, legs crossed as well as his arms, gazing at her with an unreadable expression. She didn't know when he had gotten back, but he had clearly been in the mansion for some time. His white shirt was untucked, the sleeves rolled up and almost completely unbuttoned. Not a hair was out of place nor a scratch or mark in sight. Whatever business that he had been attending to for *him* couldn't have been too taxing.

"I asked you a question," he said.

She blinked at his tone of voice, recalling that he *had* asked her a question. She scoffed.

"Right and I respectfully decided not to answer your question," she spat, sinking further until the water was just under her chin.

She watched as his jaw clenched, stormy eyes trained on her, poorly concealed anger swirling beneath the surface. He suddenly smirked, letting out a humorless chuckle.

"I must say...I admire your effort, Hermione. Your...dedication when it comes to getting away from me is definitely worthy of praise. The actual execution, however...it only serves to both amuse and anger me. I'm beginning to think that you *like* me when I'm angry. In fact, I dare say it turns you on," he sneered.

Now it was Hermione's turn to sneer as she glared at him.

"You're so full of yourself, Draco. Full of yourself and full of complete *bullshit* . If you thought for one second that I was just going to sit here like a good little girl and take all of this in stride, then you really don't know me at all," she hissed.

His smirk grew.

"Oh, I knew you'd fight, Hermione. I love it when you fight back. It's... invigorating," he said with a chuckle.

He licked his lips, pulling his bottom lip between his teeth as he stared her down.

"However, it's the fact that you think you can actually win is what throws me for a loop, sweetheart. A Malfoy always wins..."

Hermione bristled with anger, resisting the urge to jump out of the bath and slam his head against that mirror. She closed her eyes, taking a deep, calming breath.

"Did you enjoy your little...vacation while I was gone?"

Her eyes flew open.

"Yes, actually I did. The lack of...well...you was quite enjoyable," she replied.

"I do hope that our last... *chat* was still fresh in your mind. I know that Teddy has been in and out of the property, tending to some things," he said.

Hermione looked away with a shake of her head, scoffing.

"You're something else, you know that? *I don't want him*. I don't know how many times I have to say that. Besides, aren't you a Malfoy? I didn't even know that you all knew the meaning of jealousy. Careful, Draco, your insecurities are showing," Hermione whispered.

"I'd watch my mouth if I were you," he calmly stated.



"Why, because you don't like the fact that I have a friend outside of who you deem appropriate to be my friend? Theo has done absolutely nothing to deserve your wrath-"

Hermione cut herself off, realizing her mistake too late at the look on Draco's face. She slammed her mouth shut as Draco's eyes bore into her own. He slowly unfolded his arms, pushing himself off of the counter.

" *Theo?* "

The silence that followed was awkward and thick with tension. Hermione licked her lips.

"Theo, Nott, Theodore, Teddy, whatever. I was just saying that-"

"I didn't realize that the two of you were on a first name basis," he quietly said, taking slow steps towards her.

"We're not-"

"Did you talk to him while I was gone, Hermione?"

"No! I-"

"You're lying. You're a filthy fucking liar," he spat.

"I'm not lying. I-wait... *what are you doing?* "

Her question came out panicked and high-pitched as he threw one leg over the large pool sized tub, stepping in. she backed up until her shoulders hit the other side of the bath, eyes wide as he waded through the water towards her. His jaw was clenched as he stared her down through his piercing gaze, eyes flashing.

"Draco...y-your clothes. You're getting them all wet," she protested, a pitiful attempt at getting him away from her.

"Do you think I'm stupid? Do I look like a fool to you, Hermione? You saw him again, didn't you," he demanded.

"Get. Out," she spat.

He grabbed her, yanking her up until she was pressed against him, but for once it seemed that her body was not what was on Draco's mind. He paid no attention to her nakedness as he glared down at her, eyes blazing.

"You think he's going to be your knight in shining armor? You think he's going to whisk you away from here, from me?"

"No-"

"Well, he's not. That isn't going to happen, sweetheart, because you're mine. You've always been mine and you'll always be mine. That's never going to change," he spat.

Hermione's nostrils flared as she glared up at him, her body boiling with anger as his words slapped her in the face. Suddenly, with a scream, she had slammed into him, throwing them both into the water, causing it to splash along the sides and onto the floor. She dug her fingers into his neck as she held him down, the water splashing around them as she struggled to keep him under. She knew that it wasn't going to last, he was much stronger than she, but she enjoyed her brief moment of control while she could. She enjoyed the feeling of holding him down while he struggled for air and she was not ashamed to admit that.

All too soon though, she felt herself being thrown back and their roles were reversed. Hermione squeezed her eyes shut and held her breath as he held her down. She dug her nails into his arms as she bucked beneath him, his knees squeezing her legs together. He suddenly yanked her up and she gasped, taking in the air before she found herself going under again. She jerked beneath him, clawing at his neck and face as he pinned her down.

She began to panic as it became clear that Draco wasn't going to let up anytime soon. She kicked, resisting the overwhelming urge to take a breath as she fought to hold on. He stood stock still as he held her down, paying no mind to her fists beating on his chest. Just when Hermione felt her resolve crumbling, she was suddenly yanked out of the water.

She coughed and gasped for breath as he swung her up into his arms, stepping out of the tub. She faintly recognized the towel that he threw over her as he exited the bathroom. It was only when he started walking towards the room door did she begin to react.

"What are you doing? Put me down," she shrieked.

She flailed in his arms, but his grip did not loosen. She struggled even more as he made his way down the stairs, to the first floor. His silence was what frightened her more than anything and she, for once, was at a complete loss at what he was about to do. She heard voices coming from the other side of the foyer, more than likely the living room. Hermione gasped in shock as he dropped her onto the floor in the huge room and Hermione hurriedly tightened the towel around her as her eyes flickered between Blaise and Theo in shock.

It appeared that they were having some discussion when they came in and they both stood from the elaborate couches, faces twisted in confusion. Hermione scooted away, her back hitting Draco's legs as she curled in on herself, tightening her arms around her frame.

"Draco, what's going on," Blaise asked, his eyes moving back and forth between her and his friend.

Hermione recoiled as Draco knelt down behind her, running his fingers through her hair.

"Tell her, Theo," he said.

Hermione looked at Theo in confusion as his eyes widened. Her eyes fell onto Blaise as a knowing look of understanding began to

slowly overtake his features. He smirked, appearing as if he was fighting back a laugh as he narrowed his eyes at her. Hermione did not like that look.

"Tell me what?"

"Shh, let him speak," Draco purred into her ear.

Hermione's gaze fell onto Theo again as he swallowed, visibly uncomfortable, shoving his hands into his pocket.

"Don't do this, Draco," he said.

"Why the hell not? What, were you hoping that you could ease your way in? Hoping that she'd warm up to you first," Draco hissed.

Hermione flinched at the harshness in his voice.

"Draco," Theo warned.

"Tell her, Theo! Tell her how you thought that she was just the most adorable thing you'd ever seen," Draco sneered.

Theo shuffled his feet.

"Tell her how much you loved her bushy hair and that she knew just about everything. How about fourth year, huh? What about how much you were ready to fall at her feet during the Yule Ball? Or how completely depressed you were when you realized who she had come with?"

Theo's face reddened, in anger or embarrassment, Hermione couldn't tell. Probably both.

"Tell her how you dreamed of one day telling her the truth, turning your back on your entire family just so the two of you could ride off into the *fucking* sunset together," Draco spat.

"Draco, stop it," Hermione quietly said as Theo looked everywhere but at her.

She gasped as Draco dug his hands into her shoulders, yanking her up with him and pulling her against him.

"No, Hermione. He just wants to be your friend, right? *That's all he wants, right?* "

Draco suddenly leaned down, brushing his lips against her neck, eyes trained on nothing but Theo.

"Tell her how she deserves so much better than me. Tell her how happy you can make her, how she deserves to be with some pansy ass loser like you. Tell her everything because it isn't going to matter either way. It won't make a difference because she's never going to be yours," Draco purred.

Hermione stared at Theo with a frown as he looked down, eyebrows furrowed, jaw clenched. His face was twisted in torment at Draco's words, Draco's disgusting words that she paid no mind to because she finally placed that unfamiliar emotion that was always on Theo's face.

Theodore Nott was in love with her.

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**Don't murder me. I also might do a chapter in Draco's POV soon. That was kind of common in C&B and I feel like some of you would like some insight as to what is going on in his head. Let me know what you think!**

# Got Me Looking So Crazy

**BOOM. DOUBLE UPDATE.** Some of you have expressed concerns with the progress of the relationship and I'm here to tell you that things will get better. However, they're going to get worse before they get better. The next few chapters are already planned out and can I just say that some will test some people. \*cough\* Chapter 17 \*cough\*. Just warning you now. Change isn't going to happen overnight and I have wonderful chapters in store for all of you patient folks. I wish to make this as poetic as possible.

**BTW, shoutout to my non English reviewers. I get some of you guys every now and then and even though I have to Google translate your reviews, I love them all the same!**

**Also, there may be mistakes. I'm proof reading again tomorrow and will fix anything I notice.**

**Disclaimer: I Own Nothing**

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*Hermione stared at Theo with a frown as he looked down, eyebrows furrowed, jaw clenched. His face was twisted in torment at Draco's words, Draco's disgusting words that she paid no mind to because she finally placed that unfamiliar emotion that was always on Theo's face.*

*Theodore Nott was in love with her.*

---

Hermione eyes watered as it became more and more obvious the more she thought about it. She didn't know what to think, she didn't know what to say. She *did* know that she wasn't going to stand there and just let Draco taunt Theo about it anymore. She clutched the

towel around her and jerked away from him, turning to harshly glare up at him.

"That's enough, Draco," she firmly stated.

Draco glared back at her before he slowly slid his gaze to Theo, eyeing him as if he were an insect. His lips curled into a sneer.

"No, I don't think it is. He's been kidding himself this entire time, holding out for something that's *never* going to happen," Draco spat.

Hermione winced as his words hit a little too close to home. *Holding out for something that's never going to happen...* Hermione shook her head, forcing that thought away before pushing against Draco's chest as he stepped forward.

"Give it a rest, Draco," she said in exasperation.

She turned towards Theo, taking a step towards him, not exactly sure what to say when Draco grabbed her arm.

"I don't think so," he hissed.

"Let go of me," she snapped as she turned to face him.

"Let her go," Theo said.

Draco's eyes snapped to him, bright and blazing as he gently pulled Hermione beside him, hand resting on her lower back.

"Are you challenging me... *Teddy* ?"

Theo swallowed, rolling his eyes with a sigh.

"No, I'm not, alright? Just leave her out of this. This is between you and me," Theo said, motioning between him and Draco.

"You're damn right it is. However, you involved her when you decided to completely ignore what I said. I was under the impression that we

squashed this two summers ago, Theo. I told you what was going to happen. I warned you....," Draco threatened.

"And I warned *you*! "

Hermione looked between the two of them in confusion. She didn't recall ever seeing Theo look so upset and Draco's expression was almost unrecognizable.

"She's not dead. I didn't *maim* her-"

"You tried to throw her over the damn balcony," Theo hissed, eyes wide.

Hermione gasped as Draco sharply turned to glare at her. She opened her mouth to say something before deciding to just shut up, shaking her head at him with a glare.

"Shit," she heard Theo mutter.

"Heh. I thought you didn't see him while I was gone," Draco mocked.

"We talked! Is that a crime? Don't you understand? I'm going to lose my mind, Draco! He was being nice, more than I can say for you-"

" *He's in love with you!* He'd have you the first chance he got," Draco spat.

"I already told you that I wouldn't fight you on this," Theo said.

Draco spun back around to face him.

"Yet here we are," he said.

"You're not treating her right! I told you, I told you to take care of her. I backed down for you! Do you know how much it killed me to know that you would be pursuing her instead of me? When you told us that You-Know-Who had no qualms about letting you have her, I thought it was a cover for you. I thought that it was just an excuse to be with



her because I was under the impression that you *loved* her," Theo hissed.

*What?* Hermione looked up at Draco with wide eyes as he glanced at her out of the corner of his eyes, jaw clenching. She backed away from him.

"What? What did he just say," she quietly demanded.

Draco looked away, glaring at Theo.

"Is that not what you said, Draco? Did you or did you not tell Blaise and I that you thought you loved her?"

Draco straightened up, flicking his hair out of his forehead, ignoring Hermione. Blaise was now seated back on the couch, watching the two of them argue, and for the first time ever, Hermione saw genuine worry on his face. If Hermione was piecing everything together correctly, then she guessed that this fight was long overdue.

"People lie all the time to get what they want, Theo," Draco quietly spat.

Theo shook his head.

"No, I don't believe you. You're a damn coward, Draco. That's what you are," Theo said.

Draco smirked.

"And you're what? Are we forgetting that you looked at her like she hung the damn moon for years, but couldn't even grow the balls to say...hi?"

"Draco, that's enough. This is unnecessary," Hermione said.

Draco sniffed, unbothered.

"I don't really care what you think, Theo. Everyone knows that nice guys always finish last," Draco threw at him, completely ignoring Hermione.

Theo glared at him, fists clenched at his side.

"Let's go," Draco said, reaching out towards Hermione.

She jerked away from him.

"Don't touch me," she hissed.

Draco leaned down, eyes boring into her own, quietly whispering:

"Let's not do this here, alright?"

"Is he telling the truth?"

Draco let out an exasperated sigh.

"*Is he telling the truth, Draco?* Did you really tell him that you thought you loved me? Just to get him to back down?"

Hermione stared at him in disbelief. She honestly didn't even know why she was so surprised. He was a *monster*.

"Let it go, Hermione," he spat, grabbing her arm.

"Let go of me," she shrieked, tugging her arm.

"Draco, let her go," Theo said, walking towards them.

Before anybody saw it coming, Draco had spun around, his fist immediately connecting with Theo's cheek. Hermione gasped in shock as Theo stumbled, catching onto the couch for support as his other hand was cradling his face. Draco's shoulders heaved with obvious anger as he loudly exhaled through his nose. Hermione swallowed at the look on his face, the same look he wore the night he had tried to toss her from the balcony.

Blaise must have seen the look before as well because he slowly stood up, approaching Draco with caution. Draco's jaw was clenched so tightly, Hermione was convinced that he'd crack one of his teeth. His hands trembled as he glared at Theo through glassy eyes.

"You are not taking her from me," Draco whispered.

"Draco," Blaise said, walking towards him.

"No! He's not taking her from me, Blaise," Draco spat at him.

Blaise nodded, holding his hands out.

"I know, I know. It's alright. He's not going to do that. He just wanted to make sure she was okay," Blaise responded, attempting to placate him.

Draco's eyes snapped back to Theo who was now just straightening up, massaging his jaw.

"That's not his responsibility. She's mine, Theo. You hear me? You so much as breathe in her direction and I'll slit your damn throat! *You will not take her from me!* "

"Draco..."

Before Hermione could even step towards him, Theo had slammed into him, both of them going down. She shrieked as they crashed into the coffee table, the piece of furniture completely breaking under the force. Both of their fists were flying, sinking into each other. Hermione winced when she heard Theo groan in pain.

"Blaise, stop them," she yelled at the dark haired boy.

Blaise was already on it, but as soon as he got near them, Draco waved his hand and Blaise flew into the wall on the other side of the room. He returned back to pounding Theo, hardly missing a beat. Hermione's eyes widened as Draco's hands wrapped around Theo's

throat, pinning him to the floor. *He's going to kill him.* She heard Blaise making his way to his feet.

"Stop!"

Hermione wrapped her arm around Draco's neck, yanking back, but he held onto Theo with an iron grip. Blaise was by her side in an instant and grabbed one of his arms, pulling back.

"Draco, man, let go. You don't want to do this in front of her," he tried to reason.

"Want to bet," Draco spat through clenched teeth, staring down into Theo's eyes.

Hermione had never seen so much hatred in his eyes before, not even when he looked at Harry. Was it possible that Draco actually felt threatened by Theo? Theo's face was completely red as he struggled to breathe, his legs kicking out beneath Draco.

"Let him go, Draco," Hermione pleaded.

As if to say 'screw you', Draco lifted his head by the neck before roughly slamming it back down. Theo winced, scrunching his eyes up in pain.

"He's my friend, Draco. If you kill him...I'll *never* forgive you," she hissed in his ear.

She felt his shoulders tense beneath her and he blinked, staring down at Theo who was fading fast. Draco harshly exhaled and with a snarl, he let Theo go. The blue eyed boy gasped for breath as his head fell back down onto the floor. Blaise knelt over Theo as Draco stood and Hermione hurriedly took a step back as Draco turned to face her.

They glared at one another as he stood over her, chest brushing against her arms that were crossed over her own. He raked his eyes

over with a sneer before smirking, not one trace of humor on his face.

"Let me make myself very clear...", he quietly began.

Hermione swallowed, standing her ground and resisting the urge to back up.

"If I even *think* that you've been around him, if I have the slightest suspicion...the next time you see him, he'll be in pieces. I won't give a rat's ass about your damn forgiveness," he whispered.

Hermione looked past him as Blaise helped Theo sit up, his neck already beginning to bruise.

"Your things will be moved into my room *tonight* ."

And with that he brushed past her, his footsteps echoing into the foyer.

---

Hermione wrung her hands together as the footsteps got closer to the door. She didn't even know what she was doing here. She was still incredibly conflicted about her and this was probably the last place she should be right now. Hermione looked up through blurry eyes as the door opened, noting the look of surprise on Ginny's face. Hermione took a deep, shaky breath.

"Um...can-can I...I-crap," Hermione said, sniffing.

Ginny stepped forward, eyebrows furrowed in concern.

"Hermione, what's wrong?"

"Can we just forget everything for...for fifteen minutes? For fifteen minutes, can we just forget how I feel about you and...and everything that's happened? If you say no, that's okay, but for fifteen minutes, I just need-", Hermione broke off with a sob.

"Of course. Come in...please," Ginny said, moving out of her way.

Hermione walked into the room, pacing. Her hands were shaking so bad that she thought they would fall off.

"Hermione, what's going on? I heard yelling, but I...well, I figured that my presence might just make things worse," Ginny said.

"Theo's in love with me. Apparently, this is something that has been well known between the three of them for years," Hermione whispered.

Ginny's eyes widened, before she blinked, closing her eyes with a sigh.

"When he saw you the other day, I...I thought that I was just seeing things," Ginny said.

Hermione pressed her hand to her chest, using the other to push her hair away from her face.

"I've never seen Draco act like that with Harry. I mean, he was like that, but he wasn't. Looking back, I don't think Draco ever took Harry seriously as a rival when it came to me. I think...I think that he saw him as more of a pest than anything else. With Theo though....," Hermione said, shaking her head.

She licked her lips.

"Draco was scared. He's legitimately afraid that I might just run off with him," she said in disbelief.

"Well, he and Theo have a lot more in common than he and Harry. I mean, Theo basically has everything that Draco does. He has the looks, the money, the pureblood status, and he more than likely can treat you better than Draco does. I'm willing to bet that Draco knows that and he probably thinks that it's only a matter of time before you do too," Ginny quietly said.

"But I don't want him! Does that...does that mean that there's something wrong with me? Shouldn't I want Theo?"

What wasn't there to like about Theo? Everything that Ginny had said was true. She should be plotting to run off into the sunset with him, but she didn't want that. She didn't want... *him* .

"There's nothing wrong with you, Hermione-"

"Yes, there is. Theo's...he's a sweetheart. He's been in love with me for years. Hell, he stepped back and let Draco go after me because Draco told him that *he* loved me. I keep thinking that Draco couldn't possibly surprise me anymore and he just keeps proving me wrong," she said.

"Hermione...wha-Draco loves you. I don't get it, isn't that what you wanted?"

Hermione resisted the urge to scoff.

"He doesn't love me, Ginny. You don't claim to love somebody and then treat them like that. Besides, he only said it so that he wouldn't have to deal with Theo."

"What if that's not true? What if Draco's just being a coward who can't admit his own feelings," Ginny proposed.

Hermione opted to ignore that, pretending that Theo hadn't implied the same thing. She couldn't do that. Hermione couldn't afford to listen to every little opinion around her about Draco, she was already going crazy listening to her own. Hermione was about to reply when Ginny suddenly clutched her stomach, frowning before hurrying to the bathroom.

Hermione quickly followed, gathering Ginny's long red tresses as she emptied her stomach out into the toilet. Hermione looked away as Ginny reached up to flush it. She let out a humorless chuckle.

"Yeah, that whole *morning* sickness thing? Apparently that only applies to some mothers," Ginny joked as she stood.

Hermione folded her arms over her chest as Ginny washed her hands and rinsed her mouth out.

"When are you going to be able to know the sex?"

Ginny blinked, apparently taken back by Hermione's question. She shook her head.

"We want to be surprised," she answered.

"Any name ideas?"

"Way too many," Ginny said with a small smile.

Hermione awkwardly nodded, rocking on her feet.

"Ginny...did you tell one of them about the Valerian?"

Ginny stared at Hermione through the mirror before shaking her head.

"No. I know that you have a hard time believing that, but it's the truth. I just want you to be happy and if that means getting out of here, away from Draco, away from me, then I'd do anything to help. I've accepted the fact that our lives might not take the same road," Ginny said with complete sincerity.

Hermione stared at her for a while before nodding. There was an awkward silence, one filled with unsaid words and unanswered questions. Ginny sighed.

"Hermione...about Blaise and I-."

They both turned towards the room as the door opened and it wasn't long before Blaise stepped into sight. His eyes flickered between the two of them in curiosity, his eyes briefly raking over Ginny in concern



before they landed on Hermione. She didn't miss the way his jaw ticked as their eyes met. There was still *much* animosity between the two of them.

"I don't want to be rude, but..."

Yes, *you do*, she thought.

"...I'm kind of turning in for the night, so..." he trailed off, raising an eyebrow.

"Right. I guess that would be my cue to leave," Hermione responded.

She turned to Ginny.

"Thanks for the talk," Hermione said.

Both she and Blaise rolled their eyes at one another as she walked past him and out of their room.

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"No, absolutely not."

"It's just a bed, Hermione! A fucking big one at that. For Merlin's sake, I'm not going to bite you," Draco snapped.

Hermione crossed her arms over her chest as she narrowed her eyes at him.

"Ha! That's rich considering I remember you having some sort of vampire complex while we were at Hogwarts," she spat.

Hermione resisted the urge to throttle him as he fought to keep a straight face, no doubt thinking of a few particular incidents. She glared at the dark huge bed with nothing but disdain. She fought to control her anger as she thought about how she had basically been evicted from her room and forced to share a room with him all because he didn't trust her.

"I don't understand why I can't just sleep on the couch. It's perfectly fine," she said, gesturing to the black piece of furniture in front of the bed.

It was nice and looked comfortable to sit on, but she knew that sleeping on it would be an entirely different story. Besides, the thought of actually spending the next 7-9 hours sleeping on that thing didn't actually thrill her. Still, she was very adamant against sharing a bed with Draco for obvious reasons, even if he was insisting that he wasn't even thinking about touching her because he was just as mad at her as she was with him.

"You're not sleeping on the couch," he spat for the umpteenth time.

This wasn't exactly her first time arguing for this option.

"Fine, then *you* sleep on the couch!"

"This is my room. You are not kicking me out of my own damn bed, Hermione," he snapped.

Hermione threw her hands up.

"Well, I don't know what we're going to do," she said in frustration.

"I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to get in bed, make myself quite comfortable and wait for you to join me," he said, glaring at her from the other side of the bed.

Hermione rolled her eyes, grabbing a pillow and walking towards the couch. She turned to hit Draco with the pillow as she heard his fast approaching footsteps, but he got to her first.

"Let go of me," she hissed as he wrapped his arms around her and lifted her up.

She struggled against him, but it was futile and she landed on the bed with a gasp as he let her go. She scooted back as he sank one knee into the mattress and then the other, eyes trained on her as he

approached her. She kicked out as he grabbed one of her ankles, yanking her towards him.

"I have no problem getting up and dragging you back to bed every single time you try to sleep on that stupid couch. Don't make me do it, Hermione," he snapped.

She snatched her foot away from him with a huff before getting on the left side of the bed, as close to the edge as possible. She crossed her arms over her chest as he made himself comfortable on his side before the room was bathed in darkness, save for the moonlight shining in through the balcony door windows.

Hermione stared up at the ceiling, thinking to herself that there was no way she'd be able to sleep. It just wasn't going to happen. She couldn't even begin to describe just how angry she was with him. Her mind briefly shot to Theo, wondering how he was doing. She couldn't imagine how he must have been feeling. To think that he had bowed out like the bigger person all because of more of Draco's lies and then to watch as... Hermione shook her head.

She wondered if he regretted his decision. More than likely, he did. Who wouldn't? It was probably torture for him and then to find out that Draco hadn't meant any of the crap he had spewed. Hermione looked at Draco out of the corner of her eye.

Theo had called Draco a coward, implying that Draco had lied when he said he lied to Theo. Hermione didn't believe that though. Draco lied about as much as he breathed. She would not put it past him to do such a thing, to hurt an acquaintance in such a way. He was capable of and had done much worse. Hermione's mind ran a mile a minute as thoughts like these raced inside of her head and she didn't even notice when sleep eventually claimed her.

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*Hermione stared down the wing in wonder, looking over her shoulder with a smile. She wasn't stupid. She had seen him come down here. His laughter suddenly rang throughout the halls and Hermione's*

*smile widened. She reached down, picking up her long ball gown before running in the direction of the sound.*

*She had just turned the corner when she saw him disappear around the other corner at the end of the wing. She huffed quite loudly in mock irritation. He could be such a child sometimes.*

*"This is getting tiresome," she yelled as she walked down the empty wing, her grin wide.*

*His deep chuckle came from the desolate hall beside her as she reached the end. She turned to look at him as his silver eyes glowed in the darkness. He suddenly smiled, pearly whites practically blinding her.*

*"Come play with me, Hermione," he purred, extending his hand.*

*She teasingly eyed his hand, pretending to think on it.*

*"Please..."*

*"Well, since you asked so nicely," she said with a shrug.*

*She laid her hand in his and they both laughed as they ran down the wing, the moonlight shining a spotlight on them as they passed each window. Her dress and hair flew behind her as they ran up the spiral staircase and Hermione felt her heart skip a beat inside of her chest as he looked over his shoulder at her, his heated gaze boring into her own.*

*The staircase seemed to grow taller and taller the further they climbed, but neither one of them paid any mind. The contagious sound of their combined laughter filled the stairwell and it wasn't long before they came to a door. She followed him through and she closed her eyes as the wind whipped past them, blowing her dress and his open suit jacket. She looked around the beautiful roof, as she recognized the skyline of London.*

*She turned her head to watch as he climbed onto the railing around the roof, built for safety. He stood on the very top, looking down and Hermione gazed at him with wide eyes. He suddenly turned to her, stormy eyes meeting coffee colored ones. He didn't say a word as he extended his hand yet again, a silent question swimming within their depths. Hermione frowned in uncertainty, but then he smiled... and all doubt was gone.*

*She slowly made her way to him, his hand clasping around hers before pulling her up to stand beside him. She looked down at the tiny people below them, but she felt no fear. She gazed up at him as he turned his head to look down at her, bringing his other hand up to rest on the back of her neck. He pressed his forehead against hers as he began to lean, taking her with him. Hermione closed her eyes.*

---

"Hermione!"

Hermione's eyes flew open and she gasped as her eyes landed on the moon up above. The wind blew past her face, whipping her hair, obscuring her vision. Her eyes trailed along the trees and...Blaise's backyard? She began to lower her head, but before she could look directly below her, someone spoke.

"Hermione...don't look down."

She slowly looked over her shoulder and met Draco's gaze. Blaise and Ginny stood behind him in his bedroom, just behind the open balcony doors. Ginny looked worried, borderline hysterical, as Blaise kept his arms around her. Hermione looked around in confusion. How...? She looked down at herself, confused as her eyes took in her sleeping clothes. Had she been...sleepwalking?

"Hermione...come on."

Draco held his hand out as he took a slow step towards her, as if worried she was still sleepwalking.

"I didn't...I wasn't..." she trailed off as she shook her head.

"I know. It's alright. Just step down..."

Still dazed, she laid her hand in his and he yanked her down, immediately pulling her into his arms. Hermione blinked in confusion, struggling to process what had just happened as Draco dug his fingers into her skin, his arms tightening around her.

"Leave us," he hissed behind him.

Hermione didn't even hear Ginny's protests as Blaise heeded Draco's words. She felt him press his lips against the top of her head, taking a deep breath, but Hermione couldn't care less. She was far too focused on her dream and the silver eyes that had led her to her death.

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**Let me know what you think!**

# Baby You're Making a Fool of Me

**BOOM. TRIPLE UPDATE.** The reason I'm doing this is because I imagine that the next few months might be kind of hectic and I'd rather upload a crap load at once rather than upload again in like...November. At least this way you'll have plenty of material to reread.

So, it is official that Ch. 18 will be Draco's POV. I'm putting this here because, well, some of you might not want to see inside of his head. It's a...disturbing place guys. A Ch. 17 sneak peek will probably be at the end of next chapter.

Um...this chapter took quite the emotional toll on me, I must say. The reason for that being because when I write out my chapters, I usually act out the scenes. Meaning, as I'm typing or rereading, I say it aloud, how I imagine them saying it, just to get a better feel.

**WARNING:** I feel like there should be a warning here, but I won't go into detail simply because I don't want to give anything away.

**Disclaimer: I Own Nothing**

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*"Hermione...come on."*

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*"I didn't...I wasn't...", she trailed off as she shook her head.*

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---

Hermione had a hard time wrapping her head around what had just happened. She faintly acknowledged that Draco was clutching her to him for dear life, as if she would go back and jump if he let go. She could feel him pressing his face into her hair and Hermione began to shake as she resisted the urge to look over her shoulder and look at the balcony. What the hell had just happened?

She didn't sleepwalk. Hermione had never sleepwalked in her life! Not only that, but the first time she ever does it, she tries to jump off of the freaking balcony? She tightly closed her eyes as Draco backed them up into his bedroom, hurriedly closing the balcony doors with his feet. One of his hands were pressed against the small of her back while the other cradled her head to his chest.

Hermione could faintly hear yelling in the hall and from the sound of it, it was Ginny. She guessed that Blaise was having a hard time getting her back to their room. Hermione swallowed as Draco walked



over to the couch before slowly sitting down and pulling her into his lap. The fact that this didn't even bother her, that she didn't even fight him on this, should have been a telltale sign at just how out of it she was.

"Hermione..."

Hermione ignored him, her mind somewhere else entirely. What on earth could have triggered this? She looked towards the balcony and thought back to her dream. She remembered not feeling an ounce of fear as she stood on the roof with him, prepared to jump. She had felt nothing but glee, safety...security, the exact opposite of what she should have felt. She should have been absolutely terrified out of her mind because Hermione *hated* heights. No, instead she had felt a disturbing sense of loyalty, fully prepared to let him lead her to her death.

She blinked, letting out a shaky breath as Draco pushed her hair away from her face and behind her shoulder, the brush of his fingers against her skin making her hair stand on end. She could still hear Ginny yelling at Blaise right outside of the door. She could hear him trying to calm her down. Her eyelids fluttered and an involuntary shudder traveled down her spine when Draco pressed his lips to her cheek, his nose skimming across her skin.

"Talk to me...say something," he quietly demanded of her.

Hermione swallowed and pressed her lips together as her vision began to blur. She blinked the tears away as she stared at the balcony. *The balcony*, she thought in realization. That damn balcony.

---

*She suddenly screamed as the balcony doors flew open, banging against the wall and she kicked and flailed as she realized what was happening. Her heart dropped to her stomach. This wasn't happening, this had to be a nightmare.*

*"No, no," she begged.*

*"You want to leave me? Huh? Is that what you want," he demanded.*

*"No, no, Draco. Draco, please," she pleaded, digging her feet into the floor.*

*This proved to be futile as he reached down and swung her up into his arms. She screamed, kicking out and arms flying, hitting him numerous times, but he did not loosen his grip, not once. She pleaded as he walked towards the balcony, her hands catching onto one of the doors. He was going to kill her.*

*"No, you want to leave so badly, right?"*

*"I don't want to leave-"*

*" **Shut up!** You want to leave...this is the only way you're ever going to leave me," he snarled, snatching her away from the doors.*

*" **Draco!** "*

---

Her lips curled over her teeth and she suddenly turned away, fighting against his hold.

"Get away from me," she hissed.

"Hermione, stop," he said, tightening his arms around her.

She clawed at the offending things, squirming in his lap as tears of frustration sprang to her eyes. She leaned away from him as he fought to keep her caged within his arms.

"Stop! Let go of me," she shrieked.

She leapt away from him, but he followed grabbing her arms and pulling her back into his hold. She twisted and squirmed, screaming in frustration, desperate to get away from him. He held on steadfast

though, his chest pressed into her back as she dragged him all around the room. She heard him grunt in pain when she forced his back against the bedpost. She jerked forward, leaning away from him.

"Don't touch me! Get your fucking hands off of me," she hissed.

"Hermione, stop this! You're not well," he protested.

She froze, eyes wide as her harsh breaths blew her hair away from her face as his words reached her ears. Not well? She didn't even notice the door opening, too focused on what he had just said. *What?* When she spoke next, her voice was low, so low that it didn't sound like her at all.

" *What* did you just say to me?"

"You just tried to jump out of the window in your damn sleep. Clearly, something is wrong and you need to calm down," he said.

"I'm not crazy," she whispered.

"I didn't say you were," he whispered back, his breath fanning over her cheek.

"Yes you did. Yes you did! I will *not* let you drive me insane, Draco. I refuse," she spat.

That was his goal, wasn't it, to drive her completely mental? She wouldn't know right from wrong, good from bad. If he drove her mad, he'd have her exactly where he wanted her. She dug her nails into his arm, fighting to get free again.

"You need to calm down," he hissed.

"No! This is your fault," she snapped, finally breaking away from him.

She spun around to glare at him, her unruly curls flying around her face.

" *You tried to kill me* ," she screamed at him.

Tears skipped down her cheeks as a feminine gasp came from in the direction of the door. Harsh footsteps came closer and Hermione felt a hand gently grip her arm, pulling her back.

"Come on, Hermione. You're sleeping with me," Ginny said.

A dark look passed over Draco's features as he glared at the redhead.

"Like hell she is," he snarled, reaching for Hermione.

Hermione backed away just as Ginny spoke.

"No! You stay away from her. I think some time apart will do both of you some good," Ginny said, dragging Hermione towards the door.

Blaise was standing by the door, rubbing his forehead in frustration as she and Ginny passed him. As soon as they stepped into the hall, Hermione gasped. She looked around in shock, head turning left and right, hair flying as she recognized the hallway from her dream. How had she not realized it before? She stared down the wing, almost expecting to see someone turning the corner, playful laughter ringing along the walls.

"Hermione...?"

Hermione blinked, shaking her head as Ginny's voice pulled her from her thoughts.

"Let's go," she breathed.

She could hear Draco's angry shouts and Blaise's much quieter voice from inside of his room. It wasn't long before the sound of his harsh footsteps followed them down the hall.

"Draco, just give her some space," Blaise said, following the hotheaded boy.

"Weasley! Get back here! Get your fucking hands off of her," he yelled.

"Draco," Blaise warned.

"She's sleeping with me tonight. I'm not letting her anywhere near you, right now," Ginny hissed over her shoulder.

Hermione flinched as she heard Draco bang his fist into the wall, the sound of his footsteps still echoing behind them. Ginny sped up her pace, urging Hermione to do the same.

"That's not your call! That's not your damn call Weasley. *I'll fucking kill you!* "

Both Hermione and Ginny stopped and spun around at the sound of a loud bang. Blaise had his fists clenched into Draco's shirt, shoving him against the wall.

"Don't you fucking dare talk to her like that," Blaise snarled.

Draco slowly reached up and shoved Blaise away from him, the other boy stumbling into the opposite wall, the portrait beside him shaking from the force.

"Then tell her to let go of my damn fiancée," Draco hissed, stepping towards Blaise.

Hermione's heart skipped a beat and her eyes widened to a comical size. She saw red. She pulled away from Ginny, taking a step towards him, gently pushing Ginny's hands away.

"Fiancée? *Fiancée* ?"

"We've had this discussion before and nothing has changed. Whether it's next week or two years from now, we *are* getting married," he spat at her.

" *Nothing has changed?* You-."

Hermione cut herself off, reaching up and yanking down one of the portraits hanging on the wall.

"Hermione!"

She ignored Blaise's warning, hurling the large picture at the blond boy. Draco stepped back, the glass and frame shattering just at his feet before he looked up at her, eyes blazing.

"You *bastard* ! If you think that I'd *ever* willingly marry *you* -"

"Trying to kill me, sweetheart? Don't start something that you can't finish," he hissed, taking a step towards her.

She ignored Ginny's hands, walking towards him.

"I'd sooner die than ever say 'I do' to a foul, loathsome cockroach like you! Theo has a better chance than you do," she spat.

Hermione knew that it was a low blow, but she didn't care. She wanted to hurt him so much, hurt him like he had hurt her. Draco's jaw clenched, his eyes narrowing as she stepped up to him.

"Is that why you're so threatened by him? Huh? You know that he can do what you can't? Is that it," she demanded, shoving his chest.

She grabbed his shirt, fisting it in her tiny hands before shoving his back into the wall. He let her, glaring down at her, nostrils flaring. She stared up into his eyes, ignoring the way goosebumps broke out over her flesh at their close proximity.

"You're not capable of love. I deserve better...and Theo *is* better," she quietly spat.

" *Draco, don't!* "

" **Hermione!** "

Draco had reached for her, but Ginny yanked her back at the last minute. Hermione had other ideas as she reached out towards him, her hands resembling claws. Blaise held Draco in an iron grip as the Death Eater fought to get free. Tears ran down Hermione's face as Ginny struggled to pull her away.

"Hit me! Hit me, you *son of a bitch* ! I want you to hit me. Show your friend how awful you really are," she shrieked.

Blaise's back was pressed to the wall as he held onto Draco for dear life. Draco leaned forward and shoved him back against the wall, trying to get him to loosen his grip.

"You go near him and I'll kill him, Hermione! You'll never see the outside of this place ever again," he snarled, eyes trained on nothing but her.

"No, no! Let him go," Hermione screeched as Blaise dragged Draco back towards his room.

"Hermione, stop! That's enough," Ginny protested, struggling to hold the hysterical girl.

"No, no, it's not! I want him to fight me! I want to wipe that damn smirk off of his pretty fucking face," she spat, breaking out of Ginny's hold.

"Hermione, no!"

Hermione shoved the door back open just as Blaise tried to close it. The dark-skinned boy stood in between her and Draco, trying to keep them apart, one hand pressed against the door and the other against Draco.

"This is going too far, let it go," Blaise protested as he tried to close the door, but Draco had one hand on it, trying to open it as well.

"You're *nothing* , Draco! Do you hear me? You don't deserve me," she yelled, reaching through the opening at him.

Her nails just barely missed his face.

"Let me out, Blaise," Draco growled, reaching for her as well.

Ginny wrapped her arms around Hermione's waist, pulling her back, but Hermione gripped the door jam.

"You've taken everything from me! You've ruined my life," she spat.

Ginny pulled and Hermione's nails dug into the wood, but she paid no mind to the pain. She wanted to ruin him...like he had ruined her.

**" *I hate you* !"**

" *No, you don't!* You wish you hated me," he threw at her, still trying to push past Blaise.

Hermione cried as Ginny dragged her away, wrapping her arms around her tighter. Hermione's feet dug into the floor as she screamed at him.

"I hate you, I hate you," she yelled over and over again, her hands clawing at the wall.

"Come on, Hermione. Come on. It's okay...", Ginny whispered as she literally dragged her down the hall.

Hermione leaned over, sobbing as she clutched Ginny's arms. She collapsed, bringing Ginny down with her and the redhead wrapped her arms around Hermione's shoulders. She pressed her head into the crook of Ginny's neck.

"I hate him, I hate him," she quietly chanted.

Ginny rested her chin on top of her head, rocking them as Hermione clung to her.



"I know, I know. It's okay..."

---

The sound of retching was what woke Hermione the next morning. She stirred, blinking before lifting her head and looking around. It took her a minute to realize that she was in Ginny and Blaise's room. She groaned, rolling over and clutching her head. It felt as if someone was banging on her skull and her eyes felt...tight.

She groaned again before letting her head drop back down as the awful scene from last night replayed in her head. Ginny had all but carried the distraught girl to her room, holding Hermione as she had cried herself to sleep. She had cried...because of him... *again* . Merlin, she hated him.

She swallowed as soon as she thought that, her words from last night hitting her, knowing full well that she did not hate him. Draco was right though, she wished she did. If she could make herself hate him, if she could force the feelings, she would. She would have done so a long time ago. Hermione perked up as another sound came from the bathroom and that was when she remembered what had woke her up in the first place.

She threw the covers off of her and made her way to the bathroom on the other side of the room. She was greeted with the sight of Ginny on her knees, leaning over the toilet and puking her guts out. Hermione knelt down beside her, pulling her hair away from her face, running her free hand up and down her back.

Ginny sat up when she was done, taking a deep breath, clutching her stomach as she stood, flushing the toilet. The redhead rinsed her mouth out before placing one hand onto the bathroom counter. She had an odd expression on her face.

"Are you okay?"

Ginny slowly shook her head in wonder.

"I don't know. My stomach hurts," Ginny quietly said.

Hermione blinked.

"You just puked your guts out. That's normal, right?"

Ginny eventually nodded, rubbing her stomach.

"Yeah, yeah, it's fine."

Ginny suddenly turned to face Hermione.

"How are *you* ?"

"Never better," Hermione said, walking out of the bathroom.

"Hermione, last night...got really intense. I think that it would be best if the two of you just kind of...stayed away from each other for a bit," Ginny proposed, following her.

Hermione nodded.

"I couldn't agree more," she whispered.

If it were up to Hermione, she'd probably stay away from him forever. She sat on the edge of the bed, her mind somewhere else entirely.

"Why didn't you tell me about...? You know," Ginny eventually said.

Hermione closed her eyes, fully understanding what Ginny was asking about. She swallowed, taking a deep breath.

"I really...really don't want to talk about this. I don't want to talk about Draco, I don't even want to think about Draco," Hermione slowly replied.

Before Ginny could even reply, there was a harsh knock on the door. Hermione's eyes widened as she stood, looking at the door, anxious.

*Speak of the devil and he shall appear* , she bitterly thought. She turned towards Ginny, but Ginny held her hand up.

"I got it..."

She walked towards the door, standing in front of it for a few seconds before taking a deep breath and cracking it open.

"Let me speak to her," a harsh voice demanded.

Hermione's jaw clenched and she forced her anger down as *his* voice came from the other side. He had some nerve! Hermione crossed her arms over her chest, leaning against the bedpost as Ginny spoke to him.

"Do you really expect her to speak with you, right now? She doesn't even want to waste any more thoughts on you. She's upset, rightly so and I think that you should respect-"

"When have I ever given a flying fuck about what you think? This doesn't concern you, now move," he snapped.

"No," Ginny said.

There was a long and awkward stretch of silence. Hermione could almost see the look that Draco was probably giving Ginny.

" *No?* "

"No. This isn't your house and this isn't your room. She doesn't want to talk to you," Ginny replied.

"Ginevra-"

"Look, she'll..."

Ginny looked over her shoulder at Hermione, trailing off before turning back around.

"She'll talk to you later. Not that you deserve it," the younger girl spat.

There was silence from the other side of the door and Hermione found herself quite nervous at what he might do or say. She was surprised when he said:

"Two days. I'm giving her *two days* . I know that you can hear me, Hermione," he said and then he was gone.

"I'm never speaking to him again. Not if I can help it," Hermione spat as Ginny closed the door.

Ginny gave her a look that perfectly expressed what Hermione's conscience was saying; yeah, right. Hermione rubbed her hands up and down her arms, sitting back down and pulling her feet up onto the bed. She rested her chin on her knees as Ginny came to stand in front of her. The other girl sighed.

"If you have another escape plan, now would be the time to say something," Ginny said.

Hermione scoffed, letting out a humorless chuckle. She sadly shook her head.

"I'd be the biggest idiot in the world to try and escape again so soon," Hermione replied.

"Well...what are you going to do?"

"Right now? Right now, I just want to sleep for about ten years...," Hermione said, laying down.

She thought she heard Ginny sigh, no doubt about to say something before deciding on walking away instead. Hermione closed her eyes, the emotional rollercoaster that was last night taking its toll on her.

---

*"Come on," a voice blew into her ear.*

*A cold chill blew around her, ruffling her hair and raising goosebumps along her flesh. She opened her eyes and took in the Prefect's bathroom. Hogwarts. It sparkled with cleanliness and was eerily silent.*

*"Do it...do it," it whispered.*

*Dazed, she slowly looked down into the large pool sized bath, her feet just at the edge. It was empty, but water slowly began to appear in the bath, the liquid rising up and spilling over onto the floor. She wiggled her toes, tilting her head to the side as she gazed into the water. She stared at her reflection, brown eyes boring into her own, perfect curls cascading around her shoulders.*

*Another figure suddenly appeared in the refectory, behind her. His pale blond hair was the only thing visible as his head dipped, lips brushing along the expanse of her neck. Her eyelids fluttered as he gently ran his fingers up and down her arm, his chest grazing her back.*

*"Do it," he whispered.*

*His lips brushed against her ear, her body trembling as he snaked his arms around her, his hands resting on her stomach. She frowned in confusion.*

*"I don't want to," she suddenly whispered.*

*His lips attached to her neck, teeth nipping and her eyes rolled to the back of her head as she leaned her head back onto his shoulder.*

*"I want you to," he said against her skin.*

*"You want me to," she quietly repeated.*

*"Mm hm."*

*He unwound his arms from around her, sitting her up straight and Hermione looked down into the water. She lifted one foot and smiled as she dived in, the water immediately engulfing her.*

---

She gasped and her throat immediately filled with water. Hermione flailed in confusion, but she didn't have to wonder for long. Hands suddenly fisted into her shirt, yanking her up and Hermione gasped again. This time, her throat and lungs were filled with air. She coughed as someone sat her into an upright position and she heard the sound of a tap being turned off.

She coughed, struggling to breathe as her hands gripped the side of the tub. The tub? She looked around through blurry eyes, gasping for breath. She recognized this bathroom. It was the bathroom in Ginny and Blaise's room. She coughed again, raking her hands down her face before opening her eyes and being met with the sight of one worried Ginevra Weasley.

"You...you did it again," Ginny whispered.

Hermione took deep breaths as she processed Ginny's words.

"I...I left for no more than ten minutes and I came back and...and I heard the water running and-."

Ginny broke off with a sob, her hands clutching Hermione's shoulders. The distraught girl wrapped her arms around Hermione.

"I'm scared. I'm scared for you, Hermione."

"Ginny-"

"No, we have to get you out of here. I can't lose you," she cried.

Hermione wanted to protest that whatever was happening would blow over eventually. She wanted to tell Ginny that she wasn't going

to lose her, but Hermione said none of that. Instead, she pressed her lips together and stayed quiet.

---

The next two days passed quickly. In fact, the next three days passed quickly. By the fourth day, Hermione fought to not fool herself into thinking that Draco had given up. He'd told her two days, but it had been four and she'd seen no sign of him. She had mostly kept to herself, lost in her thoughts, with the exception of talking to Ginny here and there.

There had only been one other sleepwalking incident and apparently Ginny was able to safely guide Hermione back to bed. Hermione recalled nothing of this though. She had convinced Ginny that this would go away on it's on at some point and they decided to keep this between themselves, not wanting to involve anyone else.

The truth, however, was that Hermione was scared. She didn't want to acknowledge this as an actual problem. What if she was really going crazy? What if Draco had not been there the first time or Ginny the second time? What would have happened to her? What would she have done?

Ginny stayed with her every time she slept though, which she had been doing a lot. Hermione found that she didn't have much energy for pretty much anything and she was more than content to hide out in Ginny and Blaise's room for as long as Ginny would allow her. Of course, that too eventually ran its course.

"Hermione, I think that you should go to the library. You love books and they always take your mind off of things," Ginny had suggested.

Hermione decided to follow that suggestion because it was the truth. If Hermione couldn't ever count on anything else, she could always count on books. They were consistent, a staple in her now hectic life. Going to the library and curling up on one of those couches with a book was something that she could look forward to. Or so she thought...

Hermione's eyes widened at the sight of Draco as soon as she stepped inside. He sat in one of the chairs, silver eyes pinned on her. Hermione turned around as she heard the door close behind her and glared at Blaise as he leaned against the door.

"What is the meaning of this," she demanded.

Blaise sighed.

"The two of you...you have problems. Now, that wasn't always a secret, but it's gone too far. You're not leaving, Hermione until you two come to some sort of compromise. I'm here to make sure that no blood is spilt," Blaise replied.

Hermione swallowed as she put two and two together.

"You and Ginny... She set me up," Hermione whispered.

"She's just worried," he said.

"She told me that there was another incident," came Draco's smooth voice from across the room.

Hermione spun around, eyes blazing as she found herself feeling completely betrayed. Ginny had promised. Draco slowly stood.

"Don't go grabbing your pitchfork just yet. She's concerned...with good reason," Draco said.

"Oh and I suppose that you're concerned too," she spat, walking towards him.

"Is that so hard to believe?"

"No, I guess not. Apparently, worry is only warranted when my life is in danger from hands that aren't *yours*," she hissed.

Draco's jaw clenched.



"He's going to work on that...right," Blaise hinted at Draco.

Hermione scoffed.

"This is absolutely unbelievable. Draco's never going to change. Why are we even here?"

Blaise heaved another sigh.

"We're here because the two of you almost murdered one another the other night. I can't even begin to think of what would have happened if Ginny and I had not been there..."

"Well, Blaise, maybe you're a bit late to the party, but Draco has a habit of almost murdering me. What's so different now," she demanded, turning to face him.

Blaise's nostrils flared, eyes narrowing as he stepped towards her.

"The difference is that now I'm finally fed up. This is ridiculous. Hermione, you're never going to win. End of story, just accept it. Draco, maybe she'd be more inclined to accept it if you weren't so damn demented. I just want you two to figure something out, so that I can get back to my pregnant girlfriend and not have to worry about her as she sleeps on the other side of this bloody house," Blaise spat.

"Oh, I see. This is really about *you* and what *you* want. Never mind the fact that this doesn't concern you. *My life* is the one that's in danger from him every day. How selfish can you get," she snapped.

" *I'm selfish?* You treated Ginny like absolute garbage! I am the one who had to hold her as she cried herself to sleep because of you. Why are you even around her *now*, because you need her emotional support? Where were you when she needed yours," Blaise hissed.

Hermione's face reddened at the truth in his words.

"I acknowledge that I was harsh, but to be honest I don't understand what either one of you expected from me. I'm sorry," Hermione said.

"I told you before and I'll say it again. All she wanted was a little understanding...you...selfish...bitch," Blaise slowly said, repeating the words he had spoken to her that day in her room.

Draco was suddenly shoving past her, pushing Blaise against the library door.

"I warned you that if you ever spoke to her like that again I'd cut out your tongue," Draco hissed.

Blaise shoved him away.

"It's the truth! She hurt Ginny every single time she treated her like she was scum! She's a-"

"I dare you to repeat that. I'm almost begging you to-"

Their quarrel was interrupted by a bloodcurdling scream that suddenly rang throughout the entire mansion. All three of them looked up before it eventually dawned on them.

"Ginny," Hermione whispered.

Blaise was out of the door before any of them and Hermione was right behind him. She was right on his tail as they flew up the stairs and Hermione went to pass him when he stuck his arm out, determined to get to Ginny first. Hermione slapped his arm away, pushing past him and practically sliding into their room, the door banging against the wall as it flew open.

She quickly scanned her eyes around the room and seeing no sign of Ginny, ran into the bathroom. It was large and Hermione didn't see her at first until she saw her small frame huddled on the floor on the other side of the tub. Hermione hurried over to her.

"Ginny, what's-," Hermione cut herself off with a gasp.

She let out a shaky breath as her eyes fully took in the scene before her. Ginny was hysterical, loud hiccup sounding sobs escaping her lips as she rocked back and forth, her bloody hands held up to her face. She was soaked with water and Hermione noted that she had probably just gotten out of the bathtub.

The white towel that was wrapped around her had blood on it and more blood was smeared on the inside of her thighs. Hermione turned around as she heard Blaise's fast approaching footsteps.

"Blaise, don't...", she tried to warn, but it was too late.

He halted at the sight before him, eyes going wide. Draco was right behind him and she motioned for him to get Blaise out of there. Hermione spun back around just as Ginny screamed and the redhead girl leaned over, clutching her stomach.

"Ginny! Ginny-No, let go of me!"

Hermione hesitantly knelt down, running her hand through Ginny's hair as the younger girl writhed on the floor.

"Ginny," Blaise called again.

She heard him arguing with Draco, no doubt trying to get him to let go of him. Ginny screamed again and Hermione brought her head into her lap, closing her eyes as Ginny wrapped her arms around her waist, her cries and screams echoing throughout the bathroom.

---

**I did say that it was going to get worse before it got better. Let me know what you think!**

# Lately I'm Foolish

Here we go. If I wasn't doing song lyrics as chapter titles, just know that the title of this chapter would be Blinny. I ship them so hard guys, it's not even funny. I feel like a lot of you have been waiting for this chapter, whether you knew it or not, so here, for all of you patient folks.

Also, the Ch. 17 sneak peek is very short and possibly misleading(?), so don't get too excited lol.

**Disclaimer: I Own Nothing**

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Hermione took a deep, shaky breath before hesitantly bringing her fist up and knocking on the door. She heard movement from inside of the room and shuffled on her feet, holding the tray steady with her other hand. She could feel her nervousness increase as she heard soft voices before the sound of footsteps could be heard nearing the door. The door opened and Hermione took a step back, resisting the urge to look down.

If looks could kill, then Hermione would have been six feet under because Blaise Zabini was staring at her as if she were the foulest scum on earth. Hermione blinked, holding his gaze, desperately trying to convey how sorry she was. She didn't dare speak to him, that didn't exactly go well the last time.

"Let her in, Blaise," a soft voice said.

Blaise's jaw clenched and his eyes darkened, but he eventually opened the door wider and stepped aside. Hermione did her best to avoid his eyes as she passed him, but she could feel his burning gaze on her back. As she walked over to the nightstand beside the bed, she could hear him following behind her before stopping beside the huge frame. Hermione glanced over her shoulder.

Blaise hovered over Ginny, running his hand through her hair as he whispered something to her. Hermione looked away, setting the tray down onto the nightstand and tucking her hair behind her ear.

"I'll be downstairs. Just send *her* if you need anything," he said.

Hermione turned around and Blaise threw her one last venomous look before walking out. Hermione swallowed before heaving a small sigh. Blaise... *hated* her. He absolutely hated her and Hermione couldn't blame him one bit.

"He'll come around," Ginny whispered.

Hermione looked up to see Ginny gazing at her from underneath the huge comforter and piles of pillows.

"I wouldn't blame him if he didn't," Hermione said.

She looked away towards the nightstand, adjusting the tray.

"I brought you something to eat. I know that you haven't been keeping much of anything down these past few days, but...you need to try and eat something," Hermione quietly said.

Ginny didn't reply and Hermione turned to see her staring past Hermione, her gaze fixed on the door. Hermione sighed and walked around to the other side of the bed. She pushed the pillows out of the way and pulled the comforter back before sliding in. Ginny immediately turned around, resting her head in Hermione's lap. Hermione slowly glanced up, her eyes landing on the bathroom door.

---

*"Ginny...Ginny, we need to....," Hermione trailed off.*

*Ginny's hands clung to her waist, hanging onto Hermione for dear life as she cried her eyes out. She could still hear Blaise yelling in the bedroom and Hermione knew that it would only be a matter of time before he broke free from Draco.*

*"Ginny, we need to clean you up-."*

*"No!"*

*Hermione had said the wrong thing, she could see that now as Ginny sat up and dragged her hands along the bloody floor.*

*"No, no," she chanted.*

*Her fingers gripped at the blood, desperately trying to hold it, trying to hold something that wasn't there. She screamed, clutching at the floor and hunching over, wet hair clinging to her face.*

*"No," Ginny shrieked as Hermione got closer.*

*Suddenly, Hermione was being shoved out of the way and staring at the face of one angry Blaise Zabini. Hermione gulped.*

*"Blaise-"*

*"Get. Out," he snarled.*

*Hermione briefly glanced at Ginny, frowning.*

*"Blaise, please. I'm just trying to-"*

*"Don't go near her. You've done enough. Now, get the hell out," he spat before turning around and kneeling beside Ginny.*

*Hermione watched as he rested his hand on her shoulder before pulling her into his arms. He pushed her hair away from her face and leaned down, pressing his lips to the top of her head as he rocked her back and forth. Hermione felt hands gently grip her arms before leading her out of the bathroom.*

*She looked down as Draco walked them out of the room and into the hallway. She closed her eyes as Ginny screamed again, the sound ringing all throughout the wing. Draco turned her around to face him.*

*"I didn't want this to happen. I never wanted this to happen," she tearfully whispered.*

*"I know."*

*She looked up into his eyes, tears running down her face.*

*"She's going to hate me. Blaise hates me, I hate me-," she said, cutting herself off with a sob.*

*He pulled her into his arms, cradling her head against his chest.*

*"I don't hate you," he said.*

*Hermione flinched and squeezed her eyes shut as another scream came from inside of the bedroom.*

*"They're going to be okay."*

*Hermione sobbed against his chest and for a moment, she forgot about everything and wrapped her arms around him, allowing him to hold her while she cried for her friend.*

---

"I'm so sorry, Ginny," Hermione eventually said.

Ginny began to tremble and Hermione heard her snuffle.

"No offense, Hermione...but you didn't even want this for me," Ginny said with a tearful, humorless laugh.

Hermione looked away, closing her eyes. It was the truth; Hermione hadn't wanted this for Ginny. Ginny had been right when she said that she had been displacing her feelings onto Ginny and now Hermione wished that she could just go back.

"I...I know and I'm sorry. I-"

"Why? Why," Ginny suddenly yelled, surprising Hermione by sitting up and facing her.

Her normally vibrant red hair looked dull and lifeless, pulled back into a ponytail. Her eyes were bloodshot from crying and the bags underneath them were more prominent than they were the day before. She looked at Hermione, eyes inquiring.

"I...I was angry, okay? I was angry at Draco, myself, you, and Blaise and Harry. I was just... so angry, Ginny, at everyone. That doesn't excuse my behavior at all, I know that-"

"You weren't just angry, you were cruel! You were so mean and...and you were acting like...like...like a bitch. You were acting like a cold hearted bitch and in the beginning I thought that I deserved it," Ginny interrupted.

Hermione frowned, throat thick with emotion.

"Ginny..."

"I felt like I had done something wrong and so I took it. I took it because you needed to go through that. I felt like it was necessary for you...," Ginny said.

"I thought that I had more time. I thought I had more time to warm up to the idea... It was selfish. I was only thinking about myself and never did I think...never did I expect...," Hermione tearfully trailed off.

Ginny looked down, bringing her hand up and placing it on her stomach.

"Me either," Ginny whispered.

"I'm so sorry, Ginny," Hermione said again.

Ginny rapidly blinked, tears falling one by one as she nodded.



"I know," she said and Hermione pulled her into her arms.

---

"Blaise was so excited, you know? I had never seen him that happy before. He smiled so big and just picked me up and spun me around and around," Ginny said with a small smile.

Hermione found herself smiling too. Ginny suddenly laughed, sniffling.

"Then he got all worried about hurting the baby and put me down. He wouldn't let me get out of bed for anything. He stood by the door every time I went to the bathroom. He was so protective it was suffocating, but I know he did it out of love," Ginny whispered.

Hermione stared at the younger girl as Ginny suddenly swallowed, her smile disappearing. There was a short, awkward silence.

"You know that long list of baby names that I mentioned? Only about four of them were mine. He went crazy, staying up all night and when I woke up the next morning, he'd had two parchments full of possible names. We didn't want to know the sex because we wanted to be surprised..."

Ginny suddenly sighed.

"We were going to leave...", she quietly began.

Hermione perked up at this. Hermione didn't know that.

"What...?"

Ginny looked at her.

"His mum has a vacation house in the States. We were going to leave because of...well, you know. Blaise didn't want me around any of this, rightly so and we were going to get away. We were going to come back when everything was settled, however long that took."

Ginny fingered her hair.

"Maybe this was for the best....," Ginny suddenly said.

Hermione's eyes widened and she furrowed her eyebrows in confusion, reaching out towards her.

"What? No. Ginny, how can you even say that?"

"Everything happens for a reason, Hermione. Having a baby now, with the way things are?"

Ginny shook her head.

"It would be too dangerous, too hard. It would have just been something else that someone could use against Blaise...or me. Besides, I wouldn't want to bring a child into this world right now, anyway. So, yeah, I do think that this was for the best," Ginny replied.

Hermione looked away, mulling over Ginny's words. Maybe she was right...and then again maybe she wasn't. There was no telling what would have happened...but it's not like they'd ever find out.

Hermione gazed at the window, the sunlight streaming in and basking the room in its glow. She suddenly stood up and walked over to the window. Her eyes immediately fell onto Blaise and Draco in the backyard. Blaise was kneeling, his head in his hands and Draco stood beside him, his hand on his friend's shoulder.

Hermione's heart clenched at the sight and she forced herself to look away. Blaise really cared about Ginny, that much was obvious and she him. They were in love, they were happy, and now that happiness was ruined because of her. All Ginny had wanted was a little understanding. She hadn't been unrealistic and expected Hermione's blessing or something. She had just wanted Hermione to *not* act like a judgmental bint and she couldn't even do that. *How could I?* She had thought Ginny to completely be in harm's way, at the very worst, dead. It was not only shocking, but also confusing as

hell to find out the truth the way she had. Plus, it didn't help that Ginny had been right when she said that Hermione felt like she was looking in a mirror.

When she had seen Blaise and Ginny kissing that day, it was like watching her and Draco and Hermione didn't like it one bit. She had taken it out on Ginny. The healer had said that an abundant amount of stress was the primary cause of the miscarriage. Hermione had felt sick as she heard those words and the look that Blaise had given her hadn't made her feel any better. It was her fault. She had been too harsh, she realized that now, but she wished that she would have realized it sooner. Hermione looked over her shoulder as Ginny whispered something.

"What did you say," Hermione asked, fully facing her now.

She saw Ginny take a deep breath, shoulders trembling as she exhaled. She blinked before slowly looking up at Hermione.

"Blaise was the first person that I had ever had sex with," Ginny slowly said, a bit louder this time.

Hermione blinked, eyebrows furrowing in confusion. *What?* Hermione opened and closed her mouth several times, no doubt resembling a fish. She couldn't have heard Ginny right. That didn't make any sense. Hermione shook her head.

"No, no. You...and Dean. You and Dean-

"Everyone assumed that it was Dean who... So, I just let them," Ginny said with a shrug.

"I didn't assume, Ginny. That was what you told me," Hermione whispered.

Hermione didn't understand this, any of this. Ginny wiped at her face.

"Dean and I were so off and on. We were always fighting and one night, after a particularly horrendous fight, I went up to the Astronomy Tower. He had said some pretty...heinous things and I was just crying my eyes out. I was angry and sad and...and I just wanted to feel better...," Ginny said.

Hermione hesitantly sat on the bed, staring at Ginny in interest as she confessed all of this.

"Blaise was up there too doing whatever it was that the great Blaise Zabini did. Contemplating life or some crap, I don't know," Ginny said with a chuckle.

She smiled, playing with her hair.

"He saw me, well, he *heard* me and asked me what was wrong. Of course, I'm sure that you can guess my initial thought. Blaise Zabini was talking to *me* and wanted to know all about my problems. He was actually being nice...or so I thought..."

Ginny's smile vanished as she looked towards the window.

"So, he asked what was wrong and I told him...everything. I told him about how unhappy I was with Dean because Dean wasn't the one that I really wanted. The one that I really wanted never even saw me and here I was trying to force a relationship. A relationship in which I would always compare Dean to someone else. It was wrong, but I didn't care. I wanted to get over Harry, but at the same time I wanted him to notice me," Ginny said.

She shook her head.

"I didn't know what I wanted and Blaise told me exactly that. I couldn't even argue because it was the truth. He told me that I was beautiful and that I deserved better...and then I kissed him. Here was this handsome, older guy telling me that I was pretty and basically saying everything that a girl wanted to hear. So I kissed him, he kissed me back and one thing led to another. That is the

story of how I lost my virginity at the top of the Astronomy Tower," Ginny said with mock pride.

Hermione blinked, trying to piece everything together.

"It was the best night of my life, Hermione. I don't know what I expected with him, but it wasn't... *that*. He was patient and *attentive* and...it was just really sweet. We kissed and then went to our houses. I was on cloud nine, I was so happy and then..." Ginny trailed off.

"Then what," Hermione asked, transfixed.

Ginny's swallowed, eyes watering.

"Then the next day he looked right through me," Ginny whispered.

"Ginny..." Hermione said with a frown.

"I felt...dirty. I felt cheap, like garbage, like absolute trash. He made me feel so... *disgusted* with myself and I *hated* him for it," Ginny tearfully spat.

Hermione swallowed.

"He said what I wanted to hear to get what he wanted and I fell for it like an idiot. I don't know what I expected, I don't know what I was thinking... I went back to Dean, reluctantly, and he had a new girl on his arm every other day. He didn't look at me not once and it drove me insane. I really do believe that it drove me insane because two weeks later I was in his bed," Ginny said.

Ginny wrapped her arms around herself.

"It was late, we had run into each other and...I...just...snapped. I was yelling at him, calling him all sorts of vile things. I was so angry...at him, but mostly at myself. He didn't say a word, not one word and that just made me angrier. I slapped him...and then he kissed me and that was that. A week after that we were at it again.

Soon we started meeting three, four times a week. It was wrong what I was doing to Dean, he didn't deserve that, but I...I couldn't help it."

Ginny took a shaky breath.

"I'd open my legs for him again and again and every day afterwards he'd pretend like I didn't exist. He'd be cozied up with someone else and it would break my heart over and over again," Ginny cried.

"Ginny, why-"

"You don't understand, Hermione. You don't get it. When we were alone...he was different. We'd laugh and joke around with each other. Afterwards, we would just lay there, talking about any and everything that came to our minds. I would lay there with my head on his chest and he'd run his fingers through my hair, telling me about his mum and his home life. Sometimes we wouldn't even get to having sex because we'd be too busy just being complete idiots....," she sobbed.

"And he'd look at me...with this...this look. His eyes would light up a certain way and...he just made me feel special. I fell in love and every day he'd break my heart."

"What...what happened?"

"I had a pregnancy scare. I wasn't, but for a minute there I thought that I was. It put everything into perspective, you know? Did I really want to have a kid with someone who treated me like...like I wasn't worthy or something? So I broke it off. I had tried to before, but always failed. This time, I made it clear that we were done. I told him the same thing that he had told me that night; that I was beautiful and I deserved better. That was the end of that..."

"I stayed with Dean like nothing had ever happened and next year I tried to force myself to move on with the one that I had wanted all along. When that didn't work, I wasn't even that upset. I mean, I was

upset, but mostly because I wasn't as upset as I felt I should have been. Which meant that I had fallen for this beautiful bastard who had treated me like shit," Ginny said.

Hermione frowned in confusion.

"How did you end up here then?"

Ginny gave a sheepish smile.

"The night that Draco let Death Eaters into the school, I ran into Blaise. I wanted to curse him for a number of reasons, but he told me that you were in trouble. I believed him. Despite everything, I did have a connection with him and I trusted him when he said that something was wrong with you. He knew how much you meant to me. I followed him outside and the next thing I know, I'm waking up here. I was...furious. Furious and confused..."

"I demanded that he tell me what the hell was going on...and he did. He admitted that he had been a coward. He told me that that year we'd spent together meant everything to him and that he loved me, but was too afraid to admit it. He said that he had hated seeing me with Dean and then with Harry, but he knew that he had no right. He all but proposed to me, declaring that he'd spend the rest of our lives making it up to me and making me happy," Ginny said.

Ginny rolled her eyes.

"I didn't accept, of course. I was too angry. Hell, he had called Draco for backup. He had kidnapped me, keeping me away from everyone when you all needed me the most. I was angry with everything that he had done, but...I was happy that he had finally told me what I had wanted to hear for so long. I was conflicted, Hermione. I didn't know what to do..."

"Then one night, I had a nightmare. He had heard me screaming and came in, wand at the ready. He looked absolutely ridiculous and... and I laughed at him and then I kissed him. He stayed the night. We

didn't have sex, just laid there and talked. I was just happy to be in his arms again," Ginny said, a tear skipping down her cheek.

Hermione swallowed, taking it all in, everything that Ginny had just told her. After it all though, Hermione just had one question on her mind.

"Why didn't you ever tell me...?"

Hermione didn't mean for it to come out so pathetic sounding, but here was her best friend who had gone through...a pretty heartbreaking relationship and Hermione had been none the wiser. She'd had absolutely no inkling.

"Really, Hermione? This wasn't when Draco got a hold of you and you finally stopped seeing things in so much black and white. You wouldn't have understood. You would have told me that I was being foolish, that I was completely mental for ever getting involved with a Slytherin," Ginny replied.

Hermione frowned. That wasn't true, was it? Hermione didn't think that she had ever been that bad, but if she was being perfectly honest here... The truth was that if Ginny had told her all of this when it had happened, she probably would have judged her. She probably would have told her what a life threatening mistake she was making. She might have even told Ron because she was so far up his arse during this time. Hermione heaved a defeated sigh and nodded.

"You really love him...don't you?"

Ginny stood up and walked over to the window, placing her hand on the glass as she gazed outside.

"I really do."

Ginny looked over her shoulder at Hermione with a small smile.



"I'm going to marry that boy someday..."

---

After Ginny had gotten back into bed, she had eaten all of the food that Hermione had gotten for her. The fiery headed girl had immediately turned over and went to sleep, suddenly tired. So Hermione had taken it upon herself to go downstairs and fix something else for her. She was happy that Ginny's appetite had returned, even if it was only temporary. Hermione wasn't naïve enough to think that Ginny was all better, she was far from it actually. Her spirits had been lifted, but more than likely only for a short while.

Ginny had lost her baby. The baby that she had conceived with the man she loved. A potential life suddenly just gone. Hermione didn't even want to imagine what that was like, to have this life growing inside of you, to be super excited about it, about being a mom and then in a flash it's just...gone. Hermione didn't want to imagine what Blaise and Ginny were going through. To think that Hermione had caused this. She and her selfish, stubborn ways. If Ginny had explained from the beginning...

*You never gave her a chance* . Hermione acknowledged the truth in this thought with shame. No, she had never even given Ginny a chance. Hermione should have known, should have guessed that there was more to the story. Ginny wasn't stupid nor easily manipulated. Hermione had not given her friend enough credit and she hated herself for that. With a sigh, Hermione fixed up the tray of food, making sure that it had every food group necessity. She turned around and her eyes widened with a gasp.

Theodore Nott had just walked into the kitchen and looked just as surprised about seeing her as she was him. He looked much better than the last time she saw him, which was when Draco had his hands around his neck. Hermione gave a polite smile.

"How are you? I heard about Ginny...", he said.

"I'm fine. She's...not so good as I'm sure you can imagine," Hermione awkwardly replied.

He solemnly nodded and Hermione went to leave, not only wanting to escape the awkwardness, but also worried that Draco was right around the corner. Theo suddenly reached out, grabbing the tray and setting it down on the counter. Hermione frowned in confusion as he turned to face her.

"Look, it's out there, Hermione. It's out there and what are you going to do about it?"

"What? I don't understand," Hermione said, blinking.

Theo suddenly grabbed her hands, pulling her closer and Hermione's eyes widened.

"I can get you out of here," he whispered.

Hermione's heart skipped a beat within her chest. She knew without a doubt that it was from fear because Theo was suddenly playing a dangerous game.

"Theo...don't..."

"Just say the word. All you have to do is ask and I can get you far away from him. You won't ever have to see him again," he said.

Hermione shook her head. If Theo had told her this weeks ago, she would have jumped at the opportunity, but now...

"I can't leave. Ginny needs me. I've been a shit so called best friend and she needs me now more than ever. I'm not letting her down again. I'm sorry," she said.

"I can wait. When she's all better, we can go. She has Blaise. She loves Blaise and he loves her. I can help you, Hermione."

Hermione shook her head.

"Is she the only reason that you don't want to go?"

"What other reason could there possibly be?"

Theo gave her a look and she looked away, avoiding his eyes. He reached up, gently gripping her chin and turning her to face him.

"Don't do this, Hermione. Don't let him twist your mind. You need to get out of here, away from him and I can help," he repeated.

"...I suppose that this isn't just coming out of the goodness of your heart," she whispered.

Theo licked his lips, gazing into her eyes.

"I can make you happy-"

"Theo, no," she said, trying to turn away, but his grip held.

"I know I can. I have always loved you. I can treat you a million times better than he can," he said.

"Theo, please. You have to leave-"

Hermione was cut off as he pressed his lips against hers. Her eyes widened as he brought his hands up to rest on either side of her face as he moved his mouth against hers. It was gentle, it was sweet, it was...wrong. Theo was practically perfect in every way, the kind of guy any girl would dream of and it felt all wrong.

She pulled away, shaking her head and backing up. She pressed her hand to her mouth.

"You shouldn't have done that," she whispered.

"Hermione...I-"

"What's going on in here?"

---

**Don't kill me. I might do the Blinny story in a oneshot. Who knows. I've had their story in my head since forever and if you go back to C&B, there are subtle hints. VERY subtle. You'd only notice after reading this. Let me know what you think!**

---

### **Sneak Peek:**

Hermione stared through the rain at Theo, one side of his face completely bruised as Blaise held him in an iron grip. She turned to face Draco in confusion, eyes wide and questioning. He looked down at her, eyes devoid of all emotion as a slow smirk graced his lips before speaking.

"Ladies and gentlemen...we are gathered here today to celebrate the short, yet pathetic life of one Theodore Nott Jr."

# Look at What You Did to Me

When hurricane Hermine threw you off schedule ( I live in FL btw). The chapter title speaks for itself.

**Disclaimer: I Own Nothing**

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*"Theo, please. You have to leave-"*

*Hermione was cut off as he pressed his lips against hers. Her eyes widened as he brought his hands up to rest on either side of her face as he moved his mouth against hers. It was gentle, it was sweet, it was...wrong. Theo was practically perfect in every way, the kind of guy any girl would dream of and it felt all wrong.*

*She pulled away, shaking her head and backing up. She pressed her hand to her mouth.*

*"You shouldn't have done that," she whispered.*

*"Hermione...I-"*

*"What's going on in here?"*

---

Hermione looked around Theo just as he turned around. Blaise leaned against the door jam, eyes narrowed. Before Hermione could utter a word, however, Theo had beaten her to it.

"I was just offering to take this to Ginny myself," Theo said, grabbing the tray of food that had been set aside.

"How...thoughtful of you, Theo," Blaise slowly responded.

Hermione got the feeling that he didn't think that it was thoughtful at all. She desperately hoped that he had not seen anything, for Theo's

sake.

"Yeah, well, I've been meaning to check on her. I want to see how she's doing," Theo responded with a nod.

Blaise's face suddenly hardened.

"She had a miscarriage, Theo. How do you think she's doing?"

There was a tense, awkward silence.

"I'm sorry," Theo whispered.

Hermione looked down.

"I'll just go on up," he said and then he was gone.

Hermione slowly rose her eyes to meet Blaise's, very much aware of the fact that they were alone. He stepped further into the room before eventually sighing. Blaise looked...like shit, to put it mildly.

"Let's talk, Hermione..."

"Okay."

She had been expecting this, she was prepared for whatever was about to be said. Blaise walked around the large kitchen, stopping beside a window on the far left of the room.

"I went to check on Ginny just after you came down here. She...tore me a new one," Blaise said with a humorless chuckle.

Hermione blinked. He turned away from the window to look at her, an amused look of wonder on his face.

"Her love for you astounds me. Sometimes, I swear that she loves you just a bit more than she loves me," he said.

"Well...I have been a bit nicer to her in the past than you have," Hermione quietly responded.

Blaise chuckled, shoving his hands into his pocket.

"Got the whole story, did you? You don't need to remind me how much of an ass I was, Hermione. I remind myself every day..."

Hermione shuffled on her feet.

"I'm sure that you have a ton of questions. By all means," Blaise said, lifting his hand and gesturing towards her.

"Do you love her?"

Blaise tried to hide his smile, but failed miserably.

"More than anything...but you already knew that. Didn't you?"

His eyes bore into her own as he threw this at her and Hermione sighed, crossing her arms over her chest. Yes, she did.

"I think that I always knew that there had to be more to the story. I didn't want to hear it, though. I wanted to be angry, I felt that I had that right. I still feel like I had that right," she confessed.

"Anger and confusion is okay. It was expected, believe me. Ginny was worried about your reaction the most. Cruelty, however..."

Blaise shook his head as he trailed off.

"You said some awful things to her, things that I'm having a very hard time forgiving. You felt like she betrayed you and that hurt. I get it, but you were being...petty. That's quite unlike you," he said.

"I'm sorry."

Blaise heaved a tired sigh.

"Yeah, I'm sorry too."

"Why did you treat her like that? You had to have known how she felt about you," Hermione suddenly said.

Blaise looked towards the ceiling, slowly exhaling before finally answering.

"I was...scared. I know, right? Slytherins look out for themselves... that isn't just limited to our physical wellbeing. I cared about her, a lot, and in my world, that meant that she was dangerous. I was under the impression that love made you weak...and I loved her."

Hermione leaned against the wall.

"I was protecting myself. It was selfish, it was cowardly, but I didn't care. I underestimated just how much she meant to me...," he said.

He suddenly chuckled.

"When she went back to Dean, it drove me crazy. When she and Potter finally hooked up...yeah, I...I wanted to castrate him. I knew that I had no right, though. She left because I treated her like she was nothing. I had no one to blame but myself," he said, spreading his hands out.

Hermione briefly wondered if he knew about the pregnancy scare. He and Ginny seemed the type to tell each other everything, but it didn't seem like he did. Hermione wasn't going to mention it, though, in case he didn't know. It wasn't her place.

"I want to blame you."

Blaise said this so suddenly and so quietly that Hermione almost missed it. She looked up to find him staring out of the window, picking at the paint on the sill.

"Merlin knows that I want to blame you and no one but you..."



"It's okay. I blame me," Hermione said matter-of-factly.

"No. Ginny was right...we're all to blame. I didn't exactly hold my tongue around you, I wasn't very good at concealing how I felt about you and Ginny knew that. The two of us being out of her sight worried her a lot..."

"Well...I did stab you once. We can't really blame her for thinking we were trying to kill each other any time we crossed paths," Hermione agreed.

"I shouldn't have brought her here," he suddenly said.

Hermione perked up at this, frowning in confusion.

"She wanted to be out there helping her friends in any way that she could and I...I just took her. I didn't care because I just wanted her with me. It was...selfish. I see that now," he whispered.

Hermione said nothing because deep down, she agreed. It was selfish.

"Yes...it was, but...I think I get it. You love her and deep down you knew she felt the same way or...at least you hoped that she did. You didn't want to leave things how they were. You felt as if you owed it to yourself to at least try."

She heard him chuckle again.

"I knew that there was a reason I used to like you. Aside from Ginny caring so much about you, that is. Such a shame that I don't really feel that way now..."

---

*"Is that a threat?"*

*He chuckled, humorlessly.*

*"No, my dear. That is a warning. A Malfoy always gets what a Malfoy wants and Draco is no exception," he said with a dark look thrown her way just before he began to walk past her.*

*She found herself rubbing her hands up and down her arms.*

*"Oh and Hermione?"*

*She slowly turned around to face Zabini, a serious expression on his face. His next words caused her heart to skip a beat inside of her chest.*

*"Do be careful. I'm surprisingly rather fond of you and it'd be a shame if you ended up dead."*

---

Hermione blinked as the memory of that night rushed to the front of her mind. She *had* found it odd that Blaise Zabini had taken the time to actively warn her, but never would she have guessed...

"That's why you warned me that day. That's why you took so much interest in warning me about Draco," Hermione said with realization.

It made sense now, why Blaise Zabini, a guy who didn't give a crap about anything, had given a crap about her.

"A lot of good it did," he said.

*Yeah, a lot of good it did* , Hermione silently agreed. Hermione sighed.

"If she had told you no, told you that she didn't feel that way for you at all anymore and wanted to leave immediately, would you have let her go?"

"Of course," he said without hesitation.

Hermione frowned, incredibly skeptical.

"Would you have really done that? Would you have put her happiness before your own?"

Blaise turned around, a small smirk on his lips, before walking towards her. He stopped just beside her, looking her in the eyes and said:

"We're not all Draco, Hermione."

And then he was gone.

---

"Hermione, just...go to the library or something. Seriously," Ginny said once again.

Hermione had gone upstairs to sit with her, Theo long gone, thankfully. Ginny had hardly touched any of the food that she had gotten for her and that made Hermione nervous. She knew that Ginny's moments of content would be short lived. No doubt, it would be like that for quite some time. Still, Hermione worried like any normal person would.

"I'm sorry if I'm being a bit...smothering. I just don't think that you should be alone, right now. I can go get Blaise if you want," Hermione responded.

Ginny raised an eyebrow.

" *Oh?* Are the two of you cordial now...?"

Hermione looked away, rolling her eyes.

"We're...trying. He still doesn't like me and to be perfectly honest, I'm not exactly his biggest fan either."

Hermione really didn't appreciate how he had treated Ginny in the past, but clearly Ginny had forgiven him for it.

"Hey..."

Hermione looked up as Ginny laid her hand on her arm.

"You guys are trying and that's all I can ask for. I love both of you and I really want you two to get along because...he's not going anywhere, Hermione," Ginny quietly said.

Hermione sighed.

"Yeah, I kind of figured that," she sourly replied.

"Go. I know how much being cramped in this room bothers you. I'll be okay," Ginny reassured.

"Maybe that's true, but like I said...I don't think that you should be alone..."

Ginny didn't respond right away, instead looking at her with a peculiar expression.

"Are you sure that it's me who you don't think should be alone...?"

Hermione didn't respond, looking towards the window instead. Ginny's words hit a bit too close to home because Hermione really didn't want to be alone right now. Her emotions, her thoughts, they were all over the place. Truth be told, she was afraid to be alone. She was afraid of what would happen if she ran into Theo again, afraid of what would happen if she nodded off or something. Hermione was beginning to scare herself.

"Hermione...?"

Hermione swallowed.

"Theo kissed me," she whispered.

Her confession was met with silence. Hermione slowly stood from the bed, wrapping her arms around herself. She walked towards the window, leaning against the wall.

"He offered to get me out of here, to take me wherever I want to go. All he asked in return was that I just give him a chance... You know what this means, right? You understand the severity of this, right," Hermione questioned, turning around.

Ginny's eyes were wide, stunned, but she eventually nodded.

"Yes, I understand. I like Theo. He's sweet and if Draco ever found out...", Ginny trailed off.

Hermione let out a shaky breath.

"Well...how did it make you feel?"

Hermione let out a humorless chuckle, eyes watering.

"Hermione," Ginny worriedly questioned.

"This isn't right," she whispered, shaking her head.

"What's not right? Hermione, what's wrong?"

A lone tear skipped down Hermione's cheek.

"I think there's something wrong with me," she breathed.

Ginny scooted to the edge of the bed.

"Sometimes...I look into the mirror and I don't even recognize myself. Sometimes I think that this can't possibly be me because I wouldn't think some of the things that I think. I wouldn't want to do some of the things that I want to do..."

"Hermione, you're scaring me."

"When Theo kissed me...I kind of wanted to hit him. Actually...I kind of wanted to do a bit more than just hit him. Theo's a sweetheart, everything that a girl could ever ask for in a guy. He kissed me and it

felt... *wrong* . It made me feel so wrong, I just wanted to...I wanted to strangle him," Hermione confessed.

Ginny's eyes widened and she let out a shaky breath.

"That's...okay. I mean...you've been under a lot of stress too. We all go a little crazy sometimes," Ginny comforted.

Hermione looked at her.

"Yeah?"

"Yeah," Ginny said with a nod.

Hermione nodded.

"You're right. It'll pass, I just need to rest. I wish that I could..."

"Well, sleepwalking can sometimes be the result of a traumatic event. Draco *did* try to kill you," Ginny spat.

Hermione said nothing and Ginny took this opportunity to gently grab her hands.

"I'll help you get through this. We'll help each other... We are going to be okay," Ginny said.

Again, Hermione said nothing.

"Hey, look at me. Everything is going to be alright..."

"No," Hermione suddenly said.

"No, Hermione it is. I'm *going* to help you get out of here, no matter what. I-"

"You don't understand. It's not just...something happened while we were hunting for the Horcruxes..."

Ginny blinked, frowning in confusion.

"What? What happened? Was it Ron?"

Hermione shook her head. She swallowed, closing her eyes. It was coming out and she couldn't stop it...even if she wanted to.

"Harry raped me," Hermione blurted out.

Hermione felt her shoulders sag with released tension, exhaling. Her confession was met with silence and she opened her eyes and met Ginny's horrified ones. Ginny slowly slid off of the bed, her eyes wide, eyebrows furrowed in confusion.

"What...," Ginny breathed.

"Ron had left. He and Harry had gotten into a very heated argument and he left. I stayed because...I couldn't just abandon Harry, no matter how much I wanted to. We then got into an argument because...he...he just wouldn't let it rest. The whole thing with Draco was just driving him crazy. I was going to leave and he used the Imperius Curse-"

" *Bloody hell!* "

"Ginny, I need you to calm down...," Hermione sobbed.

"No! *No!* He's still breathing because...?"

"Ginny, it's a bit more complicated than that," Hermione said.

"Why are you so calm? What the hell!"

"Ginny, please," Hermione hissed, grabbing the redhead's arms.

"Hermione...why didn't you...I'm so sorry," Ginny cried.

"Ginny, please," Hermione begged, glancing at the door.

Ginny was still emotional and Hermione really should have considered that before she blurted it out. Ginny took deep breaths, anger and disgust splashed all over her face.

"How can you be so calm, Hermione? How could he *do* that to you? Harry loves you, I don't understand why he would-," Ginny broke off with a sob.

"I had my freak-out. I'm not saying that I had one and now I'm done. It was just...with everything else going on, it was very easy to push it to the back of my mind. It was very easy not to dwell on it. Besides, the truth is...I hardly remember it at all. It's very hazy, kind of like it an old dream or looking at it through fog...but it still happened. My first time was with Harry Potter under the influence of an Imperius Curse," Hermione spat.

She had never said it aloud before. Hermione didn't know how to feel now that she had.

"What did you mean when you said that it's complicated? Does this have something to do with why you're so...scarily calm?"

"It's hard to explain. You know how Harry and You-Know-Who are connected? How he can make Harry see what he wants him to see?"

Ginny swallowed, sniffing with a frown.

"Yeah...wait..."

Ginny shook her head.

"Are you saying that...? Look, it's not that I don't want you to be right because Merlin knows that I do. I want you to be right. I don't want to think that Harry is really capable of something like that, but...why would You-Know-Who do that? It doesn't make any sense, Hermione," Ginny said.



"Believe me, I know, but I know what I saw. Those weren't Harry's eyes..."

Ginny suddenly wrapped her arms around Hermione.

"I'm okay, Ginny," she whispered.

"No, you're not. What if you were already on the edge, huh? What if Draco just pushed you right off? He's making this worse. That bastard is driving you crazy. He's literally driving you crazy!"

Before Hermione could respond, the door had opened and in came Blaise, a worried expression on his face.

"I heard you screaming, Ginny. What's wrong?"

Hermione didn't miss the accusing look he threw at her. She rolled her eyes the same time Ginny answered, wiping her face.

"Just girl talk, Blaise. I'm fine," she said.

He looked torn between leaving and stepping further into the room.

"Are you sure...?"

"Yes. Hermione didn't do anything, so you can wipe that look off of your face," Ginny snapped.

Blaise cleared his throat.

"Right, sorry. Just let me know if you need anything," he said.

"I will."

Blaise reluctantly left, the door clicking shut behind him.

"I'm so sorry, Hermione," Ginny tearfully whispered once he was gone.

"Ginny...I don't want to talk about it. I...I can't, okay? I know that's cowardly, but I don't care. I'm not ready to dive in just yet. I just needed to tell someone," Hermione shakily whispered, shoulders trembling.

Hermione could tell that Ginny wasn't ready to let it go just yet, but the redhead nodded anyway.

"You understand the severity of this as well, right?"

Ginny hurriedly nodded.

"Yes."

Ginny wouldn't take her eyes off of Hermione.

"Ginny...please," Hermione sighed.

"I'm sorry," she said, looking away.

"Don't apologize. It's a lot to take in, I understand. I told you, though, I'm fine..."

"You keep saying that, Hermione, but...I don't think that you are," Ginny said.

Hermione said nothing, instead taking Ginny's hand and squeezing it with a small smile because deep down...Hermione didn't think that she was either.

---

Hermione turned the corner and looked up in surprise. She was just on her way to the library when she had bumped into the one person who surprisingly hadn't been on her mind all day. She hadn't really seen much of him since the night that Ginny had lost the baby. Hermione felt awkward as she remembered how she had let everything go for just five minutes, allowing him to comfort her, too heartbroken and guilt-ridden to care.

He towered over her, looking down his nose at her with an unfamiliar expression. It was one that she was sure she had never seen on him. There was a tense awkward silence as they stared at one another before he finally broke it.

"I heard that you and Blaise came to some sort of understanding," he said.

Hermione frowned in confusion at the direction that the conversation was going.

"Um...yeah. I guess you could say that," she replied.

"Good. I was afraid that if he called you a bitch one more time, Ginny was going to be mourning the loss of two lives instead of one," he hinted.

Hermione swallowed.

"How touching," she dryly commented.

"I assume that you're going to the library. If that's all...," he trailed off, eyes trained on her.

Hermione once again found herself frowning in confusion. *If that's all?*

"Well, I have nothing else to say to you, so yes...that is all," she smartly replied.

Hermione blinked in surprise when he reached up and brushed her hair away from her face, tucking a few strands behind her ear. He smirked, letting out a soft scoff, gazing down at her from beneath his lashes, eyes narrowed. He suddenly snatched his hand away, brushing past her and walking down the hall.

Hermione's frown deepened before she shook her head, deciding that his odd behavior wasn't important. She hurried towards the library, nothing but books on her mind. Ginny was fast asleep, Blaise

up there with her and Hermione needed a good distraction. Something that would soothe her, something familiar.

As soon as the doors closed behind her, a hand was covering her mouth. Before she could even react, she was being spun around, mouth still covered, to come face to face with Theo. He pressed a finger to his lips. Hermione jerked away from him, eyes wide and heart beating erratically. She watched as he cracked the door open, glancing outside before shutting it again.

"What the hell are you doing?"

Hermione's question came out as a quiet hiss, both scared and angry. Theo frowned, shoving his hands into his pocket.

"I'm leaving tomorrow morning. It's only for about a week. Draco is so far up You-Know-Who's arse right now, so he's got Draco ordering us around like dogs."

"Well, then it would seem like Draco isn't exactly someone you would want to challenge then," Hermione hinted.

"Don't you get it? You're worth it, Hermione," he said.

"Theo, you need to leave...now," Hermione begged.

"I'm not giving up. I won't be satisfied until I've done everything that I possibly can to get you out of here," he whispered.

"You are playing a dangerous game. Will you also be just as satisfied when you end up dead?"

Theo rolled his eyes.

"You don't need to tell me that I'm acting like some lovesick idiot, alright? Blaise loves to throw that in my face every chance he gets," Theo sighed.

"Then why? Why are you doing this? Don't you care at all about-?"

"Draco doesn't scare me," he interrupted.

"Then you really are an idiot. How do you think I would feel if something happened to you because of me? Does that not matter to you? That I wouldn't be able to even live with myself?"

Theo sighed.

"I'm sorry. I just...I know what he's capable of. He's turned the purest of people into bloodthirsty deviants. I don't want that to be you," he quietly said.

"You're a wonderful guy, Theo. You're going to make some girl very happy one day, but it isn't going to be me. I appreciate your effort, I do, but I'd appreciate you living even more. This can't happen again. Goodbye, Theo," she said.

She went to hug him, but thought better of it. She decided that she could always come back to the library later, deciding to give him a moment to himself. With one last look, she was out of the door.

---

Hermione looked up in surprise at the knock on her door. She'd decided to stay in her own room tonight, seeing that Blaise was staying with Ginny instead of her. She had just drawn a bath, preparing to get in, but her bath would clearly have to wait. She pulled her shirt back on over her head before answering the door.

She blinked in surprise -she was getting surprised a lot lately- at the figure in front of her. Draco stood before her, much more dressed down than she was used to seeing. His tousled hair fell into his forehead, appearing as if he had been running his hands through it nonstop. The dark circles under his eyes were much more prominent than normal.

"Since when do you ever knock?"

She frowned in confusion as he leaned against the doorjamb, a somber expression on his face.

"Can we talk?"

Hermione frowned, equal parts confused, worried, and a bit afraid. He was acting very...unlike him.

"Please..."

Now Hermione's nervousness had increased tenfold. Draco never pleaded for anything. He demanded, he took...he manipulated. Draco Malfoy never says please. He didn't give her a chance to respond, instead taking a step back before walking down the hallway. Hermione didn't know what possessed her to follow him. Maybe it had something to do with his out of character behavior. It definitely clued her in that whatever it was that he wanted to discuss, it was serious.

She followed him throughout the large mansion, all the way to the first floor. When he got to the back door, Hermione stopped.

"You're going outside? Draco, what the hell is this about?"

"My mum," he said and then he was out of the door.

At that, Hermione hurriedly followed. This was about Narcissa?

"Is she alright? Is she sick or something," Hermione asked.

Draco ran his hand down his face, black tee stretching with the movement, as it began to sprinkle, light drops hitting Hermione's face.

"No, she's not sick. She's....," he trailed off, reaching for her.

He gently wrapped his hand around her upper arm, turning to face her, gazing into her eyes.

"You're going to need to be there for her, Hermione. I need you to be there for her," he said.

Hermione was gently dragged along, face twisted into confusion. What was he talking about?

"What are you on about?"

"She adores Theo, loves him like she would a second son."

It was with these words that Hermione froze, feet moving on autopilot as she looked up at him. Her eyes widened as she stared at his profile, his words sinking into her brain. A sick feeling fell over Hermione.

"Draco...what the hell did you do? What is going on," she demanded.

He didn't answer, instead dragging her along through the downpour. As Hermione looked ahead, she could make out two figures standing in the backyard. They got closer and her eyes widened. Hermione stared through the rain at Theo, one side of his face completely bruised as Blaise held him in an iron grip. She turned to face Draco in confusion, eyes wide and questioning. He looked down at her, eyes devoid of all emotion as a slow smirk graced his lips before speaking.

"Ladies and gentlemen...we are gathered here today to celebrate the short, yet pathetic life of one Theodore Nott Jr."

Hermione tugged against his grip, but he held on tight. Her eyes flickered back and forth between Theo and Draco before they settled on the latter.

"What the hell? What is the meaning of this?"

Her breaths came out short and choppy because Hermione was positive that she was on the verge of a breakdown. Draco gently

pulled her closer, leaning down to trail his nose along her own, leaning down further to graze her cheek. He stopped, lips brushing against her ear before whispering:

"Did you really think that I wouldn't find out?"

Hermione swallowed as he pulled away, stormy eyes boring into her own. She clenched her jaw, closing her eyes. Why was she not surprised?

"Was it Ginny?"

Draco chuckled.

"No, actually, but I'm glad to hear that she knew as well."

Draco sounded as if he was anything but glad to hear that. Hermione opened her eyes at this.

"Blaise told me. He saw everything," Draco said., staring down at her.

Hermione cut her eyes to Blaise, glaring at him with everything she had.

"Why the look of betrayal? Have you forgotten so quickly? Blaise isn't your friend. He's not loyal to you, he's loyal to me," Draco hissed.

Hermione let out a shaky breath.

"Draco...this is a bit extreme, don't you think? You're being unnecessary," she said.

Draco let out a very unsettling chuckle.

"Unnecessary? I disagree. I gave him fair warning. Theo knew what would happen if he so much as *breathed* in your direction. Not only did he not heed that warning..., " Draco trailed off.



Draco turned to stare at the blue eyed boy.

"...but he even went as far to put his lips on something that didn't belong to him. I have half a mind to rip them off. You know what? I just might do that," Draco spat.

"Stop! Draco, this is crazy. I'm a person, with her own mind. I am *not* some object," she snarled.

Draco's head snapped towards her, eyebrows furrowed. He slowly turned to fully face her, eyes glassy as he bent down to her level, resting the palms of his hands on her cheeks.

" *Don't you get it?* You're just as much mine...as I am yours."

Hermione swallowed, aware of the eyes on them.

"We're not together, Draco."

"But we will be," he said.

"No, we won't," she yelled.

"Yes, we will! We will be together, but he's trying to stop that. He's trying to come in between us..."

Draco stood upright, face drastically changing, voice dropping.

"...and you're letting him."

"No..."

Draco took a step towards her and she took one back.

"Blaise said that it took you too long to pull away," he whispered.

Hermione continued to back up, shaking her head.

"I was in shock!"

"Were you? Or were you too busy enjoying it," he hissed.

"Stop this! We've been over this before. I don't want him," she repeated.

Draco tilted his head, fair hair clinging to his forehead.

"Why not? He's a handsome fellow. He's pureblood, rich, and such a *sweetheart* . You girls love that," he mocked.

"Stop!"

"Why don't you want him, Hermione? He's perfect," Draco sang, reaching for her and turning her to face Theo.

She squirmed in his iron grip, one arm around her arms and the other hand forcing her head to face Theo. Draco brushed his lips against her neck.

"What's not to love, sweetheart? What is it about Theo that doesn't do it for you," he purred.

She jerked against him, stomping on his feet, but it did no good.

"Is his hair too dark? Is he too nice?"

"You're despicable," she spat.

"Why did you let him put his filthy lips on you, but you won't even let me touch you?"

His question came out harsh and Hermione felt her blood boil.

"You know what? That's a good question. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that he knows how to treat people. Maybe you should try being more like him," she threw at him.

Draco chuckled, pressing his lips to her cheek. He inhaled.

"Who knows? I'd do anything for you, so maybe one day I will be more like him...but today is not that day," he snarled, gently shoving her away from him.

He walked towards Theo and Hermione jumped in front of him, shoving her hands against his chest. Her fingers twisted into the fabric of his shirt.

"I'm going to slit his throat, Hermione."

"No," she cried, feet digging into the mud.

"I'm going to bash his pretty little face in. I won't rest until every drop of his blood is spilled out onto this lawn," he spat.

"Draco, please," she screamed, shoving against him with all of her might.

She could hear Theo behind her, struggling in Blaise's hold.

"But first...", Draco trailed off.

He slowly pulled out his wand, eyes trained on nothing but Theo, bright and piercing.

"I want to watch him squirm," he whispered.

"No," she pleaded, reaching for his arm.

He blocked her with the other one, keeping her an arm's distance away. She fought to reach for his other hand, vision blurring. She couldn't let him do this...

"I want to hear him scream."

Draco suddenly stopped walking, eyes suddenly lighting up, and a gleeful expression on his face.

"And you know what...?"

He smiled, genuinely smiled, before looking down at her.

"I want you to do it."

Hermione froze, eyes widening. She could not have heard him right. Her lips parted in shock.

"What?"

"You heard me," he said, eyebrow raised.

"W-what? N-no," she stuttered.

"Just one time. Just one time and I'll leave him alone. I'll let him go and let him live his sad little life. I just want to hear the Cruciatus Curse come out of those pretty little lips," he murmured, brushing his thumb against her bottom lip.

She smacked his hand away.

"Draco, no. I can't."

"Can't or won't," he challenged.

She glared at him, jaw clenched.

"Take your pick!"

He shrugged.

"Fine. Don't do it. I'll just have to do it myself then..."

He heaved a sigh.

"But if I do it...", he said, an expression of mock sadness on his face.

Hermione watched as he trailed the tip of his wand down her cheek, across her collar bone and down her shirt, eyes never leaving hers. Goosebumps rose over her flesh.

"...I'm not going to stop."

Hermione gulped, frowning.

"Don't do it, Hermione," Theo yelled.

Draco raised his eyebrows, pearly whites on display.

"Sounds like your boyfriend doesn't want you to do it," he said, chuckling.

Hermione stared at Draco before turning to look at Theo. Theo had his arms bent behind his back, Blaise behind him. Theo shook his head at her.

"Don't do it, Hermione."

If Hermione didn't do it...then Draco would kill him. There was no debate about that; it was a fact. Hermione wouldn't be able to live with herself. Hermione pressed her hand to her mouth.

"Come on," Draco sang.

She looked at him. He smiled at her.

"It's fun. See?"

Before Hermione could stop him Theo was screaming, falling out of Blaise's hold and squirming on the ground.

"Stop! Stop," she shrieked, hitting Draco's chest.

Draco lowered his wand and Theo quieted. Hermione turned to see him still trembling on the ground, folded in on himself. Hermione felt Draco come up behind her, his chest pressed to her back, chin resting on her shoulder. He lifted her hand, putting the wand in her hand, but quickly wrapping his own hand around hers. He wasn't stupid.

"I'll teach you," he whispered.

Tears ran down Hermione's cheek.

"I can't do this," she sobbed.

"Shh, yes you can," he whispered in her ear.

Hermione's chest heaved.

"Please, don't make me do this," she pleaded.

"We'll sound it out together. Cru-ci-."

"Stop! Stop! I can't, I can't" she cried.

*Yes, you can* , a dark voice whispered. Hermione couldn't do this. She couldn't do this. *You have to* . If she didn't do this then Theo was going to die. Draco was going to kill him. *It's just one time* , she thought. She only had to do it one time.

"What's wrong? Afraid you might like it," Draco purred against her skin.

A shudder traveled down her spine, her body trembling. A flash of lightning splayed across the sky.

"Come on, sweetheart. You can do this..."

*You have to, Hermione*. Hermione tightened her grip on the wand, Draco's grip tightening on her hand.

"There you go..."

Hermione let out a shaky breath.

"3...2..."

Hermione closed her eyes. Just one time...

"1..."

" *Crucio!* "

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**Just curious... Who saw that coming? Tell me what you think!**

# So Crazy in Love

I figured that I might have to do this because a few of you are clearly confused. This chapter is not meant to make you feel sorry for Draco. I mean if you do that's cool I guess(?), but that isn't my intention. So for the two reviewers giving me grief about 'trying to make you feel sorry for Draco', believe me when I say that nobody is trying to make you do anything. If anything, the purpose of this chapter is to show how completely demented and far gone he is. You're supposed to walk away from this chapter with the thought ' yeah he's completely off of his rocker'. This chapter was purely meant to give you a look inside of his head and NOT feel sorry for him because guess what? I don't feel sorry for him. Not at all. Maybe that's because I'm the author and I know what's going to happen, but I have no sympathy for Draco at all. Neither should you (but like I said if you do that is also fine).

*Italics= flashback/ emphasis*

***Bold Italics= flashback within a flashback or emphasis during a flashback***

**Disclaimer: I Own Nothing**

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*"What's wrong? Afraid you might like it," Draco purred against her skin.*

*A shudder traveled down her spine, her body trembling. A flash of lightning splayed across the sky.*

*"Come on, sweetheart. You can do this..."*

*You have to, Hermione. Hermione tightened her grip on the wand, Draco's grip tightening on her hand.*



*"There you go..."*

*Hermione let out a shaky breath.*

*"3...2..."*

*Hermione closed her eyes. Just one time...*

*"1..."*

***" Crucio! "***

---

"That...was pathetic," Draco sneered.

He snatched his arms away from her, taking his wand with him of course. He walked around her drenched frame to stand in front of her, looking down at her with an air of disappointment. Her jaw was clenched with anger and eyes alight with a look that could kill as she stared him down. He tilted his head to the side, taking her in like he would a masterpiece before abruptly turning away, disgusted.

"Crucio," he hissed.

He took great satisfaction in watching the way Theo screamed and writhed on the grass. His face was scrunched up in pain, teeth clenched together and eyes squeezed shut. Draco's vision began to blur as he stared at him, only seeing Theo's lips on hers playing on a constant sickening loop in his mind. He wanted to kill him. Merlin knows that he wanted to completely eradicate him...but he wanted something else more.

He finally lifted his wand when Theo began to arch his back, his feet and head the only thing still on the ground. Draco just barely paid attention to the small hands that were gripping his arm as Theo collapsed, chest heaving with harsh breaths. Draco stared him down, lips curling up before he looked down.

Hermione's eyes were wide and harsh as she stared at him, her teeth clenched and bared. Water clung to her and he watched as one drop ran down her forehead before cascading down her eyelid. She blinked and the drop rolled to the very tip of her eyelashes before diving off. He ran his eyes over her face, drinking her in before finally speaking.

"That's how it's done."

He had expected it, welcomed it even, as his head was harshly turned to the side from the force of her palm. A jolt of pleasure ran through him as he relished the quick feel of her skin on his. He had the sudden urge to take her hand and kiss every inch of her body, starting right at her fingertips.

"Again," he said, grabbing her and spinning her around, loving the feel of her body against his.

"No! I can't-"

"Yes, you can. You didn't even try," he harshly replied.

"I *did* try. I can't do it," she snapped.

He roughly spun her back around to face him, his hands wrapped around her upper arms, forehead leaning against hers. He closed his eyes, savoring this moment.

"What's your name? Remind me again, who are you?"

He could feel her harsh breaths on his face and her change in breathing notified him of her confusion, but she answered anyway.

"I'm...I'm Hermione Granger," she slowly replied in confusion.

His eyes snapped open, glaring at her.

"Then start acting like it," he hissed.

She pushed herself away from him, anger rolling off of her in waves.

"What you're asking of me is...I *cannot* do it," she reiterated, shaking her head.

"You mean you won't."

"I can't!"

Draco let out a slow, quiet sigh, bringing his wand up. He pressed his index finger to the tip, gazing at it. She could do it, he knew that she could. After all, there wasn't much that she *couldn't* do. She was the best, otherwise, she wouldn't be there. He suddenly smirked.

"Remember when I murdered our Headmaster...?"

He heard her sharp intake of breath over the sound of the rain and he looked at her from beneath his lashes, silver connecting with brown. She was completely frozen, face sickly looking as she stared at him with wide eyes.

"It was quite...anticlimactic, really. You should have heard him *beg* , Hermione. He was practically ready to get on his knees just to get me to switch sides, to 'turn my whole life around'," he scoffed.

"Dumbledore did not beg," she spat.

She charged at him and he took a step to the side, reaching out and capturing her in his arms. He pulled her against him, pressing his chest against her heaving back. She struggled in his grip, but he paid it no mind.

"I watched the light fade from his eyes. I witnessed his last breath. I felt nothing but pure satisfaction as he fell from that tower," he whispered.

She screamed in anger, or frustration, he didn't really bother to figure out which. It was probably both. He tightened his arms around her.

"I am the one, Hermione, who uttered those two words that ended his life."

He rested his chin on top of her head, holding her still.

"Doesn't that make you...angry?"

"I know what you're doing. It isn't going to work," she hissed.

He chuckled, letting out an elated sigh, before bending his head down.

"But sweetheart...it's already working," he whispered against the shell of her ear.

He felt her freeze in his arms and he smiled.

"Theo is going to *die* if you don't do this. He's going to disappear, Hermione, just like that. Do you *want* him to die...?"

"No," she tearfully whispered.

He suppressed his anger at just how much emotion she was showing over this pathetic excuse of a wizard.

"Then you better come up with something...because if you don't, I am going to truly enjoy killing him."

Draco meant that too. He wanted nothing more than to go over there right now and kick Theo's head into the ground, but he wouldn't. He wanted to see how far she was willing to go to save him. He repeated his actions from last time, slipping the wand in her hand and not giving her a second to spare before tightly wrapping his hand around her own. He felt her shoulders heaving with harsh breaths.

"Don't be afraid. Just think...you're saving him from a far worse fate. You have to really mean it, Hermione. If you don't do this, I'm going to have to assume that you don't really mean it-"

"No."

"I'm going to think that you want me to kill him," he continued.

"I don't," she snapped.

"Then what are you going to do about it?"

He felt her breaths become shallower and shallower, her heaving shoulders beginning to slow down. Draco began to slide his left hand down her left arm, trailing his fingers along her skin before reaching down and intertwining his fingers with her own. He pressed their joined hands to her stomach, tightening his grip on her other hand that held the wand.

Draco's eyes found Theo's. The dark haired wizard was glaring at him with everything he had as he still struggled to get into an upright position. He cast his eyes down, drinking her in as she stared straight ahead.

"Crucio."

Again, nothing happened and Draco found himself getting frustrated.

"You're not even trying-"

"I am! I am trying," she snapped.

Draco shook his head.

"I don't believe you," he said, wrapping his other hand around the wand.

"No! No, stop," she screamed, jerking her hand.

"You've had your chance. I can only assume that you don't want him to live," Draco said.

"No!"

His hand was still wrapped around hers that held the wand and his other hand was gripping the piece of wood. They fought over it, both of them twisting this way and that. Their feet got tangled together and they fell, Draco's grip still as tight as ever. She was pinned beneath his larger frame, her grip not loosening either. Draco didn't have the time nor patience for this.

He looked up, catching Blaise's eyes.

"Finish him," he snarled over the rain.

Before Blaise could do that, however, he was interrupted.

" *Crucio!* "

Draco froze and a mixture of delight and pride swirled inside of him as he watched Theo let out a short, loud scream before rolling over and throwing up. His eyes slowly slid to the top of her head, an amazed smirk making its way onto his lips. It was brief... *But promising* , he thought.

He pulled the both of them up, Hermione completely still as she stared ahead. She didn't even notice as the wand fell from her hands and he swiftly caught it, taking in her trembling frame. He stepped beside her, watching as Theo's body still trembled from time to time.

"Well done," he said.

He turned his head to face her just as she did him, a look of pure astonishment on her face. Her eyebrows suddenly furrowed and before he knew what was happening, her fist had connected with his nose. Draco blinked towards the sky, accepting the fact that he probably deserved that. He heard Theo spew again and Draco rolled his eyes, briefly forgetting that, not two years ago, that was him.

---

*"Again," a cold voice spat.*

*Draco's stomach heaved, but there was nothing left to expel. The awful feeling of trying to puke, but unable to, made his stomach hurt. He was hunched over, forehead slick with sweat, hair brushing against his skin, beginning to stick. His arms trembled as he barely held himself up off of the floor. He glanced up through his hair, eyes focusing on unblemished black shoes.*

*"How can you possibly expect to take the mark when you can't even take a Cruciatus Curse? What, do you think you'll walk in there, get it and be on your merry little way? Did it never occur to you that you might have to actually prove yourself **worthy** of such an honor?"*

*Draco closed his eyes, breaths coming out in harsh pants.*

*"Father-"*

*Draco barely got the word out before his body became lit, once again, with pain. This time he was not able to hold himself up. His arms collapsed beneath him, forehead slamming into the floor as he gritted his teeth, a disturbing guttural sound escaping his lips. He rolled onto his back, an ear-piercing scream fleeing his now parted lips as his back arched, chest pointed towards the heavens.*

*It seemed like forever before it was over, and he collapsed once again. He slowly opened his eyes, vision blurred as he stared at the ceiling. The room was spinning and he had the sudden urge to vomit again. His entire body trembled and he was forced to suck in shaky breaths through his teeth. He heard a scoff from beside him and Draco turned his head away.*

*"Pathetic."*

*Draco closed his eyes, gritting his teeth as his father's harsh words hit him.*

*"You will cower in front of the Dark Lord. You will shame the Malfoy name, ruin us," Lucius hissed.*

*It took everything inside of Draco to speak, and when he did, it did not sound like him.*

*"Father...we've been at it for-"*

*"Do you think the Dark Lord will care? You think he will give you a **break** , let you rest? Perhaps you are not ready, after all. Perhaps I was right. You are too weak to take the mark, too weak for **this** ,"*  
*Lucius mocked.*

*No, no. Draco couldn't be too weak for this. It was not an option... Draco closed his eyes again, form trembling as he threw his arm over his face. Curls and a periwinkle dress came to the forefront of his mind just as the curse hit him again...*

---

***"Next time there's a ball, puck up the courage and ask me before somebody else does! And not as a last resort!"***

***Silver eyes watched as Weasley spluttered, seemingly thrown off by the sudden left turn that the conversation had taken.***

***"W-well th-th-that, that's not...that's j-just completely off the point," the weasel stuttered, backing away from the angry Gryffindor.***

***The redhead looked past Granger, visibly relieved and Draco followed his line of sight.***

***"Harry," weasel sighed in relief.***

***Granger turned around too, hair flying and face hard as she rounded on Potter.***

***"...And where have you been? Never mind, off to bed, both of you," she firmly stated.***



**Potter halted for a moment before he brushed past her, walking up the stairs to reunite with Weasley.**

**"They get scary when they get older."**

**Granger spun around.**

**"Ron, you spoiled everything!"**

**The dunce duo quickly hurried up the stairs, smart enough to get away from the clearly distraught girl. Draco leaned against the pillar, hands shoved into his pocket as he watched her. She plopped down onto the steps, all of the fight leaving her as she cried and practically ripped her shoes off of her feet.**

**...**

*Draco opened his eyes and stared into the cold, skeptical ones of his father who was standing over him, wand still in hand. It took a minute for Draco's mind to catch up to what had just happened. Suddenly, Lucius smirked, his grey eyes filling with a sick pride.*

*"Stand," he commanded.*

*Draco shakily heeded the order, his legs trembling as he put all of his weight on them. He swallowed, trying to wrap his head around what he had just done. They looked into one another's eyes as Lucius raised his wand again.*

*This time, Draco was ready.*

---

Draco leaned against the balcony doors, gazing out into the backyard. The light drizzle of rain had turned into a full blown storm and he was thankful that he had gotten Hermione inside the house just in time. The last thing he wanted was for her to get sick. He suddenly glanced over his shoulder, his eyes landing on her slumbering form, surrounded by the bold black covers and pillows.

He slowly made his way over to her, hand outstretched before his fingers brushed against her cheek. He had caught her just as she had fainted, the curly haired witch weighing almost nothing in his arms. As he had carried her inside, he'd had Blaise take Theo downstairs, where Draco would have a chat with him before he sent the snake on his way.

His jaw clenched and his fingers paused on their path as he thought about Theo...and her. *Kill him* . He closed his eyes, turning his head away, pushing down the urge to do just *that* . No, he'd made Hermione a promise. He had told her that he would let Theo go and that was what he was going to do. He looked back down at her, taking note of the dark circles beneath her eyes. He sat down on the edge of the bed, brushing her hair away from her face. It fanned around her head like a halo.

She looked so... *frail* when she slept. Of course, Draco knew that that could not be farther from the truth. She was resilient, determined, and brave. She was a lioness...his little lioness. All the same, she still looked much more peaceful in her sleep. She wasn't guarded and she didn't look so...mad. He perked up as she began to stir, a seductive groan escaping her parted lips as she turned her head.

He watched as her breathing began to change, quickening. Her eyes fluttered as if she were undecided on whether or not to wake up or continue sleeping. He trailed his index finger over her nose, brushing it against her lips, bringing her into the world of consciousness. Her eyes flew open and she abruptly sat up, almost immediately clutching her head.

"What happened? What did I do," she demanded, turning to face him.

Her memory was hazy. *So she doesn't fully remember* , he thought. Draco looked away, contemplating.

"Did I...?"

She didn't have to finish, Draco knew what she was asking.

"No."

Draco turned to face her, gazing into her eyes, resisting the urge to touch her again.

"No, you didn't," he lied.

Her eyes widened and her breathing increased some more.

"You...Theo...did you-?"

"I didn't kill him," he replied.

Her eyes narrowed as she gazed at him, a skeptical look seeping into her eyes.

"You let him live. Why?"

"Don't know," Draco said.

Hermione gripped his arm, digging her nails into his skin and Draco quietly hissed in pleasure.

"You do know. Is he really alive," she asked.

"I'm not lying to you. Theo's alive. Maybe...maybe I care more about your forgiveness than I originally thought."

Draco wasn't exactly sure why he had lied to her. Maybe he wanted something to hold over her when the moment came. Maybe he wanted to keep the memory all to himself, basking in the pride he had felt. However, a voice, a much smaller voice inside of him, was telling him that maybe it was because he didn't want her to know what she was fully capable of yet. He knew that it would destroy her and that didn't sit well with him.

"Forgive me if I have a hard time believing that," she spat.

She opened her mouth to say something else, but immediately clutched her head again. He reached for her but she jerked away, glaring at him.

"You need to rest. You've had a pretty stressful day," he simply said.

"Gee, I wonder why," she sarcastically said, but reluctantly laid back down nonetheless.

Draco rolled his eyes as she turned her back towards him, pulling the covers over her head. He knew that he probably should have left, but he didn't want to. He was...apprehensive about leaving her.

---

*A soft banging noise was what aroused him from sleep. He frowned, annoyed that the sound was keeping him from his slumber, but not annoyed enough to fully wake up and investigate. It was only when his hand landed on nothing, where Hermione should have been, did he fling his eyes open. A brief panic shot through him as he realized that her side of the bed was empty. She was gone.*

*There was still banging inside of the room and he looked up, sighing in relief. She was in front of the door, softly banging her forehead against the wood. He wasn't too familiar with sleepwalkers, but he had seen enough to recognize that that was what was going on. He threw the covers away and slid out of bed, cautiously walking over to her and sliding his hand in between her forehead and the door.*

*He pressed his palm against her skin as he carefully turned her around and led her back over to the bed. He did his best to try and lead her back into the bed, but it was futile. He knew that it was dangerous to wake a sleepwalker, but for once, he was at a loss. She was just standing there, beside the bed, facing the balcony that was on the other side. It was...eerie. He briefly ran his eyes over her, satisfied that she didn't look like she was moving any time soon, before rushing out of the room.*

*It didn't take him long to reach Blaise's room and he pounded on the door as soon as he was within arm's reach. He sighed in frustration at the slow response that he was getting and decided to take it upon himself and let himself in. Blaise looked to be just getting out of the bed, his feet set on the railing and his form hunched over, rubbing the sleep from his eyes.*

*"It's two in the morning, Draco. This better be important," Blaise groaned.*

*"Weasley," Draco called.*

*The redhead mumbled something, rolling over.*

*"What do you want with Ginny," Blaise demanded.*

*"It's Hermione. She's sleepwalking," Draco said.*

*Blaise sighed, reaching behind him to shake her. Draco heard her mumble something, probably questioning what was going on.*

*"He said Hermione's sleepwalking," he heard Blaise reply.*

*The redhead slowly sat up, turning to look at Draco in confusion.*

*"Sleepwalking? Are you sure," she questioned, running her hand over her face.*

*Draco said nothing, simply staring at her with a look that perfectly conveyed his feelings about that question. Was he sure? What a stupid question to ask.*

*"Hey, don't look at her like that. She was just making sure," Blaise said.*

*"Hurry. The sooner you help me the sooner we can all go back to sleep," Draco said, exiting the room.*

*"Hermione has never done that before. That's why I was asking. It's...unusual," Ginny said as they followed him to his room.*

*"Well, that's comforting to know that your guess at how to deal with this is just as good as mine," Draco snapped.*

*"Will you fucking relax? I'm sure it's not that big of a deal-."*

*Blaise abruptly cut himself off as they all stepped into the room. Ginny gasped and Draco's eyes widened, his heart skipping a beat in his chest just as Hermione pulled herself up onto the balcony.*

*"No, Hermione," he screamed in panic.*

*"Draco, no!"*

*He spun around, glaring at the younger girl.*

*"What the fuck do you mean 'no'?"*

*"You're not supposed to wake a sleepwalker. What if she gets startled and falls? What if-"*

*"Then tell me, Ginevra, what it is that you would have me do? In case you haven't noticed... **she's on the balcony** ! She's already about to fall, in fact, it looks like she's getting ready to jump," Draco snarled, gesturing towards the object of his affection.*

*Ginny opened and closed her mouth, clearly at a loss. Draco shook his head.*

*"Just shut up," he spat, fed up with the redhead.*

*"Draco-"*

*"You too! Both of you just shut up," he hissed.*

*Draco turned back around, staring at her as she looked to her right, staring up as if staring at something...or someone.*

*"Hermione," he softly called, making his way over to her.*

*She turned her downward then forward, staring straight ahead. Draco frowned, swallowing as he approached. His eyes widened as he caught movement. She had lifted her right foot and Draco lost it.*

***" Hermione! "***

*He knew that he had gotten through because she froze. He watched as she looked up and stopped her before she could look down.*

*"Hermione...don't look down," he said.*

*Silver and brown clashed as she looked over shoulder. Her eyebrows furrowed and he could see the confusion in her eyes. She looked around, taking in where she was and her state of dress before looking back at him.*

*"Hermione...come on," he gently said, holding his hand out towards her.*

*His heart was going a mile a minute and he feared for his health the longer she stayed up there. He nervously glanced towards the balcony, taking a step towards her.*

*"I didn't...I wasn't..."*

*Hermione shook her head and Draco nodded. He knew that. She would never...*

*"I know, it's alright. Just step down," he almost pleaded, trying not to convey just how worried he actually was.*

*His heart finally calmed and his entire body sagged with relief as soon as she laid her hand in his. He wasted no time, pulling her down and against him, wrapping his arms around her. He closed his eyes, tightening his grip and pressing his lips against the top of her head.*

*"Leave us," he snapped at the two behind them.*

*He ran his hands over her, savoring the feeling of her in his arms and never wanting to let go.*

---

Draco didn't want to admit it, but she had scared him. Looking at her on that balcony, knowing that at any moment she could have fallen, had scared him. She could have died, disappeared from his life forever and that would have...killed him. The reality of it had hit him right smack in the face, *hard* . He almost lost her and he didn't want to lose her. Couldn't she see how much he wanted her? How much he had gone through just to have her with him?

So Draco didn't understand it. He just didn't understand why she kept... *fighting this* . He could make her happy, extremely happy, he just knew it. *Maybe she'd be happier if you were nicer* . Draco clenched his jaw. Her resistance both frustrated and excited him at the same time. Hermione was able to bring out every emotion inside of him to the surface and they always ended up jumbling together, making him...not so pleasant to be around.

Sometimes he didn't mean to be an ass...and sometimes he did. He was selfish, incredibly so, and he didn't like for people to mess with things that belonged to him. Hermione was his. The beautiful witch slumbering in *his* bed at the moment belonged to him. Oh, but he was hers as well! He'd accepted it long ago that she had him captivated every time she so much as breathed. Draco was...ruined.

She was absolutely it for him, so it wasn't fair that she would want to be away from him so when all he wanted to do was touch her...kiss her...show her that he could give her nothing but pure bliss if she'd just let him. He wanted to steal her away somewhere with nothing but the two of them. He wanted to show her pleasure she had never even dreamed of, bringing her to the brink of completion again and again and again. He wanted to make his angel scream out to the Lord...if only she'd let him.

---



"I'm surprised that you actually kept your word," Theo croaked, throat hoarse.

Draco smirked, raising an eyebrow, hands folded behind his back.

"Me too," he said, staring the dark haired wizard down, extremely tempted to just slit his throat and be done with it.

---

*Draco panted, leaning against the wall of his study, taking in the mess he'd just made. The once grand desk was nothing but splinters of wood now, scattered all over the room along with papers and books. His foot tapped at an alarming rate, practically vibrating. He ran his hand through his hair for the umpteenth time, screaming in frustration.*

*"You're sure," Draco repeated.*

*"Yes. I walked in after she pushed him away, but I saw everything," Blaise replied.*

*Draco pushed away from the wall, his shoes crunching on glass from a broken picture frame. His body vibrated with rage, his eyes darting this way and that, trying and failing to focus on something. It was no use. He spun around, pitting a fist sized hole into the wall. Theodore had kissed Hermione. He had put his lips on her. Draco was having a hard time processing this and before he knew it he was out of the door.*

*Blaise was right on his heels.*

*"Don't you want your wand?"*

*"Nope," Draco replied, making his way downstairs.*

*Theo was in the living room, looking over some paperwork. He looked up as Draco stepped into the room, standing when he noticed the look on his face. He frowned.*

*"Draco-"*

*Theo had barely gotten the word out before Draco's fist connected with his face. He took great satisfaction in watching blood fly from Theo's mouth. Draco sunk his fist into his stomach, using the other to swing into the side of his head as soon as Theo hunched over. Theo coughed, backing away, moving around the table in the center of the room.*

*Draco bent down to hook his hand underneath the piece of furniture and flipped it out of the way. It flipped over the couch, crashing onto the floor and clearing Draco's path. Theo clutched his stomach, spitting more blood out of his mouth, looking up.*

*"I have nothing to say," he said, making eye contact with Draco.*

*Draco punched him again at the complete audacity that Theo had.*

*"You have nothing to say. Why am I not surprised? I'm just curious though. Do you have selective hearing or...",* Draco trailed off.

*Theo chuckled, wiping his mouth.*

*"You really are threatened by me. Why is that, I wonder? Is it because I have everything that you have and more? Is it because you know that I love her and would treat her like she deserves to be treated? Is that it? You're pathetic,"* Theo spat, literally.

*Draco saw red.*

*"I'm pathetic? Coming from the lovesick fool with a bloody mouth because he was trying to sneak around with **my** girl. She doesn't want you. She'll never want you,"* Draco said.

*"Who are you talking to here? Me or you?"*

*"You don't stand a chance against me, Theo. You never did,"* Draco threatened, stepping towards him.

*"Look at you. You treat her like crap and then go crazy at the thought of her finally getting fed up and leaving. Here's a tip; try **not** treating her like shit," Theo mocked.*

*Draco swung at him again, shoving him against the wall, his hand wrapped around Theo's throat.*

*"You're pitiful, Theo. It's never going to happen, so why don't you just give up! Stop trying to come in between us," Draco hissed.*

*"Me? Me? It's you! You are the one who's coming in between you two. **I** love her!"*

*Draco opened his mouth, ready to shout a response, before suddenly snapping it shut and looking away. The strangest feeling settled in his chest as he swallowed his words, making him frown. Out of the corner of his eye, he noted that Theo was looking at him with a strange expression. Theo suddenly scoffed.*

*"No...no way..."*

*Draco turned to face him.*

*"You've got to be kidding me," Theo snarled.*

*"Finally lost it, have you?"*

*Theo sneered.*

*"Don't play dumb. You know exactly what I'm on about," Theo snapped.*

*"Sorry, can't say that I do," Draco said, tightening his grip.*

*"You're a coward," Theo said.*

*"Well, I'll be sure to put 'murdered by a coward' on your tombstone. This is it for you, Theo and you know it. I **am** going to kill," Draco stated with conviction.*

*"You know what, Draco? I've got some parting advice for you then. The day that you're finally honest with yourself is the day that the two of you might actually be able to be happy," Theo said.*

*Draco smirked.*

*"Thanks for the tip," he said just before punching Theo right in the face.*

---

"Now, get off of Blaise's property before I change my mind," Draco threatened.

Theo swallowed, looking up towards the ceiling, probably searching for Hermione. Draco's jaw ticked at that. Theo suddenly shook his head.

"You're never going to be honest with yourself," Theo whispered.

Draco became very uncomfortable at the turn that the conversation had taken.

"You're trying my patience," Draco said.

Theo clenched his jaw, walking towards the door.

"You're going to ruin her, Draco."

"Tragic," Draco said, opening the door.

"You're going to ruin her-"

Draco slammed the door closed in his face, locking it. He turned around, ignoring Theo's bangs and shouts.

"You're going to destroy her!"

Draco climbed the stairs one by one, completely unbothered.

---

Draco leaned against the balcony, hunched over with his elbows resting on the railing. The wind whipped his hair away from his forehead as he gazed down into the backyard. Hermione was sitting down on the grass, head bent, her curls hiding her face from his view. She was wearing one of the more casual dresses he'd stocked her closet with, one that was a lovely contrast against her skin. It was his favorite.

It was black with fitted sleeves that stopped just at her wrist. The material was velvet and the dress was ankle length, the fabric fanning around her bent legs. Said legs were holding the book that she was currently engrossed in. Another sudden gust of wind blew by, this time blowing her hair away from her face. He stood up straight, gazing down at her as she paid no mind to anything but that book. She was smart. She was respectable and she would choose a book over any sort of gathering any day. That was something that he...really liked about her. She was different from the rest of them...

---

*"Don't you know how to take a hint? I thought that me putting you in the infirmary last year was a big clue, but you know what they say...",* Draco trailed off, flipping a page in his book.

*His jaw clenched and he glared up at her from beneath his lashes as she forced his book shut, tossing it over her shoulder before climbing into his lap. She batted her eyelashes at him as she wrapped her arms around his neck.*

*"That was last year. You were following that Gryffindor prude around, some fetish you were having, I guess. She's not here, I am, and now things can go back to the way they were,"* Pansy said, brushing her lips against his neck, running her hand down his arm.

*Draco felt absolutely nothing at the feel of her lips on his skin. Nothing but pure disgust...and annoyance. Pansy shrieked in surprise as she was abruptly shoved onto the floor. Draco stood, tempted to laugh at the pitiful expression on her face. He didn't though. He simply smirked, staring into her eyes.*

*"I don't want you," he said.*

*Pansy blinked, a forlorn expression passing over face, leaving just as quickly as it came. She stood, shaking her head at him as she approached. She reached for him.*

*"Come on, Draco. You wanted me before... I tolerated your little... **hobby** last year because I knew that you'd come back to me. You always do," Pansy breathed with a smile.*

*"Let it rest. I don't want you, Pansy," Draco harshly repeated, slapping her hands away.*

*Pansy's face suddenly shifted into something ugly, lips pursed and eyebrows furrowed. Her nostrils flared as she crossed her arms over her chest, staring up at him.*

*"Her? Really, Draco? **Her?** What is it about her? Why does she have you wrapped around her bony little fingers? Can you enlighten me, please? Tell me what it is," she quietly demanded.*

*Draco had asked himself that same question many times, so he gave Pansy the same answer he had given himself, deciding to be completely honest for once.*

*"I don't know," he said with a shrug.*

*Pansy stared at him with a frown before her eyes eventually widened.*

*"No," she whispered.*

*She shook her head in disbelief, dark hair flying around her face.*

*"Merlin, no. **No!** How is this fair? She doesn't care about you. She doesn't even like you! She's not even here, she's running around with Potter and Weasley, doing Merlin knows what. She's probably shagging the both of them back to back-ah!"*

*Draco tightened his grip on her arm, twisting it as he glared down at her. He placed his other hand on her shoulder, preventing her from twisting her body around, forcing her to cry out in pain. He leaned in, his lips brushing against her ear.*

*"Don't test me," he whispered just before releasing her.*

*She stumbled back into the couch, rubbing her arm. She glanced around the empty common room with tears in her eyes. Draco scoffed at her, turning his head away.*

*"I love you. I've loved you for as long as I can remember," she whispered.*

*"Pansy-."*

*The dark haired girl twisted her hands into his shirt, looking up at him.*

*"You know how I feel about you. You know that I would do anything just to be with you," she cried.*

*He looked down at her, wrapping his hands around her fists and forcing them off of his shirt. He gazed into her eyes as he shoved her away.*

*"...and I would do anything just to be with her."*

*Pansy struck him, the sound of the slap resonating throughout the common room. Draco touched his jaw, turning his head to look back at her, her harsh breathing the only sound in the room.*

*"She will never be with you. Not after what you've done. She won't accept you like I do! What are you going to do? Kidnap her," Pansy questioned.*

*"If I must."*

*"You're pathetic. Look at you. All of this because of some mudblood bitch who-"*

*He watched as Pansy collapsed, a harsh scream escaping her lips as she writhed on the floor. Draco stared her down as he pointed his wand down some more, putting every ounce of anger and hatred into it. How dare she! Pansy wasn't fit to kiss the ground that Hermione walked on. Pansy was **nothing** . He lifted his wand, her screaming beginning to annoy him.*

*He walked towards her trembling, sobbing frame, taking his time with each harsh step. She looked up at him through her hair as he approached, her eyes filled with tears. Her lips trembled as he knelt down, resting his elbows on his bent knees. He tilted his head, sticking his wand under a lock of her hair, flicking it out of her eyes.*

*"If I hear you talk about her like that again...they will never find your body."*

*Pansy swallowed, breaking eye contact as he stood up, turning around and exiting the common room.*

---

"Draco."

Draco was pulled from his thoughts by the sound of his mother's voice. He turned around, surprised to see her standing in his room, a somber expression on her face. He rushed over, taking her hand and leading her to sit down on his couch.

"Blaise let me in," she said.

"What is it? I take it that something has happened," Draco said.

Narcissa sighed.

"Where is Hermione?"



Draco frowned in confusion, but answered nonetheless.

"She's just outside in the backyard, reading," he replied.

Draco's frown deepened at the troubled expression on his mother's face. Had he messed up the spell? Was she remembering what he'd done to his father? No, that couldn't be it because she had asked about Hermione. What was going on?

"Mother...what is it?"

Narcissa shook her head.

"Your aunt came strolling into the manor this morning in a very... delightful mood. Before I could even inquire as to what she had done now...she told me," his mother began.

Draco signaled for her to continue. Narcissa swallowed, standing up and walking over to the balcony doors. He turned to look at her as she looked outside, at Hermione, no doubt.

"Apparently, Hermione had taken the necessary precautions in trying to keep her parents safe. She had sent them to Australia, completely wiped their memories of her, making it harder for the Dark Lord to find them. Harder...not impossible," his mother said, turning around.

Draco didn't need for her to continue. It was easy to guess what had happened.

"They're dead, Draco. Rodolphus was the one to finally end their suffering..."

Draco stood with a sigh, walking over to the balcony and standing beside his mother, gazing down at Hermione, knowing that this would ruin her...

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*It was embarrassingly obvious that the weasel was into her, hence his jealousy filled behavior. It was even more obvious that the mudblood fancied him as well. Draco's eyes narrowed at that thought. For some reason, the thought of Granger liking Weasley did not sit well with him. He tilted his head to the side as she cried out, harsh, choppy breaths escaping her lips as she sobbed.*

*"Pitiful," he quietly sneered.*

*And that she was. Granger had managed to swindle Krum into taking her to the Yule Ball. Viktor Krum! Yet, here she was, letting her night be ruined by Weasley. Draco didn't understand it. He always knew that she had poor taste, but this was just sad. He shook his head, pushing away from the pillar and glancing out onto the dance floor. Pansy was still gossiping with her airheaded friends, about Krum and Granger, no doubt.*

*It wasn't even that big of a deal! So what? Anybody, can manage to make themselves look good for a night. They acted as if Granger had stopped a bloody war! It wasn't anything special, she had just used this little thing called magic. Amazing how that works, he sarcastically thought. Still, he found his eyes slowly traveling over her frame once again.*

*The periwinkle dress stood out against the backdrop of her skin, the cool color complementing her tone. Her once kempt hair had begun to loosen, the pins falling out and the tresses dropping one by one. They brushed against her face and neck, kissing her and Draco briefly found himself wishing that he were a strand of that hair. Her nose and eyes had begun to redden from her harsh sobs, now matching the color of her lips. Her makeup had begun to smear, a newly finished painting just sprayed with water. Granger, the perfect image of perfection, looked as if she had just been dragged through hell and back. A look of utter defeat and sorrow was plastered upon her face, eyes downcast and lips pouted as fresh tears skipped down her cheeks. She had gone from having the time of her life to an utterly broken, defeated mess. She was a mess. Probably for the first time ever, Draco saw her in a state where she did not have it all*

*together. She was distraught. She was imperfect. She was ruined, if only for a night, and Draco suddenly had the urge to go over there and ruin her some more. She looked almost as ruined as he sometimes felt and for the first time of many, a thought ran through his head that he had never thought before.*

*She was beautiful.*

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**Let me know what you think!**

# Even Angels Have Their Wicked Schemes

**A short chapter, yes, but I wanted to get it out for the anon birthday girl from tumblr. I will more than likely upload again before Monday. Happy Birthday!**

**Disclaimer: I Own Nothing**

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Hermione walked through the lavish garden, eyes trailing over this and that. Looking...but not seeing. The soft sound of her shoes brushing against the grass reached her ears, having a calming effect. A calming effect from the outside, at least. She was sure that outwardly, her face was the perfect picture of composure. Inside, however...

Inside, Hermione wanted to scream. She wanted to cry, hit, and claw at anything she could get her hands on. Preferably, Draco. Theo was gone. He had left days ago and she had not seen him since that night, the night that she had tried to Crucio him. A part of her was more than surprised to find out that Draco had indeed let Theo live even after she had failed in doing what he had demanded of her.

Hermione didn't know how to feel. She was unsure about her emotions, something that had been happening quite often as of late. Theodore was gone and she felt...relieved. She was glad that he was no longer in danger from Draco. He was out of harm's way and she could feel nothing but relief about that. She didn't constantly have to purposefully avoid him in fear that Draco might just fly off the handle and really kill him.

However, another part of her, a much more sinister part, taunted that her relief was because she didn't have to put up with his unwanted advances anymore. She didn't have to constantly look over her shoulder and peek around every corner to avoid his affections. Affections that she did not reciprocate at all.

Another part of her, a much smaller part, reprimanded her for this. Theo was in love with her. He had been through so much, taken so much crap from Draco because of it. The young wizard had bowed out of the race so to speak just for what he thought would be her happiness and all she could think about was how happy she was that she wouldn't have to put up with his advances anymore.

This part of her also scolded her for not caring that she was losing a newfound friend. Theodore had become a confidant in the large house, someone she had begun to trust. He had been patient and very kind with her, something she had grown unused to. It was a relief and she didn't even care that she would no longer have that.

A wave of shame crashed into her and Hermione hung her head, fingers fiddling with a small flower that she had plucked. What was wrong with her? Theodore Nott was an amazing friend, an amazing guy, and any girl would be lucky to have him. Theodore had been ready to give her the world, whisk her away to a lifetime of safety and happiness...and she had said no.

She released a sigh, turning her face upwards to gaze at the sky, brows furrowing in deep thought. Was this because she knew that his life would always be in danger as long as she was with him? Hell, his life would have been in danger either way just for helping her escape. Draco would have stopped at nothing to track them down, killing him and taking her back. Of course, this was why she refused.

At least, that was what she kept telling herself. That sinister part of her reared its ugly head, laughing and whispering awful things into her ear. It hissed that she didn't want to leave. It whispered foul, unthinkable things about how she knew that she could never just walk away from Draco, for he had ruined her. He was inside her, twisted up and around every single one of her organs, his essence mingling with hers. How was she too far gone, too altered...too late.

Hermione swallowed, shaking her head, frantic. She was not too far gone. She was not too late. Whatever had been done to her was reversible and she was going to prove it. She heaved another sigh

before turning around and heading towards the house, the flower slipping from between her fingers and silently landing on the ground.

---

*"Why," she finally asked, her voice cracking.*

*She took a stumbling step back as he took one forward. She couldn't decode the expression on his face and now knowing what she knew, that unnerved her.*

*"Why not," he chuckled.*

*She stared at him like a mad woman, trying to understand what could possibly be funny.*

*"Do you see me laughing? Do I look like I'm enjoying this **at all** ? Why...why would you-"*

*"Sell my soul to Voldemort? If I told you that I'd have to kill you."*

*"Stop it! Just, stop," she snarled, digging her hands into her hair as she paced back and forth.*

*She had a hard time wrapping her head around the fact that Harry's suspicions had been right. Draco Malfoy was one of them now. That statement alone terrified her for so many reasons, reasons that she didn't even have the energy to analyze right now. He was inside the castle with Harry and Dumbledore. Had he been reporting back to Voldemort this entire time? Or was there a much bigger picture than that, than him simply being a spy?*

*She stared at him through blurry eyes and with a horrified sob she realized that she was actually starting to pity him. She never believed that Draco was truly evil, despite the fact that Blaise had said otherwise. This had to have been forced on him. It made sense because the pressure had to have been coming at him from all directions. She refused to believe the possibility that he... No, she*

*thought as she shook her head. Draco was a lot of things; cunning, crude and even a liar but he was not evil.*

*"We can help you," she whispered.*

*An arched eyebrow was the only evidence of his surprise at her statement.*

*"Help me," he chuckled.*

*"Yes! Whatever it is that they threatened you with-"*

*"You are an idiot," he interrupted in amusement.*

*She inhaled as if she had been slapped.*

*"Why? Because I believe that you can be saved? Because I don't think it's too late for you," she hissed.*

---

Hermione sat up with a gasp, the sudden action bringing forth a headache, causing her to rest her hand against her temple. She scrunched her eyes together, hissing in displeasure as her head began to throb. She heaved a tired sigh, her heart skipping a beat in her chest as she remembered that day.

It was the day that she had finally found out that Draco was a Death Eater. It was the day that she realized that Harry had been right after all, that Draco was one of them. Something, up until that point, she had found hard to believe. That day was the day that she realized that Draco was absolutely no longer the scrawny, whiny kid who always made idle threats about telling his father. It was the day she had found herself in a room alone with a Death Eater, someone who served the darkest wizard to ever live.

She had realized then just how dangerous and serious this all had become and had only gotten an inkling of what she was getting herself into. She should have run when she had the chance. She

cursed herself for thinking that she could have possibly helped him, changed him even. As she thought back, it was almost laughable how ready she had been to help him, offer her support when he did not want it. She had even felt *sorry* for him. Of course, then, she didn't realize just how demented he was...

She rubbed her head some more before running her hand through her hair, opening her eyes. She looked around Draco's room before her eyes finally landed on the figure sitting on the couch, her eyes wide with surprise. He had given no indication that he was even there while she had been drawn into her thoughts. Also, she wasn't exactly expecting his company, seeing as he was normally gone whenever she awoke.

She didn't really know what to say. The night he had confronted Theo had been burned into her mind on a constant loop. She hadn't spoken to him in days, opting to ignore him and he had surprisingly left her alone for the most part. And alone she had been. She hadn't seen Ginny nor Blaise around in days as well. While it wasn't uncommon as of late to not run into either one of them (they were still grieving), it struck her as a bit odd to not see them for a few *days* in a row.

She and Draco regarded one another in silence. She stared at him, a myriad of emotions coursing through her veins while he gazed back at her. His entire expression was blank, giving no hint as to what was going on inside of his head at the moment. Outwardly, no one could ever guess as to what kind of madness was going on inside of that head of his. He was draped in nothing but black, one arm stretched out along the back of the couch while the other rested on the knee of the leg that was currently thrown across the other. Fed up, and a bit uncomfortable, with the silence, she finally asked:

"What do you want?"

He blinked, turning his head away and Hermione could just faintly detect that his jaw was clenched. He closed his eyes, releasing a quiet sigh before slowly turning back to face her.



"I may have...overreacted when it came to Theodore," he finally said.

Hermione's heart stopped and she froze, the only visible sign that she had heard him being the slight widening of her eyes. *What did he just say?*

"Don't give me that look. I'm reasonable when I want to be," he quietly said, raising an eyebrow.

Hermione blinked, shaking her head in disbelief. No. She refused to believe what was happening. She had been down this road before and she was not going to be fooled again. She was not stupid.

"What are you playing at," she demanded.

He inhaled before dropping his arm and his leg, leaning forward to rest his elbows on his nose, pinning her with his piercing gaze. She squirmed in her seat at the intensity of it.

"I'm not playing at anything."

Hermione scoffed, resisting the urge to slap him in his pretty face.

"Bullshit! You expect me to believe that? You could tell me that my hair was on fire and I'd still doubt you," she spat.

Hermione didn't understand what he was doing. Something was up and she wanted to know.

"You could say that...my mother gave me some clarity," he murmured, never taking his eyes off of her.

Hermione scoffed. This was absolutely unbelievable.

"You're that much of a mamma's boy that she says one word, and you're suddenly ready to repent for everything that you've done? I'm not buying it," she whispered, shaking her head.

"I never said that. All I said was that I may have gone a bit overboard..."

"Yes, and coming from you, that might as well be a sign of defeat. What is going on? I want to know right now," she demanded.

Why was he toying with her? Why was he acting so unlike him? He stood, heaving a sigh, before slowly walking around the spacious room. He took slow, sure steps, gazing at the artwork that he had on the walls. Hermione found herself unconsciously raking her eyes over him while his back was turned before she reprimanded herself. She looked away...

"Blaise and Ginny left for a few days," he spoke.

Hermione frowned at this piece of information.

"What? Why?"

Hermione mentally smacked herself as soon as she asked that question. It was quite obvious why they had left for a while. It would make sense that Ginny would need to distance herself from this place for a bit after what had happened. Hermione found herself wondering if Ginny knew of Blaise's involvement in what had happened with Theo. More than likely, she didn't. If she did, Hermione guessed that she would have stayed behind. Still...it was unlike Ginny to not say goodbye.

"Ginny would never leave without telling me goodbye," Hermione firmly stated.

"Wouldn't she? Wasn't it just weeks ago when you never thought her capable of betrayal?"

Hermione closed her eyes, exhaling.

"She didn't betray anyone. There was just more to the story...more which she had planned to tell me if I had not reacted so harshly,"

Hermione replied.

"Didn't you just learn about the 'more', what was that, about a week ago?"

His head was tilted in her direction as he looked at her over his shoulder, tone and face inquiring. Hermione shook her head as she narrowed her eyes at him.

"I know what you're doing. You will not turn me against her."

He chuckled, a dark sound. He shook his head.

"Is that what you think I'm trying to do? I'm simply making a point that you clearly don't know her as well as you thought you did..." he said, turning to fully face her now.

He shrugged.

"That was all. Besides, I was simply informing you that Ginny and Blaise are gone. I know that you've probably been wondering where they are," he continued, sitting on the edge of his bed.

He rested his eyes on her and she looked away, unable to hold eye contact. Hermione did not like not being in the know and right now, she felt like there was something that she did not know. She didn't buy for one second that he regretted what happened with Theo. Draco Malfoy didn't do regret when it came to things that benefitted him. *Bastard*.

"I really wish that you would just cut the crap," she quietly said.

"Why, because you don't know how to respond to a Draco that is actually polite?"

She warily glanced at him before turning away again, eyelashes fluttering. No, she did not know how to respond to a Draco that was actually being polite. It was...so out of character. One minute, he was ready to murder a friend and lock her away forever for even

talking to said friend. Suddenly, he's Mr. Remorseful? She knew that he was up to something, he just had to be. Right?

She was pulled from her thoughts by the feel of his hand on her cheek. She didn't respond as he turned her head to face him, his eyes raking over her face before gently pushing her hair back. She recoiled away from him, preparing to turn her head, but he wouldn't let that happen.

He forced her eyes to connect with his, the feel of his thumb brushing against her cheek oddly calming. She wasn't sure what was going on and had prepared herself for pretty much anything to come out of his mouth. Anything except:

"Your parents are dead, Hermione."

Hermione stared at him, eyes blank as she registered his words. She closed her eyes, scoffing and snatching her face away from his hands.

"You really are something else, you know that? Telling me that my parents are dead?"

She jumped up from the bed, turning to face him, eyebrows furrowed in disbelief.

"What the hell is wrong with you, Draco?"

Never would she have imagined that he would stoop so low. Draco's expression did not change, causing her to scoff yet again.

"Hermione...I'm not lying to you."

"I don't believe you," she loudly stated, letting him know that she wasn't falling for any of his crap anymore.

Draco was a liar, always had been, and now was no different. Her parents were safe, she had made sure of it. She had wiped their memories of all traces of her, relocating them to Australia so that

they would be found by her and her only. He suddenly stood, towering over her.

"Fine. If you won't believe me then maybe you'll believe the man who killed them..."

Hermione kept her stare even, debating whether or not to even entertain such rubbish. She crossed her arms over her chest.

"Fine. Lead the way," she finally said, gesturing to the door.

Following Draco out of the room and down the stairs, Hermione glared daggers into his back. Hermione didn't understand what he could possibly get out of this. Was he expecting her to break down and lean on him for support in this trying time? Of course, he had to have known that she would see right through it. She had taken all of the necessary precautions to make sure her parents were as safe as possible.

Of course, it wasn't exactly foolproof. There was that slim chance that they could be happened upon, but that chance was very slim. Obliviating them had made them extremely difficult to find, not impossible. Otherwise, when this was all over, if they came out on top, *she* would never be able to find them. Hermione found herself frowning as he led her down into the cellar.

It was dark and Hermione found herself running her hand along the wall as she cautiously followed Draco down the stairs. As they descended, Hermione felt a bit of doubt creeping in. Could Draco be telling the truth? Were her parents really gone? Surely, Draco wasn't this cruel...

Hermione's thought process completely halted as light flooded the dark cellar and her eyes landed on the bound figure in front of them. Her eyes widened as she eventually recognized him as Rodolphus Lestrage. Her mind flew back to the Department of Mysteries all those years ago, recalling how he was one of the Death Eaters to

fight against them. She took a step back as he raised his head from its hanging position, his cold, hateful eyes meeting hers.

"I had heard that you had taken Potter's whore as a pet...seeing is believing, I suppose," the older man spat, literally.

Hermione took another step back before looking up at Draco in confusion, but his hard eyes were trained on Lestrage. She noticed that his fist was clenched beside him, the air becoming tense.

"I would gut you, Lestrage, but unfortunately, that isn't my right," he calmly whispered.

Hermione's eyes snapped back to the madman in front of them as he let out a laugh. Hermione noticed that dried blood was smeared along his face and matted into his hair.

"Oh? Is the mudblood here to avenge her mum and dad?"

Everything suddenly grew silent as Hermione stared at him, wide eyes widening even further as his words reached her ears. She felt as if someone had stuffed cotton in her ears, leaving only the sound of her frantic heartbeat as comfort. Goosebumps erupted over her entire body, her hairs standing on end. She saw nothing but Lestrage's sadistic face as he howled with laughter, each shake of his shoulders driving the knife deeper.

Hermione had always imagined that if this day ever came, her skin would grow cold. That her body would quite literally freeze with the realization that she was an orphan. This was not what happened. A fire, a raging inferno like no other began to build up inside of her, warming her hands, her cheeks...her chest.

Hermione did not move, too afraid to for some reason. The sound of her heartbeat grew louder until it was like the wings of a helicopter in her ears. The flame inside of her grew, his laughter like gasoline to it until it finally erupted. Her parents were dead. Her mum and her dad were gone. Just like that, they no longer existed.

She would never see them again. She would never hear their laughter as her dad told one of his corny, unfunny jokes. She would never see her mum thank her dad as he reminded her, yet again, to take her coffee with her to work. They would never wake her up for breakfast and she would never cook for them for their anniversary.

Hermione had forced herself to accept these things when she had left them. She had known that there was a possibility that she would never see them again. What she had not accepted was them never seeing each other. They would no longer be able to hug and kiss one another. They would never be able to dance with each other while her mum badly hummed a tune to a song she could never remember. They would never be able to hold hands, comfort one another.

They would never be able to tell each other 'I love you'.

Only when Hermione's knees buckled, did she realize that she hadn't been breathing. Strong arms caught her and she hesitantly looked up at Draco through blurry eyes. What she was looking for, she didn't know. Maybe she was hoping that he really was that cruel to play such a joke on her. Maybe she was hoping that by looking into his eyes, he would confirm that Lestrage was lying and that her parents weren't dead, but safely tucked away in Australia.

All of her hearing seemed to come back at once and the tears finally spilled over as she heard her ragged breaths. Hermione felt like she couldn't get air fast enough. She felt a burning chill like no other crawl over her skin, as if the cold hands of death were threatening to take her too. It hurt. It hurt so much and how foolish she had been to think Draco lying to her and killing Dumbledore was heartbreak. *This* ...this was true heartbreak.

Her nails dug into Draco's arms as he gripped her shoulder, holding her upright. His face was void of all emotion, either because he didn't care or to keep her calm, she didn't know. She just knew that she wanted him to laugh and tell her that this was all one big joke.

"Want to hear about how they screamed and squirmed?"

She turned her head away, scrunching her eyes together.

"That mum of yours was quite... *feisty*. Poor dad was forced to watch," Lestrangle gruffly whispered.

Hermione had lost all feeling in her legs, the only thing keeping her up being Draco's arms. She clung to him as his words truly settled in and a fresh wave of tears fell as she imagined how her parents must have suffered.

"Hermione...Hermione," Draco whispered.

Hermione hung her head, unruly curls falling into her face.

"Look at me," he said, grabbing her chin and forcing her head up.

Hermione stared into his eyes, silver and brown clashing, and then holding. One of his hands was holding her up while the other slowly let go of her chin.

"It's going to be okay..."

"No, no," she forced out.

Merlin, she was going to be sick. She suddenly blinked as he lifted an object in front of her eyes and it took her a minute for her sight to adjust. They focused in on the knife that he held between his fingers. He twirled it between them a few times before holding it out to her, the blade end in his hand while the handle faced her.

She slowly looked up at him, her tears had paused in disbelief as it sank in. Surely, he couldn't...?

"What-what are you doing? What is this?"

A slow smirk danced across his lips, eyes swirling with sinful intentions as he answered.



"You know what this is."

---

**Oh...you all thought he was being nice? *Without* ulterior motives? That's cute.**

# Hear Me Cry

**Disclaimer: I Own Nothing**

**Please, point out any grammar mistakes to me, if there be any. I did not proof read as much as I would have liked to.**

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*Merlin, she was going to be sick. She suddenly blinked as he lifted an object in front of her eyes and it took her a minute for her sight to adjust. They focused in on the knife that he held between his fingers. He twirled it between them a few times before holding it out to her, the blade end in his hand while the handle faced her.*

*She slowly looked up at him, her tears had paused in disbelief as it sank in. Surely, he couldn't...?*

*"What-what are you doing? What is this?"*

*A slow smirk danced across his lips, eyes swirling with sinful intentions as he answered.*

*"You know what this is."*

---

As Hermione realized what exactly was going on, she stared at him. She just...stared. There really wasn't much else that Hermione *could* do. Before her was the man responsible for the death of her parents. He was the reason that they were no longer in this world, basking in the love they had for each other. Here was the man who had *murdered* her parents...and Draco was suggesting that she kill him.

"No."

That was her immediate answer. Despite what her lips said, a voice inside of her head was saying something entirely different. This was her parents' killer. He deserved to suffer, to die. She had every right

to end his life and no one would blame her for it. After everything that she had been through, Hermione deserved some sort of retribution.

But not like this...

"No...?"

Draco's eyebrow was raised, smirk slowly falling from his lips as her response reached his ears. Hermione swallowed, squaring her shoulders and lifting her chin.

"No," she repeated with conviction.

She heard Lestrage let out a guttural, spine-tingling cackle.

"How quaint. The two of you are having a domestic," he laughed.

Hermione frowned, forcing herself to ignore the sound of his voice. She was hanging on by a thread, and having her parents' killer so close, trying to converse with her, was only making things worse. She and Draco stared at one another, her gaze equally as hard as his.

"If I kill him, Draco, I am no better than he is...no better than the rest of them...no better than you," she spat.

She didn't linger to see his reaction, instead opting for turning and exiting the cellar. She climbed the stairs two at a time, eager to get away from Lestrage's taunting words. She didn't hear his footsteps, but there was no doubt in her mind that Draco was right behind her.

When she stepped back into the main part of the house that was when everything hit her. Her parents were gone. She touched her face, expecting there to be wetness where there was none. Why wasn't she crying? Was something wrong with her? Or had Draco simply taken her tears too, along with everything else?

"I'm disappointed in you, Hermione."

Hermione did not turn around, instead wrapping her arms around herself and staring at the floor.

"Do you honestly think I care if I disappoint you? You've disappointed me more times than I can count, Draco," she quietly replied.

She tensed as she felt him approach, only slightly relaxing when he laid his hands on her shoulders, massing his fingers into her skin.

"He killed your parents, Hermione," Draco quietly replied, his breath fanning over her.

Hermione closed her eyes, wishing that he would just leave her alone.

"Don't you want to make him pay? Don't they deserve to be avenged...?"

Hermione hung her head, one lone tear escaping, recalling how she had thought that very same thing herself.

"Your parents would want-."

Hermione had spun around and slapped him before the entire sentence had even escaped his lips. She took great pride in the glowing red mark on his cheek before deciding that it wasn't enough. She slapped him again, beating her fists against his chest, pushing him against the cellar door. He took it, not even reacting or defending himself and that pissed her off even more.

She stared up into his grey eyes, her nostrils flaring, fists clenched by her side.

"How dare you? What in Merlin's name makes you think that you have the right to tell me what my parents would or would not want?"

He didn't respond, gazing down at her from beneath his lashes, an emotionless expression on his face.

"My father would have wanted me to be with a man who treats me like a queen. He would have wanted me to be with someone whom I could trust to protect me and support me. My mum would have just wanted me to be happy. She would have wanted her little girl to have the whole world," she spat at him.

She backed away from him, shaking her head.

"Most of all, they would have wanted me to stay true to myself, no matter what. They would not want their daughter to become a killer, so do not even dare to try and tell me what my parents would have wanted," she quietly finished.

Draco sneered down at her as he approached her.

"So what are you going to do, Hermione? Let him go? We can do that if you want. Go on...set him free," Draco hissed.

Hermione swallowed, her eyes traveling to the cellar door. The thought of just letting him go did not sit well with her.

"Humph. Yeah, that's what I thought."

"Screw you," she shrieked, her eyes resting on him.

She should have known, from the first moment he had appeared almost kind, she should have known that there was a catch. Upon finding out the reason for his uncharacteristic behavior, she had thought...she had let herself believe that... She shook her head, scolding herself for her stupidity.

"How long have you known, Draco?"

She didn't need to go into detail, he knew exactly to what she was referring to. Hermione was no idiot. It was very hard to believe that Draco had just found out about her parents and had tracked Lestranger down immediately, bringing him to her like a silver platter.

"My mother told me a few days ago."

Hermione frowned as she realized that she had been kept in the dark about this longer than she would have liked to have been.

"Did Ginny know? Before they left, did you tell her?"

It had suddenly occurred to her that them leaving could have had something to do with this. Maybe Draco had sent them away, wanting to give her space and time to grieve? Or maybe he had done so because he wanted his shoulder to be the only one she cried on. *Prick* .

"If she found out, it wasn't through me," he replied.

Hermione threw her hands up.

"Of course. Of course, you told Blaise. Why am I not surprised? As a matter of fact, why am I even surprised by anything that you do anymore? I should have accepted a long time ago that you are what you are-."

Draco's jaw ticked as he gazed at her, eyes slowly hardening.

"I bring you the man that killed your parents and somehow...I'm the bad guy here."

"You brought him here so that I could kill him!"

"He murdered your parents! Any normal, sane person would jump at the opportunity to avenge their parents' deaths," he snapped, stepping towards her.

"Well, I guess I'm not sane then! That's not who I am, Draco. You know that," she cried.

"Then you are *weak* . That man had no remorse when he murdered them. He had no problem torturing your father, *raping* your mother..."

Hermione flinched.

"...all the while forcing him to watch before gutting them both! If he had the chance, Hermione, he would happily do it again," Draco threw at her.

Hermione swallowed, eyes watering as she turned away. She kept her eyes on the wall as he gripped her arms, his body a hair's width away from her own.

"That man is a monster who took great pleasure in what he did. He took great pleasure in doing something that he knew would break you...so why are you sparing him?"

Everything that Draco said was true. That man in there...he *was* a monster and she had no doubt that he *would* do it all over again. He probably did enjoy taking her parents' lives, probably even laughed. She sharply inhaled when Draco took her chin in between his fingers, lifting her chin and rubbing his thumb across her cheek, catching a stray tear.

She could understand that in Draco's mind, he had done the right thing by offering Lestrage up to her. However, it meant nothing in comparison to everything else that he had done. She jerked away from his close proximity, stumbling backwards.

"I'm not sparing him, I'm sparing myself."

And then she was gone.

---

Hermione did not leave her room for two weeks. Draco had food and such sent up by the House Elves, but Hermione hardly had an appetite for anything. It seemed that her body had finally processed everything that had happened and it was telling her that it had had enough.

Ginny and Blaise had long returned, she could hear them in the hall from time to time. Sometimes during the evening, or morning, Hermione could never tell, Ginny would knock on her door, pleading

to come in. Hermione never answered, not until yesterday when she had told Ginny that she just wanted to be alone.

Ginny had asked how long that would be and the truth was that Hermione didn't know. She didn't feel up to seeing or talking to anyone and she was sure that Ginny understood. Her emotions and thoughts were so all over the place that she had begun to live in a constant state of grief and confusion.

The friendship, and possible relationship, that she and Harry had shared was over. Despite the questions still surrounding the incident, she and Harry's friendship was beyond repair. The night of Dumbledore's death still heavily weighed on her mind, constantly reminding her that she was closer to Draco than anyone and yet had not seen, had not even had an inkling of what he was planning.

She was certain that she was not the only one who partially blamed herself for what had happened. Even her relationship with Ginny would never be the same. Despite the fact that they had made up, Ginny had still hid this entire part of her life from Hermione. While Hermione understood the reasoning for doing so, it still hurt that Ginny had not trusted her enough with something so important, forcing Hermione to take a look at herself. Yes, they were well on their way to getting back to where they once were. However, Ginny was living out her fairytale life with the boy she had loved for years. When all of this was over, she and Blaise would no doubt get married and have many adorable brown skinned, redheaded children.

Hermione, on the other hand... There were only two options for herself and she honestly wasn't sure how she felt about either one.

Draco would win. She would finally succumb to him, surrendering the very last piece of herself, the very last thing she had left. He would get what he wanted and if this happened, then that would mean that he had succeeded in breaking her completely. She had no doubt that if she finally let go, she could be happy...but at what cost? What kind



of happiness would that be exactly? *A sick, psychotic, and twisted sort of happiness* , she scathingly thought.

Or...she would win. She would get away, break away from his hold and even then, she would not officially be free. If she left, finally got away, he would always remain within her. He had succeeded in slithering his way into her very soul, her essence, his presence constantly intertwined with her own. A piece of him would always remain, making it impossible for her to ever be completely happy. If she got away, she would not get out unscathed. His words had dug into her too many times for her to walk away unblemished. Too much had happened here for her to simply walk away...untainted. If she left, she would not be the same girl who had been dragged here. She would not belong...

---

Hermione sat up, startled awake by another nightmare for the third night in a row. Her hands were clammy, skin slick with sweat, strands of hair sticking to her face and neck. If she closed her eyes, Hermione was positive that she could still hear the screams. Apparently, her mind had a wild imagination.

She had been able to come up with several different scenarios in which Lestrage had killed her parents. Each time had always started out the same, just the three of them, and then *he* would show up. Sometimes he used his wand, sometimes a knife, and sometimes just his bare hands. It always ended different, but yet... the same. It always ended with her parents screaming for her help as she stood paralyzed, unable to do a thing.

Hermione calmed her breathing, wrapping the thick covers around her, despite how warm she already was, and laid back down. She stared at the wall, her parents screams on a constant loop in her mind before sleep eventually took her, like a thief in the night.

---

*"Hermione. Look at me, Hermione," he pleaded.*

*She reluctantly gazed at him through the corner of her eyes.*

*"I love you. Do you understand that? This isn't some stupid fickle romance. What I feel for you is real. I'd do anything for you. You know that, right? You know that I'd give my life for you. I know...I know that deep down you feel the same way. I know you do but Malfoy...he's messing with your head. He's making you question so many things, I can see it. I know you, Hermione. I know that you think that deep down there's some good in him. I know that you think that you can save him, but you can't. Do you understand? You can't save someone who doesn't want to be saved."*

*"I don't-"*

*"Yes, you do. I can't lose you too, I can't," his voice broke.*

*"Harry..."*

*"Before you know it he'll sink his claws into you so deep and...and you'll be gone. He'll take you away from me," he whispered.*

*"That's not going to happen, Harry..."*

---

Hermione sat up, eyes wide, staring at the wall in front of her. Sleep trouble was not new to her, but it still did not make it any easier to deal with. She wrapped her arms around herself, looking around the room as she accepted that she would not be going back to sleep tonight.

Her mind was too busy going a mile a minute, her body abuzz with energy and tension. As she slung her feet over the side of the bed, exiting her room, she wondered how long this would last. *Your parents were killed, Hermione. Will that ever be something you get used to?* Hermione sighed, shoulders sagging as she realized that that would not be something she would grow to get used to. Nor did she wish to ever get used to that.

She could guess as to how late it was by how quiet the huge mansion was. She had half expected Draco to be skulking about, the predator that he was, but she found that even he was sound asleep. At least, that was what she assumed considering that there was no sign of him.

She soon found herself downstairs in the kitchen, trying to find something that would satiate her. That was going to be much easier said than done seeing as she hardly had an appetite at all lately. However, she knew that she couldn't go on like this. *It's okay to grieve, Hermione. You don't have to be so strong all the time*, she thought to herself. No, she supposed that she did not always have to be so strong.

Still, strong was what she was. Or at least, strong was what she used to be. She could have counted the number of times on one hand that she had broken down or lost her temper. In Draco's presence, that seemed to be all that she did. Her emotions always went haywire whenever he was around.

For the first time in a while, she just felt...numb. It almost felt as if her parents weren't really gone, almost hard to fathom. Of course, they *were* really gone. When all of this was over, she would have no one to reunite with.

*"He killed your parents, Hermione."*

Hermione closed her eyes as she recalled Draco's words. She knew that Lestrage was still here, no doubt he would be until *she* decided what she wanted to do with him. No, she didn't want to let him go. It wouldn't be right to just let him walk away after he had impacted her life so detrimentally. Still, Hermione wasn't a killer. That wasn't who she was. Besides, it wasn't exactly fair to torture Lestrage with the uncertainty of what his fate would be.

Before Hermione knew what she was doing, her feet had carried her towards the cellar. She wasn't exactly sure what possessed her to do this, but she knew that she couldn't continue on like this. This kind of

state that she was in was exactly what Draco wanted from her. She was currently right where he wanted her and she would be damned if she let him use her grief to his advantage.

She took the steps one at a time, the light from inside the house shining into the cellar. Her eyes passed over the knife that Draco had tried to get her to use, left forgotten on the cellar floor. She looked up to stare at the half awake form of Rodolphus Lestrange.

This was the man who was the other half to Draco's deranged aunt. Hermione wondered what kind of crazy someone had to be in order to keep up with her. Then, of course, she remembered why he was down here. *How fitting they are for each other* , she bitterly thought.

She had imagined that seeing him again would force her into another fit...she had imagined wrong. Looking at the man who killed her parents did not intensify her grief or send her into another meltdown. Instead she felt nothing but wonder. Wonder at how far gone someone could possibly be to enjoy doing what he had done to another human being. What made someone turn into that, she wondered?

His low chuckle pulled her from her thoughts.

"Has the mudblood come to play?"

Hermione bit her tongue at the double meaning behind his words, not missing the way his eyes ran over her form. She was wearing an oversized tee that stopped just below her knees, leaving the lower half of her legs on display.

"No. I came here to talk to you," she shakily replied.

She watched as he twisted his head from side to side, fully awakening now before his dark eyes rested on her. Hermione almost took a step back at the intensity in them, the darkness...the emptiness.

"What could Draco's whore have to discuss with me?"

He spat the question out, grinning at her visible discomfort at being referred to as Draco's whore.

"Why...?"

Like with Draco before, she did not elaborate. There was no need to.

"The Dark Lord put the word out...someone had to do it. I volunteered...was more than happy to rid this world of more muggles," he hissed.

Hermione clenched her jaw, resisting the urge to look away from his taunting gaze.

"Why? I don't understand how you people can hate an entire race of people, people just like yourselves-."

"Your kind is nothing like my kind, *Ms. Granger* . You are disgraceful and every single one of you needs to be eradicated...or put in your place," he ended with a cruel smirk on his lips.

Hermione swallowed, eyes downcast and eyebrows furrowed. She had come for closure, answers, hell, maybe even some sort of peace. Instead, she gotten nothing but hatred. Pure, blinding hatred for people who had lives and hopes and dreams just like them. *What else did you possibly expect?*

Hermione was even more bewildered than when she went there. She did not know what she wanted to do with him, so she turned to leave.

"Not going to kill me?"

His question came out teasingly, mocking. She paused at his question before looking over her shoulder.

"I am no killer. That's you, not me," she replied.

"Don't forget your blood traitor of a boyfriend," he cackled.

Hermione squared her shoulders, opting to ignore him as she began to climb the stairs. She had just made it to the door when he whispered:

"She remembered you, you know..."

Hermione froze, eyes going wide as she spun around to face him, eyebrows furrowed in confusion.

"What," she breathed.

His dark, maniacal eyes bore into her own.

"I was just finishing up with her...your poor old mum, when she screamed for you," he said, showcasing a set of pearly whites.

"You're lying," Hermione immediately responded.

There was no way, it was impossible.

"Oh she screamed and screamed for her daughter, but oh. Where were you? Here cozying up to your Death Eater?"

His laughed bounced off of the walls and around her.

"I don't believe you," she hissed.

"Believe what you want, you filthy mudblood. When I get out of here, I'm coming for that blood traitor friend of yours. The Weasley girl? Then I'm going for Zabini, then Longbottom, the other Weasley. What's his name? Ronald? I'm going to disembowel every single one of your heroic friends..."

Hermione turned her head, forcing herself to brush off his words.

"I'll save the Dark Lord's favorite for last. He gave me this, you know."

Lestrangle turned his head, showcasing the jagged cut starting from his ear, traveling all the way down to his neck.

"I'm going to slit his throat right before your very eyes," he hissed.

"It isn't like that," she choked out, despite the way her heart sped up.

"Isn't it? No matter because it will come to pass. I'm going to get out of here and do you want to know how?"

Hermione should have left, she should have walked out a long time ago, the minute that she realized she wasn't going to get what she had come for.

" *You're weak.* You're a weak, spineless mudblood. Just like your parents-."

Hermione couldn't say when she had moved, but all she knew was that one minute, she was on the stairs and the next...

She panted, completely out of breath as she stared at his emotionless face. Her blood was boiling, vision blurry from tears as she straddled him. She briefly noted that her body was trembling, her entire frame on edge. Her mind was a jumbled mess of noise, preventing her from making sense of anything that had just happened. Then...it wasn't such a mess anymore and she dropped the knife in horror.

Her eyes widened and she stared at his blank face. The realization of what she had just done hit her like a Bludger, right in the stomach. She reached out, trailing her fingers down his lifeless face before her eyes traveled down.

Blood.

There was so much blood.

It was on him, on the floor, on...her. She turned her stained hands over, eyes raking over the mess she had made. Her mouth fell open

in shock and she hurriedly scrubbed at her skin, attempting to rub it off.

"No, no," she whispered, panicking.

She suddenly let go of herself as if she had been burned, coming to the realization that her appearance was not what was important at the moment. She placed her hands on his chest, pumping up and down, frantic...desperate.

"No, no, no," she chanted.

She glanced at the knife, now flung across the room, and back to Lestrage. She hit his chest, repeatedly.

"Come on, come on. This isn't happening," she cried, the truth of what she had just done staring her right in the face.

She twisted her fingers into her hair, stumbling onto her feet before screaming:

" *Draco!* "

She fell back to her knees, trying every wandless healing spell that she knew, becoming more and more hysterical as nothing worked.

"Draco!"

His name had just barely escaped her lips the second time before the cellar door came swinging open with a bang. He was immediately behind her and she turned to look up at him, a desperate plea on her lips.

"I...do something," she shrieked.

He simply stared at Lestrage before his eyes traveled to her, completely blank. Hermione's face crumbled and she covered her mouth, shaking her head.



"Draco, please..."

She crawled towards him, twisting her hands into his shirt.

"You can save him, right? You...there's something that you can do, right?"

"Hermione..."

She stumbled away from him, picking up the knife and shoving it in his face.

"This is yours...isn't it? Th-there's something that you can do..."

"Hermione, there's nothing that I can do."

"Don't say that! There has to be...", she trailed off as his eyes passed over her, landing on Lestrage's still form.

Hermione hit his chest, forcing him to look at her.

"You've been training with *him* , haven't you? Surely, he's taught you something...anything," she pleaded.

She let out a shaky sob, clutching her stomach.

"He's dead, Hermione," Draco said, taking her chin in his hand.

Hermione snatched away from him, stumbling back.

"No, no. There *has* to be something th-that you can do. Draco, please," she cried.

"You killed him-."

"No. I-," she broke off with a sob.

She clutched Draco's arm, her entire body shaking as she lifted her fingers to her mouth.

"It was an accident. I didn't...I didn't mean to."

"I know. I know that. It's going to be alright," he said.

"No, it's not! You have to do something!"

Draco gripped her arms, shaking her, making her hair fly everywhere.

"There's nothing that I can do, Hermione! He's *dead* ...rightfully so," he spat.

Hermione closed her eyes, gasping for breath, knees buckling. She pulled away from him, turning to sob over the body of Rodolphus Lestrage, the wizard who had murdered her parents. The wizard who had died by her hands.

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**Let me know what you think!**

# New Extremes

**Pretty sure that I was on something while typing this. Happy Holidays!**

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Hermione stared ahead, eyes blank and mind just as empty. She could faintly hear the sound of running bathwater, the droplets pinging off of the wall as the water splashed into the tub. She could acknowledge that Draco was speaking, saying something to her, but she could not say as to what. Rodolphus Lestrange was dead. She had killed him...and she couldn't even remember it.

In all honesty, Hermione was not sure that she wanted to remember it. That was something she was positive that she wanted to keep hidden away forever. This... *entire situation* was something that she just wanted to keep hidden away forever. Hermione Granger was no murderer...except....she was a murderer.

Hermione slowly glanced down, her eyes trailing along her bloodied clothing. The liquid had long settled in, the dark red color making her look like something out of a horror film. She bit her lip, eyes watering as she held her hands up to her face. *How did I get here?* How *did* she get here? *When* did she turn into...this? Movement in front of her pulled her attention away from her somber thoughts to the angelic face in front of her. Oh...right.

Draco was kneeling in front of her, a pure vision of perfection. Per usual, he was dressed head to toe in black, the dark color contrasting against his fair tone. His pale hair fell over his forehead perfectly, not a strand out of place. His bright eyes practically glowed as they rested on her, like a cat, and his sinful lips that were normally curved into a smirk, were straight and flat today.

He looked like an angel, an angel in black, but there was nothing angelic about Draco. Draco was the equivalent of the devil himself.

He was toxic, intense, constantly going from one extreme to the next. He was fiercely jealous and incredibly possessive and it was quite clear to Hermione, now more than ever, that he had a twisted view of the world. He was Hades in the flesh and the longer she remained, the more she began to see herself as Kore.

"I killed him," she quietly said, gazing into his eyes.

Not a flicker of emotion passed through his gaze, but he did exhale, tilting his head to the side as he reached up and brushed her hair away from her face.

"I know," he said in a small, soothing voice as if he were talking to a child.

Hermione swallowed and bit her lip, looking down. She felt Draco wrap his hands around her upper arms, gently coaxing her onto her feet. She didn't even mind when he began to peel her clothes off, the garments heavy with blood as they stuck to her skin. She remained in her bra and underwear, but neither one of them paid any mind to her indecent attire as he helped her into the steaming bath water.

Hermione closed her eyes as the heat surrounded her, not realizing just how much she needed it until that moment. She let out a quiet breath as Draco began to scrub the blood off of her skin, the action already making her feel ten times lighter. She leaned her head back as he ran the water down her neck, washing away the blood and grime.

"I killed him, Draco," she repeated.

"He killed your parents," was his immediate harsh reply.

She flung her eyes open, turning her head to pin him with a hard stare.

"...and that's supposed to make it okay?"

"Yes," he answered just as quickly, his tone equally as biting as hers.

She blinked, turning her head away, thinking of all of the things she could say to refute that statement when he continued.

"We are in the middle of a war. Lives *are* going to be lost, that is a fact. Lestrage was just one of the many casualties, if you can even call him that..." he scoffed before continuing "...We both know that all of this is going to come to head, sooner rather than later. Imagine how many of your friends, your classmates he would have killed. Just think of all the lives you saved by killing him."

Hermione shook her head, refusing to look at him.

"Are you honestly regretting that this world has one less person like him in it? Or are you more horrified that you're the one who did it?"

"I...that's not who I am, Draco. It can't be... I refuse to be like you," she stated.

"Newsflash, it's too late for that," he said.

She winced, the truth in his words hitting her right where it counted. She gazed down at the red tinted water, eyes somber. He pushed her hair over her shoulder, his thumb tracing circles just beneath her ear.

"You and I are more alike than you would like to admit...now more than ever," he darkly whispered.

She slowly turned to face him, her eyes once again resting on his annoyingly perfect appearance. How was it fair that he continued to be the pinnacle of perfection while she crumbled and lost a bit more of herself day after day? Why could he look like that while her inner turmoil began to reflect on the outside as well?

She slowly ducked under the water, eyes tightly shut as the dark liquid surrounded her. It was still heated, enveloping her like lava,

seeping into her skin. She wasn't sure how long she remained beneath the surface, but when she slowly broke through, lifting her head, eyes still closed before slowly turning and opening them to look at Draco, he was gazing at her with an unreadable expression.

She blinked, suddenly bringing her hand up, smearing the murky water along his skin. He didn't seem to mind the slight stain of red now on the side of his face though, his focus entirely on her. She ran her fingers through his hair, staining it as well as she leaned closer. Maybe Draco was right. Maybe she and him did have more in common than she would have liked to admit. To her, admitting that would mean that she wasn't the same. It would be the almost equivalent of admitting defeat.

Draco was cruel, demented, jealous, twisted...and she kissed him.

His lips devoured hers with a fierceness, taking her by surprise as he wrapped his arm around her waist with an iron grip. He pulled her out of the water, the sound of it splashing around her and onto the floor reaching her ears. She dug her nails into his arms as his lips moved over hers, her body alit with sparks.

She faintly noted that they were moving backwards, into his bedroom, no doubt. He picked her up, forcing her legs around his waist and she wrapped her arms around his neck. Hermione knew that no matter what angle she looked at it from, no matter how she twisted it, what she was doing was wrong. However, she had killed a man. She wanted to forget that, even if only for a minute or two.

Her back connected with the softness that was his bed, water soaking into his comforter. Once again, that seemed to be the last thing on Draco's mind as his teeth nipped at the skin of her neck, sucking and pulling, causing her to let her eyes flutter closed. She swallowed as she ran her hands over him, heart pounding as everything began to build up within her.

Hogwarts, Dumbledore, the Horcruxes, Harry, Ginny, Lestrangle. Everything began bombarding her at once and she felt herself

overflowing. Everything that Draco had put her through since their sixth year, Harry's persistence and his eventual...triumph. Ginny hiding an entire part of her life from Hermione. Her pregnancy and her eventual miscarriage. The absolute horror that she had felt upon realizing what she had done to Lestrage. It was almost like she was watching herself balance on the railing of the astronomy tower and then she just...tipped.

As Draco brought his lips back up to hers, she opened her eyes, trailing her fingers up his arm and whispering against his lips:

"Did you know that Harry and I had sex?"

Her words had the desired effect as she felt him freeze over her. The atmosphere around them changed, *drastically*, as his lips paused mid movement. She knew that telling him this while she was beneath him wasn't exactly the smartest idea, but for some unknown reason, she was not worried for her safety.

Draco slowly lifted himself, wide eyes connecting with her own. He looked at her as if she had grown another head. He looked at her with the most peculiar mix of anger, disbelief, and revulsion. His jaw was clenched, nostrils flaring as he visibly got angrier and angrier. He looked at her like he wanted to both kill her and fuck her at the same time. Hermione knew that if Harry was there at the moment, he would be a dead man.

"Actually...that's not entirely true. He raped me. He used the Imperius curse to get what he wanted..." she continued.

It seemed that these words had an even worse effect as he almost flew off of her. She slowly sat up, wet hair drying madly around her head like a curly halo. No, Hermione disregarded what she had thought before. Now she knew, if Harry was there at *this* moment, he would be unrecognizable once Draco was finished with him.

She almost felt sorry for Draco. Almost...then she remembered everything he had put her through. Every tear, every heartache,

every time she both wanted to kiss him and throw him down a flight of stairs at the same time. Hermione was irrevocably changed, he had ruined her. She had accepted that now, but she was going to be damned if she didn't ruin him a little more in the process.

"How does it feel, Draco? How does it feel to know that –how do you boys say it? - he got to me first?"

She raised an eyebrow and watched as he turned around, bracing his hands against the wall, shoulders heaving. She slid off of the bed, approaching him.

"If it makes you feel any better...I barely remember it. It's kind of like looking at it through a foggy window."

Her words came out very robotic, as if she were reading lines or something. She didn't know what possessed her to tell him-no, to throw it in his face, but it was too late to turn back now.

"The crazy thing is...I both hate him and am grateful to him for it. You don't deserve that part of me, Draco. You and I both know it. I'm not going to lie, it's a little satisfying to see how much this is affecting you," she taunted, standing right over his shoulder now.

He slowly turned around, eyes blazing as they connected with hers. She swallowed, tempted to take a step back from the look in his eyes, but she refused to be afraid. What more could he possibly do to her?

"I've always seen right through you, Draco. Ever since we were younger, you were jealous of Harry, of all three of us. You couldn't understand how a poor blood traitor like Ron could have the family and happiness within that family that you would never have," she spat.

She ran her fingers down his cheek.



"You hated me for besting you in all of our subjects, baffled that a *mudblood* was better than you."

He simply gazed at her though dark eyes, completely still like a ticking time bomb.

"You hated Harry because everything just came so naturally to him. Teachers' acceptance, making friends, the Quidditch team. He didn't have to buy any of that and you hated him for it. Now you can hate him for this too. He got what you'll never get," she harshly whispered.

She didn't even flinch when the balcony windows behind them shattered, glass flying everywhere. She never took her eyes off of him.

"He didn't even get it fairly. He *took* it, Draco."

She was crying now and this time she did wince when the study doors and bathroom door flew open, startling her as his eyes grew darker and darker.

"He cheated. How does that feel, Draco?"

He gripped her arms, firmly, but not enough to hurt as he pushed her back.

"Shut up, Hermione," he said, speaking for the first time since she started.

"No! I have to deal with this every day. I've had to live with it. I won't do it alone. If I have to suffer with this then you're going to suffer with me," she said through clenched teeth.

Draco closed his eyes, looking away.

"Go on. Look...we both know that you want to."

His eyes flew open, glaring at her.

"Look, Draco. I'm sure that you'll find more than I remember," she whispered.

And he did look. She felt the foreign force sifting through her mind as he gazed into her eyes. They both relived it as the memory was brought to the forefront of her mind and she shuddered, collapsing from the toll it took as he threw himself away from her.

She looked up at him from her position on the floor through blurry eyes, taking in the horrified and forlorn expression on his face. Draco's eyes were wide as if he had seen a ghost, chest heaving. A myriad of emotions passed over his features, one she did not recognize nor understand.

"Do you feel it, Draco? Do you feel that pathetic, hopeless feeling of trying to fix a situation you believe is out of your control? Do you feel like you're drowning? Do you feel...useless?"

She didn't give him time to answer.

"That's how I feel on an almost constant basis. That's a *fraction* of how I feel knowing that you are never going to change. That's just a taste of how I feel when I think about how I'm never going to be the way I was."

Draco's eyes were glassy as he glared at her, no doubt replaying what he saw on a loop in his mind. He was such a masochist like that.

"That doesn't even compare to how I feel when I think about how I feel...about you..."

Hermione swallowed, tears skipping down her cheeks.

"...because, see, I know what you're capable of and then I know who you actually are and it's two very different people..."

She closed her eyes.

"...then you switch it up. You do it t-to confuse me and- and drive me absolutely *insane* . Well, I refuse to be the only one. So you keep playing that over and over again in your mind. You think about it over and over again, how Harry-."

He was making a mess of the room before she could even finish. She cried as furniture and books and paper flew past her, always missing her, and landing on opposite sides of the room. Furniture was being thrown out of the balcony, the sound of it crashing onto the ground below reaching her ears.

She twisted her hands into her hair as he screamed and she found that she surprisingly took no pleasure in it. *This is what you wanted* , she told herself. *He deserves this* . This was true and he deserved much more, but she found herself feeling...cruel. She had thrown it in his face, knowing exactly how he would react. In fact, she had anticipated his reaction, looked forward to it even.

She had done this with the mere purpose of hurting him. She had wanted him to feel just a fraction of what she felt. She didn't want to be the only one suffering through this ordeal. She had wanted revenge, wanted to mock him and with a shock, she realized that it was something that he would have done. Did that make it wrong? Was it too cruel, even after everything he had put her through?

By the time he was done, the entire room was unrecognizable. She looked up at him as he tugged on his hair, the pale tresses sticking up all over the place as his chest heaved. His eyes were wild, darting this way and that before finally zeroing in on her like a lens. She stood on shaky legs as he approached her, refusing to crumble under his hard gaze.

They stared at one another for a long time before he crashed his lips against hers, backing her up against the wall. She was taken by surprise and didn't know how to keep up with the force of the kiss. He suddenly pulled away, resting his hands on the wall behind her before letting his head drop against her shoulder. She noticed that

his shoulders were shaking before he suddenly lifted his head, a humorless and bitter smile on his lips.

"I don't even have any right whatsoever to be upset...because this is my fault," he forced out, running his thumb down her cheek.

Hermione frowned in confusion. Hermione supposed that if she looked at it from a certain angle, she could find some way to blame him. Draco didn't elaborate, instead he backed up, a troubled look in his eyes before he left, the door slamming shut behind him.

---

"Draco told me that you were dealing with something rather...heavy."

Hermione sighed as she set Narcissa's tea down in front of her. She hadn't seen Draco in days, but she knew that he was still around. Quite frankly, after she was given time to give it some thought, she did not feel bad for what she had done. Was it petty? Yes. Cruel even? Most definitely. Was it also well deserved? Yes, she had finally concluded to herself. Would she regret it later on down the road? That was still up for debate.

Even though he didn't want to see her, he had still summoned his mother to come and keep her company as if she were a child. Narcissa was kind, she had to admit, but the woman also had her own agenda, one that coincided perfectly with her son's. The woman was sweet, yes, but Hermione felt that she also had unrealistic expectations for her son.

"He shouldn't have told you that. That wasn't his place," Hermione replied as she sat down.

Narcissa threw the younger witch what she probably thought was a comforting smile. Narcissa examined her hands before picking up her tea and taking a sip.

"He's worried. I can tell, can hear it in his voice. Whatever it is has got him...shaken up," the older woman said as she set her tea back

down.

Hermione imagined that it did.

"I would imagine so. I sort of...threw it in his face. My goal was to hurt him like he's hurt me. I know that he's your son, but I'm not sorry," Hermione replied.

Narcissa exhaled, shoulders sagging as she did so.

"I understand. I just wish that...the two of you weren't so stubborn..."

Hermione looked away, rolling her eyes at Narcissa's choice of words.

"That's an interesting way of looking at it..."

"This...news... Does it relate to your parents? Draco told me that he told you," Narcissa said.

Hermione smiled a rather cruel and bitter smile.

"No, it doesn't. Did he also tell you that I killed Lestrage?"

Narcissa choked on her tea, her eyes going wide as she hurriedly wiped at her mouth, looking up at Hermione.

"You did... *what* ?"

Hermione swallowed as Narcissa shakily set her cup down before making eye contact.

"I killed him. I don't even remember it...I just remember him taunting me and then suddenly I'm over him. The knife is in my hand and there's blood everywhere."

Hermione was proud of herself for being able to recount it without a breakdown. Of course, this also worried her as well. Narcissa's eyes softened as she reached towards the younger girl.

"Hermione..."

"Draco got what he wanted," Hermione sharply said.

"Killing someone...taking a life...it is never easy. In some situations, it cannot be avoided. I'm sorry that you had to go through that," Narcissa quietly said.

Hermione stood, walking into the kitchen, she could hear Narcissa following behind her.

"I can understand your anger and malice towards Draco. I sympathize with your need to exact revenge, to make him feel like you do."

Hermione sighed again as she gathered their dishes from their little 'luncheon'. She knew where Narcissa was headed with this conversation, she could hear it in her voice.

"Narcissa-."

"You want to hurt him and I want him to see reason. He needs to wake up, he needs to realize what he's doing and just what it could cost him. He needs to know that he could lose you any moment..."

Hermione had heard it all from the older witch before. The woman loved her son, that much was obvious, and she would clearly do anything to see him happy. Hermione just wished that she could get it through her head that Hermione was not going to be able to change him. They were not going to get married and give this woman the grandchildren she so desperately wanted. Hermione spun around.

"That's enough. I-."

Hermione cut herself off with a gasp as she looked at Narcissa with wide eyes. Draco's mother had a look of pure determination upon her face as she stared Hermione down. Hermione felt numb at first,

the shock of what had just happened frightening her more than the act itself. Then, of course, the shock wore off and she felt the pain... and it hurt like hell.

Narcissa removed the knife and Hermione collapsed, grasping her side, her body hitting the floor as she scrunched her eyes together. She could hear Narcissa yelling for Draco, but Hermione could hardly pay attention to that. Hermione pressed her hands to her skin as tightly as possible to try and stem some of the bleeding, but there was no way to accurately judge how well she was doing.

She tried to think of any healing spell, anything at all, but her mind was a complete jumbled mess. She was in pain, so at least that was a good sign. The area hadn't gone numb yet. She could hear Draco yelling now, he was right next to her. She forced her eyes open to see him yelling at Narcissa and she briefly wondered if he was capable of killing his own mother. The last thing she saw was his wild eyes as he took out his wand, aiming it right at her.

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**That whole family is cray cray. Let me know what you think!**

# Nothing's That Bad

I cannot apologize enough, you guys! I try to update no less than once a month, but sometimes life gets in the way and things get delayed. Here's an update, hoping that you guys won't scold me too much. Also, if you'll notice, the lyrics for the titles shift between songs depending on the shift in the story. This title is from a third song that will signal the new shift in the story.

## Disclaimer: I Own Nothing

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*Hermione had heard it all from the older witch before. The woman loved her son, that much was obvious, and she would clearly do anything to see him happy. Hermione just wished that she could get it through her head that Hermione was not going to be able to change him. They were not going to get married and give this woman the grandchildren she so desperately wanted. Hermione spun around.*

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"Ginny, calm down."

Blaise.

"No, I will *not* calm down! Your psycho of a mother did this. She could *die* , Draco!"

Ginny.

"Ginny, he knows that. *Look at him ...*"

Blaise's words came out harsh and biting, and she imagined that he was gesturing to Draco, wherever he was. There was a long silence, one in which the only sound Hermione could hear, was the steady beat of her heart. She heard footsteps approaching her, wherever she was, before she felt the soft caress of fingers grazing her own.

Someone slowly exhaled, the repressed irritation in the action evident.

Draco.

"Leave...now."

His words were quiet, swirling with authority that left no room for argument. Hermione heard Ginny huff, the sound of she and Blaise leaving before she sank back into unconsciousness.

---

She stirred to the feel of long fingers intertwined with her own. The other hand was brushing along the expanse of her arm, a soothing feeling that calmed her heart, she was reluctant to admit. It was quiet for a considerable amount of time before he began to speak.

"The very first time I knew I wanted you, was at the Yule Ball. Humph, I know. What a cliché, right? The guy realizes what was hidden underneath his nose all along the minute the girl gets all dolled up...except it wasn't like that."

The fingers were brushing her shoulder now.

"That night...for the first time in my life...I felt an emotion that I had never felt before. I was angry with both you and Krum. I wanted to curse him...maybe even kill him. I imagined all sorts of things that he could do to you that night...and it just made me angrier..."

Draco scoffed.

"I'm sure you can guess what I was feeling. You're Hermione Granger, so of course you could deduce. I didn't, though. I had never felt it before, I had never had any reason to feel it before. Can you imagine my complete shock at realizing that I was envious? It took me even longer to realize *why* that was so..."

He exhaled, trailing a finger down her arm.

"I wanted you. You looked...a vision in that periwinkle dress. You were easily the most beautiful witch in the room...and you weren't on *my* arm. No, you had come with Krum. You didn't pay me any mind and that infuriated me even more."

He sighed, a long tired sound.

"I wanted to Crucio you...and I wanted to shag you..."

Hermione's heart stuttered within her chest at this confession.

"It's the oddest feeling in the world, you know? Being incredibly angry with someone all the while wanting to throw them down and fuck them stupid. Then again, I have the strongest feeling that you understand..."

She heard him stand, slowly walking around the room.

"From that moment on, I did whatever was necessary to get your attention, to get you to look at me with those deep, brown eyes."

He was beside her again, his fingers running through her hair.

"Night after night, I've imagined what it would be like to gaze into those eyes while I give you pleasure you've never known. I want to wake up to those brown eyes every morning for the rest of my life. You've bewitched me, Hermione..."

His lips brushed her ear, one hand rubbing circles onto her side.

"The things I've done, the people I've hurt...the people I've *killed* ... None of that is going to be in vain. There are people after you, people who are trying to take you away from me-," he cut himself off, huffing.

He took a deep, shaky breath, grabbing her hand and bringing it to his lips.

"You are my life, Hermione, and I will kill every single one of them if I have to."

---

"Blaise and I went away. I realize now that we needed it. I told you once before that everything happens for a reason, and I believe that now more than ever. I wasn't ready to be a mother, especially now with everything that's going on. Besides, as much as I like to pretend that I'm perfectly happy here, I do miss my family. I would have wanted to tell my parents that they were going to be grandparents. I

would have wanted to tell my brothers that they're going to be uncles. It's something that I would have wanted to share with them."

Ginny sighed.

"Draco told us about what happened with Lestrage, Hermione. I wish...I wish that I had been here for you. Maybe you wouldn't be where you are right now if I had been. However, like I said, everything happens for a reason and..."

Ginny scoffed.

"...and I don't think I've ever seen Draco look so scared in his life. I've never seen him so angry, so out of control, so conflicted. Hermione, he... Narcissa-," Ginny broke off with a sob.

Ginny sniffled, taking a deep breath.

"When you wake up...I don't know what you'll be waking up to. It's getting bad, Hermione. She's coming for you and I don't know if Draco will be able to stop her. To be perfectly honest with you, I don't know which outcome I fear more; him killing her or her killing him. Blaise has been talking about it for a while, about how Draco seems to be doing his own thing. How Draco is fighting for one side and one side only; his own."

Ginny grabbed Hermione's hand, squeezing it.

"If he kills her, he's done for. He will have chosen you, a muggle born, over them."

---

Hermione exhaled, taking in the noises around her as her hearing was the first to return. She noted that it was quiet. Then came the feeling, and her body felt like it was weighed down with sand. How was it possible to feel sluggish when she hadn't even started moving yet? Her entire being felt tired, including the little things like her

fingers and her toes. It took almost all of her strength to force her eyes open.

Surprisingly, the room was dark. Save for the moonlight shining in through the balcony windows, of course. The room was bathed in the eerie low light, casting shadows here and there. As Hermione's eyes landed on the black couch across from the bed, she then realized why the room looked so familiar. She found herself relieved to be in a familiar place.

She pushed herself up onto her elbows, wincing at the slight uncomfortable feeling in her side. She pressed the palms of her hands into the mattress, attempting to push herself into a sitting position when she let out a loud hiss. Someone moved so suddenly beside her and she shrieked in fright at the silhouette of a figure beside her in the bed. She stared at the figure and it seemed to stare at her too before the room was suddenly bathed in light.

Hermione's hand was pressed to her chest as she attempted to calm her erratic heartbeat. She had not even noticed that she was not alone in the bed. She stared at Draco for what seemed to be a long time, drinking him in.

His pale hair was unruly, letting her know that his slumber was not a peaceful one, instead filled with much unrest and many toss and turns. His hard, piercing eyes softened ever so slightly at the sight of her. He scooted closer, reaching out to run his hand down her face and Hermione remained still, unsure of what to do, unsure of what was about to happen.

She didn't have time to dwell on that thought long before his lips were suddenly covering hers with a fierceness she had never seen in him. One hand cradled the back of her neck while the other was on her arm, then her leg, back, stomach, never staying in one place too long, as if he were trying to get the feel that she was really here. Hermione surprised herself when she did not pull away.

She welcomed the feel of his hands on her, his lips on her own, the taste of him within her mouth. He nipped and tugged on her lips, their teeth gnashing together as he attempted to breathe her in, keeping her essence within him. She twisted in his arms and she winced again, letting out a small cry of pain.

Draco pulled back, cradling her face within his hands as she laid her hand on her side. She looked up in time for him to graze his lips against her own. He exhaled, the air blowing around her face.

"I thought that you would never come back to me," he breathed against her lips.

"How long...?"

He closed his eyes, resting his head against her chest.

"Two weeks. The healer said that she could only do so much, the rest was up to you and your own body..."

Hermione frowned, quite alarmed as his words reached her ears. She had been unconscious for two weeks straight...she'd been in a coma, basically. He turned his head, pressing his lips against her collarbone.

"There was so much blood...it was all over the kitchen floor, me... you."

Hermione's heart skipped a beat as she recalled trying to frantically come up with any healing spell that she could think of. Her mind had drawn a blank.

"Narcissa?"

Draco stiffened against her and before she knew it, she was alone in the bed.

"Weasley and Blaise have returned, they've been worried about you," he said, walking towards the mirror and fixing his hair.

Hermione frowned, worry growing in the pit of her stomach at his avoidance of her question.

"Draco..."

"Of course, Ginevra was being a nag, per usual. Somehow, some kind of way, this became my fault. Although...I suppose she isn't wrong," he scathingly murmured that last part.

"Draco...where is Narcissa?"

"You pulled through, though. I knew that you would..."

Hermione huffed, throwing the covers off of her and immediately hopping out of the bed. Only to collapse onto the floor as soon as her feet touched the ground. She winced, her hands and knees taking the brunt of her fall. His hurried footsteps approached her and he bent down to swing her up into his arms, one arm underneath her legs, the other underneath her back.

"You're still incredibly weak. Just let me know when you need to-."

Hermione reached up, pressing her fingers around his jaw.

" *Where is Narcissa?* "

His eyes hardened, jaw clenching as an unfamiliar emotion passed through his eyes. Hermione's eyes widened as she recognized the emotion to be sorrow. Her heart sank down to her stomach and her throat became incredibly thick all of a sudden, the realization seeping into her bones.

"What did you do?"

Her question came out soft, as if she were too afraid to really voice, too afraid to get an answer. Draco turned his head, cold eyes downcast.

"What did you do," she asked more forcefully this time.

He closed his eyes before collapsing onto the edge of the bed with her still in his arms. He opened them, a hollow, defeated look swirling within their depths.

"I did what needed to be done."

His words washed over her like ice water and Hermione's mouth fell open in disbelief. She brought her hand up to her mouth, trying to hold it in, but she failed. Tears skipped down her cheeks at an impressive pace, collecting where her hand met her skin. Draco slowly turned to look at her.

"Why are you crying? She tried to kill you..."

How was it that she had long realized what he could not? How did she tell him that Narcissa had, in fact, not been trying to kill her, but instead tried to force Draco to realize the possible outcome of his behavior? How did she tell him that this was his mother's extreme way of getting him to shape up? Narcissa had wanted him to be happy, so badly that she had risked, and ultimately forfeited, her life while doing so? Hermione said none of this, though. Instead, she simply said:

"Draco, she was your mother."

"...and you are my life," he said with conviction.

Hermione bit her lip.

"She knew what you meant to me and she tried to take that away from me. She tried to take you away..."

His arms tightened around her and Hermione glanced down, unsure of what else to say. A cold feeling washed over her as it finally sunk in that Draco had killed his mother. The only person in the world he was possibly capable of loving. He had done so for her, had killed her because he saw Narcissa as a threat to *them*. If she'd had any doubts before, they were long gone now as she realized that this



man had no boundaries. This man knew no limits when it came to ensuring that she would remain by his side forever.

---

"Ginny, I'm alright."

A tired, yet amused, voice said, the sound muffled by the other girl's hair.

"I know."

A small voice whispered.

"...so you can let go now. You could have let go fifteen minutes ago."

Ginny sniffed, reluctantly pulling her arms away. Her eyes and nose were red, almost matching her hair.

"I know, I'm sorry. I just...you scared me. You're okay and I just want to make sure."

Hermione sighed and grabbed her hand, heart clenching at the expression on Ginny's face. She looked like a scared little girl, reminding Hermione of the simpler times back at Hogwarts...before Blaise...before Draco...

"I know, I know. It's alright... I'm fine," Hermione reassured.

Ginny shakily nodded.

"Yeah, you just...you really scared us. I thought that you were never going to wake up," Ginny whispered, on the verge of tears again.

"...but I did."

"Yes, yes. I should have known. You're Hermione Granger, you're a fighter."

Hermione gave a half smile and Ginny returned it.

"Yeah...I am," she whispered.

"We didn't know what to do. The healer told us that it was just going to be a waiting game... That was the worst possible thing she could have said to Draco," Ginny murmured.

Hermione frowned in confusion.

"What do you mean?"

"He killed her," Ginny said, as if it were the most obvious thing in the world "...he just...snapped."

Hermione's eyes widened as she took this in, leaning back to rest against the headboard. He conveniently left that part out.

"She told him that there was nothing else she could do and he snapped her neck on the spot."

Hermione was not surprised by this in slightest. When it came to her, his reactions always exceeded well past the extreme. This was who he was, she had accepted it.

"...it's crazy, isn't it?"

Hermione slowly looked up, eyes connecting with Ginny's.

"What is?"

"There's no safer place for you than by his side. Oddly enough, it's also the riskiest," Ginny scoffed.

Hermione looked down again, not sure how to respond to that.

"He told me about Narcissa," Hermione murmured with a frown.

"Yeah. That's something that I would much rather forget," Ginny quietly responded.

Hermione glanced up, startled.

"You...you saw?"

Ginny swallowed, nodding.

"It was after the healer told us that she'd done all she could. When he was done with her, he went downstairs... Blaise tried to stop him, but he was too far gone. I just...I don't understand why she would do that to you? She had to have known what would happen. Then again, maybe crazy just runs in the family," Ginny whispered.

*Or maybe it's just contagious* , Hermione thought.

---

"This is ridiculous," Hermione sighed, sinking into the duvet.

"Believe me, princess, I would much rather be anywhere else but here, but you know how he is. You almost died, unconscious for a little over two weeks straight. You'll be lucky if you can even go to the bathroom by yourself," he replied, completely uninterested.

Hermione didn't appreciate his tone and glared up at him as he sat on the couch, flipping through a book that clearly held no interest for him. Even though she and Blaise had somewhat buried the hatchet, so to speak, it was going to be a long time before they were ever best buds. She was still bitter about the fact that he had shown his true loyalties in the worst of ways, even if she had long expected it to be that way. She also knew that a part of him, and she wasn't sure how small or big that part was, still blamed her for Ginny's miscarriage. Somewhere deep inside, a small part of him *hated* her.

"Then leave," she demanded of him.

She didn't want him there any more than he wanted to be there.

"We both know that I am far from an idiot. Therefore, that's not going to happen any time soon," he smoothly replied.

Hermione sighed again, feeling trapped in the now sickeningly familiar room. Draco was scared to leave her alone for even a minute and it had grated on her nerves since day one. She wouldn't even be in this mess if it weren't for him.

"You know, there's something that I've always wanted to ask you..."

Hermione cautiously looked up, his tone worrying her and the look in his eyes worrying her even more.

"Just because you've always wanted to ask, that doesn't guarantee that you'll get an answer," she replied.

"Humor me," he said, throwing the book aside and rising from the chair.

Hermione crossed her arms over her chest, deciding that it couldn't hurt. Besides, it wasn't like she had much else to do.

"Why *didn't* you run off with Teddy?"

Hermione's eyes widened slightly, this question being the very last that she was expecting.

"I...I don't want to talk about Theo," she quietly responded.

Theodore was still a sore spot for her and Hermione was sure that Blaise knew that. His head was tilted to the side as he gazed down at her.

"I'm just curious. I mean, Theo is virtually the perfect guy..."

He slowly walked towards her.

"He's handsome, from a well off family, very kind and sensitive, something I know you girls love so much..."

The mocking tone in his voice grew the closer he got.

"He's exactly the kind of mushy guy who would run you a hot bath at the end of the day and listen to you rant about all of your troubles," he chuckled, a dark and menacing sound.

Hermione glared up at him. He pressed one hand against the headboard, a Malfoy like smirk gracing his lips.

"I just didn't."

He frowned.

"Why not, though? Did you not find him attractive?"

"Don't be absurd," Hermione scoffed.

Theo was an extremely attractive guy and they both knew it. He and Draco shared some similarities in their appearances, their fair skin and tall stature, for example. However, appearance wise, Theo was the dark to Draco's light. His blueberry colored eyes contrasted his midnight black hair perfectly. His long lashes and full pink lips gave him some femininity, softening his features, but his sharp jaw structure equally made up for that. To put it simply, they both knew that Theo was a dreamboat. They both also knew that any girl would have jumped at the chance to have been in Hermione's place.

"Well, then what was it? Why stay?"

"You know why..."

"Do I? Did you have such little faith in Teddy, that you thought him so incapable of protecting you from Draco? Or is that simply the easiest thing to tell yourself?"

"I didn't want to risk his life like that," she whispered, looking up at him.

He had a thoughtful look on his face, before shaking his head.

"Mm, you know what? I just don't believe you..."

"Well, it's a good thing that I don't really give a damn about what you think, Blaise," she bit out.

"What kept you here, huh?"

She bit her lip, refusing to look at him.

"He was offering it all to you, Hermione. Why didn't you go?"

She turned away, opting not to answer him, refusing to give him the satisfaction. She remained still as he leaned in, lips next to her ear.

"Teddy was offering you the world," he whispered.

She whipped around, her reply already falling from her lips before her mind had time to process.

"And Draco's not?"

Blaise leaned back, looking at her with a raised eyebrow, the smirk even more sinister now. Hermione's mouth parted and she blinked as she realized what she'd just said and she swallowed, glancing at her lap before looking away. Blaise made a humming noise before walking away with a chuckle, picking up where he left off with his book.

As he sank into the couch, glancing up at her over the brim of his book, Hermione knew that she was right all along in assuming that he was no better than Draco. He was just as bad, but much more clever about hiding it. Both he and Draco were two different devils of the same hell.

---

"Where the hell were you?"

That was what greeted her almost immediately after she stepped into the room and Hermione looked up in exasperation. She used the last bit of her strength to pull herself inside of the room, but Draco

was already there, one arm around her waist and the other being used to close the door.

"I was downstairs. Last time I checked, that wasn't exactly a crime," she breathed.

The journey up the stairs had taken more out of her than she thought. Hermione wasn't sure how long it would take for her full strength to return, but she needed it back and fast. She didn't think it possible for Draco to be any worse, but this was clearly the universe's sick way of proving her wrong. Wherever Narcissa was, she was no doubt smiling fondly.

Hermione, on the other hand, wasn't. She saw this as nothing more than Draco not wanting anything to happen to one of his 'possessions'. She was like a glass vase, delicately handled and hovered over because he was afraid of her getting a single scratch.

He huffed at her response and Hermione felt her anger rise.

"I'm in this predicament because of you. I am here because of *you* . If you want to be angry with anyone, be angry with yourself, Draco," she harshly said, attempting to move past him.

His hand shot out like lightning, halting her in her place so fast that it startled her. She slowly looked up, her hard brown eyes meeting his equally cold silver ones. His face was only inches away from her own as he stared into her very soul.

"That is where you are wrong, sweetheart..."

"What on earth are you-?"

"Did Theodore not offer you a way out? Did you not have your chance to run?"

Hermione clenched her jaw.

"You chose to stay."

"...and we both know why! You would have found us, you would have killed him. Theo didn't deserve that," she angrily replied, yanking on her arm.

He only pulled her closer, his lips grazing her ear.

"That's not what I heard," he purred.

Hermione closed her eyes, cursing Blaise to the darkest and lowest pit of whatever hell there was.

"When are you going to start being honest with yourself...?"

He brushed his lips along her jaw.

"...you fight and you fight. One of these days, Hermione, one day soon...you're going to grow tired of fighting. You'll grow tired of lying to Ginny, to Blaise, to me...to yourself," he whispered.

He pulled away, one hand bracing the back of her neck while the other ran down her in between her breasts, resting on her stomach. He tilted her head back, forcing her to look up at him.

"You want me, Hermione. Not just my body, no...no, you want *all* of me. Why is that so bad?"

Hermione stared at him, heart pounding within her chest and she swallowed, eyes watering. Her lips parted and she let out a shaky breath, one lone tear skipping down her cheek.

"You killed Dumbledore. You allowed those Pureblood extremists to take over our school, our Ministry. Merlin knows what my friends and school mates are going through, right now. You...you're fighting for someone who wants to see me, and anyone like me, dead-."

"I fight for me," he snarled.

" *It doesn't matter!* If you stand back and do *nothing* , then you are taking the side of the oppressor."



His hand tightened on the back of her neck.

"You've hurt people, innocent people. You've killed and continue to do so and take pleasure in it. You tortured Theo for loving me, something you know you could never be capable of..."

Hermione swallowed.

"You killed your parents-."

" *For you!* I did all of those things for you! What more do I have to do? What more do you need of me?"

Hermione cried as he shook her, her hands digging into his arms to steady herself.

"I didn't ask for any of that! I didn't ask for any of this!"

Hermione sobbed, chest tightening.

"I don't want this. I don't...I don't want...to want you. It's unfair that I find myself in this predicament when I didn't go looking for it," she forced out.

"Well, that's too bad, because you're not going anywhere. You...are my life..."

Hermione had a sense of déjà vu, the words sounding all too familiar.

"You're all I think about. You've consumed my very being. I've tortured for you, I've killed for you and I would gladly do it over and over again, as many times as it takes..." he said through clenched teeth.

His hands moved to her arms, tightening ever so slightly. Hermione swallowed as he chuckled, a hollow, humorless sound.

"It's...it's so frustrating because I *know* that you feel the same way. You can't help it, just like I can't help it, but you... You continue to fight it, to deny yourself of what you truly want while it seems that I have no choice in the matter," he harshly whispered.

Hermione let out a shaky breath.

"You're a monster, Draco," she replied in an equally quiet voice.

His jaw suddenly clenched and his eyes grew dark as he straightened up, pulling her up with him. He yanked her closer, their faces a hair's width apart.

"It seems that we've lost our footing somewhere..."

Hermione's chest heaved.

"It seems that you've forgotten so quickly, so, let me be so gracious as to remind you..."

He reached up, trailing a finger down her cheek.

"You are mine as much as I am yours..."

A touch on her neck.

"You are it for me and I know that the feeling is more than mutual. If you manage to escape, I'll hunt you down..."

A brush against her shoulder.

"You can hide all you want, but I'll find you..."

His thumb rubbed along her stomach.

"You can dare even try to move on...", he chuckled, finding that amusing "...but we both know that I'll gladly slit his throat on the spot."

Hermione's heart sank, nothing but truth in his words. He grinned.

"Why put yourself through that...why put anyone else through that, when we both know the outcome?"

Hermione looked down, but he grabbed her chin, raising her face. He bent down, looking into her eyes like a parent would a child.

"Aren't you tired of fighting, Hermione?"

She bit her tongue, already knowing the answer to that.

"Don't you want to just breathe? Relax...?"

She tried to look away but he held her chin in between his fingers with an iron grip.

"Don't you want to be free of that tightness in your chest? That weight on your shoulders?"

Hermione swallowed, eyes never leaving his as he leaned in.

"Don't you just want to be worshipped? Don't you want to forget about all of the heartache you've suffered? Don't you deserve that?"

She did deserve that and she began to nod, but thankfully caught herself. It was too late, however, Draco had already seen. A slow smirk danced across his lips as he snaked one arm around her waist, brushing his lips against her ear.

"Don't you want to know what it really feels like to make love? To be tangled up in someone who you crave?"

Hermione tried to pull away, but he tightened his grip, leaning her back, exposing her neck. His lips grazed her neck, teeth scraping the flesh.

"Don't you want to know what a first time is truly supposed to feel like?"

The door flying open broke the spell, and Hermione found herself upright, still in his arms, head swimming with confusion. Blaise stood at the opening, a long black coat covering his being with two more in his hand. Two, which he threw at Draco.

"Everything's ready. We need to be long gone within the next hour," he said.

Draco quickly slid into his coat and proceeded to put her arms through the other. Hermione blinked, the fog finally clearing.

"Ready? Ready for what? Where are you going?"

"We...," he gestured to all of them "...and Weasley, are leaving."

Hermione's eyes widened, the confusion returning.

"Leaving? No, absolutely not. I'm not going anywhere with you," she responded.

The thought of how close she was to giving in just then was fresh in her mind, scaring the hell out of her.

"That's too bad because you don't have much of a choice. She'll know to look here," he said, buttoning his coat and guiding her out of the door.

"What-who- no! What is going on?"

She looked over her shoulder as Blaise closed the bedroom door behind them, hurrying past them down the stairs. She was suddenly brought to a halt, Draco's piercing eyes boring into her own.

"Sweetheart, have you forgotten so quickly whose husband you murdered?"

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**Let me know what you think!**

## If It Feels Good

It's an update! I try so hard not to take so long to update, but I'm just hardly ever satisfied. not sure if anyone else has noticed, but I've noticed that my last few chapters just seem to be lacking in quality. I wasn't pleased with them, and I feel like my writing for this story has been getting rather weak and sloppy lately. I don't like that. I'm trying to fix that. Fortunately, I am rather content with this chapter. Maybe it has something to do with it being purely Dramione, who knows.

Also, I realize it may be a lot, but I wonder if any of you can remember an important detail from the night on the Astronomy Tower (Ch 4 of M&M), and then recall an even more important detail from Ch. 6 of M&M? Something that will be very important later on?

### Disclaimer: I Own Nothing

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The polished wooden floor was silent beneath her feet as she walked around the living room. The kitchen was directly across from her, and to her right, there was a short hallway that lead to a bathroom and linen closet. Just next to the hallway was the stairs, and she slowly climbed them one step at a time, her hand trailing along the banister.

There were only two rooms upstairs, one with a bathroom within it. The doors stood on each side of the stairs and directly in front of her was a window with a seat. The corners of her lips turned up ever so gently as she walked towards it, sinking down and leaning her back against the wall. She'd always wanted a window seat.

Her eyes fell onto Draco, who was outside in the yard putting up wards and enchantments. *That'll never work* , she thought to herself.

*She's going to find us, going to find me* . Of that, Hermione was certain.

She had seen what people would do, the lengths they would go to once they were pushed too far. Hermione honestly didn't know how much of a heart Bellatrix had left. She didn't even know if Bellatrix had still loved her husband, dearly, or was merely avenging him out of duty, simply because it was *she* who had killed him. Hermione did know that she was tired of hiding, and she was tired of fighting. She was tired of fighting...everything.

She pressed her forehead to the glass, bringing her fingers up to trace along the pane. Draco's words waded through the depths of her mind, the familiarity within them giving her a sense of comfort. On some level, she acknowledged that his disturbing monologue should have scared her. That his words should have unsettled her, rattling her sense of safety around him, but they had not. Instead, she welcomed them, because they related to something within her.

"You're my sickness....," she repeated.

She lifted her eyes and found the yard empty. She wasn't worried, and it wasn't long before she felt his presence behind her.

"What if she kills me, Draco," she suddenly asked.

"That's not going to happen."

"It could....," she whispered.

His fingers came up to rest along her neck, gliding towards her collarbone and adding pressure.

"Do you want it to...?"

His question held a threatening and malicious undertone, one that did not faze her. Hermione chuckled.

"Once upon a time, I probably did, but no. Not today," she honestly replied.

He leaned down, resting his chin on her shoulder and Hermione exhaled.

"What do you want?"

She turned her head, her lips a hair's width away from his own.

"Right now..."

She hesitated, eyes running over his face.

"...I want you to tell me how you got here. I want to know why you took the mark," she whispered.

"You're awfully curious this evening," he purred.

"I've got nothing better to do than ask questions. It would be stupid to try and leave, and even if I did, where would I go? Your crazy aunt – no offense- is out for blood, and you know what, Draco? She scares me. Bellatrix Lestrange makes my skin crawl. She's deranged, tortured, and sadistic. I don't even want to imagine what she would do if she ever got her hands on me..."

Hermione fully turned around now, leaning her back against the window and looking up at Draco as he towered over her.

"...we're alone here, and I've decided that I want to know everything."

Draco leaned over her, his hand pressed against the wall, the other spread along his hip, pushing his coat back.

"You know why I took the mark."

"...but there has to be more, right? I cannot be the sole reason that you chose this life," she said, disbelieving.

"...and why not?"

Hermione opened and closed her mouth, unsure of how to respond to such a statement. Statement, not a question, because Draco had worded it in such a way that told Hermione that she was, in fact, the sole reason he had taken the mark.

"You told me once...that you didn't trust Dumbledore to give you what you wanted. Me... Is that correct?"

"Yes."

"Draco, I was never Dumbledore's to give away. I was never anyone's..."

Hermione looked away from him.

"I could have helped you. I could have given you what you wanted seeing as I'm the only one with the power to do so. You didn't need to trust Dumbledore..."

Her eyes met his.

"...you just needed to trust *me* ."

She stood, brushing past him and making her way downstairs.

"We both know how that would have went, Hermione," Draco called after her, his footsteps right behind her own.

"Yes, it would have been trying..."

She spun around to face him.

"It would have been difficult, obviously, but isn't anything worth fighting for is? All I'm hearing, Draco, is that...you took the easy way out."

"Where was I when 'easy' happened?"



She frowned at him.

"You didn't want to fight for me," she whispered.

"All I've done is fight for you. Why the hell do you think we're here?"

"This is different. It's easy to fight against people who are trying to kill me. It's easy to fight for me when the opponent doesn't give a rat's ass about me. It's not so easy when the opponents are my friends, my family, people who have my best interests at heart," she replied.

She took a step towards him.

"It's not so easy when the battlefield isn't in your territory."

---

"Do you honestly feel nothing when you kill people?"

"More often than not..."

Hermione glanced down as she processed this. She still drew a blank every time she thought of Lestrage, and she couldn't help but wonder if she too had felt nothing? Or if she did feel something, what was it? Had she been afraid? Had she been angry?

"I don't know how you do it. I don't know how you can just look someone in the face and take their life as if it had always belonged to you to begin with," she whispered.

"You'll find that it has an oddly calming effect."

Her eyes flickered up to connect with his, and she looked away with a sigh.

A part of her knew that when it came down to it, she might just have to kill Bellatrix. She didn't want to, she wished to avoid it as best as possible, but Hermione wasn't naïve. She knew that the only way to stop Bellatrix was to stop her heart. Was it selfish, cowardly even, to

want Draco to do it for her? After all, Lestranger's blood was on her hands, not his.

*But Draco was the one to bring him there* , she thought to herself.

This was true as well. Draco had every intentions of her avenging her parents' death. He had gotten exactly what he wanted. She couldn't help but wonder... Was this a part of his plan, as well? Surely he must have known that Bellatrix would find out some kind of way.

Hermione lifted her eyes again, regarding him in silence.

What could he possibly gain from killing Bellatrix? Or maybe, the better question should be; what could he possibly gain from having her kill Bellatrix?

"What do you feel the other times when you kill people? The incidents that would fall into the 'than not' category?"

"...satisfaction," he answered without hesitation.

He turned to look up at her from his place on the couch.

"Is that what you felt?"

"...I don't remember," she quietly replied.

She wrapped her arms around herself, bringing her legs up to rest her chin on her knees.

"How am I going to fight Bellatrix? I can't even cast a stupid Cruciatus Curse," she mumbled, resting her cheek against her arms to look at him.

A slow smirk danced along Draco's lips and his eyes swirled with amusement, a hidden joke in there somewhere.

"You'd be surprised at the secrets your mind withholds from you."

"Are you ever afraid of *him* ?"

She didn't know what possessed her to ask such a question. Surely, even Draco wasn't completely fearless. Surely, he feared him as much as every other wizard.

"No."

Hermione sat up straight.

"I don't believe you..."

Draco raised an eyebrow.

"Why not? What makes him so special? Is he not just like the rest of us?"

No, Hermione wanted to say. He wasn't just like the rest of them. He was a dark wizard who had done the darkest of deeds and split his soul.

"Horcruxes can be destroyed," he said, surprising her.

Her eyes widened as she stared at him, and his smirk grew.

"What? You thought I didn't know?"

"Horcruxes aside, he was still a very skillful wizard before he... damaged what remained of his soul," Hermione said.

"While that may be true...you are not born with skill, Hermione. He's human, just like the rest of us, and that makes him conquerable."

Hermione suddenly looked at him in a new light as she read between his words. She frowned.

"You think Harry's going to beat him? You think he's going to fall..."

"Oh, I'm counting on it," he purred.

"Then...why-."

She cut herself off, certain that she didn't have to clarify any further, but Draco didn't respond. He simply grinned at her before rising and walking into the kitchen, leaving her there to ponder everything.

---

Hermione ghosted her fingers over his shoulder, close enough to feel him, but far enough away so as to not touch him.

*"You're my sickness..."*

She recalled the words and lowered her eyes to rest on his face as he turned over to blink up at her. If he was surprised to find her in his bed, and not her own, then he did not show it.

"The Cruciatus Curse... It has little to no effect on you, correct?"

"...depends on who's on the other end of the wand."

His voice was riddled with slight confusion.

"I need to be prepared for the worst. If Bellatrix takes me..."

"She won't."

"... *if she does* , I refuse to break. I won't give her the satisfaction," she said, recalling Neville's parents.

She shuddered and scooted closer to Draco.

"That gain...learning to withstand it... Is it safe to assume that it did not come without pain?"

"...Yes."

Hermione exhaled a shaky breath.

"I want you to teach me..."

---

*Hermione blinked, eyes focusing in like a lens as the blindfold was gently removed from around her eyes, returning her site back to her. She stared at the modest house before her with a fearful curiosity before shifting her eyes around her. She had no idea where they were, Draco had made sure of that before securing the blindfold. They had apparated, several times actually, cautious in covering their tracks.*

*She stepped away from Draco as he and Blaise spoke, paying no mind to her as she gazed at the land before her. Wherever they were, it was secluded, that was certain. The house was surrounded by trees, trees which Hermione did not find terrifying, but instead... ethereal.*

*The leaves that adorned the trees were a vibrant green, and splashes of color infiltrated her vision as flowers of varying colors bloomed along the bushes and edge of the woods. Directly in front of her was a small lake with a dock as white as the moon, and said moonlight reflected off of the water, casting light onto them and the house.*

*Hermione turned back around and gazed up at the house that she would probably describe as a generous cottage. It wasn't very large, but it did have two stories. It was cream colored with a cobblestone foundation. It was decorated with a brown trimming, the windows and shutters a dull, faded green. It was cute, it was whimsical, and it was a place that Hermione might have read about in a book of fairytales. Except...*

*This was no fairytale.*

*She was here because a demented and deranged witch was after her, after her blood.*

*Bellatrix Lestrange wanted Hermione dead.*

*In all honesty, Hermione had forgotten about her. Hermione had actually forgotten just who it was that she had killed. The whole ordeal had been such a turning point for her, downright traumatizing, and she had just wanted to forget it. She had wanted to put it behind her. Hermione knew that was impossible, a silly thought even. She was never going to be able to forget about it.*

*She had taken a life. It did not matter what Lestrage had done to her. It did not matter that some, many, would say that he deserved it. She had taken it upon herself to remove him from this world. What right did she have to make that call? **Who was she?***

*Draco and Blaise's conversation finally pierced her ears.*

*"...I'll kill her myself, Blaise, I don't care. Family or not...she's a crazy bitch whose husband had it coming."*

*"...and what are you going to do about...? Are you going to lock her inside? Have her run into the woods like a fearful rabbit?"*

*"She's going to be safe. That's all that-."*

*"No," Hermione interrupted.*

*Her voice caught their attention and they both turned to look at her. Her eyes found Draco's and she held his gaze.*

*"I'm not going to run."*

*"Hermione..."*

*"I said, no. If she finds us, I will not run. What exactly am I running from? The truth? I killed him, Draco. Not Blaise, not you, but me. It was no one but me," she firmly stated.*

*"I am not going to stand by and let you get yourself killed because of your nobility," Draco spat the word, disgusted.*

*She rushed towards him and firmly grabbed his arm, forcing him to face her just as he turned back to speak to Blaise. Fire burned in her eyes as she looked up at him.*

*"I will look her in the face and own up to what I did. Sure, maybe he did have it coming, but it is not my job to play God. It is not my job to be the judge, jury, and executioner. If she wants to attempt to avenge her husband, then she can, she has that right. Will she succeed? I hope not, because I don't plan on going down without a fight."*

*Draco stared at her, an unfamiliar expression swimming across his features. He said nor did nothing for a while before his fingers finally came up to graze her cheek. He turned to Blaise.*

*"...well, that settles that, I suppose. You should get back to Ginevra, Blaise."*

*They both gave each other a firm nod before Blaise disappeared, leaving Draco and Hermione alone.*

*She heaved a tired sigh as her eyes took in the scenery for a second time, taking in things she had not noticed before. Draco watched her and she took note as he walked around her, stopping to stand behind her, his chest brushing against her back. She did not protest as his hands came up to rest on her shoulders, his fingers kneading the skin through her coat.*

*"Do you like it?"*

*His voice was but a whisper within her ear.*

*"It's...cute. Under different circumstances, I'm sure I would be ecstatic to be in such a place..."*

*It wasn't a lie. Hermione was never one for flashy things. She loved simplicity, appreciated it even.*

*"This place...this house was meant to be ours after..." he trailed off, allowing Hermione's mind to fill in the blanks.*

*She swallowed as she gazed at the abode and was reluctant to admit that...she could see it. She could see Draco carrying her over the threshold, a bundle of white in his arms, and he, a vision in black as always. She could see it, but she could also see it for what it really was. A hideaway, a prison disguised as a fairytale.*

*Although, she supposed that after everything Draco had done, a modest and secluded life would be all they could have.*

*She suddenly stepped away from him and slowly turned to face him, eyes lifting to meet his. He gazed at her so intensely, something she should have been used to, but in truth, Hermione would never grow numb to it.*

*"Why do you want to marry me?"*

*If Draco was surprised by her question, then he did not show it.*

*"You're the best," he answered without hesitation.*

*"So you want a trophy wife, then?"*

*Draco threw his head back and laughed, a chilling sound. He suddenly sobered up, his eyes fixing on her, tilting his head as if she'd just said the funniest thing.*

*"You know me better than that, Hermione."*

*Her name seemed to roll off of his tongue like a purr.*

*" **Pansy** is a trophy wife, **Daphne** is a trophy wife. Astoria, Tracy, Celeste, any other pureblood Slytherin bimbo you can think of. Those are trophy wives. They're dull, they're dumb, and the only thing they're good for is wrapping their mediocre lips around my cock," Draco spat.*



*Hermione swallowed at the venom within his voice.*

*"Then...why...? What makes me the best?"*

*Draco chuckled without humor, his lips curling over his teeth.*

*"Those girls, and many more like them, are brainless vultures who only care about my name. They would do anything for me..."*

*He began to pace around her, and Hermione turned her head, never taking her eyes off of him.*

*"...they would sacrifice any and everything just to be beneath me for one night. Just to claim that they opened their legs for Draco Malfoy. Hell, they'd sacrifice the world just to have my ring on their finger..."*

*Hermione stared, transfixed, as he continued.*

*"...I could murder their friends, their entire family right before their very eyes, and they would simply look at me with such devotion and adoration and would say..." he leaned into her ear "...'thank you, Draco'."*

*"You're awfully...sure of yourself," Hermione breathed.*

*Draco stopped to stand in front of her, silver eyes matching the moon, his hands disappearing into his pockets. His face was blank, devoid of any trace of humor.*

*"I speak the truth and we both know it. They would excuse everything I do. They would surrender their dignity, their morals, their opinions, and their minds...their identities, just to keep me on their arm."*

*Draco scoffed, tilting his head to the side.*

*"They're...puppets. They're mindless admirers who have no sense of self-worth. They're pitiful," he whispered in amusement.*

*"...and me? What am I?"*

*"You're my destruction."*

*Hermione's eyes widened and Draco chuckled.*

*"You've taken over every part of me like a fucking parasite."*

*Hermione took a step back, but Draco followed.*

*"You've snaked your way inside of me, Hermione. You've taken up residence, and eventually, I just let you stay. I let you grow and spread until you're all I think about. There was a time when I thought about..." he chuckled, shrugging "...just killing you."*

*Hermione stumbled back at this revelation.*

*"Surely, that would have been easier. Surely, it would have been so much simpler to just slit your throat, or take the easy way out and use my wand..."*

*He sighed, a sad sound.*

*"...but that was a long time ago. I'm past that now. I stopped fighting ages ago and just let you in. However...I still think about wrapping my hands around that pretty little neck. I think about doing it while you're beneath me, bringing you to the edge of both completion and death at the same time. I think about the feel of you tightening around me while your heartbeat slows, the sight of your eyes simultaneously brightening and burning out while I take your life..."*

*"...I always let go, though. I always allow you to live, handing your life back to you like a gift. It's...surreal, isn't it? The idea of holding someone else's life in your hands, literally. The idea of being in control of that light shining in their eyes."*

*Draco shook his head, his thumb grazing her cheek now.*

*"Of course, I would never do that. My heartbeat coincides with your own, and ending your life would mean ending mine too," he whispered.*

*He leaned in, brushing his lips ever so gently against her cheek.*

*"You're my sickness that I just can't kill."*

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**Let me know what you think!**

# I'm That Voice Inside Your Head

An update!

**Warning:** For those who are squeamish or easily repulsed by graphic details of violence involving blood.

**Disclaimer:** I Own Nothing

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*"I need to be prepared for the worst. If Bellatrix takes me..."*

*"She won't."*

*"...if she does, I refuse to break. I won't give her the satisfaction," she said, recalling Neville's parents.*

*She shuddered and scooted closer to Draco.*

*"That gain...learning to withstand it... Is it safe to assume that it did not come without pain?"*

*"...Yes."*

*Hermione exhaled a shaky breath.*

*"I want you to teach me..."*

---

Hermione collapsed, her chin connecting with the wooden floors, making her wince as she fought to compose herself. Her breaths came out in harsh pants, unruly hair sticking to her face as a light sheen of sweat covered her skin. Her eyes were unclear and unfocused, the room swaying, and her body trembled from the aftershocks of the curse.

How did Draco *do* this?

She felt that at any moment, she was going to be unbelievably sick. *You asked for this* , she reminded herself. That she did, and while she knew that it would be hard, she didn't imagine just how hard it would be. Draco made it look like cake. Her lips trembled as she fought to open her mouth and speak.

"I...I c-can't d-do this," she wheezed out.

"You can, and you will," came his harsh reply from above her.

She looked up at him, the act of simply lifting her head taking so much out of her. His gaze was unrelenting, conveying that he had every intention of seeing this through.

They had been at this for *weeks* , with a few days of reprieve always thrown in so that she wouldn't overexert herself. She had been under the impression that it would get easier as time went on. She was wrong. How was it possible that she felt so much worse now than when they had started? The inside of her mouth watered, stomach churning as she lowered her head again.

She heard Draco heave a sigh before saying:

"Break."

Hermione could have collapsed with relief if it weren't for the hands that were suddenly on her. She didn't even have the energy to protest as Draco swung her up into his arms. She leaned her head on his shoulder, eyes falling shut as he carried her up the stairs.

"How do you do it?"

Her question was quiet, barely a mumble as she wondered.

He chuckled, and her body shivered as the vibrations traveled from his chest to her frame.

"I go to my happy place," he simply said.

Hermione couldn't tell if he was joking or not, but she still chuckled nonetheless.

She was in and out of consciousness as he walked into the bathroom. He set her down onto her feet, one arm still wrapped around her waist as she leaned into him. She faintly recognized the sound of running water as he began to run a bath. Hermione found that she was even too tired to care about undressing in front of him, stumbling into the bath as it began to fill.

Draco seemed otherwise too preoccupied to care either. His jaw was clenched, eyes hard as he cupped the water in his hands and let it run over her head.

"It's been weeks, Hermione..."

She bit her lip, eyes lowering as she knew what he was talking about.

"I don't...I don't know how you do it. It's a pain unlike any other, and trying to focus on something else entirely seems...impossible," she murmured.

He paused in his movements, eyes intensely resting on her.

"You wanted this, remember?"

Hermione closed her eyes with a sigh, nodding. She felt him smooth her hair back away from her face, fingers trailing along her neck.

"You can do it. I know you can..."

She opened her eyes as his fingers ran along her shoulder.

"You're Hermione Granger."

"Sometimes it doesn't feel like it," she whispered, a sudden sadness overcoming her frame.

*You're Hermione Granger* . How many times had Ginny said that? Ron? Harry? She lowered her eyes, suddenly wondering what they were up to. She knew that Ginny was safe. Blaise wouldn't allow anything to happen to her, that she was sure of. Ron and Harry, on the other hand... Her eyes watered, wondering if Ron was even still alive. If Harry was dead, she would know, Draco would make sure of that.

Draco's fingers on her arm brought her out of her reverie, and she lifted her eyes to meet his. She could see the question swirling within their depths, and Hermione wanted to confess how much she missed her friends and her desire to know what was going on, but instead, she simply said:

"I'm just tired."

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It was a strange feeling, being around Draco and not feeling that normal underlying layer of animosity. With just the two of them in this modest, secluded house, she didn't feel that. She didn't know why that was, but she had opted to not dwell on it. Was it because it was just the two of them? Did a part of her recognize the fact that there was no one around to please? That there was no one around to judge her for...succumbing to what she really wanted?

She swallowed, wrapping her arms around herself as the conversation with Draco from weeks ago replayed in her head.

*"Why put yourself through that...why put anyone else through that, when we both know the outcome?"*

Deep down, Hermione did know the outcome. She had known it for quite some time and had fought so vigorously against it. She had known that she was fighting a losing battle for a long time now, and Draco was right. She was tired of fighting. What was the point? It seemed so senseless now.

She glanced down, unsure of what was going to happen when all of this was over. As crazy as it sounded, she couldn't imagine a life without Draco in it in some way, shape, or form. She cared for him. A stupid thing to do really, but something that she could not help, nonetheless. That small part of her was hopeful, positive that she could sway him, even just a little.

"Keep frowning like that and you'll get wrinkles."

"Do you love me?"

Hermione didn't turn around as she threw the question out there, but she was certain that it had caught him off guard nonetheless. She wasn't sure what possessed her to suddenly ask such a thing, but she immediately felt stupid. She shook her head, eyes will glued to the window.

"Never mind. Of course you don't," she murmured more to herself than him.

She wondered if he could hear the bitterness in her voice. Nonetheless, he said nothing, but she did hear him slowly approach her. She could feel the heat from his chest settle warmly against her back and she felt his hands rest on her shoulders.

"What I feel for you is very strong."

She scoffed, a humorless sound as she took a step away from him.

"That much is obvious, but that isn't what I asked," she said, turning around to face him.

His face was void of any and all emotion, and Hermione fought to not just give up and let the subject drop.

"I feel very strongly about my cat, Ron feels very strongly about his wand, and You-Know-Who feels very strongly about Harry. Let's not do this, okay? I don't want to play dumb with you. I just want to get



this conversation over with because...I'm tired. I'm exhausted and...I don't want to fight anymore," she said with a shrug.

Still Draco said nothing, and Hermione found herself becoming frustrated. She crossed her arms over her chest, eyebrows furrowing as she stared at him with hard eyes.

"Do you even *like* me?"

Draco scoffed and Hermione's anger grew.

"No, I'm serious. It may seem like a silly thing to even ask, but...you have to admit. Your actions don't exactly scream 'I care about you so much'. They scream 'I want you and want to marry you because I don't want anyone else to have you.'"

"Hermione," Draco warned.

"If I'm going to be subjected to a miserable life with someone who will only ever view me as some object, another trinket that belongs to him, then I want to know now. I want to know so that I can fully accept this for what it is, and so that I can stop torturing myself," she said.

Draco took a step towards her, and Hermione did not protest as he ran his hands down her arms, pulling her closer. He ran one hand upwards, traveling towards her collarbone. His nose brushed against hers as he leaned in.

"I've never loved anyone, Hermione..."

Hermione closed her eyes, accepting what she had already known.

"The closest anyone has ever been was my mother, and look where she is. I so easily cast her aside for your wellbeing. Now, what should that tell you?"

"That you're insane," she chuckled.

Draco chuckled too, a low, husky sound, as he wrapped the other arm around her waist, pulling her closer.

"That too, but that wasn't what I was hinting at, silly," he mocked, tapping her nose.

"I don't know," Hermione murmured.

"I've never loved anyone. I've never experienced it, known it, but what I feel for you...I guess you could say it's pretty damn close," he said, brushing his lips against her cheek.

"...but I don't want close. I want the actual thing."

He abruptly leaned away, looking down at her with an expression painted with disappointment.

"Do you need *love* ," he spat the word "...in order to fully accept me?"

"Yes...", Hermione said with conviction "...look at everything I'd have to sacrifice. You think that I would risk everything to be with someone like *you* , and there's no possibility that you could ever love me?"

Hermione shook her head.

"If I'm going to lose myself, it's going to be for something that's worth it, at least."

Draco brought his hands up to rest on either side of her face, eyes boring into hers as he bent down slightly.

"Hermione...what we have doesn't even compare to something as fickle as love."

Hermione blinked.

"She Weasley loved Potter, and now she loves Blaise. Blaise loved her back and look at how much he hurt her by treating her like trash

and sleeping with other girls. Look how many people claim to love each other and still separate? Look how many cheat, and belittle, and do anything possible to hurt the people they claim to love," he whispered.

Hermione said nothing, reluctant to admit that he had a point.

"Did Potter not claim to love you?"

Hermione's heart faltered within her chest, recalling not just what Harry had done, but also what he had said. Never mind the fact that the *incident* was still quite ambiguous. All of the things he had said to her were not. He had accused her of being a spy, compromising everything for Draco. He had not respected her wishes to simply leave her be. He had pushed and pushed, despite the fact that she had verbalized how much she detested it.

"Do you love me?"

No. The answer was instantaneous, requiring no thought to it at all. She did not love Draco, and she probably never would.

"I don't care though. What we feel is consuming..."

His hand snaked its way up her chest.

"...and intense..."

His fingers bloomed around her throat, spreading along her skin.

"...and toxic and dangerous," she harshly whispered as his grip tightened.

He grinned, lips brushing against hers.

"That it is, but that's the fun part, no? What we have is beautiful because we'll never tire of each other, we'll never stray," he hissed, pulling her bottom lip in between his teeth.

"Speak for yourself," she panted.

"Oh? What would you do if I left right now and found some lucky witch to spend my night with? What if I decided that you just aren't worth the hassle anymore?"

Hermione brought her hand up, digging her nails into his arm as her eyes narrowed, jaw involuntarily clenching.

"You wouldn't," she challenged through clenched teeth.

Draco's grin grew and he sighed, a lustful sound as he tilted his head to the side, his eyes darkening.

"Green looks good on you," he said with a husky laugh.

Hermione tightened her grip, drawing blood.

"We don't need love, and you know it. So why do you really keep fighting?"

"You're a murderer, a monster. You have no soul, you cut people down as if they are nothing," she threw out.

"I can stop killing people. It takes nothing away from me. See how easy that was? What's your next excuse?"

"You serve-."

"I already told you. I serve *me*, and since He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named has something that rightfully belongs to me..."

Hermione frowned in confusion.

"Draco serves Draco now more than ever," he chuckled.

"What does he have that belongs to you?"

Draco simply smirked before exhaling, pressing a kiss to her forehead.

"We need to practice some more..."

---

One minute, Hermione was in agonizing pain, gritting her teeth, back arched as her body was wracked with shudders. She had thought of every possibility, anything that she could focus on, and nothing had worked. She had done exactly as Draco had said, as he had described, but time and time again, it had proven to be futile.

Then, Hermione had suddenly remembered...

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*" **You're weak** . You're a weak, spineless mudblood. Just like your parents-."*

*Within a matter of seconds, the dagger was in her hand, the blade embedded in his shoulder. Lestranger howled, a muffled sound that barely reached her ears as she watched the blood, his life blood, trickle out of his wound, staining him more. Hermione stared as he writhed, transfixed as a rush of adrenaline washed over her like a wave.*

*This man had killed her parents. Two people who were everything good in this world, two people who had meant the world to her. He had murdered them with no sense of remorse or feeling. He had murdered dozens more before them and had even threatened to do the same to her friends, to Draco... Hermione was sure that if Draco were to die, it would be by her hand and hers alone.*

*Hermione yanked the blade out, paying little attention to him as she gazed at it. How many more would he kill? How many more lives would he ruin? She slowly slid her eyes up to meet his, his pained, hateful eyes meeting her empty ones.*

*This man was evil.*

*This man did not deserve to live.*

*With a shaky breath, Hermione abruptly leaned over, sliding the blade across his throat with ease.*

*Her heart thudded within her chest, and she watched, transfixed as the dark red liquid spurted out of his throat, some landing on her, gliding down the skin like a fountain. She exhaled, an odd sense of satisfaction washing over her.*

*She had done this. She had killed this man, taken his life with all the ease of handling a kitten, and probably saved numerous lives in the process. She tilted her head, leaning over him as his body twitched, then finally going still, eyes staring ahead, seeing nothing.*

*This man was a monster, and now he was dead.*

*A feeling like no other came over her...*

---

Hermione gazed at the ceiling open mouthed as she registered that she felt...nothing. She felt nothing! A numbness had overtaken her, and she noted that Draco was quiet too. She stared above her for a few more seconds, her mind processing what had just happened.

She turned her gaze to land on him, and his expression confirmed her suspicions. She suddenly sat up, wincing as she did so, but too elated to care.

"I did it," she breathed in disbelief.

He smirked, and Hermione laughed, teeth bared. She stood on shaky legs, grabbing onto his outstretched arms to steady herself, bringing her hands up to cover her mouth as she giggled.

"I did it," she repeated, eyes watering.

She chose not to dwell on how she did it, nor the repressed memory that had come crashing back, leaving a slightly disturbed feeling. She would think on that later...much later. Now, she wanted to bask in her success.

"I did it!"

She wrapped her arms around him, and he crushed her to him, burying his nose into her hair, deeply inhaling.

"I knew that you could," he huskily whispered against the shell of her ear.

Hermione couldn't believe that it had worked. Her body ached, an obvious sign of her struggle, but she figured that it was worth it. Draco leaned down, lips nearing hers as Hermione's eyes widened. Just as they brushed together, they heard a loud bang come from outside, the ground shaking.

They pulled apart, and Hermione hesitantly looked over her shoulder, heart rate increasing. She slowly pulled away from him, turning around, fear growing in the pit of her stomach. Draco pushed her behind him just as the ground shook again from the force of a spell.

" *Draco!* "

Hermione's eyes widened, and her fingers tightened around his arm.

"You've been a very bad boy," the voice loudly screeched.

Hermione didn't question how she had found them, she knew that it was only inevitable.

"You're hiding that *mudblood bitch* in there. I know you are," she quietly hissed, the words coursing through Hermione like venom.

"Don't move."

"We can't stay in here forever," Hermione protested.

He suddenly tensed, looking up with a frown.

"They're weakening. She's going to get through the wards," he murmured, eyes narrowed.

Before Hermione could say anything else, she found herself on the couch and bound. She struggled against the ropes wrapped around her frame and glared up at Draco with hard eyes.

"Draco," she harshly whispered.

"I won't have you getting in the middle of this," he said, rolling up the sleeves of his shirt.

"This is my fight! Do you really think that you're a match for her all on your own?"

Hermione squirmed, huffing in frustration as the ropes only grew tighter. He ignored her and Hermione screamed in frustration.

"You controlling son of a bitch," she snapped just as the door slammed shut.

Hermione huffed and thought of every nonverbal spell that she could conjure up to help her in this situation. It seemed the more she struggled, the tighter and more painful her bonds became. She winced, eyes watering as she glanced around for anything that could be of use.

Another bang captured her attention, and Hermione stared at the door in fear. She could see flames just outside of the window and Hermione's panic grew.

It shouldn't have surprised her to end up in such a predicament. She should have known that Draco had no intentions of letting her fight, not if he could help it. Bellatrix was here for one thing and one thing



only; Hermione's head. There was another loud crash, and the small house shook.

Hermione squirmed and winced as the ropes tightened, digging into her skin. She groaned, accepting the Devil's Snare like quality of the bonds. She sighed, resigned to her predicament when she blinked. She glanced down, eyeing the ropes before slowly looking towards the door, as if trying to find Draco through the wood.

She suddenly swallowed and closed her eyes. She leaned back, allowing her body to relax as she forced her mind to do the same. *It isn't Devil's Snare, Hermione!* Be that as it may, it was still worth a shot. Draco expected for her to struggle, to do anything possible to get out there.

Hermione exhaled, body becoming limp as her mind cleared, and she felt the ropes slacken a bit. It wasn't much, but it was enough to feed her determination to see this through. Another curse hit the house, and Hermione forced herself not to tense up. Hermione didn't know how long she stayed that way, she guessed twenty minutes, but eventually the ropes fell around her, and Hermione hurriedly kicked them away.

She could hear Bellatrix screeching now, and Hermione hesitantly looked out of the window. The crazed witch was on her knees, clutching her face as she glared at her nephew threw the openings in between her fingers. Hermione's eyes sought out Draco, and they eventually landed on him.

He was on all fours, back heaving, his hair sticking to his face with sweat. Hermione rushed to the door, throwing it open without hesitation and stepping outside. The raven haired witch's head snapped up, her one good eye locking onto Hermione. Hermione could swear she heard her snarl, and knowing Bellatrix, she probably did.

Hermione dived just in time to miss the curse that went searing past her, causing something in the house to explode. She looked up from

her position on the ground to see Bellatrix standing, a fire just behind her, licking at the ends of her dress, but she paid it no mind.

The older witch was focused on nothing but Hermione as she stumbled forward.

"I'll always regret the day that my husband lost his life at the hands of someone like *you* ," she sneered.

Hermione pushed herself up, glaring at the mad woman.

"He murdered my parents, good people who he had nothing against. He deserved to die," Hermione said with conviction.

Bellatrix pulled her upper lip back over her teeth and raised her arm. Hermione felt it, and her back hit the house from the force of it, but other than that, she felt little to nothing. She recalled that feeling of triumph, the odd sense of calm and satisfaction that had overtaken her when she had avenged her parents.

She gritted her teeth, closing her eyes as her body slightly shook, but she refused to fall. She reached back to dig her fingers into the cobblestone as Bellatrix put more force into it, clearly unsatisfied with the results, or lack thereof. Hermione opened her mouth, letting out a small gasp as her legs shook, beginning to buckle.

Just as she fell to her knees, Hermione saw Draco tackling Bellatrix to the ground, the physical assault catching her off guard. Hermione watched as Draco struggled to hold her down, his wand pointed at her. Hermione wondered what spell he was using as she noticed Bellatrix's legs kicking out.

The dark haired witch screamed and cackled just before Draco flew off of her, his back connecting with the ground with a hard thud. Hermione dived for his wand and wrapped her hand around it just as she felt something long and thin wrap around her neck.

Hermione pulled on the rope, eyes watering as Bellatrix began to drag her backwards...towards the pond. Hermione dug her feet into the ground, one hand on the rope that was killing her, the other around the wand. Bellatrix yanked, and Hermione almost lost her grip on both. A sadistic grin spread along her face as they neared the water.

Hermione began to panic, noting that the more air she lost, the less likely she was to communicate a spell. One spell came to Hermione's mind, one she swore she'd never use, not after Harry had told them of the incident... Hermione gritted her teeth, hard eyes glaring at Draco's aunt as she laughed, a high pitched sound that sent shivers down Hermione's spine. Her vision began to blur and she shakily lifted her hand, swishing the wand in zig-zag movements. With gritted teeth, she murmured:

"Sectumsempra."

Hermione gasped as Bellatrix lost her grip, the woman stumbling back, collapsing, the wand falling from her grasp. She coughed, throat filling with blood. Hermione gripped her throat as Draco helped her stand on shaky feet. She hesitantly approached his aunt, the older woman still alive and kicking as she reach out towards her wand. Hermione intercepted as the wand flew to her hand, stopping it beneath her foot and snapping it without hesitation.

Her cold dark brown eyes, rested on Hermione as she still fought to get to her. Hermione did not think as she lifted Draco's wand.

"What are you doing?"

She was dying, they both knew this. It was done...

"I'm ending her suffering," Hermione simply said.

She swallowed, tightening her grip, having never used the killing curse before. She felt Draco's hand on the small of her back, and it

gave her a sense of comfort as she uttered the words for the first time.

"Avada Kedavra."

Hermione's hair blew black, the flash of green illuminating the night. She exhaled, eyes wide as she stared at the still form of Bellatrix Lestrange. She felt strange, like she should feel guilty, but also knowing that she has no reason to feel such a thing.

She felt Draco's lips brush against her cheek.

"We have to go, Hermione," he murmured against her skin.

She looked over her shoulder in confusion, still dazed.

"Go where?"

He wrapped his arms around her, resting his chin on her shoulder as he gazed down at the lifeless body of his aunt.

"To Hogwarts..."

Hermione's heart skipped a beat, and her eyes widened as her eyes met his.

"...I told you, he has something that rightfully belongs to me."

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**Harry did not disarm Draco in Ch. 6 ;) Let me know what you think!**

## Update

Hi everyone! I know it's been a long time since you've heard from me and I'm sorry for that. Life and other things got in the way and as I've said in the past, I will always put my mental health first. I do feel ready to start writing again, however, I will be copying all of my stories to AO3. One or two stories of mine, I am still on the fence about continuing, but even if I don't complete them, I don't take them down. The rest will still be updated on here, but in every other sense, I will be on AO3. That is where I'll primarily be, and AO3 and tumblr is how you will best reach me.

This is the link:

[/users/s\\_l\\_y\\_t\\_h\\_e\\_r\\_i\\_n\\_d\\_o\\_l\\_l](#)

I will start the transition process this week.

I feel as if I don't say it enough, but I appreciate every single one of you and I thank all of you who have stuck around. Especially those who have been here since the beginning. I hope to move into a new chapter of my life and writing and I'm very excited.

~ slytherindoll