

Love in the Dark

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Love in the Dark

by [Smudgesonapage](#)

Summary

Hermione Granger —War heroine and one third of the famous Golden Trio — feels invisible.

Life after the Battle of Hogwarts hasn't exactly turned out how she thought it would, and while everyone around her reminds her constantly of 'the good old days', they appear oblivious to who she is now.

But one person sees her. One person notices just how different she is now.

And that same person has the key to unlock more of herself than Hermione ever thought possible.

What happens when a Gryffindor hands over control to a Slytherin?

And what happens when she discovers, she absolutely loves it?

NOW COMPLETE!

Notes

Hi! So this is my first ever Dramione fanfiction. I've always loved to write and since I adore Draco and Hermione together I thought I would give it a go.

The first chapter is setting the scene. I hope you'll enjoy this journey with me.

The tags will update as the fic moves forward so please check regularly and look after yourself.

I do not own any of the characters. All belong to J.K. Rowling.

Invisible

Chapter Summary

We meet a lost and unhappy Hermione and see where everyone else has ended up.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Chapter One

Invisible

As Hermione sits in the kitchen looking out of the window, she can't help but feel the grey day reflects her mood. Dull and all consuming.

Boring.

Let's not beat about the bush—*her life*—is boring.

She sometimes wonders exactly how this happened, how did the many years of adrenaline, fear and dare she say it, excitement, become so very mundane and boring? Hermione hears the shower click off and counts to ten knowing she has another ten seconds at most to gather herself before she has to pretend she's happy. Like clockwork, the bathroom door opens and Harry steps out into the hallway wrapped in a low slung white towel, another running through his dripping hair. She hears his feet coming closer to the kitchen and plasters on a smile a second before he steps in.

“Morning, Hermione,” he smiles, making his way over to the two cups of coffee that are sitting steaming on the counter.

“Morning Harry,” she smiles back.

“I'll take this to Ginny and get ready, then we can leave?”

Hermione nods. Like she does every morning. Harry walks out of the kitchen and down to his room and she exhales a deep breath and takes another. She needs her own space back, she's too old and moody to be living with anyone, even her best friend. Rinsing out her cup and

walking over to where she left her shoes and slipping her feet into them, glancing out the window Hermione sees it's started to rain. Great.

Hermione is just about to slip on her travelling cloak so there's no reason to stay in the flat any longer than necessary when she hears the muted thud of what can only be a headboard and a muffled groan. Rolling her eyes, Hermione uses her wand to leave a note for Harry letting him know she needed to get in to work early and leaves it pinned to the back of his door before quietly heading to the fireplace, taking a handful of *Floo Powder* and disappearing in a flash of green.

When Hermione arrives at the Ministry she sees it's busy as usual. Bodies moving from grate to atrium and then down to the bank of lifts against the wall. Copies of the *Daily Prophet* flying around to the many people who requested one at work every day, something she'd never understood, why not have it delivered to your home so you can read it over coffee in the morning? Keeping her head down she walks to the lifts and is in luck when one opens just as she approaches. She steps in and travels with the usual speed, up to the sixth floor. Stepping out of the lift and making her way down the quiet corridor, because hardly anyone is here yet as is usually the case.

"What's on the agenda today, Claudine?" Hermione asks as she steps into her office and glances at the pile of parchment on the desk. It's barely even eight in the morning and there's already a pile of post demanding my attention.

"You have a staff meeting at ten. Other than that, the day seems clear ... for now anyway," she smiles at Hermione.

Settling myself at the desk and reaching for the pile of post, "For now," Hermione laughs. "How long until that changes?"

Claudine laughs back looking at the clock behind her. "I'll give ten minutes."

"Can I get you a coffee?" she asks, making her way to the door.

She looks up and smiles at Claudine. "That would be lovely, thank you."

Claudine grins and pulls the door closed with her wand as she leaves me to it. Hermione spends the next ten minutes looking through anything that looks important before there's a knock on the door and Harry pops his head through. "You okay?" he asks, looking worried.

"Of course," Hermione smiles softly. "Why wouldn't it be?"

"You were waiting and then ... you weren't. What was the rush?"

Hermione raises an eyebrow at him and watches as a blush moves over his cheeks. "Oh. Sorry."

She shuffles some papers on her desk. "You don't need to apologise, Harry. It's your flat and you can come—" It's her turn to blush. "I mean," she clears her throat. "You can do whatever you please."

He blushes deeper and clears his throat too, looking like he'd rather be anywhere but where he currently is. "Well, I'll see you later then."

Hermione groans as he closes the door.

Come and go as you please? Really?

The rest of the morning goes by without any more embarrassing conversations about Harry and Ginny's sex life and before she knows it, there's a knock at the door and Claudine is letting her know it's five minutes until the meeting. Hermione thanks her, pockets her wand and heads to the meeting room finding it almost empty. She takes a seat and waits for the room to fill. Within minutes everyone is present, Harry strolls in and takes the empty seat next to her as usual. It's an unspoken rule that we sit together in these seats every week. She's not really sure when it started but no matter if we're late, these two seats are always vacant and we always sit in them.

Head Auror Otto Ashby arrives and the meeting gets underway. The usual topics are covered; Dark objects discovered, any sniff of Dark Magic reported and all suspicious activity addressed. Thankfully these things are rarely anything sinister and our time is more often spent tracking down illegal Dragon egg deals and the like but every week during these meetings you feel a collective sigh when nothing serious is reported.

"There is one last thing," Otto says. "There are going to be some new ... *appointments* soon," his eyes glance over everyone in the room before settling on Hermione and Harry. "We still have many Death Eaters we'd like to secure and for that to happen, the Ministry feels working with those directly involved will be a massive insight and help."

Hermione feels Harry tense in his seat. "Who?" he asks.

Otto shakes his head. "I'm not sure at this stage, but there is no doubt in my mind that they'll be ... *known* to you."

Harry nods tensely and Otto thanks everyone for coming before they all begin to file out of the room and back to their office spaces. Hermione turns to look at Harry and he sighs. "It's never really going to end, is it?" He scrubs his face. "Five years and we're still having to deal with the aftermath of everything."

She reaches for his hand and squeezes his fingers. "It's okay. There's no danger this time, they're just ... moving forward with putting those involved in Azkaban like they deserve." she tell him soothingly, "We knew they would need help in doing that. I'm surprised it's taken so long really."

His sad eyes meet hers and he nods. "I just ... every time we have to mention it, it feels like he's still here, still pressing down on us, you know?"

"He's gone, Harry. You killed him and all is right again."

He smiles and shakes his head. “And I couldn’t have done it without you.”

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Later that afternoon she’s busy trying to translate Runes when a voice at the door makes her head snap up.

“What are you doing here?” Hermione asks as she stands and makes her way over to the tall, redhead standing in the doorway.

Hermione wraps her arms around him as he brings his up to wrap around her. It’s warm and familiar and her eyes fill with tears at the comfort his embrace still gives.

“I thought I’d come by now I’m back,” when he sees the tears in her eyes he reaches up to brush them away. “What’s this? What’s wrong?”

Hermione shakes her head, wiping the remaining tears from her cheeks. “Nothing, honestly. I’m just tired.”

“Are you sure?”

She nods. “Positive. When did you get back?”

After the Battle and after everything settled into the new normal, Ron decided to spend some time working with George at the shop. Everyone knew that George would never recover from losing Fred, how could he? So Ron asked if he could learn a bit about what it takes to run the shop. To his and everyone’s surprise, he took to every aspect of the shop easily, especially selling and now spends his time travelling to other Wizarding communities trying to get them to stock a selection of products.

“This morning, I went by Harry’s place and Ginny said you were staying there?”

“Yes, there’s been a delay with me buying the house. It’s imminent but I’ve had to pack everything up and store it at Harry’s until I can move in.”

“You should have told me, my palace is empty, you can have it.” He shrugs.

She swallows and shakes her head. “I don’t think that’s a good idea. It won’t be for much longer anyway. And I think it’s high time you stop referring to your smaller than a broom cupboard flat as a palace.”

“Ah, but that’s the joke.” He grins goofily at her.

Things with Ron didn’t exactly go how she thought they would. After the battle, Hermione assumed they’d be together. She’d spent years falling in love with him and never getting my chance. Then once she did, everything they’d ever known changed. It’s true what Molly kept

telling everyone, that making decisions in the middle of a war can come back to haunt you. As time went on and we chased the future we both wanted, we realised we were different people, that what made sense when we were children hunting *Horcruxes* and forced to spend so much time together, didn't make sense when the threat was gone.

It was a mutual decision, but one that she still feels a little sad about. Hermione still loves Ron, but in a way that doesn't stir her blood or heat her skin and she refuses to settle for anything less. If the war taught her anything, it's that life is short—*too short*—to not be true to herself and after so long focusing all her time and energy on everything and everyone else, Hermione wants to focus on what she wants.

His eyes meet hers and she sees sadness there too. "If you change your mind—"

Hermione squeezes his hand. "Thanks, Ron."

"Dinner later?" he asks, his easy smile back on his face. "I'll get the gang together, like old times."

She smiles and accepts the offer.

The gang.

Like old times.

Everyone who survived the Battle and are bonded because of it.

Except recently she can't help but feel left out and like no one really sees her. They see who she was *then* and not who she is *now*. They assume she's the same person and no one has ever thought to look a little deeper or even to ask how she feels. It's like Hermione is frozen in the past, forever one third of the *Golden Trio*.

Except she's not.

She hasn't been that person for a while and she wishes someone would notice.

*

Hermione receives an owl later in the day letting me know everyone is meeting at *The Leaky Cauldron* at seven. She pushes aside the feeling of dread and replies that she'll see them all there. Hermione keeps her head down and by the time five o'clock comes round she's made good progress on the Runes. Stretching her arms above her head and delighting the delicious feeling of stiff muscles being pulled tight after sitting in one position for too long. She grabs her cloak and bag before heading back to the atrium and back to Harry's. It's busy as usual and she avoids the eyes of Logan Macridge who is making a beeline for her and manages to disappear before he reaches the fireplace. Hermione steps into Harry's lounge and stumbles in her heels in embarrassment at what is happening in front of her. Harry has Ginny pressed

against the wall, his hands vanishing under her robes, Ginny's head against the wall, eyes closed.

"Uh—" Hermione averts her eyes and hears Ginny laugh. "I'll just—"

Harry steps back and clears his throat, that sweet blush creeping across his cheeks again as his hand ruffles his already messy hair. "Sorry, Hermione, *again*."

"No need," she waves her hand dismissing his apology. "I'm just going to get ready for tonight. You're both coming I assume."

Ginny laughs and Hermione cringes at her choice of words again. "Oh, we definitely will be."

Harry glares at her and she laughs more. "We are, we can all go together."

Great.

Third Wheeler Granger strikes again.

"Sounds like a plan," she smiles. "I'll be in the shower and you know, not around for a while if you want to continue." She can't help but tease them.

As she walks away Hermione can hear Harry laugh and then the distinct sound of lips on lips. Dropping her bag and robes onto the small armchair in the bedroom, she kicks off her shoes and grabs everything she'll need for a shower. Thankfully the bathroom is right across from the room she's currently occupying so there's no chance of seeing or hearing anything in the one-second dash across the hall. Hermione steps into the bathroom and removes all her clothes before pulling her hair on top of her head and removing the day's make-up.

Makeup is just one of the many things that has changed that no one seems to notice about her. Hermione of two years ago would never have made the time to wear makeup. She would have prioritised work and neglected herself. And when she first started wearing it almost 11 months ago, no one noticed. It wasn't until Ginny walked into the bathroom while Hermione was applying mascara that she asked me how long she'd been wearing it. Hermione felt even more invisible in that moment than she ever has before and it's only got worse in the months since.

No one notices the clothes she wears, the heels that are always on her feet or the hair she spends so much time trying to tame.

Hermione has changed and no one sees it.

Shaking off the hurt, she steps into the shower and turns it on. One of the best things about being a witch is the constant supply of hot water, it never runs out and there's no awkward hopping from foot to foot while the water warms up. Stepping under the spray Hermione turns her freshly cleansed face to the spray and sighs, repeating the same thing to herself that she has for months.

One day soon, she's going to meet someone who sees her, who adores her, who can't keep his hands off her like Harry and Ginny.

One day, Hermione will be the priority and not the option.

She hums to herself and watches as the soap runs its way down her naked body and swirls down the drain before switching it off and stepping out, wrapping herself in a fluffy emerald green towel. Hermione picks up her clothes and leaps across the hall and into her bedroom, closing the door with her heel. She rummages through the wardrobe and settles on a dark green jumper dress that she bought recently. It has a high neck and looks great with her knee-high black leather boots.

Hermione casts a drying charm and when she's dressed, heads over to the mirror and sits on the floor with her bag of cosmetics. The mirror is one of the things she couldn't bring herself to put into storage when the buying of her house hit an annoyingly frustrating obstacle. It means too much and the thought of it sitting gathering dust, or even worse, getting damaged, made her feel sick. So it sits in this room, taking up too much space against the wall, but making her smile every time she sees it.

Hermione taps her wand at the small speaker she bought on impulse from a Muggle shop last week while out shopping with Ginny. Much to her amusement the young guy in the shop flirted shamelessly with Hermione the entire time and she just couldn't say no to the speaker. Hermione could, however, say no to his offer of a drink after he finished work, that part came easily.

A few seconds later, the sound of one of her favourite Muggle bands floats around her while Hermione moisturises her face, applying a little concealer to banish the evidence of my sleepless nights before sweeping a slate grey eyeshadow over her lids. She curls her eyelashes with her wand and applies mascara. Finishing the look with a deep merlot red lipstick and turning her attention to her hair.

Where she's managed to work out makeup, her hair still remains an absolute curly mess most of the time. With less stress, eating properly and taking more time over it, the untamed frizz has slowly turned into defined curls, but taming them is still a daily battle.

Hermione prods at her hair and the loose bun magically transforms itself into something much more aesthetically pleasing with loose curls falling around her face. Feeling rather pleased with herself, she stands and puts on her boots, grabbing a slate grey cloak and throwing anything I'll need into a small bag Ginny bought me last Christmas. Hermione peeks her head out of my door and listens for any sounds. The coast seems clear so she heads into the lounge to wait for Harry and Ginny.

Ten minutes later they both appear. Harry's wearing his usual jeans and shirt with a jacket over the top. Ginny is wearing a pair of jeans and a jumper, much more casual than Hermione is dressed, and she feels like she's made a mistake in picking this outfit, a suspicion that's confirmed when Ginny spots Hermione's outfit and her eyes go wide.

"You look—"

“Overdressed?” Hermione grimaces.

“No,” Harry glares at Ginny. “You look beautiful, Hermione.”

“But am I overdressed for whatever tonight is?”

“No, I think you look hot!” Ginny tells her. “But I think I might change.”

She kisses Harry on the cheek, telling him she’ll be five minutes before shooting off to their room. Harry takes a seat opposite Hermione and looks at her with curious eyes. She grows uncomfortable under his scrutiny and goes to get up when Ginny appears around the corner dressed in a short black dress that clings to her curves and a black leather jacket.

“Now I’m dressed properly.” she grins before taking a handful of Floo Powder and stepping into the fire when the flames burn green and yelling *The Leaky Cauldron* before disappearing.

Harry laughs and gestures to her. “Ladies first.”

When Hermione steps out of the floo she meets Ron’s eyes; they’re wide and shocked which gives her a strange little thrill. Hermione reminds herself not to fidget and strolls confidently over to the big table that has everyone she loves sitting around it.

“Hermione!” George yells above the noise of the pub. “You look sensational, want to sit next to me?” He raises a cheeky eyebrow at her and she laughs walking towards the vacant seat he’s currently gesturing at. “Or you know, my lap is ridiculously comfortable, so I’m told, if you’d rather take a seat there.”

As Hermione passes by Ron, she feels his hands come up and around her waist pulling her to stand between his open legs and peering around her body at his brother. “I don’t think so, George.”

“I’m sorry, baby brother, I thought Hermione was done slumming it with you?”

“It doesn’t mean she wants to be mauled by you.”

George raises his eyebrows at him and smirks. “You’re the one mauling her, I merely offered a beautiful lady a comfortable place to sit.”

Hermione steps out of Ron’s embrace and bypasses George’s lap in favour of sitting next to Angelina instead. Harry follows through the Floo soon after and heads to the bar to get a round of drinks in. He doesn’t even need to ask what everyone wants, everyone wants what they always have. Ron stands and follows his best friend to the bar and Angelina moves closer.

“This colour suits you,” she says. “Even if it is a little *too* Slytherin.”

Hermione laughs and places her bag on the table. “Come on now, all those bad feelings died a long time ago. Everyone is just the same now.”

She shakes her head at Hermione and starts to tell her about the new guy in her department at the Ministry that she thinks she might like. Hermione humours her knowing full well he's not who she's looking for. Harry returns and hands out everyone's drink before settling into a chair next to Neville who's busy telling everyone all about his decision to apply for the opening of Herbology Professor now that Professor Sprout is talking about retiring.

"What does McGonagall think?" Hermione asks.

"It was actually her idea. Professor Sprout suggested she speak to me."

"I think you'd be great, Neville." she tells him softly. He smiles and takes a sip of his *Butterbeer* hiding his awkwardness at her encouragement.

After a couple more drinks, we move on to a bar further along Diagon for drinks and much to Ginny's delight, dancing. The place is packed and hot. Bodies everywhere dancing too close and too sensually and she finds herself unable to look away. A couple in front of her have their arms around each other while they sway to the music playing, the girl has her hands tugging the guy's hair while he switches from her backside to her hips, pulling her into him.

Hermione shudders at the display and it doesn't take a genius to realise why. It's been a long time since she was that close to a male and if she's honest with herself, and she always tries to be, she's never ever felt that soul deep burn for someone else. Hermione feels a warmth at her left and turns to see George has made his way over to her side of the table. His eyes are bright and a little glassy alerting me to the fact he's had more to drink than Hermione has.

"Can I help you?" She calls over the thudding beat.

"Most definitely you can," he licks his lips. "Would you," he swallows a little nervously.
"Want to dance with me, right now?"

Hermione tilts her head to the side and considers his request. George has been in her life as long as Ron and Harry have but things haven't always been friendly. There were times that we downright disliked each other during our years at Hogwarts, we're opposites in so many ways and that can often lead to conflict, but things mellowed as we grew up and we have a good friendship now. Except, she's caught him looking at her a little more intently over the last few weeks and she's not entirely sure what to think about it. George is always joking, always trying to get a rise out of people, especially Ron. So as much as Hermione would like to think his little tease when she arrived tonight was nothing, the way he's looking at her right now tells her that it *is* something.

"You want to dance with me? Why?"

He leans closer and Hermione feels his warm breath on her neck. "Because you're the most beautiful woman here and I'd like the chance to dance with you."

Hermione feels her eyes go wide at his words. "You're drunk,"

He laughs in the way only he can and meets her eyes again. "Drunk or not, I'm not blind, Granger," he lets his eyes roam over my body and back to my eyes. "You're gorgeous."

Absolutely gorgeous,”

The compliment is nice, but that’s as far as it goes. Hermione doesn’t see George that way and she’s positive there’s some kind of rule about not dating the brother of your ex.

“One dance?”

He nods. “Yep,”

Hermione stands and holds out her hand to him. “Okay,”

He leads her across the room and onto the dancefloor just as another song comes on, before she has a chance to register what he’s doing, he’s pulled Hermione into his arms and is pressing himself against her. He’s warm and strong and Hermione realises she’s never really appreciated how muscular he is, but having him pressed against her has Hermione all too aware of it. Hermione flinches as she feels his hand skim her hips and settle itself on her backside.

“George,” she laughs. “Hands above the waist.”

“Has a mind of its own that one,” he laughs freely, raising his hand to sit on her waist again. “But you can’t judge me for it, have you seen you?”

“Every day, funny enough. What’s gotten into you?”

He shifts us and moves us a little more into the pool of bodies. He doesn’t answer her question, just continues to move us to the music. When Hermione lifts her eyes, she connects with Ron whose eyes widen in surprise. Blushing, Hermione steps back a little from George and stumbles. He steadies her and when the song ends, kisses her cheek and leads her back to our table.

“What was that?” Ron glares at us.

“It’s called dancing, Ronald,” George laughs. “Some of us aren’t as uncoordinated as you are.”

“Looked like more than dancing from here.”

Hermione shakes her head and laughs. “You’re seeing things, it was a dance. George is as good as a brother, you know this.”

George winces from beside me and Hermione knows he’s heard what she hoped he would, loud and clear. It’s never going to be anything more between us.

“Right,” Ron nods, still glaring at his brother. “Want a drink?”

Hermione nods and walks with him to the bar, giving George a little space and herself some time to cool down and try to process exactly what that whole thing was.

The evening thankfully goes by quickly with no more awkwardness between George and Ron and before Hermione knows it, she's helping an intoxicated Harry and Ginny back to the apartment with Ron's help. When they're safely deposited into their room, they leave them and close the door. Ron walks to the kitchen and helps himself to leftovers from last night's dinner from the fridge with an ease that only he has in someone else's home.

"Want some?" he asks, his eyes glazed.

"I'm good, help yourself though." She laughs, kicking off her boots and hopping up onto the counter.

He leans against it with the bowl of chicken in one hand and the other reaching for a jar of pickles from the fridge before he starts to make a sandwich for himself. He turns his eyes to her and she watches as his eyes travel down her legs and up to her breasts before coming to a stop on her mouth.

And Hermione waits.

She waits for the heat that his perusal over my body would have brought a year ago, but nothing happens. His eyes heat however and Hermione knows she's going to have to make it clear to a second Weasley tonight, that this is not happening. she's not interested in casual and she's not about to pick up where they left off. He finishes his sandwich and brushes his hands on his trousers before shifting her legs so he can stand between them.

"Ron—"

"I miss you, Hermione." His voice is husky.

"No you don't," Hermione tells him, pushing against his shoulders. "You're drunk, still irritated about George and I dancing and horny."

He quirks a brow at her and shifts closer. "Is that a bad thing? I always thought we were great together."

She pushes him a little harder as his head drops to her neck. "Ron, no. We ended things, we want different things, we're not the same people."

"Maybe we can be again." He breathes over her skin, dropping to press a kiss to her neck.

If Hermione ever thought they might be able to get back together, the lack of any feeling at all puts an end to it. There's no spark, no heat, there's just *nothing*. She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath, trying to remember if there was ever a time when his lips on her skin did make her feel alive or if it's always been like this. Familiar. Comforting even, but not explosive.

And Hermione desperately wanted it to be explosive. She wanted electric currents, whole body shivers, fireworks and scorching heat. She didn't want familiarity or comfort, Hermione wanted passion.

Before he has a chance to make this whole thing more awkward, Hermione moves and pushes him back before jumping off the counter. His lust-filled eyes stare down at her and she shakes her head.

“The sofa is that way,” Hermione points down the hall. “I’m going to bed. Alone.” His eyes fill with hurt but he nods.

Hermione picks up her shoes and bag and heads to her room. Stepping inside she leans back against the door and takes a deep breath. There was a time when she couldn’t picture her life without Ron beside her. When she pictured getting married, having children and becoming *Mrs Hermione Granger-Weasley*.

But now?

The thought leaves her cold and empty. She doesn’t understand how her feelings can shift so dramatically in such a short amount of time, but they have and she’s not going to ignore it. Hermione pushes off from the door and slips into her pyjamas, deciding not to risk going to the bathroom to wash her face in case she bumps into Ron again. As Hermione climbs into bed and closes her eyes her mind drifts to her usual fantasy, of a man who ignites her mind, body and soul and makes her feel things she never thought possible. The only problem is, he doesn’t have a face and she has no idea where to find him, or if he even exists.

Chapter End Notes

Hello and thank you so much for reading my first ever fanfic.

I just wanted to take a moment to acknowledge that, I’m aware there are typos and that the POV switches from first to third sometimes. I’m honestly trying my best to stop it, but the fic was originally written in first person as that’s what I’m most comfortable with, but since reading a LOT of Dramione fanfiction and realising no one writes first, I went back to change it.

Was that the best idea? I’m yet to decide. But it’s done now.

I started this as a bit of fun and I hope you find enjoyment in this like I do. I’m doing it all on my own, it’s my first fic and I hope to get better as time goes on.

Please know, that I appreciate it SO very much!

Breath Of Life

Chapter Summary

Hermione meets the Death Eater who will be helping and his appearance has her confused.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Two

Breath Of Life

Monday morning rolls around so fast she feels like she's barely left work before she's heading into work again, early as usual, eager to make some headway with the results from the trials. Shortly after nine, a knock on the door brings her head up. Claudine smiles at her and lets me know the weekly meeting is happening in five minutes. The meeting goes as usual, Hermione listens to the talks of raids and the many dark objects removed, it's nothing she hasn't heard before and truly, it's nothing that worries anyone massively at this point.

Tuesday afternoon, finds Hermione in the lift heading down to pick up a coffee from the café just down the street. She has her head in a page of Runes when the lift comes to a stop and people flood in. Hermione raises her eyes to see who she's now locked into the small space with and feels all the breath leave her body.

Standing mere inches in front of her is none other than Draco Malfoy.

Hermione hasn't seen him in the flesh since his trial and she's shocked to discover how different he looks now.

He's aged like a fine wine, she's shocked to admit, even to herself. He's bulkier than he was in school and taller, much taller, how that's possible she doesn't know. He looks just as haughty but he's grown into his pointy features and everything just looks softer.

One thing that's very different is the sneer she's so used to expecting to adorn his face is missing. He has a soft smile on his lips and his eyes are bright. Alive. The very opposite of what they were the last time she saw them.

Hermione finds her eyes scanning over his body and sees he's wearing perfectly tailored robes of steel grey, a black shirt, tie, waistcoat and perfectly tailored trousers. She loses herself to her perusal and in some unknown amount of time later, her eyes come to rest on his hands. They're large and elegant with long fingers and tidy nails and just visible, wrapped around one ridiculously long finger is a signet ring. Silver and black and she assumes sporting the Malfoy crest.

As his gaze raises to meet hers, she realises his robes almost match his eyes perfectly. His face registers surprise and Hermione watches as he takes in her face for a second before his gaze drops to brush over her entire body, heating her skin everywhere his eyes travel before they come to rest on her eyes once again.

"Granger," he nods before turning to stand just in front of her as more people pile into the lift.

Hermione knows she blushes but she doesn't have a chance to say anything before the lift doors close and they're descending to the atrium. Hermione keeps her eyes trained on the back of his head. His hair is still platinum blond, the perfect strands as stark as they always have been but they're less rigidly slicked back.

He wears it a little longer and looser on top and shorter on the sides with a lock of hair falling forward onto his forehead. Hermione has to admit, it looks really good on him.

He looks really good.

Hermione never saw the attraction of Draco Malfoy at school. He was a bully and made her life miserable, he took enjoyment in his vileness and relished in his torment of others but that seems like a lifetime ago now and if she's changed, there's no reason he hasn't too.

When we reach the atrium, he steps out and Hermione follows closely behind. It's only when he stops and shakes hands with none other than the Minister for Magic himself, Hermione puts two and two together.

Draco Malfoy is the Death Eater who will be working at the Ministry and helping rally up anyone of interest.

It's his help we'll be receiving.

She walks past the pair and out into Muggle London, opting to bypass the Wizarding café she intended to visit, and deciding to go for Muggle coffee while thinking about how she and Harry will soon, *potentially*, be working closely with Malfoy.

Two Gryffindors.

One Slytherin.

A whole heap of history.

This was going to be ... fun.

Hermione's suspicions are confirmed the following Monday when she walks into the usual meeting and Malfoy is standing speaking to Otto. His eyes turn to meet hers and she smiles back before taking her seat. When Harry walks in talking to Ruttley, he doesn't appear to see Malfoy immediately, even though every other pair of eyes has spotted him. He takes a seat and it's only when he turns to speak to her that she knows he sees him. He stops breathing and his hand clenches at his side. Hermione reaches across and places her hand on his and squeezes.

"It's okay." Hermione tells him softly.

"You knew he was here?" Harry's green eyes lift to hers in confusion.

"Only when I stepped in." Hermione lies.

He nods and turns his eyes to the front as Otto clears his throat to start the meeting. The first few minutes are as they always are, the reassurance that there is nothing urgent requiring our time, but there have been whispers of trouble down in Cornwall that we'll be keeping an eye on. When he steps to the side and indicates to Malfoy, Harry's hand tenses again.

"As I mentioned before, we have made some new appointments and I'm pleased to announce that Draco Malfoy will be joining the department as an Auror. He comes highly trained from the French Ministry and has an exceptional record in hunting out those Dark Wizards left behind since ... well ... we know when. He'll be with us from now on," his eyes flash to Harry and he swallows. "I hope you'll all make him feel welcome."

Everyone murmurs and Draco smiles at the room at large. He steps back and lets his gaze drift over everyone in the room before coming to rest on Hermione. The intensity of his gaze makes a shudder run up her spine and she shifts in her seat to cover it. Harry looks at her curiously and assumes incorrectly that Malfoy is making her uncomfortable. Hermione lets him. Because to do otherwise is impossible when she doesn't know what on earth Malfoy's gaze is currently making her feel.

If Hermione had to describe it?

She thinks she'd say overheated.

She might say shuddery.

Hermione absolutely wouldn't say curious or aroused however.

Not. At. All.

Breathe .

Otto ends the meeting and asks Hermione and Harry to stay behind for a few minutes. As we watch everyone file out of the room she can feel the tension radiating from Harry. When everyone has left the room, he stands and bends to breathe into her ear.

“Here we go. Let’s all go befriend the boy who—”

Hermione shakes her head. “That was a long time ago, Harry,” she tells him softly.

“And that changes what, exactly?”

She stands and shrugs. “I don’t know what it changes yet, but he deserves a second chance. We all did what we had to to survive. We don’t know his reasons, I think he deserves a chance,”

Harry looks at her with wonder and smiles. “This is exactly why everyone adores you, no one I know thinks like you or has the compassion you do. You make everyone a better person, Hermione,” he tells me softly. “Thanks.”

Hermione moves towards where Malfoy and Otto stand and smiles at them both. She’s about to extend her hand when Otto speaks.

“I know you went to school together,” he says softly. “I hope that old grievances will be forgotten.”

Harry joins us and nods, extending his hand to Malfoy without hesitation. “Malfoy,”

Malfoy hesitates and for a second Hermione thinks he’s going to decline. But he surprises her and reaches his hand out, closing his fingers around Harry’s to shake. “Potter,” he nods without a smile before releasing his hand. “I remember offering you my hand many years ago and having it rejected, how time changes, it seems.” He smiles then and she notices the change it makes to his whole face.

“And you know Miss Granger,” Otto says quickly like he’s trying to avoid anything uncomfortable.

Malfoy turns his eyes to her and reaches his hand out. Hermione almost gasps in shock,

Draco Malfoy wants to shake *her* hand?

Shake the hand of the *filthy little Mudblood* ?

Oh, how times change, Malfoy is right about that.

She smiles and reaches forward to connect our palms. The second our skin touches, a shock like a bolt of lightning runs the length of her arm. Hermione winces and meets his eyes, She sees a twitch of his left eye but no other acknowledgment of what just happened.

Did he feel it too?

Is that what the twitch was about?

Or is that the natural reaction to being so close to someone like her?

She pulls her hand free of his grasp and steps back a little, taking a steady breath.

"Mr Malfoy will be in the office across from you, Hermione. I've suggested he ask you if he needs anything, I hope that's okay."

"Of course," she nods. "I'll be happy to help. When I'm here of course," Hermione tries to sound genuine.

A few minutes later they all leave the meeting room and head to their offices, Harry turning right out the door while Malfoy and Hermione turn left. She stops outside his office and points towards her door.

"When I'm here, I'll just be in there if you need anything." She tells him.

He nods and smiles softly at her. "Thank you, Granger."

Hermione shifts from foot to foot while locked in his eyes. Malfoy smiling at her is not something she remembers. Sneering, yes. Scowling, absolutely. But smiling? Not once can Hermione remember him smiling at her and the change it makes to his features is ... remarkable. It's only when Claudine calls her name that she manages to drag her gaze away and leave. When the door to her office closes and she's alone, Hermione takes a shaky breath and raises her hand to her forehead, brushing away the perspiration that has beaded there.

What on earth was that?

And why is she reacting this way to *Draco bloody Malfoy* ?

Thankfully the day goes by with no more interactions with Malfoy. Hermione stays in her office and he stays in his. They don't meet while grabbing a coffee and they most certainly don't meet each other when they leave for lunch, mainly because Hermione waits for him to leave before she leaves the safety of her office. While she sits at her desk eating lunch, Hermione keeps her eyes trained on the doorway, telling herself it's so she can be prepared should he decide to knock on the door, but really, it's because she hopes to see him walk back to his office.

The Malfoy Hermione knew and the Malfoy she met this morning are like two different people. One was mean and never without a sneer, the adult Malfoy is softer, leaner and yet broader all at the same time. The adult Malfoy wears his hair in a deliciously loose style that she could imagine running her hands through and ruffling up a little more.

The adult Malfoy looks at her and *smiles* and when their skin touches, it causes an electric current to pulse through her skin. Hermione groans and takes a bite of her lunch.

The adult Malfoy was also causing her to lose way too much time thinking about him and it has to stop.

At five o'clock, Harry pops his head around her door as usual to head home together. Hermione smiles and gathers her things. Just as they're heading to the lifts, Malfoy leaves his

office too and she has no option but to walk ahead and pretend he's not there. Only, he gets into the lift with them and she's suddenly assaulted by not only the presence he exudes, but his scent. It's clean and almost citrusy, but there's a spice too. Hermione is horrified to note that when she next inhales, her mouth waters and she feels a tug somewhere deep in her stomach. Hermione tries very hard to not inhale too often while stuck in such a small space with him but the journey to the atrium takes forever and all the while Harry attempts small talk with the man.

"You're living at the Manor?"

"Yes, my mother is also there."

"And you don't find that a little—"

Malfoy interrupts Harry. "Stifling? He laughs bitterly. "Yes. And that's why I'm in the process of buying my own place."

Harry chuckles. "I can't imagine living with—" he stops himself and smiles sadly. "Hermione's in the process of buying somewhere too."

Hermione glares at Harry before meeting Malfoy's eyes. "It's taking longer than anticipated," she explains. "But it should all be completed soon."

"Are you still living with your parents?" he asks her, a gentle curious look on his face.

"No, I'm currently taking up valuable space at Harry's," she bumps shoulders with her best friend. "But not for much longer, hey roomie,"

"No," he grins, "Thankfully for you."

Malfoy watches them, a mixture of curiosity and amusement on his face. The looks are both alien and unsettling to Hermione. She smiles back at him and finds herself feeling warm again. Thankfully the lift comes to a stop and the shutters fling themselves open. Harry steps out but Malfoy stops and holds his arm out, gesturing for her to go.

"Please—"

Hermione feels the shock register on her face before she can stop it and steps in front of Malfoy, quickly making her exit. When Harry hangs back to walk with her to the grates she inwardly growls at him. As Hermione walks beside the pair of them, her whole body seems intent on keeping informed on exactly where Malfoy is. Her head keeps turning to face him, her ears are searching for his deep, commanding tone and her nose suddenly wants to inhale every few seconds and fill her lungs with whatever scent it is he's wearing.

Hermione realises they've stopped a little too late and walks straight into Malfoy, making herself wobble and for him to reach two hands out to steady her. The heat that covers her skin and leaves a shudder in its wake is visible, even from space I'm sure of it. She says thank you politely before stepping into the fireplace and calling out Harry's address. As the flames turn

green and Hermione begins to move, she sees Malfoy's eyes resolutely fixed on where she's standing and something flashes in his eyes.

Something Hermione can't and won't name.

"Look at me," he demands, running his mouth over her nipple and hooking one finger into the side of her knickers.

Hermione's hips buck and her eyes snap to his. Stormy, dark and so full of heat she shudders.

"Good girl," he purrs as he drags her knickers down her legs before pressing a kiss to the inside of her thigh. "Watch me devour you, Hermione."

Her name on his lips has heat pooling between her legs and her nipples pebbling. God his eyes, his touch, his voice. When did a man ever have this effect on her before?

They haven't.

That's the truth.

Hermione has always enjoyed sex but has never experienced anything like this.

Hermione watches curiously as he lifts her with one big hand and rests her bottom on his splayed

hand, propping her up and bringing her closer to his face. Hermione blushes, the very act of somewhere so intimate being so close to his face making a shiver of embarrassment course through her, and she brings her hands up to cover her face.

"None of that, beautiful." the croons, running his lips across her inner thigh again. "I've waited a long time to get you this close to me. *Eyes. On. Me.* "

Hermione obeys instantly, like it's what she's supposed to do and once she meets his eyes, Hermione can't tear her eyes away from him even though everything is all too intense. She watches with wide eyes as he drops his nose between her legs and inhales deeply, his eyes close and he breathes in again. When they slowly blink open, they're almost black. With his eyes on her, he smirks and Hermione sees his pink tongue slip out from between his lips.

With excruciating slowness he licks her from opening to clitoris, groaning as he comes to a stop.

"Intoxicating," he breathes into her skin, before burying his face into her heated, oversensitive flesh. "And so fucking delicious,"

Hermione calls out, fingers clawing at the sheet beside her hips. She feels his free hand come up and he slides one long delicious finger inside of her, the one with the signet ring, its cold edges putting pressure where she needs it. Hermione is vaguely aware of the fact she should be embarrassed at how easily he's slipped inside, but she's not.

Hermione wants him to know what he does to her.

She wants him to know that she's hot and ready for him.

While he slips a second and then third finger inside her, his tongue laves at her clitoris sending shockwaves of pleasure through her body and making a deep pull begin in her lower abdomen. Hermione releases the sheet and brings her hands to rest on his head and tugs at his hair, raising her hips and holding his face to her giving him no way to stop or escape.

“Please —” Hermione pants.

He chuckles against her skin. “Oh, I *love* it when you beg. Such a good girl, aren’t you?”

His words have her shuddering and edging closer to the release Hermione desperately wants.

“Yes,” she mewls. “Yes, I am a good gir—”

Hermione’s words cut off as he sucks her clitoris fully into his mouth and she detonates around his lips, his fingers curling upwards inside her and prolonging her orgasm as he massages the sweet spot Hermione has never been able to find herself.

“That’s it, just like that, Hermione. So good.”

Hermione gasps as his voice vibrates against her skin, another shudder wracking her body, her legs shaking around his head. Hermione tugs at his hair and grinds herself closer to his mouth, not able to get close enough to him. He’s the one to pull back, he’s the one to stop the connection and she misses it immediately.

When she’s caught her breath, she looks back down and sees him still looking up at her from between her legs, just inches from her core, the evidence of her orgasm still on his face and lips,. Shock registers seconds before he speaks again.

“Well, well,” he chuckles darkly. “Who knew the *Gryffindor Golden Girl* would be so greedy for my Slytherin tongue?”

Hermione jerks suddenly awake, her hands still between her legs, a layer of sweat drenching her body and the flush of my orgasm still colouring her skin.

Chapter End Notes

Annnnnnd, welcome Mr Malfoy.

And hello graphic sex dreams about a co-worker.

I hope you enjoyed this chapter and the little dream at the end!

Thank you so much for reading commenting and leaving Kudos - I cannot fully express how much it means to me.

Daylight

Chapter Summary

Things start to get interesting with the investigation.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Three

Daylight

When Monday morning arrives, Hermione steps out of the lift with trepidation, hoping that she doesn't bump into Malfoy on the way to her office. Thankfully, the path she takes is clear and she hides herself away until the usual morning meeting. As Hermione makes her way into the conference room, she keeps her eyes on the scroll of parchment on the top of her file and avoids making eye contact with anyone in the room. Hermione knows the way to her seat with her eyes closed so doesn't think anything of it. When she reaches her seat, she plops herself down and turns to her left, about to tease Harry for being early for a change, when she gets a whiff of the citrus and spice scent from Friday. Hermione slowly turns her eyes and meets a grey pair of eyes where there should be green.

“Oh,” Hermione stutters. “Hi.”

Malfoy smiles. “Good morning, Granger. Did you have a nice weekend?”

The second the words leave his mouth in his, deeper than she remembers it, voice, She has the most vivid flashback from her filthy and inappropriate dream.

“Oh, I love it when you beg. Such a good girl, aren’t you?”

Watching curiously as he lifts her with one hand and rests her bottom on his splayed hand, propping her up and bringing her closer to his face.

“That’s it, just like that, Hermione. So good.”

His voice vibrating against her skin, another shudder wracking her body, her legs shaking around his head.

Hermione squeezes her eyes shut trying to stop the visions playing in her head, to force down the feeling of Malfoy's hands and mouth —

"Are you okay, Granger?"

Hermione snaps her eyes open and looks at him, a blush creeping up her neck and her heated cheeks on full display. She swallows thickly and shakes her head.

"Yes," she croaks, placing a hand to her forehead. "Just feeling a little, overheated. Is it warm in here?"

His face creases in confusion and he shakes his head. "Not particularly,"

"Huh," she manages. "It must — "

"Morning, Hermione. Malfoy." Harry's voice rescues her from making any more embarrassing noises as he takes a seat the other side of her from normal.

The room continues to fill up while Hermione tries to calm herself down while sandwiched between her best friend and the man she had the most vivid sex dream about, all while surrounded by their colleagues, sitting in the Ministry of Magic. When Otto strides in and begins the meeting, it's with a look of resignation rather than reassurance.

"Morning everyone, I hope you had a good weekend," he scratches the side of his cheek and sighs. "So there's really no gentle way of saying this," he looks out at the group and back down to his sheet. "There's been some Werewolf attacks in the West Country this weekend. There are whispers that Greyback is responsible and that he has help."

Hermione tenses at hearing the name she hoped to never hear again. Turning to look at Harry, Hermione sees he's tensed in his seat, hands gripping the side of his chair. After the Battle of Hogwarts, Greyback vanished, quite literally, overnight. There were no more attacks, no whispers of his whereabouts and no signs that he was even alive. Everyone who had ever met or heard about Greyback let out a sigh of relief and quietly celebrated the demise of such a vile, rabid creature.

When a position came up in the Department of Magical Law Enforcement assisting them with complex Runes translations, Arithmancy and other areas of magic Hermione loved, she applied. She didn't think for one second she would get the position just out of her voluntary Eighth year at Hogwarts,, but low and behold, Otto offered her the job and she happily accepted it. Hermione didn't want to fight in the field, she'd done enough of that to last a lifetime, but she did want to help put Dark Wizards where they should be; in Azkaban.

"Help?" Harry asks from beside her.

Otto looks at Malfoy who answers the question for him. "We suspect Death Eaters, or what's left of them." A collective intake of breath sounded across the room at Otto's words.

"What's the plan?" Harry asks, leaning forward.

Otto sighs. “We’re going to need to send a team down to Cornwall to check a few things out. We’re obviously keen to catch and stop those involved, but we can’t have them knowing, they’ll go to ground and if that happens, we’ll have no chance.”

“Is this why Malfoy is here? Does he know who’s helping?” Cudmore asks from across the room.

Hermione feels eyes turn in their direction and she turns to look at Malfoy too. He meets everyone’s eyes in turn before speaking.

“I’m here because there was a vacancy, I applied and was offered the job, which I accepted.” his eyes tightened as he looked at everyone in the room. “But potentially yes, I will know those involved.” She watches as he straightens his tie, tugs on his shirt cuffs and leans back a little into his seat.

Malfoy makes it perfectly clear he’s not here to defend himself. He knows he’s good at his job and he hasn’t the time or inclination to prove it to you. The tension is radiating off of him and she finds it stupidly attractive.

Stop.

This.

Now.

Otto clears his throat, drawing attention back to him. “There have been some elaborate spell work and curses used on the victims as well as bite marks, Malfoy has agreed to help identify any he recognises.”

“Recognises?” Rudsdale questions. “How would you recognise a spell? Surely they’re all the same?”

Malfoy’s eyes darken and his shoulders square. “Not if you’ve been taught by the Dark Lord, they’re not.” he says clearly.

At once the tension in the room overflows and everyone shifts in their seats uncomfortably, many mumble curses. It’s been a long time since there has been any mention of Voldemort within the confines of the Monday meeting and the fact it has, has everyone on edge.

“So we’re not just looking for Werewolves but what? Death Eaters, too?” Harry says from beside her.

“We can’t be sure yet,” Otto says calmly. “But we think so, yes. Malfoy will be able to tell us more soon.”

“When do we leave?” Harry asks.

“We’re sending a small team out today, I expect you want to be included in the initial visit?”

Harry nods. "If it's Greyback, then yes. I've never believed he was dead and I've wanted that bastard dead for a long time. If there's a chance he's behind this, I want to be a part of the team investigating."

Otto nods and finishes up giving everyone their instructions. Hermione just sits there, unsure of what to say or feel. *Greyback. Death Eaters*. She feels like she's gone back in time. The faces of those they lost at the filthy hands of Fenrir Greyback come flooding into her mind. The pain, suffering and terror he inflicted on generations for years hits Hermione in the stomach. He was the reason Lupin suffered his whole life, the reason Bill wore cursed scars and why Lavender and countless other people lost their lives.

And now he's back.

Not dead like everyone first assumed.

She feels a warm hand in hers and turns to see Harry staring at her. Hermione shakes her head to clear the memories taking hold.

"Why now?" She whispers.

Harry's eyes meet hers and he shakes his head. "I don't know, but we're going to find out."

Three hours later Hermione is buried in paperwork, trying to shut her brain off, to stop it from torturing her with images of the dead lined up in the Great Hall after the Battle, stop it showing Remus pale and small in death. Most days the war seems a distant memory, something intellectually Hermione knows happened but one she tries very hard not to remember.

After years of seeing a Mind Healer, she's worked through the trauma that swamped her childhood and made as much peace as she can with what happened. But that doesn't mean acceptance of such horrors comes easily or freely. As the clock continues to tick on, she gets more restless. Harry, Malfoy and a handful of others left for Cornwall almost straight after the meeting and they're still not back.

Realistically they won't be back for hours yet, but knowing Harry is far away and in the possible area that Greyback is ... it's more than unsettling her. Hermione gives up on the papers in front of her and paces in front of her desk, running her hands through her hair and completely messing up all her hard work taming it this morning.

How can we be in this situation again? How has Greyback avoided detection this long? Where has he been hiding? And Death Eaters? How many are there left? How can they even call themselves that now that Voldemort is dead? Hermione rolls her shoulders and bites back a growl.

Not this.

Not now.

Not when everyone is finally able to look for the future and not the past.

She's sitting contemplating going to get some lunch when a noise in the hallway alerts her to company a second before the door opens and Harry comes striding in without knocking. She's up and out of her seat before he's even half way in the room and throwing my arms around him.

"Oh, thank Gods you're back! Are you okay?" She pulls back and searches his face for any signs of injury.

"Hermione, it's okay. I'm absolutely fine." He breathes and pulls her back into his embrace.

"What happened?" She murmurs against his chest as his arms run soothingly up and down her back.

"Not much," he breathes into her hair. "We didn't find anything new, but Malfoy is confident that it's Greyback and Death Eaters working together. Hermione — "

"Potter, we need to brief Otto on what we found," Malfoy's voice interrupts our embrace and we both pull back.

Hermione looks over Harry's shoulder and meets Malfoy's eyes, he nods and tries to smile but it doesn't quite work. She steps back and smooths her hands down her dress, shaking her head to get a little control over herself.

"Go," Hermione tell Harry. "Shall I go get some lunch for us?"

He nods and smiles. "That would be great,"

Hermione smiles and looks back at Malfoy "Would you — " she swallows and tries again. "Would you like to join us? I can bring it to the meeting room and you can fill me in properly?"

A look crosses his face, Hermione can't tell what it is before it's gone and a smooth smile is in its place.

"Thank you, Granger. That would be — "

She nods. "What can I get you?" Hermione interrupts before he has to find a word that expresses what lunch with myself and Harry will be.

"A salad, a sandwich, I eat most things."

Hermione tries desperately not to allow her mind to flashback to that bloody dream again and respond with a throaty, *I know you do* .

She gathers her cloak and bag and tells them both she'll see them in the meeting room in twenty minutes before heading down to the atrium. Once Hermione is alone in the lift, she rests her back to the wall and brings her hands to rest on her knees. Her breathing is fast, her skin is clammy and her hands are shaking. Hermione hasn't felt like this since just after the war when everything was new and she was struggling to adjust to a new normal, safe life. She closes her eyes and takes a few deep breaths.

In. Out. In. Out.

Hermione reminds herself that this is a very different situation, that this isn't a war, this isn't Voldemort, this is a handful of individuals that Harry and his team will stop. Yet Hermione can't seem to stop the little voice that whispers in her head, *that's what everyone thought before.*

She Disparates into Diagon and heads to the new little café that has recently opened next to Flourish and Blotts and sells the most delicious sandwiches and salads. She orders a few different things in the hopes Malfoy likes something and on her way back up the street, stops and grabs two coffees and a tea. Hermione doesn't know much about this new Malfoy, but she does know one thing, his preference is tea. She heard him tell Claudine the other morning when she offered to get him a drink.

Hermione makes her way up to the meeting room and lays everything out, placing her robes on the back of her chair and her bag on the floor before having a seat and taking the notes she's been working on out and placing them onto the table. She's not sure how much time goes by but Hermione jumps when a warm presence behind her leans over and speaks.

"Justice," Malfoy says.

"Gods Malfoy, announce yourself, don't sneak up on me!" she stutters as she reaches for her wand out of pure instinct.

His eyes go wide. "I did. Several times, in fact." He frowns at me.

She furrows her brow. "I apologise, I tend to get lost in these kinds of—are you done?" Hermione asks, looking around the room to find Harry.

He nods and pulls back a chair next to her before taking a seat. "He'll be here in a moment,"

Hermione vanishes the papers back into her office and reaches for the tea, holding it out to him. "Tea,"

He smiles softly and takes the cup. "Thank you, what do I owe you for lunch?" He gestures to the feast on the table.

She waves him off. "Nothing at all, it's on me,"

His lips purse and he glares at her. There's the Malfoy she knows, for a while there she thought he'd completely vanished. "You can accept lunch from a—" Hermione stops herself. His eyes light dangerously.

“From a?”

“Colleague,” Hermione says.

His eyes heat for just a second and he swallows. “What are you working on?” He asks.

“There were Runes found when a raid took place last month. At first I didn’t think much of it, the Rune you saw can mean many things; justice, leadership, logic—”

“*Battle*,” he interrupts.

Hermione meets his eyes and nods. “And battle, yes.”

“What others were found?”

Before Hermione has a chance to reply, Harry steps through the door and comes to take a seat on the opposite side of the table to where Hermione and Malfoy are seated and reaching for one of the coffee cups.

“So . . .” she begins unwrapping the paper packaging and removing lids from containers. “We have some of everything, please help yourself.” Hermione gestures to the table but neither of them move.

“After you,” Malfoy says from beside me.

Hermione looks between him and Harry and sighs. “Okay, but I only got one of each thing so if I take what you want, it’s your own chivalry to blame.”

They both chuckle and she reaches for the most delicious sandwich she’s ever eaten; hot chicken and stuffing with crispy bacon and just the right amount of lettuce and tomato. Hermione grabs her coffee and sits back down, making a show of crossing her legs and placing her sandwich in front of her. Hermione looks up as Harry is reaching for another of the sandwiches and finds Malfoy’s eyes fixed on her crossed legs.

She waits a second or two, watching intently as his eyes trail down to my feet which are encased in a simple pair of black heels with pointy toes and too many cushioning charms to count. When his eyes return to her face he doesn’t even have the decency to look embarrassed, he merely nods as if in approval and reaches for the chicken salad.

Over lunch they both explain what they found. A body with unmistakable bite marks and dark magic. Malfoy confirms that he’s only ever seen that particular mark left by a specific spell taught by the Dark Lord. Hermione shudders and tries to hide her shaking hands at his words as Harry reaches over the table to squeeze her fingers.

“We’ll stop this, Hermione,” he tells her.

“I know,” she smiles weakly. “I know.”

Malfoy shifts beside her and she turns to look at him. “You’re not in any danger, Granger.” He speaks clearly and with authority.

Hermione laughs. "You can't know that, no one can. The war taught us all that."

He leans closer to her, placing his empty tea cup on the table. "I do know that," He says simply.

"How exactly?"

He stands, buttons up his jacket, tugs on his shirt cuffs and looks at her with such a hard expression she feels herself shrink a little. "Because I won't let anything happen to you and I since I got my freedom back, I never fail," his eyes lock with hers for a second before he looks away and at Harry. "Thank you for lunch, Granger, I'll return the favour I can assure you. I'll be in my office."

With that he walks out of the meeting room, down the corridor and out of sight.

Chapter End Notes

Hi everyone!

From this point on, I'll be aiming for updates every Wednesday and Sunday (life depending)

The tags will also update as we get further into the story, so please, please check and read responsibly. Look after yourself first and foremost.

Thank you all SO much for reading, commenting and leaving kudos. The fact that you're taking a chance on my little fic blows my mind.

Until Sunday ...

Beautiful Things

Chapter Summary

Hermione receives an unexpected invitation and finds herself surrounded by snakes.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Four

Beautiful Things

The invitation arrives on Thursday afternoon. A thick and expensive parchment, sealed with a blob of green wax and black ribbon. Hermione uncurls it and finds ornate silver lettering informing her that she's invited to the annual charity ball at Malfoy Manor in two weeks.

A shocked laugh escapes her lips.

Hermione finds herself leaving her office and walking towards Harry's before she realises what she's doing. Hermione knocks and waits. Harry opens the door a few seconds later with a grin on his face when he sees what's in her hand.

"You got one, too?" He asks quietly, ushering her in and closing the door.

"I did," Hermione confirms. "Will you be going?"

Harry sits on the edge of his desk, ruffles his already messy hair and looks at her. "I think so, yes."

"Yes?" She asks in surprise. "You're willingly going to go back to the Manor?"

"Hermione, you forget I've been back many times since," he smiles sadly at her. "It looks nothing like it did then you know?"

Hermione shakes her head, no.

She doesn't know.

Because she's never been invited back.

Narcissa Malfoy holds many galas at the Manor every year and she's never on the guest list. Hermione can only assume she is now only because she works with her son and she can't be seen to not invite her.

"What was it you told me back when Malfoy started? We all did what we had to to survive. We don't know his reasons, I think he deserves a chance? Don't you think she deserves the same?"

Hermione turns away from him, pacing his office. Of course she believes everyone deserves a chance, but Malfoy was a child then. Narcissa was an adult, the consequences of her actions are greater than Malfoy's because she really did know what she was doing. She stood by while her insane sister tortured me on the floor of her house, while her psychotic husband followed and supported the darkest Wizard our world has ever known. She stood by when that same wizard moved into her home and tortured and killed there.

"She was prepared to save her son — who was the exact same age we were — but willing to let every other student in Hogwarts die, Harry. You're telling me I should give someone like that a second chance?" Hermione raises her eyebrow in challenge.

He frowns at me. "She saved my life, Hermione. She lied to Voldemort in that forest and in doing so, saved not only my life, but everyone else's. I can't even begin to think what it would have been like if things had ended differently."

"She lied to save *him* , not you, not me. Him. Am I supposed to worship the woman? Applaud her bravery? Give her some kind of award for behaving like a human being?"

"No, I'm not asking you to. All I'm saying is, she did what she felt she had to to save her son. There were hundreds of Death Eaters who killed our classmates, tortured them or stood by and cheered while others did their dirty work. Narcissa isn't innocent but she's not the same as they are."

Hermione looks back down at the parchment in her hand. The invitation declares that all money raised is being donated to St Mungos, to the Janus Thickey ward which desperately needs refurbishment. She scoffs. Of course it did, it's needed for many years and yet no one seems to want to fundraise for it.

Until now that is.

Hermione knows she has to go. She's been trying to petition for a complete refurbishment of that ward since the Battle and got nowhere. The ward is filled with long term patients with permanent spell damage. Some from the first war, but lots more from the second. People she knew well, those she fought side by side with at the *Battle of Hogwarts* . They sacrificed themselves so she and countless others, Harry included, could have their freedom, the least she could do was attend a party and help raise as much money for them as possible. If Narcissa Malfoy and her rich friends were prepared to help, Hermione would be there to support it.

She closes her eyes, fistng the paper in her hands firmly and nods at Harry. "I'll be there," Hermione opens her eyes and fixes them on his green ones. "And you had better be too,"

Two weeks later, Hermone is sitting on the floor of her room and taking her time to apply her makeup before tonight's gala at Malfoy Manor. The last two weeks have gone by so quickly, it feels like she only just sent her owl back with her reply accepting the invite and now the minutes are ticking by far too quickly and she's expected to be ready to leave in an hour. She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath before getting back to transforming her face into a version of herself that doesn't immediately announce that this is her very first Malfoy Manor gala.

Hermione glances over at the dress hanging on her wardrobe and smiles. Not even Ginny had seen it and she's secretly looking forward to seeing her reaction. She finishes applying the gold shimmer eyeshadow in the centre of her eyelids which she was told would make her brown eyes pop, before using a lengthening charm on her lashes making them longer, fuller and more dramatic, before applying mascara.

Keeping her lips a soft matte nude, she turns her attention and wand to her hair.

Hermione watched hours of tutorials working out how to create an elegant updo and feels pretty confident that she can create, if not the exact style, something very similar. Forty minutes and obscene amounts of *Sleeky's Hair Potion* later, her hair is sleek, soft and feminine. A few curls loose and framing her face while the rest is up and secured with more magic than she thinks it needs, but she doesn't want anything going wrong tonight, least of all her crazy mane of hair escaping and ruining the overall look.

Standing, she slips out of her dressing gown and into the burgundy dress she picked for the occasion. It's long, fitted and has a very out of character, almost indecent V at the rear, exposing a large portion of her shoulders and back. The front is modest and comes up to meet her shoulders in a form fitting line. The front would be classed as simple if it wasn't for the mid-thigh split on her right leg, showing just enough toned, tanned leg, or so the lady in the shop told her.

The whole dress is covered in lace and when Hermione slips it on, it moulds to her body like a second skin. Remembering the charm the lady in the boutique told her to use, she secures the thin, delicate lace to her skin to stop it moving before turning to the mirror and casting a charm to support her breasts because, as she was also told in the boutique, this dress cannot be worn with a bra and Hermione's ample chest would need support.

Hermione straps her wand holder to her left leg and places her wand securely into the black leather. Looking back at her reflection she grins. The woman staring back at her is sophisticated and elegant. Hermione turns and checks herself from all angles and nods in approval before slipping her feet into the heels she purchased for tonight. Pointed toe, satin and far too high but if there's one thing she adores about being small, it's that she can wear whatever damn shoes she wants without feeling like a giant. Hermione spritzes some perfume before grabbing her black velvet cloak and taking a deep breath. When she walks out into the lounge where she can hear voices, all eyes snap to her and Harry makes a choking noise.

“Hermione!” Ginny bellows. “Fucking Godric! Look at you,”

Ginny comes over to stand in front of her and indicates Hermione should twirl. Thanking herself for not only putting cushioning charms on the heels but a stabilising one too, she pivots and grins when she hears a gasp.

“Wow,” Ginny breathes. “I’m one-hundred percent straight, but even I’m mentally calculating how I can get you to agree to come home with me later.”

“Ginny,” Harry laughs from the other side of the room. “Hermione you look —”

“Sensational,” Ginny finishes for him. “Ravishing, *fucking hot!*”

“Thank you,” Hermione blushes. “You look beautiful, Gin. Harry, dapper as always.” she nods at her best friend who is wearing his smartest tuxedo with a simple black travelling cloak over the top.

“Are we ready to go?” Harry asks, fidgeting with his collar.

“Stop fussing,” Ginny tells him, stepping closer to him and moving his hand. “I’m ready, and Hermione definitely is.” Ginny grins.

Hermione nods and Harry gestures for Ginny and herself to go first, Hermione holds her hand out and stops him. “You two go together, you’re a couple, it’s odd if you don’t.”

He locks eyes with me and assesses if there’s any other meaning in my words. “Okay, but I expect you in thirty seconds.”

Hermione nods and manages to stop the eyeroll. “Of course,”

Hermione watches them step into the grate and call Malfoy Manor before the flame turns green and they vanish. She takes a deep breath, steps up to the fireplace and does the same. Hermione arrives in a much larger fireplace and steps out. The entryway is already packed and as soon as Hermione appears, she casts her eyes around the room and spots Ginny and Harry a few people ahead of her and waiting to be greeted by none other than, the lady herself, Narcissa Malfoy. The room is grand, light and elegant with silver and green accents and Harry was right, it looks nothing like it did the last time they were there. Hermione shoves the memory from her mind and takes a deep breath.

“Hermione,” a voice to her right. “How lovely to see you.”

She turns my head and comes face to face with Austell Goodsworth, a Healer from St Mugos. “Austell, so lovely to see you here, how have you been?”

Hermione listens as she tells her she’s been well and busy with life as a new mother, how she’s rejoining the hospital soon and her excitement that the Malfoy’s are fundraising for the ward. We move along the line, watching as Narcissa greets Harry and Ginny warmly before they step aside and further into the room beyond. Before Hermione is ready, it’s her turn to greet the matriarch of the Malfoy family. Hermione pulls herself up straight, faking confidence when all she really wants to do is kick off her shoes and run back to the fireplace

to escape this whole nonsense. She boldly meets Narcissa's eyes and notices the older witches widen a little when she sees who is standing in front of her.

"Miss Granger," Narcissa says softly. "It's an honour to have you here tonight, I hope that you are well?"

The warmth in her tone knocks Hermione off kilter and she stands there mute for a second before answering. . "Thank you for having me," she murmurs, my manners taking over. "I'm very well, I hope you are too."

She nods and looks over her shoulder at someone. "Draco tells me you work together now?"

"Well, we're part of the same department, I wouldn't say we work to—"

"Draco, darling," Narcissa says to the looming presence beside her. "Miss Granger has arrived,"

Hermione feels heat flood her cheeks and turns to smile at the man beside her. Dressed impeccably in the sharpest black suit she has ever seen, it screams extravagance and wealth and as he reaches up to smooth his bow tie, the diamonds winking at her from his cufflinks confirm her suspicions.

"Granger," he nods smoothly at her.

"Malfoy," Hermione replies in a voice much deeper than usual.

"Why don't you escort *Miss Granger* into the ballroom, Mr Potter and Miss Weasley are here already."

"I'm certain Granger is more than capable of finding the ballroom, Mother," he tells her.

She laughs, a delicate ringing laugh and levels her eyes at her son. "Be that as it may, it's the gentlemanly thing to do," she leans closer to him. "And I know I raised a gentleman, Draco Lucious Malfoy."

Hermione expects him to argue his point, to decline. Surely escorting her into the packed ballroom isn't on his list of things to do tonight but he surprises her. Malfoy merely nods at his mother before holding his elbow out Hermione. Left in no position to decline after Narcissa made such a thing of it, she slips her hand into the crook of his elbow as he steers them towards the doorway and into the largest room Hermione has ever seen in her life.

She looks up at the ceiling and sees eight crystal chandeliers casting rainbows all over the room while people dressed in various colours mill around taking glasses of perfectly chilled champagne from hovering trays or canapes from various waitstaff. As they step into the room, every head turns their way and Hermione sees flashes of camera bulbs pointing directly at them. Hermione blinks and stops walking.

"Are you okay?" Malfoy asks from beside her.

"The press are here?" She whispers to him, looking uncomfortably around the room.

“Yes, it’s our hope that with their help, donations will flow freely.”

“Then I should let you—”

He stops and turns to her. “You should continue to walk beside me while we go find Potter, Granger.”

His eyes scan her face before unashamedly taking in her dress, heels and exposed thigh. When his eyes lift to hers again, she notices his pupils are dilated and the signature Malfoy smirk is firmly in place.

“Be sure to keep your wits about you, tonight, Granger. There are many men in this room who will make their interest known, I am sure of it.”

Hermione laughs at his ridiculous words. “I’m positive they will not, but thank you for the warning, Malfoy.”

He arches his brow at her before leaning closer to rest his mouth by her ear. His hot breath combined by his citrusy scent has Hermione’s skin heating in a second.

“If I were a betting man, *which I am*, I’d guess that before the night is out, you’ll have captured the attention of every male in this room, single or married, you’ll have your pick of them. I suggest you choose wisely, Granger.”

Hermione takes a steady breathing and nods. “I will,” she all but manages.

Every single cell in her body is aware of him, more than aware, they’re screaming at her to step closer, inhale deeper and when Hermione feels his hand come to rest on her lower back, his pinkie finger resting on the bare skin just above the dip of the dress, Hermione shudders.

He notices of course and runs his finger back and forth on her bare skin a few times.

“Let’s get you to the relative safety of Potter shall we?” Malfoy says and guides her over to where Harry and Ginny are watching them with open curiosity.

As they cross the room, Hermione feels every pair of eyes on them once again, tracking their movements and no doubt noticing Malfoy’s hand on her lower back. She feels like there’s a flashing light indicating where he’s touching her, alerting the whole room of the fact *Draco Malfoy is willingly touching Hermione Granger*, it’s front page of the *Prophet* stuff Hermione is sure.

When they reach Harry and Ginny, both smile at them and Malfoy greets them both politely, yet makes no attempt to remove his hand from her skin. Hermione feels heat creep over her cheeks and her skin burns where his finger still rests.

“I’ll leave you to it,” he tells me. “If you need anything at all, please let either myself or my mother know,” Malfoy turns to me and bows. “Enjoy your evening, Granger.”

Hermione watches him walk away before reaching for a hovering tray of champagne, taking one and swallowing half the contents in one mouthful.

“What was that about?” Ginny asks from beside her. “Why did Malfoy have his hand on you?”

She shakes her head, dismissing her comment. “His mother asked him to escort me in.”

“Does everything his mother tells him to, does he?” Ginny laughs, quirking an eyebrow at me.

“I have no idea,” Hermione replies.

Hermione takes a moment to fully take in the room. Its shiny white marble floor, the cream damask curtains artfully opened at each giant set of doors that she guesses lead out to balconies. The room swelling with classical music courtesy of the orchestra playing above them on the veranda. Everything is elegant, classy and sophisticated. Everything Narcissa Malfoy claims to be. Hermione scans the room and notices a lot of familiar faces; Otto Ashby, Arlo Cudmore and what looks like the rest of the DMLE, Rita Skeeter, quill and photographer in tow. Kingsley Shacklebolt and his wife Evelyn. As Hermione scans the room her eyes land on the white blond head of Malfoy and the group he’s surrounded by.

Pansy Parkinson, Blaise Zabini and Theodore Nott. All Slytherin’s and people she actively avoided at school. Hermione can’t help but notice how impeccably dressed they all are, how there isn’t a hair out of place or a crease to be found. She also notices how incredibly attractive the three men standing together are. Blaise’s dark skin is a complete contrast to Malfoy’s alabaster, while Theodore’s more olive complexion seems to bridge the gap perfectly. Pansy; petite with a sharp dark bob and dressed in a satin emerald green dress, laughs at something Theodore says before looking up and meeting Hermione’s eyes. She tenses, expecting venom but receives only a small smile. She nods her head and turns away from the group and continues to scan the well-dressed crowd before the attention of the entire room is captured by Narcissa Malfoy’s *Sonorously* voice.

“Ladies and gentlemen, it’s wonderful to see so many friends, old and new, here tonight to support the wonderful cause Draco and I have chosen to shine some much needed light upon,” she smiles warmly at her guests and Hermione has to admire how effortlessly she speaks to such a large audience.

There’s movement to her left and she sees Draco striding towards his mother who stands on a raised platform that Hermione is sure was not there before. He takes his place beside her and looks out on the many people looking up at him. All eyes are on the mother and son duo who exude confidence and regality effortlessly. But as Hermione scans the crowd, she notices a few faces look less than enthusiastic at Malfoy’s appearance.

“We’re all here to support the vital work that the entire staff on the Janus Thickney ward undertake every day,” a smattering of applause begins and swells greatly as Narcissa looks out at the room. “Draco and I know that the ward is in desperate need of not only refurbishments, but of additions that will enrich the lives of those currently undergoing care there,” she looks to Draco who gently nods his agreement. “So we ask you all to dig deep, donate generously and make a true difference to those who need it most.”

Hermione glances around the room and sees many of the faces nod in sympathy and whisper among each other, yet she can't help but notice there are also those who openly glare and sneer at Malfoy and she's reminded that, as much as everyone appears to adore his mother, they seem to feel very differently towards him.

"The evening will be opened, as is tradition, by a dance," it's Malfoy's voice that fills the space now. "Please join my mother and I in celebrating what I am sure will be a most successful evening."

She watches as Malfoy holds out his hand and leads his mother to the centre of the dancefloor before the strains of a beautiful string piece begin. Hermione watches in fascination as he leads his mother around the floor in an effortless waltz. She beams with pride at her son as they move around the floor before coming to a stop in the very centre of the room where Malfoy bows aristocratically to her before another piece of music begins and other couples join them. Hermione watches as Blaise leads Pansy, as Kingsley and Evelyn join them and when she looks to her right, she sees Harry and Ginny join in too. As one, everyone begins the same dance, all without being told. It's mesmerising and Hermione finds that she can't take her eyes off the spectacle.

"Hermione Granger,"

She turns and meets the brown eyes of Theodore Nott. "Theodore,"

"Theo," he corrects. "No one calls me by my full name, not any more, actually, not ever really,"

Hermione nods and moves her eyes back to watch the dancing. In truth, she wouldn't know what people call him. They were not friends in school and she hasn't seen him since they left.

"It's been ... a long time,"

She doesn't turn her attention back to him, but nods in agreement.

"Would you care to dance?" He asks softly.

"With you?" Hermione stutters stupidly.

He laughs and his whole face lights up with mischief. "Well, yes."

She eyes him suspiciously. "*You* want to dance with *me*?"

He nods. "Not just me, Granger," he looks out and gestures to the room at large. "Every man in this room wants to dance with you, but I'd like to be the first, if you'd do with the honour."

Caught off guard by not only his words but his request, Hermione nods and Theodore holds out his hand for her to take. She places her palm in his and allows him to lead her onto the floor just as the song finishes. Another begins and he places his hand on her waist as she rests hers on his shoulder and he leads them in the same direction as everyone else is going. They continue to dance in silence for a few seconds before he speaks.

“You work with Draco,” it’s not a question.

“We’re in the same department, not exactly working together,”

“And how is that?”

“It’s how it is with anyone else, Theo—”

His hand flexes on my waist as he corrects me softly. “Theo,”

“It’s the same as it is with all my colleagues, *Theo*,” Hermione tells him, smiling. “We go into the office, we complete our work, we go home. How else do you imagine it to be?”

“I’ll admit to being … concerned when he told us he was joining the DMLE after returning from France. It’s filled with Gryffindors, is it not?” He tries to lighten the topic a little with a smirk.

“It’s not just Gryffindors, there’s Ravenclaws and even a couple of Hufflepuffs,” she tells him. “He is our first and only Slytherin though.”

“He does like to make an impression and to have all eyes on him, that’s for sure.” Theo tells her as they move gracefully around the floor.

Hermione looks over his shoulder and notices Malfoy is dancing with a witch she doesn’t recognise, but his eyes are trained on where Theo’s hand rests on her lower back and not on his partner. His jaw tenses and releases several times while she watches him before his eyes snap up and meet hers. There’s something in them that Hermione can’t decipher and he moves himself and the witch around us so he’s now at my back and she can’t see him.

“Oooops,” Theo murmurs into her ear with a chuckle. “I think my closeness is upsetting the dragon.”

Hermione’s head turns to look but Theo moves them speedily away from Malfoy and his date and towards the edge of the dancefloor before coming to a stop and releasing her. His hand reaches for Hermione’s before he presses a soft kiss to her knuckles, bows and meets her eyes.

“The pleasure is all mine, Granger. I hope we can dance together again some time. Please enjoy your evening.” He bows slightly again before heading in the direction of the bar and leaving her utterly confused.

After gathering herself, she heads over to where Harry is speaking to a tall wizard she’d recognise anywhere. She walks slowly across the room, keeping her eyes open for Malfoy and the other Slytherin’s but doesn’t see any of them. As she approaches. She grins and taps the man on the shoulder.

"Hermione," he says brightly, dipping to kiss her on the cheek. "You look incredible."

Hermione blushes and steps back a little. "Thanks, Neville. I didn't know you were coming tonight."

Hermione assumed he would be of course. After the war it became common knowledge that Neville's parents were in fact alive and were full-time patients on the sameJanus Thickney ward they were here to raise money for, something not many of their friends had known before. Hermione can still recall the moment she found out that Christmas Arthur was attacked by Nagini and taken to St Mungos. They'd bumped into Neville completely by accident and she will never forget the look on his face when he saw them. Since the battle and everything that happened, Neville has made it his mission, much like Hermione has, to get the much needed funding for the ward and the patients. With very little luck. Which she hated to admit,

"I couldn't not, could I?" He said softly. "It will help mum and dad, I'd like to say it'll mean a lot to them, but we both know it won't. But it will make things more comfortable even if they're not really aware of it."

Hermione simply reaches for his hand, squeezes his fingers and smiles at him.

Sometimes words aren't needed.

"Did I see you dancing with Theodore Nott Hermione?" Harry asks, leaning closer.

She nods. "He asked, I didn't feel like I could say no. Why?"

"No reason, it's just ... after all this time I still expect to get Hexed whenever we're around them."

"It takes some getting used to, doesn't it?"

"And how was Theodore?" Ginny asks. "And was he always that ... attractive?"

Harry glares at her. "I'm standing right here, Gin"

Ginny turns and pats him on the head in a patronising manor. "I know, darling," Harry huffs at her and rolls his eyes.

"I don't remember if I'm honest," Hermione tells her. "He was really quiet at school, kept to himself. I don't remember Malfoy and him being friends really, at least I didn't see them together. It was Crabbe and Goyle who had that honour and the big mouths."

"And Malfoy," Neville adds. "What's he like to work with?"

"He's actually okay. Has a massive ego still and has the uncanny ability to talk down to everyone, but he's mellowed and he's very good at his job. Just don't tell him I said that," Harry grins.

While the boys talk she scans the room again. It's easy to spot Malfoy's white blond head of hair amongst the many heads in the ballroom. He's standing stiff and looks bored with the conversation and the person who's currently desperate to keep his attention, although from here it doesn't look like they've got much of it. She smiles to herself and starts as he looks directly at her, seconds before the person with whom he's speaking, turns too.

Cormac McClaggen.

Hermione grimaces and moves to the right a little to hide herself amongst her group of friends.

Cormac never let his infatuation with her go. They both joined the Ministry at the same time and ever since that first day, she's been avoiding him. Any opportunity he gets, he corners her and from what she's heard, every other female too. But money talks and Cormac and his entire family has a lot of money. It seems Malfoy is as unimpressed as she is that he's here and having to make small talk with him. Hermione watches the pair from the safety of her friend's circle and tries to work them both out.

Malfoy makes it perfectly clear he's over the entire conversation and yet McLaggan keeps going on and on. The man does love the sound of his own voice but surely even someone as oblivious as he is can see Malfoy isn't enamoured with it. She watches as Malfoy raises his head and scans the room again, for what? A way to escape? His mother? Somehow, and she's not exactly sure how, his grey eyes manage to find hers again. A small smirk lifts the corner of his mouth as he rolls his eyes at Hermione before subtly shaking his head. She looks away and tries to make her way back into the conversation and sometime later when she finds herself flicking a glance back to where Malfoy was last standing, she sees he's gone.

When the night begins to wind down, Hermione finds Harry and Ginny speaking to Kingsley and heads over to let them know she's heading out.

"There's no need for you to come with me," Hermione tells Harry. "I'll see you tomorrow,"

She says goodbye to Kingsley and Evelyn and walks to the fireplaces to head back to Harry's. Her feet are sore even with the amount of cushioning charms she put on them and she's desperate for a cup of tea. Hermione says goodnight to a few people as she leaves the ballroom. Hermione speaks her name and waits to collect her cloak. When it appears she looks up and meets the grey eyes of Malfoy who suddenly appears holding it in his hands.

"Please allow me," he says in his deep aristocratic drawl.

Hermione turns and allows him to place her cloak on her shoulders before turning back to face him. His eyes are bright and his smile warm, his eyes letting me know he's a little intoxicated right now and it seems to have softened him and made him let down his guard a little.

"I hope you enjoyed yourself?" He asks as he walks beside her to the Floo.

"It's been lovely, I hope it's been successful?"

He nods. "Very. We've raised more than we hoped, it will make quite a difference."

Hermione stops and turns to face him, needing to express her thanks for his generosity. She flicks her gaze around, noticing they're surprisingly quite alone.

"Thank you, Malfoy. For holding this, I know the difference it will make. I've been trying to raise money for years and never got anywhere."

He shakes his head before he speaks. "While welcome, your praise is quite unnecessary, Granger."

She just nods, unsure of what else to say. "Well, goodnight, Malfoy." She manages, eventually.

He swallows and reaches for her hand, pressing a soft kiss to her knuckles. "And goodnight to you, Granger. I must tell you before you leave and I miss my opportunity, you really do look breathtaking tonight, my only regret is not having had the courage to dance with you. Another time perhaps."

He kisses her knuckles one last time, releases her hand and Hermione walks into the grate with as much confidence as she can muster. When she speaks her destination and seconds before the flames turn green, her eyes meet Malfoy's and she shudders. They're black and heated and fixed on the expanse of leg that peeks out from her dress. As Hermione prepares to embrace the spinning that comes with Floo travel, his stormy grey eyes snap to hers. The floo whisks her away a second later and she's left trying to catch her breath.

Chapter End Notes

Happy Sunday, everyone!

This was one of my favourite chapters to write so far. I adore the whole idea of galas and balls and Hermione getting a chance to show everyone just how much she's changed was just too good an opportunity to miss.

Not to mention we got to see where life has taken some of the Slytherin's which I also LOVED!

Thank you all again for taking the chance on my fic, for reading, commenting and leaving Kudos. It blows my mind that you're reading and enjoying this little adventure of mine and I cannot thank you enough.

See you on Wednesday when things get interesting ...

Speechless

Chapter Summary

Hermione dreams of Malfoy again ...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Five

Speechless

Hermione's suspended. Secured by something thick and coarse wrapped firmly around her arms, legs and torso.

Rope.

A black rope.

Her legs are pulled wide and she's completely naked, her core exposed to the cool, almost chilly air of the room. Her nipples pebble as she twists and looks left and then right. The room is vast with wood panelling in a dark, rich green. A shiny, overstuffed leather sofa sitting in front of the fireplace to the right of where she's hanging, she notices with distaste the fire grate is empty even given the chill of the room. To all intents and purposes, Hermione appears to be alone, except ... her senses tell her otherwise.

She can feel someone, almost taste them in the air.

She closes her eyes and concentrates on what she can hear.

Nothing.

No breathing, no rustle of movement. Hermione looks above her, trying to work out how she's secured in this position, but she doesn't appear to be attached to anything. She's just hanging there. Some kind of magic is holding her up.

"Hello?" Hermione calls out, her voice sounding far too loud in the silent room.

There's no reply as she hangs there, suspended and at the mercy of whoever put her here.

Then she hears it.

A chuckle .

It's coming from somewhere behind her, so far behind her there's no chance of being able to turn around and see who it is.

"Who—" Her voice cuts off when she hear it again.

Another chuckle.

Then a soft, warm kiss to the inside of her left thigh.

He's moved and Hermione didn't hear anything at all.

Her eyes instantly snap down to see who her captor is, only to have her eyes covered by some kind of silken material that's thick, padded and blocks out all light.

"Who are you?" She croaks, a sense of panic and fear lacing her mind and body.

They don't speak, their only response is a warm, firm tongue pressing against her clitoris. She shudders, repulsed by the brasennes of such an intimate act and tries, without success, to close her legs. Her reaction finally has a response falling from their lips.

"Oh come now," a voice from between her legs rumbles. "You *know* this tongue, you *crave* this tongue and what it can do." The stranger gives me another lick and Hermione recoils. "Say my name, *I dare you .*"

That voice .

She knows that voice, she's heard it before. But where?

"I— *I don't*—" Her voice is cut off as whoever is settled between her open legs suckles at her clitoris and thrusts a finger forcefully inside her.

"I should be insulted. You know full well who I am. Concerate, be a good girl for me and pass this test and I assure you," he slips another finger inside. "The reward will be worth waiting for."

Hermione shudders. She's disgusted with herself. She has no idea who this man is and yet she feels herself growing wetter as they speak. Heat pools in her hips, her nipples stiffen and her cheeks flush.

What's wrong with her?

Why is she responding to this man like this?

"Come on. You can do it," he breathes against her. "*Say. My. Name.* "

Hermione struggles against the bindings, trying to dislodge whatever is covering her eyes but it's futile. He's secured her with magic, not just strength and without a wand, she have no hope of escaping this.

"I can't say your n—name, when I don't know w—who you—are," Hermione swallows down the groan that threatens to escape as his teeth scrape against her swollen core and a third finger slips, far too easily, inside of her.

That's when she feel it.

Metal. Cool metal and ridges. A ring.

She knows that ring.

He chuckles again. "I thought that would help solve this little puzzle," he thrusts his finger further into her and she gasps. "You know I'll do this until I get what I want, so just give it to me, Little Lion,"

He makes his threat clear, pressing deep inside of her while his lips and tongue continue to caress and suck at her oversensitive flesh. Hermione squeezes her eyes tight under her blindfold, the tension leaving her shoulders as she finally knows who it is that has her trussed up like this. She pants as he increases the pressure between her legs before adding a bite to her nipple. Hermione cries out, sweat covering her skin as she fights against the release that is determined to shatter her into a million pieces.

She will not come.

Not like this.

Not with—

A sharp slap to her right thigh has all the breath leaving her body. As the pain fades and the desire flares deep inside her, Hermione feels herself lifting her hips to get closer to him. He chuckles again and sinks his teeth into the heated skin where he slapped moments before.

"Greedy as always, I see." He taunts her with another nip to her burning skin. "Such a good girl, aren't you? Just give me what I want and I'll reward you, you can do it,"

"Tell me who you are," Hermione growls, fighting the rising tension in her core.

"You know who I am."

"Tell me," She pants.

He shakes his head against her skin and sucks the sensitive skin on her thigh into his mouth.

"Give it up, Little Lion, I'm in control here, you do what I say. And I want you to say my name so I can make you come so hard you'll see stars."

The huskiness of his voice, the pressure between her legs, She's helpless to fight the climax that explodes a second later, the scream that burns at her throat and the chant that leaves her lips without permission.

"Draco, Draco, Draco!"

Bolting upright, Hermione covers her lips with her hand to stop the sounds pouring from them. The warmth of the morning sun floods her room and she feels overheated, her skin buzzing. Glancing down at her body, her chest rising and falling rapidly, a blush covering her skin along with a fine layer of sweat. Hermione squeezes her legs together to try to stop the throbbing between them.

Another dream.

Another orgasm in her sleep.

Hermione raises a shaky hand to her forehead and closes her eyes, where on earth did her brain conjure such vivid, obscenely sexual images from? She didn't realise she had such an active imagination to create something so out of what she's experienced before. And why, all of a sudden, is dream Malfoy the one who keeps giving her better orgasms than she's ever, ever had in her waking life? It's just because she's seen him a lot recently, they're working together and she went to the gala.

A little voice in her head speaks up; it's also because adult Malfoy's insanely attractive and she'd like to have sex with him to see if real Malfoy can compete with Dream Malfoy. Bloody hell, her libido is out of control right now.

Hermione swings her legs out of bed and on embarrassingly shaky legs, makes her way to the kitchen to make a coffee. Her steps falter when she steps into the small space and finds Ginny sitting at the table, mug in hand, grin plastered on her face. Hermione avoids her eyes and grabs a cup, filling it with coffee and adding a generous spoonful of honey and milk before sitting down at the table opposite her.

"Morning," Ginny smiles around her cup.

"Morning,"

"Sleep well?"

Hermione blushes and nods. "Yes, you?"

Ginny lowers her cup and places it on the table. "Uh huh."

Hermione takes a sip, burning her mouth in the process. Ginny continues to stare at her.

Hermione sits in silence before it's too much and she has to know what her problem is.

"What?"

"Harry's at the shop, has been for the last twenty minutes, he's grabbing everything for breakfast."

"Right?"

"It's really quiet in here in the mornings, you can hear everything—"

Hermione drops her head into her hands and covers her reddening face. "Oh Gods,"

"Hermione, the walls were almost shaking." She laughs.

"Stop," she groan. "I don't know wha—"

Ginny reaches over and tugs her hand away from her face. "You had a sex dream? *About Malfoy?*" Ginny grins at her.

Hermione nods her head, embarrassed but also glad she can finally speak to someone about it. "It's the second time it's happened. I can't control it! And Ginny ... it's better sex than I've ever had in real life!" Ginny's cackle fills the room and makes Hermione groan even more. "How has my life come to this? Having sex dreams about Draco fucking Malfoy!" The words leave her in a rush.

"Relax, it's a dream. We can do whatever we want in our dreams, Hermione. It doesn't mean anything."

"Doesn't it? How am I supposed to look him in the eye after he's—"

"He's?"

Hermione shakes her head at her. "I'm not telling you,"

"Oh go on, just one little snippet. I had to listen to you screaming his name over and over not five minutes ago." Ginny wiggles her eyebrows at her and Hermione flushes red.

"We were just—"

"You weren't *just* anything, Granger. Spill it."

"He was just really good with his mouth, okay?"

A choking sound from behind them has her head snapping up and Ginny spitting out her coffee. Hermione can't bring herself to turn around and she shoots daggers at Ginny not to say a word. After a minute, Harry steps into the kitchen and noisily places everything he has in his bag onto the counter while she slips her coffee and dies of embarrassment.

Sunday rolls around and Hermione finds herself tucked into a corner of her favourite coffee shop in Diagon waiting for her order of Croque Monsieur with a side of chips. She's brought her book and she intends to read and eat and forget about everything.

Especially ridiculously tall, blond intense men.

Hermione loses herself to the latest romance novel she's been invested in while she eats her food and drinks her second coffee. The day was warm and the sunlight streams into the coffee shop, it really was the most idyllic set up and long after the sandwich was gone and the coffee was cold, she finds herself still seated in her sunny spot and reading, the bell *dinging* every time someone new enters or a customer leaves the coffee shop.

She looks up to charm her coffee hot again and notices the two men seated towards the front of the coffee shop, a vacant seat at the table. From where she's sitting, no one could see her unless they're purposefully looking, so she's safe to watch.

Blaise Zabini and Theodore Nott have never been seen in this coffee shop before, she's sure of it. Hermione frequents this place most days, it's *her place* and she's never seen them. The many witches dotted around prove her point, they're looking over their shoulders every few seconds, staring almost open mouthed at the pair. They're not regulars and everyone in there knows it. The dinging of the door doesn't even register until she hears a pair of witches to her right speak.

"Oh Merlin, *look*,"

Hermione turns her head to look in the direction they're both staring at and tenses. Malfoy was making his way over to his friends and was drawing the attention of everyone here. He's impeccably dressed of course. Black woollen travelling cloak and leather gloves which Hermione takes great delight in watching him remove from his hands, one long finger at a time. When he's divested himself of the gloves and the cloak, he straightens and she sees what he's wearing; a charcoal grey polo neck and trousers that he fills like a model. His hair was perfectly windswept and just falling artfully onto his forehead. He greets his friends, takes a seat and casts his eyes over the menu.

"He's delicious isn't he?" The two witches begin to speak again. "I swear grey never looked so good on anyone before."

"Neither did a polo neck,"

They laugh and Hermione takes it as her cue to leave. She finishes her coffee, puts her book back in her bag and puts on her coat, hat and scarf. While the slither of snakes are chatting, Hermione makes her way out unnoticed and to the Burrow for the usual Sunday get together.

Hermione almost crawls into work on Monday morning, exhausted from a nightmare filled night. They're rare now thankfully, but when they hit, they're almost worse than when she'd have them on repeat. It's always the same ones; the final battle, Voldemort's piercing voice announcing that Harry was dead, Bellatrix torturing her on the dark floor of Malfoy Manor while everyone present just watched. She used to wake up screaming from them every single night for months, until she took herself to a Mind Healer to work through the trauma from years on the run, deaths of those she loved and seeing her best friend supposedly dead in Hagrid's arms. With years of talking it got easier but it's never fully left her and she doesn't expect it to.

Trauma was trauma and it takes up residence in your mind, body and soul. With time, she's just learned to deal with it better than she did back then.

Stepping out of the lift Hermione notices that no one was in yet, not unheard of since she usually gets in early to get some work done before everyone starts interrupting her. As she walks towards her office she notices a light on under Malfoy's closed door. Someone's in after all it seems. Hermione quietly heads into her office and closes the door without making a sound. She drops her bag onto the floor, places her wand on the desk and takes a fortifying sip of her coffee.

Everything in life is easier to deal with, with a coffee.

Hermione makes her way to the weekly briefing and takes her seat, Harry isn't in yet so she sits and waits for everyone to file into the room. To her surprise, Malfoy arrives and takes the seat next to her again. She looks up and finds it hard to swallow. He's dressed in his signature black of course, three piece suit fitted to his body so perfectly it's like it's moulded to just fit him and it most likely was, his hair loosely styled and looking perfect. But sitting on his face was a pair of black framed glasses.

Kill.

Me.

Now.

"Morning Granger,"

"Morning," Hermione chokes out. She clears her throat and try again. "Sorry, long night."

Thankfully everyone begins filing into the room then so she just smiles and turns in her chair to greet Harry. When the meeting begins, Otto starts by informing everyone that there have been two more attacks overnight. She looks at Harry and realises that's why he wasn't at home when she left that morning. Otto explains that Malfoy has visited the scenes and confirmed the traces of the same Dark Magic that was present with the other victim. Otto then turns his attention to her.

"Hermione, we also found Runes, are you free to help with this?" Otto tells me.

Hermione nods. "Of course, anything you need, I'll help with."

"Actually," Malfoy leans forward and places a piece of parchment in front of me. "I'd like to speak with you about them, if you have a minute after the briefing."

She nods and turns her attention to Otto as he outlines the plans for the week. Everyone leaves and she heads out of the room and back to her office, to wait for Malfoy. He knocks a few seconds later and after inhaling deeply, Hermione opens the door.

"Come on in," she says politely, stepping aside so he can enter.

Walking back to her desk, she takes a seat, gesturing to the chair opposite. Hermione inhales and tenses. Having him in her office means she's in a very small, enclosed area with no other distractions. His scent was so strong she closed her eyes tight for a second to calm herself down.

You're at work Hermione, stop this .

"The Runes we found?" Malfoy's voice snaps her out of her daze. "The same Rune you were looking at was among them,"

He takes a sheet of parchment out of the file he's holding and slides it towards her. The Runes on the page are clear; wrath, conflict, stasis, justice. They're all there, along with many more but one stands out.

"Death," Hermione whispers, running her finger over the the upside down Y.

"It could mean many other things—" Malfoy begins.

"But not when paired with all the others. Some of these aren't even Runes. Are they Dark Magic?"

Malfoy shakes his head. "Possibly, but I don't know for sure. No one ever knew everything that was going on, The Dark Lord told everyone different things, that way, if it got out he'd know who it was. I wasn't privy to these," he gestured to the parchment.

Hermione looks at the page in front of her again. She knows Runes, she knows them well and these aren't normal Runes. The fact she's never seen some of these before was intriguing and terrifying. They could mean anything and if Malfoy doesn't know what they mean either, it's almost impossible to work out what they mean. Voldemort's magic was unparalleled in lots of ways and trying to decipher something that seems to be entirely of his own making fills her with dread.

"Is it a way of communicating between them? Or a message? Hermione says aloud.

"It could be either," he replies, standing and buttoning his jacket.

Hermione keeps her eyes on the parchment in front of her but really, she's focusing entirely on him; the sure way he moves, the length of his stride, the sheer height of him. When he comes to stand next to her, leaning over to point to a rune on the page, his scent and warmth surrounds her.

“That’s—” Hermione inhales and regrets it. “Really unhelpful, Malfoy.” she tells him shakily, closing her eyes again as his finger brushes hers when he reaches for the paper.

He chuckles.

The exact same chuckle Hermione heard in her dream, except it’s deeper and real and right next to her and her mind loses all ability to function and instead floods her brain with memories of the latest Malfoy dream.

Another chuckle. Then a soft, warm kiss to the inside of her left thigh.

“Oh come now,” a voice from between her legs rumbles. “You know this tongue, you crave this tongue and what it can do. Say my name, I dare you.”

Hermione pants as he increases the pressure between her legs before adding a bite to her nipple.

“I should be insulted. You know full well who I am. Concentrate, be a good girl for me and pass this test and I assure you,” he slips another finger inside. “The reward will be worth waiting for.”

“Granger?”

His voice snaps her out of her filthy flashback and abruptly back into her office and to Malfoy, leaning close to her and watching Hermione with curious eyes. Hermione shakes her head and pretends she’s lost herself to the Runes, even though the only thing she’s lost herself to is the sinful memory of his tongue and fingers inside her, his dirty words and praise that has her whole body shuddering in her seat.

“Sorry,” she coughs, trying to clear her throat. “I went to a whole other place then, didn’t I?

He moves away, tugs on his shirt sleeves and moves to the other side of her desk and takes a seat at a safer distance, bringing one leg up to rest on his knee and casually resting the hand that holds his signet ring atop his knee. The mere sight of that damn bloody ring has her flushing, she knows it does.

“I’ve been going over them since I got back, trying to remember if I’ve ever seen them before and there’s something—” he exhales deeply. “But I can’t remember what it is.”

Hermione focuses on his face, which given the new addition of those bloody glasses, doesn’t help her focus one bit. “We’ll work it out, Malfoy. It’s still early days.”

It’s only then that she notices he looks paler and there’s the telltale dark smudges of exhaustion under his eyes.

“Did you get any sleep last night?” she asks him. His tired eyes meet hers and he takes off his glasses and rubs his eyes far too fiercely to be comfortable.

“No, is it that obvious,”

"Well," Hermione begins. "I didn't know you wore glasses, but you are today. But yes, you look a little tired."

Understatement.

He places his delightful dark rimmed glasses back on and looks at her. "I don't unless I'm tired and as you correctly guessed, I'm tired today."

She gathers the parchment together and duplicates the sheets before handing them back to him. "I'll keep looking over these and I'll let you know if I work anything out, I'd appreciate you—"

Another damn chuckle causes another flash of her dream to claw its way into her mind.

"Greedy as always, I see." he taunts her with another nip to her burning skin. "Such a good girl, aren't you? Just give me what I want and I'll reward you, you can do it,"

"Give it up, Little Lion, I'm in control here, you do what I say. And I want you to say my name so I can make you come so hard you'll see stars."

His voice snaps her back to the present once again. "Are you sure you're okay?"

"Yes," Hermione raises her hand to her heated face. "I'm—you know, I'm not entirely sure I'm not coming—" *Bloody hell, stop.* "I think I might be unwell," she tells him pathetically.

"You do look a little overheated,"

Why are his eyes so alive and why does the smirk on his face tell her he knows exactly what she's been recalling all morning? Hermione nods and looks away. Malfoy stands and she feels a huge sense of relief that he's going to leave her office.

"I'll be in my office, if you need me."

She nods and he takes the file from her desk and heads to the door. Hermione would be lying if she said she didn't watch him walk away, ogling his backside and the way his suit fits him perfectly. She'd also be lying if she said she didn't flush the deepest shade of red when he turns as he reaches her door, fixes me with his steely stare and tells her to take it easy before leaving her completely alone in her office but with the lingering scent of his cologne.

Hermione takes lunch at her desk to limit the possibility of running into Malfoy again. She spent the morning looking through old books and parchments of Runes but found absolutely nothing. The Runes being used by Greyback and who they assumed to be Death Eaters, were nowhere to be found. At first she thought that was impossible, but it's true. The all too familiar prickle of fear twinges at the edge of her consciousness, reminding her that this isn't

Ancient Runes, this isn't the safety of Hogwarts, this was adult life and the danger was real and it would affect everyone she loves if they don't stop it.

After a busy day Hermione decides what she needs is wine and not to go back to Harry's and sit either on her own or with a couple so obviously in love they practically breathe heart bubbles. Without informing anyone, Hermione leaves her office, heads down to the atrium and into Muggle London. She walks down the street, past cafés and bars until she finds the one she's looking for. Its dark interior and golden lighting makes it cosy and inviting and as she steps through the doors and inhales the sweet scent and the calming sound of the soft jazz playing, Hermione feels herself relax. She heads to the bar, hops up onto the stool and places her bag on the marble counter in front of her. The barman smiles and asks what she'd like. Hermione orders a glass of red wine and a bowl of nuts which he moves to get. The first sip of wine releases more tension and by the fourth, she feels much better.

Hermione eats a couple of the nuts in silence before digging into her bag for some of the papers she's been working on. Strangely, she finds that when she's had a drink, she looks at things differently. Hermione puts it down to inhibitions being lowered, the ability to suspend what she thinks sees and look a little deeper.

It doesn't take long for her to finish her glass of wine and raises her head to order another when a flash of pale blond in the mirrors behind the bar catches her eye.

Surely not.

Hermione tracks the person and to her utter astonishment discovers that the pale blond head belongs to none other than *Draco bloody Malfoy*.

What the hell is he doing here?

Hermione watches as his tall frame swaggers it's way over to the bar and stops at her right. She turns her head and scowls at him.

“What are you doing here?” Hermione doesn't mean it to be unfriendly, but this was her place, a place of sanctuary in Muggle London that no one else knows about. A place she can escape to and just be herself.

His pale eyebrows shoot up into his floppy fringe and his eyes narrow at her. “I'd have thought that was obvious,”

“I mean *here*,” she sighs at him. “In *Muggle London*.”

His lips twitch. “You're not the only one who likes to escape, Granger.”

“I'm not escaping,” Hermione bristles. “But really, of all the places you could go, you pick here?”

“I like it here,”

The barman walks over to us then and Malfoy orders the most expensive Scotch they have.

Of course he does.

When he gets his drink, he pulls out the stool and takes a seat right next to her as if he's been invited. Hermione picks up her glass and takes a deep mouthful, keeping her eyes away from him and turning back to her papers.

"All work and no play makes—"

"If you don't mind, I'd rather just—"

"Work all the time?"

Hermione turns her head in time to see the smirk on his lips as he raises the glass and takes the tiniest mouthful.

"I don't work all the time," she huffs, putting the papers back in her bag as proof.

He doesn't respond, just openly stares at her. She stares back, unwilling to look away even after she becomes uncomfortable with his gaze. Hermione feels suddenly warm and reaches for a clip she has in her bag to pull her hair off her neck, his eyes follow her every action; as she grips the hair clip in between her teeth, as she uses both hands to sweep the curls off her neck and twist them into some kind of order and finally, as she secures them at the back of her head. His eyes watch in invested interest as two stray curls fall forward immediately around her face. Hermione swallows thickly at the look on his face and reaches for her wineglass only to discover it's empty.

Malfoy calls over the barman and orders another before Hermione can decline. She takes a much needed sip when the glass is placed in front of her and turns to look back into the mirror behind the bar.

"I like your curls," he says, meeting her eyes in the mirror.

Hermione doesn't know what to say, so she says nothing.

"And your dress," he says, raising his hand to tug on the curl nearest to him.

Hermione turns in her seat to face him and his eyes unashamedly roam over her body, over her crossed legs and down to her feet before coming to meet her eyes.

"Thank you," she croaks. "I like your glasses," she says stupidly and regrets it immediately.

He smirks at her and touches the frames once with one hand. "I hate them,"

"Why?"

"Why are you here alone tonight?" he asks, not answering her question.

Hermione takes another drink and shifts so she's facing him. "I wanted some time alone. Why are you here?"

“Not meeting Weasley? Or some other wizard?” He says quietly so as not to be overheard.

“Not that it’s any of your business, but no. Do I have to be meeting someone to go for a drink?”

He shakes his head and smiles. “No, but I wouldn’t have thought, *Hermione Granger, the Golden Girl* would be sitting alone in a bar,”

Hermione arches her brow and gestures to him. “Well, I’m not alone anymore, am I?”

“Touché,” he smirks before taking another sip of his drink.

They sat in silence for a few minutes. They watched people come in and find a table or booth to sit at.

Hermione pretends not to watch him while he makes no such attempt to hide that he’s watching her.

It’s unnerving and so alien to her that she all but squirms under his attention. The biggest and most confusing thing was that she doesn’t know why he’s staring.

What was he thinking?

What did that flash of heat in his eyes mean exactly?

Finishing her drink, Hermione calls over to the barman to settle up when Malfoy’s hand stops her.

“I’ll get these,”

She glances at him and scowls. “I can buy my own drinks, thank you.”

“I’m not under any illusion that you can’t, Granger. I’d just like to, if you’ll allow it.”

She nods. “Perhaps next time ask, rather than barge in and assume.”

He chuckles—delicious and deep—and Hermione grips the bar with both hands and squeezes her eyes shut to stop the onslaught of memories flooding back again. If he notices, he doesn’t comment.

“Thank you,” she tells him before slipping off the stool and to her feet.

He stands up too and Hermione has to crane her neck back to meet his eyes. As he gazes down at her, she feels her cheeks heat and steps back only to wobble in her heels. His hands come out to steady her and the heat she feels where his skin touches hers is borderline insanity.

Hermione swallows deeply and tries to smile. “Well this was—”

“Unexpected,” he says.

She nods in agreement. “Have a lovely evening, Malfoy,” Hermione almost whispers before making her way out of the bar, all the while feeling the intensity in which his eyes follow her.

Chapter End Notes

Happy Wednesday, everyone!

Here we go again ... Hermione can't seem to control her hormones and really, do we want her to?

Things are getting interesting and I promise it won't be long before the sex is no longer in dream form.

As always, thank you SO much for reading, subscribing, the kudos and comments. I know it needs some editing and I'm trying my best, but being partially sighted I miss a lot - I really hope that doesn't distract you too much from the story.

Please also check updated tags each week.

See you on Sunday!

Smudges

The Lightning Strike

Chapter Summary

Things start to heat up. That's all I can say.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Six

The Lightning Strike

The next morning, an owl arrives with paperwork informing Hermione that her house will be officially hers on Friday. She silences the room, lets out a yell of joy before dropping back onto her bed and sobbing.

Finally.

She's going to have her own space again. She'll be able to decorate it however she likes, fill it to bursting with her books and spend as much time walking around naked as she wants to. Hermione doesn't actually *ever* walk around naked, the risk of someone making an unplanned visit and catching her is a big enough deterrent, but she *could*, and that's one of the best things. Hermione can do whatever she pleases because the house will be solely hers. After Hermione gathers herself enough to stop the flow of tears, she continues getting herself ready for the day. When she enters the kitchen half an hour later, Ginny and Harry are sitting having breakfast, thankfully fully clothed and their hands occupied by cereal and toast rather than each other.

"Morning," Hermione greets them, heading to the coffee pot. "Sleep well?"

Harry raises an eyebrow at her and nods. "Yes, you clearly did."

She takes her coffee to the table and sits down, waving the parchment around in his face. "I just got this,"

Harry takes it, eyes moving slowly across the page before his eyes snap to hers. "You're leaving me,"

She laughs at his fake sad face. “It was always temporary, you’ll be glad to have the place to yourself again. You can have sex everywhere now without fear of me walking in,”

“Oh,” Ginny laughs. “We never had much of that to begin with,”

“Don’t I know it,” Hermione grimaces.

“We can help you move all your stuff this weekend,” Harry offers. “I’m sure Ron will—”

“We’ll see,” she tells him. Not sure she wants help moving everything in.

Hermione has waited so long to finally have a place that’s just hers, she’s not sure she wants to share it straight away. Whenever Hermione pictures moving-in day, she always sees it being something she does alone, hair pulled back, wearing her favourite jeans and her comfiest shirt. Hermione sees herself levitating all the boxes where they need to be, she imagines sitting on the floor surrounded by cardboard boxes and opening a bottle of champagne that she drinks straight from the bottle with a massive grin on her face *because she can*. Hermione imagines sinking into a hot bath and playing music and before she falls into *her bed*, in *her room*, in *her house*. A house that represents not only her independence but a new chapter in her life.

A chapter where Hermione moves on from the losses she’s had before, during and since the war. The loss of so many friends and then her parents. Their loss still hurts, like a wound that’s not fully healed and bleeds at the slightest touch. After the war, Hermione travelled to Australia to find them, to reverse the Memory Charm she’d placed on them for their safety. Because in a world where hunting and killing Muggles was a sport, having her parents not remember who she was but still alive was far better than them being dead. Hermione lost track of them while on the run from Voldemort and when the dust had settled, getting them back was her first priority. Only, what she discovered was actually more proof that life could be beyond cruel.

Her parents had died.

They’d died and she didn’t know about it.

They’d been in the wrong place at the wrong time, a drunk driver going too fast had lost control and drove straight into seven tables outside a restaurant in the middle of the day. They’d been caught in the initial collision and died on impact, they hadn’t suffered she’d been told. But they’d died and Hermione didn’t know about it. It was the worst kind of irony, the realisation that, had Hermione not sent them there, they’d still be alive today.

It ate her for months. She felt so guilty and it felt as though she’d taken them out of the known danger only to throw them into the unknown danger waiting for them. In trying to keep them safe, Hermione had ultimately got them killed. It was only when Harry held her hand and told her that had she not sent them away, their fates would have almost certainly have been worse at the hands of Voldemort, that her guilt eased a little.

Their passing changed everything for her. Hermione inherited everything they owned; the house, their savings, everything. She spent weeks clearing the house out, finding everything

they'd kept of hers through the years; the letters from Hogwarts, the Wizarding photos she'd sent that moved rather than stayed still. They kept so much of her life, a life they were only a tiny part of, because they were proud of her.

Because their pride was bigger than the life they didn't fully understand.

Once the house was bare, Hermione put it up for sale knowing she could never stay in a place so full of them. Them as a couple, them as a family, just them.

It sold within a week and suddenly, Hermione had more money in her Vault at Gringotts than she'd ever dreamed of having and no one to share it with.

She stayed in her little rented flat for a while after that trying to process everything that had happened. Hermione learned a little about who she was and what she wanted from life and only when she felt that the time was right did she start looking for somewhere that was just hers.

Hermione found it in the seventh house she visited.

As she'd stepped into the shell of a house that had walls full of holes that were a faded cream colour with not a scrap of furniture to be seen, she looked out of the conservatory window and saw the rolling fields that surrounded the property and fell in love. There wasn't anyone around for miles and on closer inspection, Hermione discovered a small stream ran along the bottom of the garden and the biggest willow tree she'd ever seen created the most beautiful shady reading spot.

She put an offer in there and then and mentally began planning how to redecorate and create a haven of relaxation for myself. She pictured pale cream walls with exposed rick work. A kitchen with an island and she could stand at and look out onto the garden. She pictured soft greens and pale pinks and she imagined being happy for the first time in a long time.

She pictured a haven of tranquillity that was all hers.

A haven that she'd be able to begin to create very, very soon.

And Hermione couldn't wait.

Ginny reaches over for her hand and squeezes it. "I'm so happy for you, Hermione. I know this means ... well ... everything to you,"

She squeezes Ginny's hand back and nods. "Thanks, Ginny,"

Hermione leaves for work a little while later and fills her day with trying to make headway on the Runes, but finds herself growing more frustrated by the minute. She's gone over and over and over them, trying to see a pattern, something that keeps cropping up, except right

now, she can't see one. If it's a way of communicating, Hermione can't work out what they're saying and if it's spellwork, she doesn't recognise it at all but the message is clear. Whoever is behind this is seeking revenge.

Hermione brushes her finger over the Runes again and shudders; wrath, conflict, stasis, justice ... death. There's no need to understand exactly what the other Runes mean to know they're sinister.

Deciding a change of location might help clear her head, Hermione gathers everything up and heads to ask Otto if she can use one of the meeting rooms to give herself more room. Otto clears the request and she heads into the vacant room. The floor to ceiling glass wall becomes her pinboard as she levitates her workings out and the Runes that were found and use a sticking charm to secure them. With her back turned Hermione doesn't see him, but she does hear his determined knock on the door, two short raps.

Taking a deep breath she turns around to face Malfoy. Hermione is prepared for his height, his steely eyes and his glasses, what she's not prepared for is the fact he's swapped out his usual black shirt for a charcoal grey. The suit he's wearing is still black, as is the waistcoat, but the shirt is grey and it does incredibly pleasant things to his eyes.

"Otto said you were going to work here and suggested I—" he assesses me with a look she doesn't understand before speaking again. "Would you like some help?"

"I'm sure you\re busy,"

"Working on these," he gestures to the Runes behind her and shrugs. "Two minds are better than one, so I'm told."

Malfoy steps into the room then and she nods. There's really not much else she can do. Hermione tracks him as he walks around the table, removes his jacket and places it on the back of a chair. He takes a seat opposite the wall of papers she just created and adjusts his glasses once before waving his wand. Piles of parchment and books settle themselves neatly on the desk in front of him and he meets her eyes.

"Want to take a look?"

Hermione moves with more confidence than she feels knowing he's watching her. She can feel his eyes on her but she chooses to ignore it. Taking the seat next to him, which Hermione regrets straight away as his scent envelopes me seconds before his heat. She manages to maintain professionalism thankfully and accepts the parchment he hands her.

"The same Runes were found at a suspected safe house that was raided two months ago. No one was there when the raid took place, but the Runes and everything else was documented." He tells me.

"So do we think that the same group of pep—"

"Death Eaters,"

"They're people whether they're Death Eaters or not, Malfoy."

He chuckles darkly and she squeezes her legs together. "I'd question that logic, Granger,"

"But is the thought that they're responsible for the Runes in the raid and the ones found at the body?" She pressss gently.

"Yes, but I can't confirm for certain since I didn't visit the location to search for traces of Dark Magic, but it seems too coincidental,"

Quiet settles over the room then while they both look over the papers and workings Malfoy brought with him. It's exhausting work and when she sits back and rubs her eyes, Malfoy sits back and removes his glasses.

"It's early days," Hermione reminds him. "But I hate not understanding something."

He just nods, Hermione feels he's about to say something when his Auror badge screams to life alerting the entire DMLE of another body that's been found and calling all Aurors to the scene. His eyes flash to hers and he stands and leaves without saying a word.

With most of the task force investigating the latest victim and everything that comes with it, the afternoon is quiet. Too quiet. Hermione can't focus not knowing what's going on, just because she has no desire to be in the field. She still hates being kept in the dark during raids and moments like this.

When six o'clock rolls around and the team is still not back, Hermione packs her things away, makes a neat pile of everything else on the big table and heads out. She intends to go home, but the second she reaches the Atrium, she changes her mind. A drink is in order and keeping close to the Ministry should anything happen. Hermione makes her way to her favourite Muggle bar and the second she steps inside, the comfort it always brings her is instant. Hermione takes her usual seat at the bar and orders a glass of her usual red wine.

She loses track of time, listens to the sultry jazz playing, relaxes into the subdued lighting and absorbs the relaxing warmth of the wine. Hermione watches people come and go, she grins as the barman makes a show of creating a complicated cocktail for a pair of friends out for drinks and tries very hard to forget about work. When she feels the wine making heer feels a little lightheaded, she orders a charcuterie board and nibbles at the olives and bread. Hermione is on what she thinks is her third glass of wine when a familiar scent fills the air and a body sits down next to her.

He doesn't say anything, just reaches over and with one long finger and thumb, picks an olive off the board and brings it to his mouth. She watches in the mirror behind the bar at the positively erotic sight of Draco Malfoy closing his mouth around and then eating an olive. The barman comes over and he orders a whisky, just like before and it's only when he's had one of his tiny sips that he turns to her.

"Same as before," he sighs.

Hermione turns to look at him. "You're just getting back?"

He nods. "Yes,"

She pushes the board closer to him and takes an olive, popping it into her mouth and sinking her teeth into the plump flesh. She notices he seems as invested in her eating the olive as she was in him eating his but she doesn't comment on it.

"Help yourself," she tells him, gesturing to the board. "You must be famished."

His eyes flick to hers and she tries desperately not to squirm in her seat as his eyes travel the length of her body again. "You have no idea,"

Hermione watches with carnal delight as he eats more olives and bread. She can't look away as he slips a piece of oily grilled artichoke into his mouth then raises his thumb and forefinger to his lips and sucks the oil clean from his fingertips, throat bobbing as he swallows. The whole thing is insanely erotic and Hermione finds herself squeezing her legs together. He notices and the Malfoy smirk tugs at his lips as he reaches for his drink and takes another tiny sip.

"Why do you do that? Drink such a tiny amount?" She asks him curiously.

"Something this well-crafted deserves to be savoured," his dark eyes raise to hers. "As should all the best things in life, wouldn't you agree?"

Hermione swallows thickly and nods. "Yes, I suppose so."

"A mere ... *wet of the tongue* is all you need, because it's just *that* good,"

She shudders.

She has absolutely no control over it.

The timbre of his voice, the suggestive tone and the look in his eyes that tells her he's not just talking about his drink, has heat pooling between her legs and a flush creeping its way up her neck. It must be the wine, Hermione's had more to drink than she originally thought and hardly enough food to soak it up.

That's all this is.

It's nothing she needs to worry about because it's just the wine.

Yet, when he reaches over for another olive at exactly the same time she does and their fingers touch, the spark of electricity and the shudder it causes is definitely not down to the wine. Hermione pulls her hand back, reaches for her glass and downs the contents before reaching for her bag, throwing down enough money to cover her bill and getting to her feet.

"Enjoy the rest of your evening, Malfoy," Hermione says in a rush.

"Wait,"

His tone is firm and leaves no room for interpretation and to her absolute surprise, her feet stop moving and she looks at him. He picks up his glass, takes another sip before placing it in front of him, leaving Hermione standing there waiting for whatever it is he wants to say to her. After another minute she feels heat rise to her cheeks in embarrassment, Hermione feels stupid just standing here and turns to leave once again.

“I said, *wait*,” he says again.

“Well say what you need to, so I can leave.”

He raises one eyebrow at her and leans closer, resting his lips at her ear. His warm breath on the sensitive spot below her ear makes her squeeze her eyes shut and shift from one foot to another.

“You follow an instruction beautifully, Granger, did you know that?”

Hermione’s eyes snap to him. “An instruction?” She glares. “Sounded more like a demand to me.”

He brings one finger up and moves her hair further off her neck. “And yet, you followed it,” she feels his nose move across the exposed skin where her neck meets her shoulder and back to her ear. Goosebumps cover her entire body and she fights every instinct to move closer to him. “Place your bag on the stool,” the tone is commanding again.

Without thinking about it, Hermione does as he tells her.

A small chuckle leaves his lips and she tenses. “Beautiful,” he breathes against her skin. “I wonder what else I could have you do?”

“What do you want me to do?” Hermione asks, the wine making her braver than she feels.

She feels his lips ghost over her skin as his words bathe her in desire. “Many, many things, Granger,”

Hermione closes her eyes and leans closer to him, wanting to feel more of ... *everything*.

His breath, his lips, his words.

She flinches as he brings one warm hand around to fist in her hair as he draws her closer to him.

“One day I’ll tell you, in vivid detail what I’d like to do to you,” he tightens his hands in her hair before moving his hand to rest his thumb firmly on the pulse point of her throat. “But not tonight. Goodnight Granger, be a good girl for me and go home,”

Hermione takes an unsteady step back and shakes her head trying to clear the daze he’s somehow managed to put her in. He sits back casually and perfectly relaxed on the stool, reaches for his glass again and takes a sip as his curious eyes linger on her face. Hermione reaches for her bag, steps back and heads towards the exit. She rushes to the closest Apparition point and arrives back at Harry’s to a thankfully empty flat. Kicking off her shoes,

locking her bedroom door and throwing up a Silencing Charm, Hermione doesn't even make it to the bed, she presses her back to the door before tugging up her skirt, pulling her knickers to the side and bringing myself to the quickest, most intense orgasm she's ever had all while remembering the scent, warmth and feel of Malfoy's hand on her throat.

Chapter End Notes

Well, hello.

I hope you enjoyed that, I know I did.

Again, thank you so much for the comments, Kudos, subscribes and for taking a chance on this little fic of mine. I cannot tell you how much it means to me.

Until Wednesday ...

Smudges

One Night

Chapter Summary

There are big changes for Hermione - some she expects, others she does not.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Seven

One Night

Saturday morning finds Hermione stepping through the Floo of her new house.

She takes one step into the room, closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. Then another. Before opening them and glancing around the empty room.

It still doesn't feel real.

This is Hermione's house.

Her own space where she can do whatever she wants, whenever she wants.

Hermione doesn't have time to think about it because the Floo flares to life and Harry steps out carrying a box of her things. His green eyes meet hers and he smiles softly.

"So this is it," he grins wider. "Your house. I'm so happy for you, Hermione."

He places the box on the floor and steps forward, pulling her into a hug. She rests her head on his shoulder and nods.

"This is it."

When they pull apart, he scans the room and she can see him taking everything in. The bare floorboards, the walls that have holes and no furniture to be seen.

"It's what the Muggles call a fixer-upper," Hermione grins at him, looking around. "I can't wait to fix her up."

“By yourself?” He asks, stepping around her to venture into the tired kitchen.

“No, I plan to get help. I don’t know who, but I’ll work that out. All that matters is it’s *mine*, Harry.”

He nods then chuckles. “I think the Dursley’s had a similar kitchen once,”

She steps up behind him and laughs. “It’s beautiful, isn’t it?”

“Oh yeah, it’s got everything you could ever want,” he teases her. “Even some plants,” he gestures to the crack in the wall where some foliage is creeping in.

“It’s what every good kitchen should have,” she laughs.

He turns and looks at her again. “I know you’ll make it perfect, Hermione, I can’t wait to see what you do with it.”

“Thanks, Harry,” Hermione whispers in a croak, the emotion getting the better of her.

He turns and wraps his arms around her again, just letting her cry it out. Everything Hermione has wanted is hers now and yet there’s a massive part of her that knows it wouldn’t be this way if she still had her parents, if they were still alive, Hermione would still be trying to save enough money to be able to buy a tiny flat like Ron. Their loss feels greater in that moment than it has in a long time and she squeezes her eyes shut. When Hermione has herself under control she steps back and looks at Harry. Her best friend and the person who has been there for her through everything, still just being there for her when she has nothing to say but a whole heap of emotions.

“It’s the start of a whole new chapter, Hermione, it’s going to be a great one, I can feel it.”

Six hours later, Hermione is doing exactly what she planned. Sitting on the floor of her new house, surrounded by boxes with a bottle of chilled champagne and drinking right from the bottle. After letting Harry and Ginny helped move her things in, they left after giving Hermione hugs and congratulating her on her new house. It’s been an emotional day but Hermione can’t remember feeling happier, certainly not recently. She’s pretty sure her smile can be seen from the moon, it’s so big and her cheeks are starting to ache from smiling so much but she simply cannot stop. Hermione aches in places she didn’t know she could ache, she feels dirty from all the lifting and spells she’s cast to clean the place up a bit and yet she’s deliriously happy. Hermione raises the bottle to the empty room and speaks through her tearfilled smile.

“To my new life and getting exactly what I want from it,”

Monday arrives far too soon and with Hermione having had very little sleep. She just couldn’t stop herself from organising as much as possible. After putting her bed in place, she

put together the next most important thing; her bookcases. Magic made everything so much easier and quicker and in no time she was sitting in her favourite chair reading a book while enjoying a cup of coffee for what she told herself would be a ten minute break. Only, the next time Hermione looked up, the coffee was cold and five hours had passed.

Hermione managed to get some groceries and have her first meal in the house; cheese and ham toasties and her guilty Muggle pleasure, a whole tube of Pringles. Time continued to lose all meaning while she sorted her life out and before she knew it, it was three am and she needed to get some sleep.

Yawning, Hermione heads straight to the meeting room and stops inside the door when she sees Malfoy already here, perched on the edge of the desk — dressed impeccably as always in his favourite black — looking at the wall of evidence. Remembering how they left things the last time she saw him, Hermione considers backing away and going to work in her office instead. Except his head snaps up to hers and he smirks.

He bloody smirks the arrogant arse.

“Morning, Granger.”

“Morning, Malfoy,” she manages, clearing her throat and walking to place her things on the table.

“You’re here early, couldn’t you sleep?” He asks, turning to watch her walk around the table and come to a stop beside him.

“Actually, I didn’t get much sleep this weekend, but that’s not why I’m here at this time. I like getting in before everyone else, when it’s quiet and I know nobody will want anything from me.”

His eyebrow quirks. “Do a lot of people want things from you, Granger?”

Hermione shrugs. “It’s work, someone always wants something.”

He nods. “And your lack of sleep?”

She can’t help but grin then. “I moved into my house this weekend, I was too excited to sleep.”

“Congratulations,” he smiles. “I can imagine the excitement of finally having your own place, I hope to experience it very soon myself,”

“How’s it going? Any luck finding somewhere?”

“Yes actually, Pansy has found the perfect place,”

“Pansy Parkinson?”

He nods. “The very same. She mainly does interiors but she’s been helping me find a suitable space of my own.”

“Oh?”

“Outside of the city, I crave peace, Granger. Space and peace,”

Something in his words speaks to her soul. Space and peace are two of the things she craves too. After years of chaos and almost constant company, Hermione’s soul needs the opposite. Ron thinks it’s lonely, and needs to have people around him after growing up in such a busy house, but it’s the opposite for her. It’s not lonely being comfortable with your own company, it’s peaceful.

“I understand the need for both those things, I need them too.” Hermione meets his eyes and smiles. “And Pansy will decorate?”

He chuckles and she does her best not to squeeze her legs together. “So she keeps telling me, yes.”

“I have so much decorating to do,” she laughs. “I bought what the Muggles call a fixer-upper and there’s so much work to be done I don’t know where to start.”

“I’m sure Pansy would help, I can ask her to get in touch — ”

“*Pansy?*” Hermione half yells and Malfoy winces. “I don’t think she’d want to help me, Malfoy.”

He scowls and leans back a little. “We’re all different people now, aren’t we Granger?”

“I—I guess so.”

Malfoy stands stiffly and tugs at his shirtsleeves, something he seems to do when he wants to get control of a situation back, “I won’t mention it if it makes you uncomfortable. Pansy is very good at her job, that’s all I meant.”

Hermione goes to reach for his arm but stops herself in time. “No, I—I’d like the help, thank you.”

He nods and fixes his eyes onto the wall again while she stands beside him and flushes in embarrassment at her juvenile response. He’s right, everyone is different now, they’re not at school, they’re not those people. She wouldn’t want someone to judge her by what she was like then, so Hermione shouldn’t do the same.

“Did—did you have a good weekend?”

“It could have been better,” he says simply. “Perhaps the next one will be, there’s always hope.”

She stands there, pretending she’s focusing on the wall when in actual fact Hermione is focusing on him. Every breath and movement. The air around them crackles and is so tense she considers telling him she’s going to work in her office when Harry knocks on the door and comes in.

“Any progress on the Runes?”

“Not yet,” she tells him. “I’m not sure if Malfoy has any, I’ve not been here long,”

Hermione steps away from the desk and takes a seat, picking up a piece of parchment from the stack in front of her and pretending to read what’s on it while Malfoy and Harry speak. When the conversation ends and Harry leaves the room, she doesn’t look up, keeping her eyes down and listening for any sign of moment from Malfoy, Hermione doesn’t hear anything and thinks for a second he’s left too, but then he takes a seat next to her.

“I think there’s a chance it’s a way of communicating. Some of the same Runes have been found at a number of different scenes, it could be a coincidence but I don’t think it is. This one,” he points to an oval with a dot in the middle. “I’ve seen this once before, I remember where now.”

“Where?”

He shifts as if he’s uncomfortable and then speaks. “At the LeStrange Manor.”

A cold shiver runs up her spine at the name and the scar on her arm itches, desperate to be scratched.

She doesn’t.

Out of everything Hermione saw, everything she did during the war, being tortured in the drawing room of Malfoy Manor by Bellatrix Lestrange is still one thing she actively tries to block out but doesn’t seem to be able to. It’s her face Hermione sees most often in her nightmares, her voice that causes her to wake up screaming in the dead of night. And all these years later, the scar on her arm still twinges and itches at any mention of her.

“So it—it could very well be a Death Eater way of communicating,” Hermione whispers.

“It’s likely, my Uncles and Aunt learned torture at the hands of the Dark Lord, they were—are—still very much invested in his ideals.”

“I thought—” she swallows and takes a deep breath. “I thought they died at the Battle?”

Hermione remembers hearing their names amongst those who had died and she’s never heard anything about them since. The fact that there are still Voldemort sympathisers in the world isn’t news to her, but the LeStrange brothers still being alive is.

“They were assumed dead, no one ever confirmed it. When I was in France I received a letter, a threat really, from both of them. They made it very clear they consider me and my family traitors and mean to obliterate our line from the world. They mean for the Malfoy line to end with me.”

“Does your mother know this?”

He chuckles darkly. “Of course she does, Granger. Why do you think she’s kept me at the Manor with her for so long?”

“For safety—”

“Perceived safety,” he says. “When my father died in Azkaban she thought she would be safe. Society welcomed her back, sympathising with his heavy handedness and manipulation of us both, but both Rodolphus and Rabastan know where the Manor is, even if the wards will keep them out.”

“Malfoy,” Hermione let out a shaky breath. “I had no idea, I thought—”

“Why would you, Granger?” He says in a mocking tone. “You and I aren’t friends, we haven’t seen each other since my trial. You have no idea what my life has been or is now,”

Hermione knows it’s true.

He vanished after his trial until he came back to work at the Ministry right alongside them. Hermione doesn’t know anything about the man he is now except that he’s taller, more handsome and seems to frequent the same Muggle bar she favours.

“You’re right,” Hermione tells him, meeting his intense grey gaze. “I don’t know who you are now, but I hope in time I will,” Hermione holds out her hand between them. “I’m Hermione Granger, I love coffee, red wine and smooth jazz. I’m still a bookworm—”

His eyes stay on hers and she flushes in embarrassment and starts talking again to fill the awkwardness.

“I’ve changed a lot in the last year and I’m still trying to work out who I am and at times I feel like no one sees the change in me except myself,”

Hermione’s honesty shocks them both.

She grows more uncomfortable with her hand still very much floating between them, all the while, Malfoy doesn’t look like he’s going to take it, so she decides to move it back but he raises his hand at the last second and curls his fingers around hers, his warm palm engulfing her hand in his.

“Draco Malfoy,” he says evenly. “Reformed Death Eater and Auror. I know very well who I am, but no one else seems to care enough to find out.”

With that he releases Hermione’s hand, picks up his glasses and focuses on the sheet in front of him and doesn’t speak for the rest of the morning. When he excuses himself to leave for lunch, she remains seated at a total loss for what she’s supposed to feel after his confession. Ten minutes pass before Hermione realises she’s supposed to be getting lunch too. She heads to her favourite café and gets the same lunch as always along with a coffee. At the last minute Hermione orders Malfoy a tea and heads back to the meeting room where she casts a *Stasis* charm to keep his drink hot for when he returns. She eats her lunch and waits for him to return, except an hour later he still hasn’t come back.

Another hour and still no sign of Malfoy.

When it gets to the end of the day, Hermione heads back to her office and notices his door is open and he's not in there either. On her way to the lift she meets Harry and asks if he knows what happened to Malfoy.

"He went home, said there was something he needed to do, he didn't tell you?" He asks curiously.

"No, he left for lunch and just never came back."

"He's Malfoy, he does whatever he wants, don't take it personally, Hermione."

She scoffs and presses the button for the Atrium. "I'm not,"

When they arrive at the bustling Atrium, they say goodnight at the Floo and Hermione ready herself to step in after Harry. At the last minute, she changes her mind and heads out into Muggle London and to the bar, wondering if Malfoy will be there again tonight. She steps through the doors and casts her eyes around for a familiar blond head but sees nothing. Hermione takes her usual seat at the bar and orders a glass of wine. While she drinks she keeps her eyes trained on the door but he never appears.

The next day at work he doesn't appear either so Hermione spends the day on her own in the meeting room trying to decipher what exactly the Runes might mean.

Hermione heads to the Muggle bar after work and sits, as she did the previous night, waiting to see if Malfoy arrives. He doesn't. Nor does he show himself in the office for the remainder of the week. She asks Harry again if he's coming in and Harry just shrugs at her.

By the end of the day she's desperate for a glass of wine and a bath, but makes her way back to the bar and prepares for another no show. She decides to take a seat in one of the many booths as the bar is much busier on a Friday night and Hermione doesn't much fancy making idle conversation with people at the bar.

Ordering a basket of chips and chicken strips and while she waits, she looks through some of the workings from this week in case inspiration suddenly hits. She eats and drinks while going over the papers, greasy fingers making marks all over the pages, lost to her thoughts, when a tutting alerts me to another's presence.

"You really have no manners, Granger,"

She looks up and sees the scowl on Malfoy's face.

"Excuse me?" Hermione huffs, wiping her fingers on a napkin.

"Look what you've done to the parchment, couldn't you have waited until after you finished your—" his eyes drop to her plate of half devoured fries and chicken. "Meal?" He practically

sneers.

“What does it matter to you what I do? It’s out of office hours,”

“It doesn’t mean one should let all etiquette leave them,”

Hermione raises her glass to her lips and scowls at him. He hasn’t been at work all week, hasn’t sent her an owl to inform her of this, thereby leaving her to try and decipher some dark way of communicating with each other and he’s lecturing her on etiquette?

“Speaking of, it’s not polite to leave work for lunch and never come back. There are ways to communicate, do you understand this?” Hermione raises an eyebrow at him.

“My apologies, something came up.”

She just glares at him.

“May I join you?” He asks, pointing to the booth.

Hermione considers it for a moment. She has wanted to see him here all week and now he’s here, she’s not sure she wants his company after all.

But she does want answers about what he means about no one caring enough to find out who he is now. She sighs dramatically and gestures to the booth with one hand.

“Sure,”

The waitress spots his arrival and comes over to take his order. He, of course, orders a whisky and declines any food. While they sit together in silence, she sneaks glances at him from where he sits opposite her. He looks tired but still perfectly put together. Hermione doesn’t think he owns anything in another colour except black. When the waitress brings over his drink he takes the smallest sip and settles back in his seat. Feeling awkward, Hermione takes a sip of her wine and gestures to the food still on the table.

“Please help yourself,” she tells him.

“Thank you,” he smirks, surprising her by reaching forward and taking a chip.

“Has whatever took you away for the week been … resolved?”

He chews slowly before wiping his fingers on a napkin. “Mostly,”

“Good,”

Silence descends again and Hermione distracts her racing mind by eating a few more chips and a chicken strip and taking long mouthfuls of her wine until the glass is empty on the table. He waves over the waitress and orders another drink for her and for himself without asking.

“You know you really are too assuming and heavy handed, what if I didn’t want another?”

A smirk plays at the corner of his lips. “Then you’d have spoken up, I’m sure.”

“Still so arrogant,”

“Still so opinionated,”

Hermione sits back in her seat and meets his eyes. She allows herself to fully take in just how much of a breathtaking man Draco Malfoy has become in the years since the Battle. He’s grown into the pointy features of his adolescence and the man before her has matured into a broad, fine-lined, chiselled God of a creature. One with muscles and effortless hair that falls artfully over his forehead. He has lips that are the most delicious shade of pink and the perfect combination of full and pouty. He fills his suit with the kind of presence few men can achieve and she can admit this only to herself, but Hermione finds it devastatingly attractive. He doesn’t squirm under her scrutiny, if anything he seems to relish it and with her third glass of wine disappearing far too quickly she can’t find it in herself to be ashamed of her blatant perusal of him. He raises his glass to his mouth and she watches fixated on his mouth and throat as he swallows.

“See something you like, Granger?” He asks, an arrogant smile firmly in place.

“Perhaps,” she admits.

“Hmm,” he hums, the sound deep and gravelly.

Now it’s his turn to explore her, his eyes travel over her face, down the exposed skin of her neck and collarbone, over the swell of her breasts and back up to her face. He makes no secret that he likes what he sees too, much like he hasn’t hidden it every other time Hermione has caught him looking. It’s a surreal thought, that Malfoy finds *her* attractive and it leaves Hermione a little confused and overheated. She breaks the connection and looks out over the bar, it’s busier than she’s seen it before and she realises instead of the music playing over the speakers, there’s a live band there tonight.

Hermione keeps her attention on the couples that are dancing on the small dance floor directly in front of the band, men holding their female companions close, the women enjoying being in their arms. She feels a pang of jealousy at their closeness. It’s been a long time since Hermione was in the arms of another man and even longer since she’s felt any kind of spark. As happy as she is having her own space, her body craves the closeness, connection and the companionship being part of a couple brings.

The atmosphere changes when the music does, the beat becoming slower and more sexy, encouraging the couples dancing to move a little closer, pressing their bodies tighter together. The addition of real-life musicians adds a whole other dimension to the bar. The sound of the saxophone glides over her skin and soaks into her soul. Hermione takes a long sip of her wine and looks everywhere but at the man sitting in front of her. She can feel his eyes on her, knows he’s watching but Hermione avoids his gaze. Movement catches her attention and she looks up and catches Malfoy’s gaze as he stands and holds out his hand to her,

And for once, without overthinking everything, Hermione takes it.

Malfoy leads them into the crowd and settles her in front of him, taking one of her hands in his as she slips the other onto his shoulder. Hermione feels his breath on her neck and the heat from his hand sinking into her skin as he moves them confidently to the sultry music surrounding them. She leans into his body a little as more couples join them, delighting in the feel of his tall frame against her soft one, relishing in the feel of his muscles and strength.

They don't speak, they just move as if they've always done this, like being so close to one another is as natural as breathing when the opposite is true. Hermione feels his breath whisper against her neck and can't help but shiver in his arms, bringing her hand across his shoulder to rest on his neck so her fingers can brush the edges of his hair. Her movement seems to encourage him and his head drops lower to her neck and he inhales.

"You smell divine, Granger, what is it?"

"Just—" Hermione feels his lips press just below her ear and swallows back a groan. "My perfume, vanilla I think,"

She presses closer to him, needing the connection, the touch, just *him*.

The music changes, another sensual piece that floods her blood with desire and need.

Malfoy pulls her closer and she feels everything that overwhelms her in that moment pressing right back against her.

He wants Hermione just as much.

"Granger," his voice is husky in her ear. "*Come with me*,"

It isn't a question.

Hermione releases her hold on him and steps back so she can see his face. His eyes are dark and heated, there's a slight flush to his skin but he looks right back at her. He reaches for Hermione's hand and tugs her forward and kisses her.

It's deep and passionate.

It feels like he's pouring his soul into her mouth and Hermione swallows it down greedily, taking everything he's offering because she's scared he'll never offer it to her again.

When he withdraws and brings his thumb up to brush against her bottom lip, the adrenaline that courses through her body almost makes her collapse on the spot.

"Now,"

Hermione follows him out of the bar, barely holding onto her cloak and bag or balancing in her heels. When they leave Muggle London and enter Diagon Alley, Malfoy tugs on her hand, holds on tight and Apparates them to a location he clearly knows but is completely unknown to her. Hermione has two seconds to take in the large space—dark and masculine in colour and furnishings—before he's on her, pushing backwards until her back thumps against the wall, threading his hands into her hair and angling her head so he can continue the broken

kiss from the bar. Hermione lets go, doesn't bite back the groan this time and he swallows it down like it's the greatest gift he's ever received.

"Tell me, Granger, do you want me?" He asks against her mouth, his hands dropping to her waist and squeezing.

"Yes," she pants, her hands rising to reach for handfuls of his hair.

But they don't get that far.

Malfoy captures her wrists in one of his large hands and pins them above her head. He shifts and forcefully pushes one of his long legs between hers, pressing against her core in the most delicious way.

"You don't get to make the rules, here Granger," he brings her bottom lip between his teeth and bites down harder than Hermione was expecting. "*You follow them.*"

Hermione nods against his mouth and flexes her wrists, still held firmly in his grip. He steps back, standing to his full height before looking down at her. He takes one deep breath and with what must have been a wordless spell, secures her wrists with something that pulls her arms high above her head and holds them there.

Hermione doesn't have time to look and see what it is, because he takes her chin in his thumb and forefinger and moves her head to meet his gaze. His eyes are so dark, his pupils blown so wide she can only see a trace of the grey.

There's an intensity that Hermione feels to her very core and more than a hint of danger.

"This is your choice, I won't make you do anything you don't want to. But you need to know, if you stay ... *I make the rules* and I expect you to obey me. Is that what you want, Granger?" He drops his lips to her and kisses her, deep and with confident strokes of his tongue. Hermione has never been kissed like this before, in such a consuming way that all thoughts leave her.

Nothing else exists or matters in this moment, just what she feels and the man standing in front of her.

"Do you want to give yourself *willingly* to me? Do you trust me to know what you need even when you don't?"

Something clicks in her head, a piece of herself that she didn't know was missing until right this very second.

And it's with genuine surprise that Hermione realises then that her mind is quiet and it's not because he's kissing her, it's something else, something she doesn't understand but she wants to.

Hermione raises her chin, meeting his eyes and nods.

"Yes," she tells him confidently.

He smiles slowly, the kind of smile that makes Hermione wonder if she's made the right choice.

"Very well then," his lips press to hers once more before he steps back, towering over her and meeting her gaze with eyes that promise things Hermione doesn't understand. "On your knees."

Chapter End Notes

Happy Wednesday, everyone!

Well ... things are starting to get a little interesting now, right?

From this point on, Hermione is going to be learning a lot - both with Malfoy and without him.

Life is about to get exciting and challenging in all kinds of way.

As always, thank you so very much for reading, commenting and leaving Kudos. It means the world that you're taking a chance on my fic.

I sat down one day after an idea came to mind and decided I would try and write what was in my head, what I wanted to read. It amazes me that you want to read it too - so thank you!

I'll see you Sunday for ... ahem ... more ...

Smudges

Altitude

Chapter Summary

Hermione discovers just how much Malfoy can make her forget.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Eight

Altitude

Hermione does it without a question or thought.

Dropping to her knees and folding her legs beneath her. Her hands remain secured to the unknown restraint above that much to Hermione's surprise, extends without needing any adjustment to her change in position. Once settled, she raises her face to Malfoy and his hand snaps to her chin, tugging her face to meet his gaze.

"Did I say you could look at me?"

Hermione baulks. What? "No —"

"Eyes to the floor then,"

Hermione's pulse quickens and she lowers her gaze to stare at his shiny Dragonhide shoes. Everything about Malfoy is expensive, from his robes to his shoes. He has confidence in buckets and a swagger that only comes from having money and being raised to believe you are and deserve the best. It's less obvious than it was when he was a child. But it's still there.

Hermione takes a couple of deep breaths and waits.

And waits.

And waits.

Her shoulders begin to ache at being held in such an unnatural position and yet her mind is eerily quiet and as the minutes tick by she finds herself settling into the position and to her

surprise, relaxing completely. Whatever this is, she's in no rush for it to end. Hermione thinks Malfoy notices the shift in her because he whispers her name so softly she's not sure she's not imagining it.

Hermione doesn't move.

She stays exactly where she is, having already learnt her lesson. She doesn't move until he speaks softly but a little louder this time, so she's sure he's speaking to her.

"*Granger*," he moves to crouch in front of her and lifts her chin. "I told you before that you follow an instruction beautifully and I continue to be awed at how effortlessly you obey," he runs a finger along her jawline and brings his hand to her throat, curling his fingers around the delicate column of her neck. "I need something from you," he leans closer and kisses her.

Hermione is beginning to realise that Malfoy doesn't know how to kiss without consuming. His kisses are otherworldly, so deep and intense she feels like they're going to set her on fire. She relaxes as he caresses her tongue with his, while the fingers around her throat tighten infinitesimally and as heat pools between her legs.

"Anything, Hermione murmurs against his lips.

He pulls back and gazes at her. He doesn't kiss her, doesn't tell her to do anything, he just looks at Hermione as though he's never seen anything quite like her before. The minutes roll on and she grows warm under his unwavering scrutiny, then he speaks.

"Trust me. Allow me to show you what you need. *Breathe for me*,"

Hermione takes a deep breath and realises in her daze, she's not taken a full breath for a while. Sucking air into her lungs feels alien, almost like her body is functioning on his touch alone. It terrifies her. How does someone she barely knows command all her senses and gives her more than she could ever imagine one person being able to give?

"Do you trust me?" He asks, his warm breath feathering over her skin.

"Yes," Hermione answers without thinking but knows it's the truth.

She tenses as his fingers tighten a little more before he releases her throat and drops his nose to her jawline. Moving it back and forth and inhaling deeply, it feels like he's centering himself in the moment and it makes her heart feel like it's going to explode.

"On your feet,"

Hermione stands.

Without a moment's hesitation.

She feels whatever is restraining her wrists slacken a little and bring her hands to rest at her hips and he moves her to the centre of the room. With one of his hands on her waist, he checks the tightness on the binding of her wrists with the other and hums in approval. Then

he slides his hands down her arms, across her collarbone and over her breasts before coming to rest again on the swell of her hips.

“I’m going to begin,” he tells her. “If it’s too much, say yellow and we’ll slow down. If you want me to stop altogether, say red, is that clear?”

Hermione nods and receives a quick but firm slap to her arse. She inhales sharply.

“Words, Granger,”

“Yes, Malfoy,”

His eyes flash dangerously and for one second, real fear floods her body, but then it’s gone and his wand is in his left hand and the clothes on her body are gone leaving her standing in just her underwear and heels. For the first time in a long time, Hermione is really glad that she spends a stupid amount of money on lingerie to make herself feel better. A small gasp leaves his lips and he steps back to admire the green silk and lace her body is encased in.

“*Fuck*, Granger. It’s almost like you’ve gift-wrapped yourself for me,”

The lingerie is entirely too over the top for someone who is single but Hermione doesn’t care. The knickers are intricate brazilian cut, high-legged and with multiple straps that come high up on her waist, framing her stomach perfectly and hopefully distracting from the scars she has all across her torso from her run in with fellow Death Eater Antonin Dolohov in the Department of Mysteries in Sixth Year. Even though she thinks it, she doesn’t open her mouth to remind Malfoy of this fact, positive he knows where they came from.

The bra is simple, plunge and even Hermione knows, it makes her breasts look fantastic.

But the real secret and the one thing that makes Hermione feel sexy and feminine is the matching suspender belt that’s attached to black, lace top stockings. There is just something about knowing you’re dressed like this under your work clothes, going about your day like everyone else but wearing silk and lace and wrapped up, as Malfoy says, like a gift for some lucky person to unwrap. Which of course, there hasn’t been until tonight, but now her love of lingerie is finally paying off.

Hermione meets his eyes and smiles. “I wear these for me,” she skims her eyes down to his trousers and smiles wider. “But you’re welcome to enjoy them and I see that you do,”

He chuckles, just like he does in her dreams every time and Hermione shifts her legs closer together trying to get some relief from the pressure building there. He notices of course and spreads his legs a little, resting his wand on his forearm as he crosses them.

“I very much enjoy them. And they’re in my colour, I see,” he moves forward with a look she can only describe as predatory. “What’s a good little Gryffindor like yourself doing wearing Slytherin green?”

“I think we’re past wearing house colours by now, are we not?”

He smiles and reaches towards her to run one long finger across the swell of her breasts, dropping lower to trace a path along her stomach before coming to rest at the top of her still covered core. Hermione inhales and rebalances herself in her heels that he's happy to leave her wearing. Hermione can imagine the image she makes, restrained and dressed in just lingerie, completely his to do whatever he wants.

"It almost seems a waste to remove this from you, Granger. But however am I going to do what I want to do with these in my way?"

Hermione's breathing hitches as his finger dips into the waistband and brushes against the small patch of curls there. He's predatory in his touch and his gaze as he dips lower until he comes into contact with her clitoris, brushing his finger back and forth once, twice, three times. She drops her head back and lets a lust-filled groan leave her lips while the restraints support her weight.

Hermione hasn't been touched like this in such a long time and never with so much possession. His finger circles her clitoris with such skill and devotion her legs begin to shake. She arches her hips into his touch and lets another groan escape as he slips lower and slides inside her.

"Good girl, that's it," he encourages. "Just like that, Granger, it feels good doesn't it?"

"Yes," she pants.

"You want to come?"

"Yes," Hermione pants again, unable to say anything else as the delicious pressure builds.

She feels the coiling in her hips, all the tension in her body settles between her legs as he massages a spot inside that she's never been able to find no matter how hard she's tried. The elusive G-spot. Hermione thinks he's going to stop when he withdraws his finger, but he only thrusts back in and to her absolute delight, adds a second finger stretching and filling her more than she's been in months.

"*Oh —*" she gasps as he presses harder into a little knot of nerves that takes her breath away. "*Malfoy, oh Gods —*"

"Ask me," he murmurs close to her ear, tracing the shell with his tongue. "Ask me for permission to come, Granger."

What? Permission to —

"*Please —*" the word leaves her mouth before she can stop it. "Please, Malfoy, can I come?"

He leans forward, swallowing her groans with his mouth as his fingers continue to thrust in and out as his thumb brushes over her clitoris. "As you asked so nicely, yes," he twists his wrist and presses down firmer on her clitoris. "You may,"

Hermione has no control over her body's reaction to his words, to him giving her permission to climax.

She shatters.

That's the only word she can find to describe what the orgasm does to her.

She shatters into a thousand tiny pieces, suspended in Malfoy's room, with his fingers inside her.

Her heart pounding, sweat beading on her brow and a guttural cry ripping itself free from her throat.

When Hermione finds her way through the fog of the best orgasm she's ever had, Malfoy kisses her temple while murmuring words of praise before he steps back and raises his fingers to his mouth.

With a very deliberate move, he raises them to his mouth and sucks them clean.

"Hmmm," he says around his fingers. "Better than I could ever have dreamed of, and I have, Granger, I've dreamed of this very moment *many* times,"

Hermione shudders in the restraints and pants her way back to some kind semblance of sanity while he licks her climax from his fingers, almost as though it's the most normal thing in the world.

Perhaps in his world it is.

But in Hermione's world? She's never seen anything more erotic in her life.

When he's finished he looks at her and she knows that this isn't over.

Without a word, ropes appear and wrap around her thighs, lifting her feet off the floor, spreading her legs and leaving her completely at his mercy.

"Even more breathtaking," he says as he begins to remove the cufflinks from his shirtsleeves. "Do you take a Contraceptive Potion?" He asks, so matter of fact like he's asking if Hermione's preference is coffee or tea.

"No," she flushes. "There's been no need,"

"You'll start tomorrow, I'll use a charm for now."

"I—what?"

"I don't intend to become a father, Granger. It's to protect us both."

His fingers are slow at removing his shirt and when it finally slips from his shoulders her mouth waters from the vision of his toned and muscular torso. He's marble perfection in human form, the scars from his youth, both Harry's Sectumsempra and his Dark Mark on full display. He's a work of sculpted art and he's standing before her without care in the world with so much confidence she feels lost for words. He's beautiful and her hands itch to trace them, to follow the lines over his torso with her tongue. Perhaps he'll let her.

Hermione can't say she's ever spent time thinking about how Malfoy would feel about his scars, how he would feel about the Dark Mark still being inked into his skin, but if she had, she would have thought he'd have Glamoured the mark, hidden it away.

She would have it had been her.

But then she doesn't hide her scars either.

They're a part of who she is and Hermione is of the opinion that, if you end your life without any, have you ever really lived?

Hermione watches transfixed as he removes his belt and steps out of his trousers, She notices he doesn't remove any underwear because apparently Draco Malfoy doesn't seem to wear any. His erection stands heavy and proud between his legs and her core twitches at the thought of having him inside her.

"Do you remember your words?" He asks as he loops the belt around his hand.

"Yes," she croaks. "Yellow and—red." Hermione swallows as he snaps the leather tight.

With another wandless spell, she's turning, hanging so her arse is in the air. With another spell her bra vanishes and his hand comes down and pushes slightly making her swing in pace. With her bra gone, Hermione's breasts swing freely and from the corner of her eye, she sees feet approach to watch the spectacle.

"Just when I think it can't get any better, it does," a warm hand comes up and he fills his hand with her left breast, squeezing once before pulling back to pinch her nipple. "I'm going to spank you, Granger, I'm going to turn your beautiful arse red and then?" He pinches her nipple hard and she gasps. "I'm going to fuck you and if you're really lucky," he moves his hand and her body raises up high until her breasts are hanging inches from his face. "I'll let you pick where I come."

His mouth latches onto one nipple and he sucks hard, hollowing his cheeks completely.. Hermione groans as pleasure spikes through her in waves and she feels a pulse of need between her legs.

"And if I don't want you to?" She manages through gritted teeth as he sucks on her other nipple and bites down hard.

"Then you wouldn't have come here, you wouldn't have stayed, you wouldn't have given yourself to me so beautifully, would you?"

He's right of course.

She does want this.

More than she's ever wanted anything in her life.

The feeling of freedom is intoxicating and Hermione will do anything to keep a hold of it.

She relaxes and he shifts from under her, lowering her body to where he wants her and coming to a stop behind where Hermione hangs. She feels his warm hands on her skin before she notices her knickers have gone too.

“We’ll start with six, Granger,” he tells her as he caresses her arse. “One for every year of school you completed right along with me and one for every year I had to tolerate your swotty little mouth,”

“My—”

Hermione’s words are cut off when the first slap hits her between the juncture of her bottom and thigh. It’s hard and biting and unlike nothing she’s ever felt before. She swallows around the groan threatening to escape.

“Count, Granger,”

“One—”

The second lands on the other leg but the same place, harder this time. She bites down on her bottom lip.

“Two—”

The third and fourth land directly on her arse, one for each cheek. Her skin feels on fire and she wonders curiously how just one slap can cause so much pain. Then she wonders how being punished, being restrained by a man she barely knows can be so bloody arousing. Hermione can feel her arousal pooling between her legs and begin to slide down her thighs. She’s never been so turned on in her life and she doesn’t have time to think about why before another slap lands across half of each cheek.

She inhales, the impact causing her already sore skin to flare to life again.

“Three—”Hermione breathes. “Four—”

“You’re doing so well,” he praises. “Look at you. One more, one more and I’ll reward you with every inch I have to give, would you like that?”

Hermione doesn’t have time to answer. The sixth and final blow hits the one place she has always treated with utmost kindness. When the slap connects with her vulva Hermione screams. The impact and the shock leaves her unable to do anything else. It’s immediately followed by the most deliciously warm form of his mouth. He laps at her burning skin, teasing her wet flesh and pushing into her before coming back to swirl over her clitoris.

“Perfection,” he murmurs as he kisses her burning skin. “So good, you’re exactly what I need, what I want, do you know that, Granger?”

“N-no—” Hermione croaks as he swipes his tongue across her clitoris again.

“Are you ready?” He asks, standing straighter and resting his hands on her hips.

"For everything you want to give me, Malfoy," she groans as she feels the head of his cock poised at her entrance.

Hermione hears a softly muttered *Contraception Charm* and with a soft groan of his own and a sharp thrust he pushes forward and stills. She tries to move, to push back on him, to get some kind of relief, but she's met with another slap to her already flaming skin.

"Keep still," he grounds out as he withdraws and slides back in.

She does as he asks and doesn't move to meet his thrusts. Hermione does clench around him though and he growls behind her, slapping her arse once again.

"So tight," he says. "You take every inch, Granger,"

She groans as the restraints raise her hips but lower her chest, deepening the angle that Malfoy can reach. It's delicious and every roll of his hips hits the place deep inside her that has her calling out, asking to come and begging for more all in one breath. Hermione feels herself climbing once again and moving backwards until she's pressed against his chest, his mouth at her ear.

"You want this?" He asks as he thrusts inside me.

"Yes."

His mouth finds the place where her neck meets her shoulder and he bites down hard, sucking the skin into his mouth as he plunges into her over and over again. His hands leave her hips and come around to each breast, squeezing so hard Hermione feels a stab of pain which he soothes before pinching her nipples. A combination of pure pleasure and a spike of pain has her climax building. She can feel it begin low in her stomach before spreading to her core, every part of her body alive and desperate for another release.

"Please —"

"What, Granger," Malfoy murmurs into her ear, "What do you want?"

His left hand leaves her breast and comes to settle between Hermione's legs where he begins to rub small circles on her clitoris while his mouth latches on to the already sore bite mark and sucking the skin into his mouth.

"I need—" She pants and grinds on him trying to find the right amount of friction to orgasm.

"You need?"

"To come, I need to come, please, can I?"

He chuckles and as always it seems to have a direct line to her clitoris.

"Another one so soon? You are greedy, aren't you?"

He pushes deeper and presses harder on her clitoris. "Yes, I am, with you, I am,"

He pulls out of her and pushes her back forward and when she feels him between her legs again, he just rocks back and forth, the head of his cock rubbing repeatedly over her clitoris. The combination of his erection and the softness of the head of his cock does wonderful things and Hermione can't stop the moans leaving her throat.

"Count with me," he says.

"What am I counting this time?"

"The number of passes across your clit before I allow you to come,"

"H-how many?" She grits her teeth, the feeling too intense.

"Nineteen,"

"Why-why nineteen?"

He slowly draws himself back and then thrusts forward before he answers. "Your birthday, one stroke for every day in September the world had to endure until you made your appearance."

"How do you know my birthda—"

He slaps her arse and she groans. "I know a great many things, Granger. *Now count .*"

At one Hermione feels relief.

At seven her teeth are clenched tight.

By ten her thighs are squeezed together to fight off her impending climax.

At thirteen her whole body is shaking and covered in sweat.

At seventeen she turns her head and bites into the skin of her arm to silence herself.

When nineteen falls from Hermione's lips, she screams.

She screams until her throat is raw and her eyes are streaming with tears. Hermione sobs and shudders and twitches in her restraints. She groans and mutters all manner of things she cannot remember the second they leave her lips.

She's never felt so alive.

"Where?" Malfoy asks from behind her.

"Where, what?"

"I'm going to come, Granger. You get to choose where, but be quick about it or I'll make the choice for you."

Hermione's mind is struggling to keep up but she knows there's only one place she wants him to finish.

"Inside me," Hermione all but whispers.

"As you wish." He grips her hips and plunges back inside her.

He loses himself to chasing his own climax, pushing deep and with such brutal force she's sure it will leave her sore in the morning, but she doesn't stop him.

She can't.

Hermione wants him to feel as good as she does, wants him to use her body and find a release as earth-shattering as hers was. His pace quickens and Hermione knows when he's close because he leans forward, sinks his teeth into her shoulder and the grip on her hips becomes so painful she's certain she'll have a bruise there too. With one final, deep thrust, he falls into oblivion with a groan so indecent Hermione commits it to memory.

And then there's silence.

Beautiful, contented silence.

The only sound is their breathing and eventually the sound of one warm hand running back and forth across the bare skin of her back. Then she's moving, released from the restraints and nestled into his arms and he's walking, dropping her shoes to the floor with a clunk. Taking her somewhere she doesn't know and yet can't find it in her to care. Hermione's eyes shutter closed and she shifts closer into him, closer to the warmth she seeks and the safety she desperately craves.

When he places her on something soft and leaves her alone, she opens her eyes to see where they are.

A bedroom.

His bedroom?

Hermione sits up a little to properly look around. The room is painted a dark green with wood panelling. The bed is a dark wood four-poster and the carpet is slate grey and luscious looking. The fireplace is crackling and the light in the room is surprisingly not coming from candles, but from lamps dotted around the room. It's a beautiful yet masculine room.

Hermione doesn't hear him come back into the room and startles when a warm pair of lips press to her shoulder.

"Here," he reaches around and hands her a potion bottle. "It will help with the pain."

Hermione turns and meets his gaze. "I'm not in pain,"

His eyes tighten and he sighs, closing her fingers around the vial. "Please,"

She opens the vial, raises it to her lips and swallows the contents. His eyes soften and he brings his hand to her neck once again but not in the way he has before.

He's comforting, yet claiming all in one.

"Roll onto your back, I have a salve for your backside,"

Hermione nods and does as he asks. The scent of the balm is minty with a citrus tang and she groans as he begins to massage it into her heated, sore skin. His fingers are so sure and gentle when he traces the dips of her spine and spends time massaging between her shoulder blades. They're sore from how long Hermione spent with her arms raised above her head and it feels insanely good. They don't speak while he caresses her skin and works out the knots in her shoulders and when he's finished he leans forward and places a soft kiss on her left shoulder.

"How do you feel?" He almost whispers against her bare skin.

"More alive than I've ever felt before," Hermione confesses honestly. "I feel like—" She doesn't know how to explain anymore than that so she doesn't even try.

"Have you ever done anything like that before?"

She shakes her head but doesn't turn to look at him. "Never,"

He shifts and comes to lay next to her, his chest still bare but he's slipped on a pair of soft flannel dark grey pyjama bottoms. He settles beside her and reaches over to brush the curls back off her face leaving her no way to hide.

"Why now?"

Hermione swallows and takes a deep breath. "I didn't know that was what was going to happen when we left the bar and when I got here, everything just happened so fast and my brain just—"

"Just?"

"Stopped racing. Everything went quiet and I didn't have a thousand things racing through my head. It was just about what I felt and that's—that's not something that happens, Malfoy. I spend my whole life with too much in my head and with you it just all—stopped."

He smiles and leans forward to kiss her, softer than before but still as consuming. When he pulls back she's breathless and a steady pulse is already beginning between her legs again.

"Did you like it?"

"Wasn't that obvious?"

He smirks, arrogant and sure. "Yes, but I need words, Granger. *Tell me* ,"

Hermione smiles and looks over his shoulder, embarrassment turning her cheeks pink. "I more than liked it," she swallows and meets his eyes again. "Did you—did you like it?"

"I did, I meant what I said, you follow an instruction beautifully and obey like you're born to it," he runs a finger down her arm and goosebumps cover her skin. "And for a man like me, that's an intoxicating combination."

"A man like you?" She asks, not sure what he means.

He looks at her and for the first time Hermione sees his arrogant mask slip just a little. "It's late,"

The abrupt change in direction leaves her confused. "Right,"

"Your clothes are on the chaise, I'll leave you to dress then you can use the Floo,"

It's like a bucket of ice has been thrown over her.

This is over?

That's it?

Thanks very much for the orgasm but you can leave now?

He doesn't say anything else, just climbs off the bed and leaves the room. Shame washes over her as she sits up and gets off the bed. Her legs are sticky with their combined climaxes, a wet patch where she's been lying but her clothes, bag, cloak and shoes are sitting waiting for her, just like he said.

Hermione slips into her bra and knickers, gets dressed and steps back into her heels, wrapping her cloak around herself trying to keep the warmth in and the sudden feeling of shame at bay. On wobbly feet Hermione walks down the hall and towards the light and sound of glass on marble. When she turns around the corner, Malfoy has his back to her and a glass of amber liquid in his hand. He raises his head when her heels click on the floor and meets Hermione's eyes. She doesn't know what to say, what do you say to the man who's seen you naked, spanked you and given you the best orgasm of your life? The man whose semen is still drying on your inner thighs.

"I'll—" Her voice wobbles but she clears her throat. "I'll be leaving then,"

He nods.

"Th—" Hermione stops herself from thanking him just in time. His coldness sparks something inside of her and she refuses to be grateful to someone who can be so cold after what they've just shared. "Have a nice weekend, Malfoy."

Hermione turns on her heels and walks towards the fireplace. Grabbing a handful of *Floo powder*, throwing it into the empty grate and stepping through before speaking her address calmly and clearly. As the flames turn green, Hermioe looks up and makes eye contact with Malfoy, still standing where he was before, eyes devoid of any emotion and in that second Hermione knows that tonight, she's quite possibly made the biggest mistake of her life.

Chapter End Notes

Phew, well.

That was a lot, wasn't it?

As always, thank you so much for reading, commenting and leaving Kudos. I will never tire of telling you how much it means to me.

Until Wednesday ...

Only Human

Chapter Summary

Hermione questions everything and finds the answers she needs in the most unexpected place.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Nine

Only Human

After *Floeing* back from Malfoy's flat, Hermione arrives back to her house and feels it's emptiness like a choking wave pulling her under. She kicks off her shoes and throws open the back door, stepping out into the cool night air and sinking her toes into the overgrown grass of her garden.

It's wild and it needs cutting desperately but right now it's the perfect balm for the ache in her chest.

This is exactly the reason Hermione doesn't allow herself to be swept up by her emotions, why she's always been the practical one who thinks things through, has a plan. She never allows herself to fully grab what she wants because it leads to hurt and upset.

And tonight it has led to semen drying on her thighs and tear stains on her cheeks.

It leads to emptiness and confusion and the feeling of being taken for a fool.

Malfoy doesn't care. He just wanted a place to get his kicks and where better to get them than with the Golden Girl. He'll be telling the rest of his snakes how he managed to convince Hermione Granger that he was interested and took her home from a sad Muggle bar after a few drinks and tied her up in his flat.

Hermione finds herself at the little stream and sinks to the wet grass and dips her feet into the cold water. She feels so stupid. After being alone for so long, the thought that someone like

Malfoy would be interested in her, find her attractive and want to have sex with her soothed her ego and made her feel desired.

He made her feel things she's never felt in her entire life; not just sexy and desired but free.

But at what cost?

Freedom always comes at a cost somewhere down the line, she just didn't anticipate it being the very same night she found it.

Hermione angrily sweeps her fingers under her eyes, gathering the tears she only allows the moon and stars to witness before standing up, straightening her spine and heading back to her empty house. She makes herself the biggest mug of tea she can find and climbs the stairs. Hermione runs a hot bath and sinks into the sweet smelling bubbles, wincing as it makes contact with her sore backside and then again when the hot water laps at the soreness between her legs. Laying her head back, she lets the night replay in her mind like the most beautifully painful movie.

The way Malfoy touched her like he knew her body, knew her mind, and like she could trust him with both. His possessive touches, his consuming kisses. The way they fit together and both found so much pleasure in each other, pleasure she's never felt with anyone before.

This wasn't the awkward fumbling of teenage love, this was all consuming, mind-blowing sex with a man who knew how to coax the most intense orgasms out of her, leave her feeling broken and yet put back together all in one.

So why did he react that way? Why did he leave her clothes for her and ask her to leave?

"I meant what I said, you follow an instruction beautifully and obey like you're born to it and for a man like me, that's an intoxicating combination."

A man like him?

She groans and sinks her head under the water and screams.

What did he mean? Who the bloody hell is Draco Malfoy?

Hermione spends the weekend alone in her house. She cleans every surface she can and eats far too much chocolate and Pringles. By Saturday evening, she's sick and tired of feeling like she's done something wrong. So what, she had sex with Malfoy? She's a single, adult woman and can have sex with whoever she likes, whenever she likes, as many times and in as many positions as she likes.

When Ginny sends an owl on Sunday morning asking if they can expect her at the Burrow for Sunday lunch, Hermione replies saying she won't be over today and to send the Weasley's

her love. Then she does something she never thought she would ever do.

She sends Pansy Parkinson an owl.

Dear Pansy

I don't know if Malfoy has spoken to you yet or not, but I've just bought a house that needs a lot of work. He mentioned that you're the best at interiors and I wanted to ask if you'd like to help me turn this shell of a house into a home?

I'll understand if this isn't something you'd like to help with, so please don't feel any obligation to.

I would appreciate you letting me know either way, if you'd be so kind.

Hermione Granger

Pansy's owl delivers a letter to her office on Monday morning where Hermione is currently pretending she's not avoiding Malfoy even though, if she's completely honest with herself, she definitely is. Not because she feels ashamed about what happened between them, but because she's new to the whole 'working alongside someone who has had their tongue, fingers and penis inside you while you were suspended to their ceiling' thing and really, who is she supposed to talk to about that .

With hands far steadier than she feels, she opens Pansy's letter and reads.

Granger,

It feels too fucking weird to call you anything else at this point, but in future, I'm happy for you to call me Pansy by the way.

Draco hasn't mentioned anything to me, but he works at a fucking snail's pace so unless you were going to wait until the next millennia, it's a good thing you owled me yourself.

I am the best at interiors, ask Blaise or Theo or even King Dick himself. I made their shitty houses into homes they can be proud of and between you and me, I have a lot of Galleons because of it.

Anyway, let me know when you're free to meet up and discuss your shell of a home - preferably at said shell so I can look, saves me coming back and wasting both of our time.

Look at us, acting like fucking adults!

See ya, Granger.

Pansy

Despite herself, Hermione laughs when she reaches the end of Pansy's letter. Who would have foreseen the two of them corresponding? She skims the letter again and her eyes land on three little words; *King Dick himself*.

Hermione laughs again and only stops when Harry pokes his head in the door and raises his eyebrows at her.

"What's so funny?"

She folds Pansy's letter back up and places it on her desk noting its time to head off to the usual Monday meeting.

"Absolutely nothing, just life."

They walk down the corridor together and Hermione takes a deep breath before they enter the meeting room. Malfoy is already in the room and sitting in the chair he seems to have adopted as his own. Harry takes the seat one up from him leaving Hermione's usual seat vacant and looking expectantly up at her when she doesn't immediately sit down.

Malfoy meets her eyes and raises an eyebrow in challenge. "It doesn't bite, Granger. Take a seat."

All at once she feels pissed off he's trying to order her about, hot all over from the way he's looking at her and cold because now everyone is looking at her and wondering why exactly she's not just sitting in the bloody seat she always does.

"Hermione, sit down," Harry laughs. "You always sit here."

Nodding, she walks around the chair and sits down, angling her body away from Malfoy and towards Harry, fully intending to start a conversation with him about his weekend.

"Good weekend, Granger?" Malfoy asks from beside her, leaving her no option but to face him.

Glaring, she turns to answer him. "Yes, actually. It was a perfectly relaxed one which was needed after the week I'd had."

He raises an eyebrow at her again. "Pansy mentioned you'd owled."

"Pansy?" Harry exclaims from the other side of me. "As in, Parkinson?"

"It turns out she's the best at interiors and she's going to help me with the house."

"Oh, right," Harry sounds a little confused. "Well, she's got her work cut out for her, does she know that yet?" He laughs.

Hermione glares at Harry now. "There's nothing wrong with my house,"

"Hermione, you have plants taking over your kitchen."

She flushes.

"You have what?" asks Malfoy from beside her. "Is it safe?"

Hermione turns to him and rolls her eyes. "It's the safest place I've been in the past week," she maintains eye contact. "There's nothing for Harry, nor anyone else to worry about."

"But if you have plants—"

"I said it's fine," Hermione tells him, sounding way more defensive than she needs to.

"Thank you." she adds quickly.

Otto arrives then and stops any more conversation between her and Malfoy. She finds it hard to concentrate on what he's saying but guesses from everyone's reaction that it's nothing too troubling. She's the first to stand up and leave the meeting and head back to her office, closing the door.

Thankfully everyone leaves her alone for the rest of the day and she's able to work out her agitation on the Runes she still doesn't understand. Hermione foregoes the Muggle bar since it's only Monday and picks up Chinese takeaway on the way home instead.

Sitting on the floor, cross legged wearing old, worn, flannel pyjamas with her hair scraped back and a can of her favourite Muggle Coke Zero eating prawn toasts and chicken chow mein, the gentle tap, tapping on her window alerts her to the arrival of an owl. Standing up and walking over expecting it to be Harry or Ginny, she's curious to see a large Eagle owl perched waiting for her.

"Hello handsome, who do you belong to?" She asks the majestic bird.

She already knows the answer before she removes the scroll attached to its left leg.

Granger,

You have nothing to be ashamed or embarrassed about.

If you are free this evening, I'd very much appreciate it if you would come over.

Announcing Burton House as you step into the Floo shall bring you directly to me.

I want to see you.

DLM

Hermione finishes reading and closes her eyes as she raises the parchment to her face and inhales.

Even his parchment smells like him.

She reads over the lines of the letter again and feels her toes twitch beneath her.

Why is she even considering going to him after how he behaved?

He had sex with her and basically asked her to leave!

He didn't so much as look at her as she vanished through his fireplace and now he's writing demanding her presence in his posh house which is Gods knows where?

Yet Hermione feels something inside her reaching for him, wanting to see him and confront him to make him apologise. There is something so beyond her comprehension and understanding taking root inside of her and she's suddenly consumed with thoughts of seeing him.

All logic seems to have vanished and the only thing stopping her from leaving is the fact she's not dressed for company.

Especially not his company.

Before she has time to overthink it, she runs upstairs, changes into a pair of jeans and a white t-shirt, pulling on her trainers and stepping into the *Floo* saying clearly the name he told her to; Burton House.

Seconds later she steps out into the most stunningly decorated lounge she has ever seen outside of Malfoy Manor.

The cream walls and sumptuous furnishings are all surrounded by floor to ceiling glass doors and windows. There are elegant sofas in emerald green and soft brown leather armchairs arranged around a huge dark wooden coffee table while crystal chandeliers fill the room with golden light.

Stepping out of the fireplace Hermione spots the solitary person in the room, glass of amber liquid in hand. He gets to his feet and puts the glass down. Slowly and steadily, he stalks towards her and inhales, letting his eyes trail over her terribly Muggle outfit that may have looked okay at home but looks incredibly shabby surrounded by the elegance of this room.

Hermione tries to stay rooted to the spot, tries to show her annoyance at being summoned after being so carelessly discarded before.

But she can not.

Like the jerk of a Portkey behind her navel, Hermione stumbles forward at the same time he reaches for her and they collide.

Hands in her hair, fingers fisting in his shirt and finally, lips crashing to lips.

He devours her mouth in a kiss that heats every cell in her body and leaves her breathless and unable to support her own weight.

It doesn't matter though, he's there, holding her up, supporting her and taking everything from Hermione whether she gives it or not.

He doesn't ask.

She doesn't give permission.

It's just how it has to be.

"You came," he breathes into her mouth, biting down on her bottom lip a little too hard.

“You summoned me,” she breathes, biting his lip back.

He groans and reaches for her neck, fitting his fingers so easily around her delicate throat as though she is made for his hands alone.

“You really do obey like you were born to it,”

Malfoy continues to kiss and devour with his hands, lips and tongue. Worshipping Hermione without removing a scrap of clothing, making her feel more naked than if she were standing in front of him as bare as the day she came into the world.

“I need your apology,” she breathes, standing back and peering up at him.

“You won’t get it,” he tells her honestly, gazing down at her. “I’m not sorry for any of it.”

Hermione shudders, takes a deep breath before turning to leave.

He captures her waist and pulls her into him. “You don’t need it as much as you think you do,” he tells her, mouth at her ear. “If I were to say it, it would be meaningless, and what’s an apology without meaning, Granger?”

“I do need it,” she tells him. “I need to know you won’t do it again.”

“But I will.” He says. “I’ll give you honesty but I cannot give you regret when there is none. To do so would be deceitful. I’m not the hero, Granger.”

She turns in his arms and looks up at him. His grey eyes are clear and open and she knows there’s so much truth in his words but they slash at her leaving open wounds and agonsiding pain.

“What does that make me?” Hermione asks, curious to know whether she’s the damsel or the dragon slayer in this story.

“Mine,” he says simply, like it’s the most obvious thing in the world.

She laughs and turns to look around the room. “How can I be yours when I don’t trust you? When you just admitted you’ll hurt me again?”

“Then what do you want to be, Granger? Tell me,”

Hermione, to her absolute horror, feels tears fill her eyes and spill over her cheeks. “I want to be loved, Malfoy,” she croaks, her voice thick with emotion. “I want someone to see me, to want me. I want to be the centre of someone’s world. I don’t want more pain, I’ve had enough of that to last a lifetime.”

“And you think I’m incapable of all those things?”

“I think someone who cannot feel remorse when they hurt someone is incapable of those things, yes.”

He fixes his eyes on me and stands silently watching. Hermione's skin prickles under the heat of his stare and she looks everywhere except at him.

"I don't pretend to understand this, Granger. I don't pretend to know why I'm so drawn to you or what this all means but I do know that when I'm not with you, you're all I think about,"

Hermione looks at him then.

"I'm not good," he sighs. "I don't think I've ever been good and I think I'm worse now. Our world—the world we live in, has shaped us both and made us very different people and yet—this thing between us is electric and I desperately want to explore it, don't you?"

Hermione feels it.

Their connection fizzes under her skin like an electric current, drawing her to him even though she knows she should be walking away. because he's telling her every reason she should.

So why can't she?

Because for the first time in her life, she feels seen.

She feels understood.

She feels truly alive.

And doesn't being alive come with good and bad?

Doesn't being alive mean feeling both intense joy and complete sorrow? Hasn't her life to this point been proof of that?

Just for once can she not just be allowed to make the reckless choice and not worry about what it means for her future? Why can't she just do what she wants and not worry about everything and everyone?

"I don't want to get hurt," she whispers.

Malfoy steps forward and cups her face in his warm hands.

"You're already hurting," he tells her, brushing her tears away with his thumbs. "You're miserable and no in your life seems to care,"

"And you do?"

He leans down and kisses her softly. More softly than he's kissed her yet.

"Yes,"

Hearing him say he cares cracks the last piece of Hermione's resolve. She allows herself to fall into his embrace and chooses to accept whatever he has to give her because in this moment, him being here means more than anything else

Hermione doesn't want to think.

Hermione wants to hand over every part of herself to Draco Malfoy and have him make the decisions for her.

So she does the only thing that makes sense in her head and heart, she does the one thing that her brain is telling her will make everything better, make everything else go away.

Hermione drops to her knees and waits for her instructions.

Chapter End Notes

Hey everyone, happy Wednesday!

As always, thank you for reading my little fic.

I just wanted to take a moment to acknowledge that, I'm aware there are typos and that the POV switches from first to third sometimes. I'm honestly trying my best to stop it, but the fic was originally written in first person as that's what I'm most comfortable with, but since reading a LOT of Dramione fanfiction and realising no one writes first, I went back to change it.

Was that the best idea? I'm yet to decide. But it's done now.

I started this as a bit of fun and I hope you find enjoyment in this like I do. I'm doing it all on my own, it's my first fic and I hope to get better as time goes on.

I appreciate you all.

See you on Sunday!

Never Let Me Go

Chapter Summary

Hermione does what comes naturally and reaps the rewards.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Ten

Never Let Me Go

Time comes to a complete stop in the moments that follow.

Hermione hears nothing but the steady beating of her heart, her gentle breaths and the complete calming of her mind and thoughts. All the while Malfoy stands rooted to the spot. Hermione can't be sure of what he feels or thinks at this moment, but she does know that it feels undeniably right to her. To her complete surprise, Malfoy crouches down in front of her and lifts her chin to meet his steely eyes.

“Why?” He asks simply.

“Because it felt right,” she tells him.

Something close to relief washes over his face for a fraction of a second before he rises to his imposing full height and clears his throat. The room is so silent she could hear a pin drop and when he finally speaks again she lets out a small breath of relief.

“Do you wish to have sex tonight?”

Hermione doesn't think she has ever been asked this question before but finds it refreshing.

“I do,”

“I must tell you before this goes any further, I need the control Granger, I can't make love to you and be gentle, it's not —”

Hermione raises her chin and looks him in the eye. “If I wanted that, I wouldn't be here. Show me. Teach me how to be with you, I'm a fast learner,” she smirks.

He reaches for her face and runs one finger across her cheek. “Oh, I’m fully aware, Granger,”

“Then show me, I’m yours to teach.”

His nostrils flare and he nods once before she feels her hair being set free from its confines and his hand comes to rest on her shoulder.

“Remove your clothes,”

Her hands go to her t-shirt and she tugs it over her head, her bra follows and then she waits, silently asking for permission to rise to her feet. The look he gives her has her feeling warm.

“You may remove the rest,” he says.

Hermione stands and tugs down her jeans and underwear and fights with everything inside of her not to cover herself up. Malfoy is completely dressed and Hermipne is now fully naked, it’s an embarrassing and unnerving feeling. That is until he reaches out one big, warm hand and cups her breast.

“Look at you being such a good girl for me,”

It takes everything inside her to remain standing and not fall to her knees and whimper.

He chuckles. “Someone likes praise, do they?” He teases.

“Do you even know me?” She laughs.

He steps forward and presses himself to her. “I hope to soon,”

Malfoy picks her up like she weighs nothing and carries her out of the room and down the hall.

They enter a room that’s dark and cool, with a wave of his hand the fire erupts in the grate and candles flicker to life. It’s decorated in a deep green that feels comforting in a strange way. The fixtures are all brass and elegant. The room is perfect for Malfoy.

“I want all your senses, Granger,” he tells her. “I want everything you smell, hear, taste, touch and see to be what I let you. I want you to crave my touch and I want to deny it to you until you’re begging. Does that worry you?”

“Quite the opposite,” Hermione says with an audible shake to her voice.

“Tell me what it does to you,”

Hermione swallows. “It —I—”

He kisses her, deeply and with a ferocity that leaves her breathless. “Nothing you say can be wrong, speak your truth and we’ll both get what we want.”

Hermione tries again. “I want you to take it. Take everything because it makes it all go away and it—it turns me on.”

He rewards her with a stroke to her nipple with his tongue. “It arouses me greatly that you want to hand over your control to me.”

“It doesn’t sound very strong of me though, does it?”

He chuckles. “I think it does. It’s you making the choice. It’s your choice to submit to me and in doing so, it actually gives you all the power. You say stop? We stop. You ask for more,” he kisses her nipple again before biting down and making her inhale. “I’ll give you everything.”

All at once Hermione’s mind goes silent and her blood heats. She shivers, not from the coolness of the room but from the promise in his words.

“Everything? You promise?” She asks.

He nods against her breast. “Everything,”

The word hangs there for what feels like an eternity before his mouth latches on to her left nipple and her knees buckle. He catches her, fully expecting the reaction it seems. She loses herself to the heat of his mouth, the feel of his strong hands holding her up, the soft cotton of his shirt and the woollen material of his trousers. Hermione pushes everything out of her brain—the doubts, the feeling of letting someone back in who will hurt her. Everything. She only cares about the here and now.

“I’m going to worship you tonight, Granger,” he tells her, his voice thick with arousal. “I’m going to take your pleasure hostage until you’re sobbing my name, how does that make you feel?”

“Wet,” she groans as he finds her clitoris and rubs small, firm circles.

“So I can see,” he grins into her skin, slipping a finger inside of her as he continues to lick and suck and bite at her breast.

Without thinking, Hermione reaches for his belt buckle and before she even has a chance to register what’s happening, he has her hands tucked behind her, his voice at her ear.

“Did I say you could touch?”

“No, I just—” Hermione gasps as he grips her wrists tighter, making her wince.

“You don’t get to *just* anything while you’re naked and with me, Granger, do you understand?”

“I—I think so,”

“You think so? What exactly is unclear to you?”

“I have to ask to touch you?”

“Yes.”

“Always?”

“When we’re like this, yes.”

“And when we’re not?” Hermione needs to know the answer to this question more than she would ever admit.

Malfoy stills and she tenses.

“Outside of here?”

“Like—like at the bar or at work or—” She stumbles over her words feeling unsure of herself.

“We’ll discuss that another time,”

Hermione shakes her head. “I’d like to discuss it now,”

“Well, I’d like to bury my tongue in your cunt right now,” he growls. “We’ll discuss it later.”

Then he’s on his knees, doing the very thing he just told her he would.

With a spell she doesn’t hear, he has her fully supported and safe, suspended by the ceiling again and her legs wide open and at what seems to be the perfect height for him to feast on her.

And feast he does.

He uses his tongue in strong, firm strokes, he adds a finger, followed by another and embarrassingly easily, adds a third, all while she turns to putty in his hands. He angles her so she fits better on his face, he pulls her onto his tongue using his hands until she’s seated exactly where he wants her and then uses his hands to pinch and pull at her breasts with his strong fingers.

He groans against her. “You’re so close. Did you know when you’re close to climaxing, your cunt acts like a suction? It’s pulling on my tongue and dragging me closer. I could very well die between your legs and I’d be the luckiest fucking man to ever have existed.”

“Malfoy,” Hermione groans, feeling embarrassed.

“Yes, Granger?” He asks from between her legs.

He somehow manages to slip a fourth finger inside her and she gasps in both pleasure and surprise.

“Nothing,”

“That’s what I thought, now are you going to come for me like a good girl?”

Her whole body tightens. "Yes,"

"Come then, show me just how good you are,"

Hermione looks down, wanting the thing she sees right before her climax takes over to be him, on his knees, with his blond head between her legs.

It's much more erotic than she thought it would be and when he looks up and meets her eyes, Hermione shatters. Shuddering her climax against his tongue, face and chin as he laps up everything she has to give him like a dying man in the desert.

"Hmmm," he coos wetly from between her legs. "So fucking good, could do this all night, such a good girl for me."

"Malfoy?" Hermione croaks, glassy eyes gazing down at him.

"Hmmm?" He continues licking at her overly sensitive flesh.

"Can you ... stop? Please?" Another shudder runs through her body along with a sharp pinch of pain.

"Stop?"

"It's too much,"

He merely stares at her and moves to slip two fingers inside of her, moving them back and forth before settling on the little knot of nerve endings deep inside her. She flinches and tries to close her legs, which is hopeless.

"I told you I was going to take your pleasure hostage, Granger. Did you think that was an idle threat?"

"No—no I didn—"

Her words cut off when he moves closer and sucks her clitoris into his mouth. Everything is too intense. His fingers push firmer into her G-spot and he sucks harder on her clitoris and everything shakes; her stomach, her legs, everything. Her orgasm rips through her with an intensity she didn't think possible.

"Malfoy!" She sobs, turning her head to bite down on her arm.

"Don't you dare try to stop those sounds, Granger, I want to hear them all."

He continues to suck on her clitoris, all the blood in her entire body seeming to rush to that one spot making her feel lightheaded and raw.

"I can't—*please*," Hermione begs him, sobbing the plea and letting tears cascade freely down her cheeks.

“Oh, Granger,” he growls into her thigh before planting a kiss there and getting to his feet.
“How well you beg for me,”

His tongue is in her mouth and she's gasping for breath and control over her body even as he cups her face and pulls back. His big hands cover her cheeks before one drops to her neck.

“You’re beautiful,” he tells her gently. “You’re beautiful and strong and brave,” he kisses her again and with his mouth against her lips and breathes two more little words into her mouth.
“And submissive,”

She pulls her head back and looks at him, eyes still wet with tears and overwhelmed with the emotions he drags out of her. “Submissive?”

He nods and releases the bindings on her legs, catching her easily. “You submit like you were born to it, you follow an instruction like it’s a language you’ve known your whole life,”

“And you … like that?” She asks, feeling embarrassed.

He presses his hard body into her and finds her answer. “I don’t only like it, Granger. *I need it*.”

She lets that sink in a little and feels something clear in her head. This is what she’s been missing. Every day she battles needing control. She needs organisation, she needs to be in control of her work life because without it, she cannot function. She likes to be needed and admired and valued.

Except it seems like she’s very happy to relinquish control when it comes to sex, something she’s never tried before or even thought about really. Sex has always been enjoyable but it’s never lit her soul on fire like it has both times with Malfoy.

Hermione looks up and meets his eyes. “What do you want? What do you need? I don’t know how to be with you properly, Malfoy … teach me. Show me how to please you.”

He inhales and runs a thumb over her bottom lip. “A blank canvas,” he breathes, closing his eyes and taking a deep breath. “On your knees, legs apart and your hands behind your back.”

He places her on her feet and she folds herself to the floor, thankful to be seated and able to feel steady. He looks down at her and a small smile tugs at the corner of his mouth.

“Have you given a blowjob before, Granger?”

Her cheeks heat and she nods. Malfoy speaks about sex like most people talk about what they’re having for dinner. It’s unsettling and fascinating all at the same time.

“*Words* ,”

“Yes, I—I have,”

“And did you like it?”

Hermione thinks about it. The times she tried with Ron, he always seemed to enjoy it, he would mainly just lay there and groan though. Did she enjoy it? Sometimes. Sometimes she would just do it as a means to an end which was an awful thing to admit, but it's the truth. She'd have liked him to be a little more vocal, to tell her when she did something he really liked or to go faster. But he never did.

"Granger?"

"Sometimes," she admitted.

"What didn't you like about it?"

"Well," she blushes deeper. "He—he never really made me feel like I was doing the right things, just kind of laid there and—"

Malfoy reaches for her chin and raises her eyes to meet his. "I can assure you, without ever having had the pleasure of your lips wrapped around my cock, that you would have most definitely have done the right things,"

She nods.

"That's what I want tonight," he tells her. "I want you to wrap those pouty red lips around my cock and I want to come on your tongue so you'll taste me for days, understood?"

Heat floods her body at his crass words.

"Yes," she nods.

He doesn't remove his clothes, he just unzips his trousers and pulls out his erection. She opens her mouth and he smiles down at her.

"See? You're already doing the right things, Granger."

He presses forward and inch by inch, settles his cock on her tongue. He feels heavy and warm and as she curls her tongue around him, she feels the first flood of pre-come weep over her taste buds. She swallows instinctively and he growls, closing his eyes and threading her hair in his hands and thrusting his hips forward.

"*Fuck*,"

The word tumbling from his lips makes her feel powerful and hot all at once. She continues to lave his cock with her tongue before hollowing out her cheeks and sucking him further into her mouth.

"I knew—I knew you'd be fucking incredible at this, Granger," he opens his eyes and looks down at her. "Look at you, on your knees with my cock in your mouth, your cheeks flushed and your eyes glassy, I don't think I've ever seen anything more beautiful in my life,"

She purrs around his cock, the vibrations ricocheting along the length of him. His hands tighten and he begins to thrust into her mouth, closer and closer to her throat. Panic sets in

and he senses it.

“Relax, you’ve got this, such a good, talented girl,”

She relaxes and he slips further into her mouth.

“Put your hands on my thighs, if it gets too much, if you want me to stop, tap me, okay?”

She nods and follows his instructions. Relaxing her jaw and breathing steadily through her nose. When she feels him at her throat she breathes in, when he retracts, she breathes out.

In. Out. In. Out.

“Suck,” he tells her.

She does what he says.

The immediate response to her following his instruction has him picking up pace, thrusting into her mouth, down her throat and back again. Over and over again. She feels him get harder, a flood of pre-come covering her tongue before he taps her cheek.

“Are you ready?” He asks.

She doesn’t need to clarify what for.

She nods her head and meets his eyes steadily.

He grips her head, trusts forward and doesn’t look away from her eyes.

When his climax takes over and she feels his release in her mouth she swallows and sucks and grins around his cock. She feels powerful and dare she say it, proud that she’s made him come. He stills and rests in her mouth, she feels some of his come dribble out of her mouth and down her chin before falling onto her thigh.

“*Fuck* ,” Malfoy removes himself from her mouth and glances down at the small pool of his climax and her spit on her thigh. “I hope you’re not going to waste that,”

She shakes her head, using one finger to push the remnants of his release on her chin, back into her mouth before using the same hand to scoop up the mess on her leg and pushing that into her mouth too, swallowing it all without taking her eyes off his.

“Good girls don’t waste their food, do they?” She tells him, making a show of licking her fingers clean.

Chapter End Notes

Happy Sunday, everyone!

So this one worked out a little better, huh?

This fic is going to be full of them both working this thing out. At times, I think you'll be as frustrated as they are with each other but I hope the reward is worth it.

Thank you to everyone who has commented such lovely things this past week, it makes such a difference.

Thank you to everyone who has bookmarked, read, commented and left kudos. I appreciate you all.

Until Wednesday ...

Material Girl

Chapter Summary

Hermione makes friends with a snake and gets devoured by one too.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Eleven

Material Girl

Pansy Parkinson is coming to her house.

At precisely noon on Saturday, Hermione opens the door to Pansy standing dressed in a short black skirt, white blouse and black blazer. Her hair is still in a bob but she wears it a little longer and looser and with a delicate wave to it now. Her eyes are dark, curious and rimmed with bold black eyeliner and mascara. Her lips are red, full and glossy and of course, smirking at Hermione. As Hermione opens the door fully and steps aside, she spots Pansy's choice of footwear.

Stiletto heels.

"Um, you might want to take those off, the floor is a mess. I'll grab you something more sensible to wear."

"I can run in these, Granger," she points to her feet. "I have run in these, your floors do not scare me. And in any case, do I look like I have any desire to wear sensible footwear? Now, show me the shell."

Hermione walks into the shell of a house and hears Pansy close the door behind her.

"Fucking hell, you were not kidding, were you? What is this place?"

"It's my home, Pansy," Hermione laughs. "And I'm told you're the person to help me make it look ... better?"

“Granger,” Pansy sighs her name as she peeks into the kitchen and spots the plants growing through the crack in the wall. “It can’t really look much worse, can it?”

“It just needs a little love. The guy who sold it to me said it had been left vacant for almost two years. No one wanted it, said it was too much work, So it was a steal, really.”

She watches Pansy walk further into the kitchen and peer out the window. “You mean, you actually paid good money for this pile of rubble? They didn’t give it to you for free?”

“But look at the view,” Hermione almost whispers, coming to stand next to Pansy. “The stream, the willow tree, the sheer size of the garden! I couldn’t not buy it.”

Pansy turns her head and looks at her. “Love at first sight huh? I know the feeling, I too have a fondness for the damaged and seemingly beyond help things in life. It’s what drew me to Draco and Theo.”

At the mention of Malfoy, Hermione heads over to the small refrigerator that was here and surprisingly still working and grabs milk. “Would you like a coffee?”

“No thank you, do you have anything stronger? Wine perhaps?

“It’s barely lunchtime,”

“It’s past midday,” Pansy huffs like she’s been scolded before about her request for alcohol so early.

Hermione leans back into the fridge and pulls out a bottle of white she opened last night. “Pinot okay?”

“Perfectly,” Pansy actually smiles and opens the door to head outside.

Hermione makes herself a coffee and pours a glass of wine for Pansy. She grabs the snacks she prepared in advance and places everything on a tray that she levitates beside her and out into the garden. She finds her guest sitting on the big blue chair she has and looking out at the stream.

“It really is beautiful here,” Pansy says, looking at Hermione as she approaches. “And I can absolutely turn your shell into the home you always dreamed of, but it will take time and money, Granger. A lot of both.”

“I have both,” she reassures her, handing her the glass. “And I don’t plan to ever move from here, so I’ll invest whatever it needs to make it my dream home.”

Pansy takes a sip of her wine and studies Hermione over the rim. “And what exactly does Hermione Granger’s dream home look like? Red and musty like the Gryffindor common room?”

Hermione laughs. “Not at all. It’s bright and light and a place I can have people over and they’ll have plenty of space and places to sit and feel comfortable and welcome.”

Hermione has always dreamed of a house that all her friends feel comfortable in. The kind of place you feel your shoulders relax as soon as you step inside. She wants big bookcases and creams and light. She wants space and calm. She wants safety.

“And what else do *you* want? Not everyone else, you. It’s *your* house after all.”

“A whole room dedicated to books,” she grins. “A kitchen I can cook and socialise in. And the biggest shower and bath you can find.” Hermione adds with a laugh.

Pansy grins and takes a sip of her wine. “For all the sex you plan on having in them,”

Hermione chokes on her mouthful of breadstick and rolls her eyes at the Slytherin. “Erm, not really. Just because I’ve never had a big bath or shower and after all the time on the run during the war and then sharing the flat with Harry, I want space. It’s what drew me to this place.”

“Gods Granger, live a little. Put a seat in your shower so you can have sex in it, make the bath big enough so you can get two or three people in there —”

Hermione splutters. “It won’t need to fit three people!”

Pants just shrugs. “You never know and I think it’s best to be prepared,”

They just stare at each other before Pansy speaks again. “Did you want to include the garden in the renovations?”

Hermione looks out at the generous space and thinks for a second. “Yes, but I want to keep it wild. I don’t want manicured lawns and hedge mazes. It’s not a manor, it’s a house. I thought I would speak to Neville, would you be happy to work with him?”

Pansy scoffs. “Longbottom? Sure, is he as gormless as he was in school?”

Hermione glares at the witch. “You wouldn’t remember because you left, but Neville was a big part of defeating Voldemort at the final battle. No one who saw him fight would ever call him gormless, Pansy.”

Pansy doesn’t react, just keeps her eyes trained on Hermione waiting for her to speak again.

“He’s tall, dark and good looking and he knows what to do with his hands,” Hermione realises what she says and blushes. “With plants. He knows what to do with plants.”

“Hmm, I think I was correct in suggesting a tub to fit three. I never imagined you’d be so adventurous. Weasley *and* Longbottom? The Golden Girl is a bit of a freak in the sheets, huh?”

“*Pansy* —”

“I’m not here to judge your sex life, Granger. I mean, just last week I had Blaise and Theo in my bed, admittedly we were not fucking, but still,”

Hermione just stares at the witch. Other than Ginny, she's never met another female who speaks like this. It puts her on edge and delights her all at once.

"So why were they in your bed?" She can't help but ask.

Pansy takes another sip of her wine and pops an olive in her mouth. "Well, Theo is having some kind of crisis, he's known for them. And Blaise was over discussing renovating his place in Italy."

"Okay ... but why were they in your bed?"

"I was getting ready for bed when they *Flooed* over,"

"Right—"

"They've both seen me wearing less than my silk nightdress, Granger so no one was offended or aroused much is the pity."

Hermione takes a deep breath and a mouthful of her coffee. "I think Slytherin's are complicated and bizarre creatures."

Pansy scoffs. "You have no idea."

They sit in silence for a few minutes before Hermione steers the conversation back to the renovating and away from the oddness of the Slytherin's relationships.

"So the garden?"

"Got it," Pansy says. "I'll see what ideas he has. I'm guessing you'd like squishy seats around a fire pit and a pergola with a big table that seats ten. And plenty of room for flowers."

Hermione beams at the Slytherin. "That's exactly what I think I'd like."

This was easier than Hermione thought it would be, surprisingly it's not awkward or uncomfortable, in fact perhaps Pansy understood her more than she expected her to.

"And a massive pool." Pansy adds looking out at the garden again.

Or perhaps not.

"That's really not how it was at all!" Ginny yells across the packed table. "It did rise, it just—sunk in the middle. I won't bother next time George," she huffs.

Everyone laughs at her annoyance while Harry pulls her in to him and kisses her temple. She bats him away.

“Don’t try to be nice now, Potter, you were pissing yourself laughing at it!”

“It was a little funny, Gin, admit it.”

Ginny looks at Harry and smiles. “Okay, fine. Baking is not my forte.”

Hermione laughs and takes another sip of her wine. The usual crowd has gathered for Geroge’s birthday. A difficult occasion since losing Fred. Everyone is aware of it, everyone tries hard to make it better for him, but the truth is, nothing can make it better for him. She looks over at where he sits sandwiched between Ron and Lee Jordan, tipping back another shot of Firewhisky even though he’s already had more than the rest of the table put together. He went past drunk a while ago but no one is going to tell him to stop. If there’s one day that he should be allowed to do whatever he wants, it’s today. He looks up then and catches her looking at him, a mischievous smile spreads over his face and she watches as he stands and comes towards her on surprisingly steady feet.

“Budge up, Gin, I want to sit next to Hermione.”

Ginny huffs and stands and he wastes no time plopping down into the vacated seat and slinging an arm around her shoulders. He’s warm and breathing alcohol fumes all over her but she smiles and turns to speak to him.

“How’s the birthday boy?”

His face falls for a second, like he’d finally forgotten what today is and she’s just reminded him. She winces.

“I’ll be better once I get my birthday kiss from you,” he tells her cheekily.

Hermione leans over and goes to kiss his cheek, just as he turns his head and her lips fall right on to his. Everyone around the table cheers and wolf whistles and she pulls back. Ron is scowling at his brother and she shakes her head at him.

It’s fine.

“George Weasley,” she growls at him with a smile. “You did that on purpose!”

“You can’t blame me, it’s my birthday after all and I’m told I get whatever I want,”

She shakes her head and laughs, picking up her glass just as she feels an odd sensation wash over her, like someone’s watching her. She looks around the table but no one is looking her way, they’re all too busy talking and laughing and encouraging each other to drink more than they need to. Hermione turns her eyes to the rest of the packed pub and scans the crowd.

She spots him instantly.

Seated towards the back, surrounded by his Slytherin friends and staring daggers at her.

When did he arrive? Has he been here the whole time?

Hermione looks away, heat flooding her cheeks and feeling embarrassed for what he must have just witnessed. For the next ten minutes she finds it hard to focus on the conversations people attempt to pull her into knowing he's sitting there, looking at her, watching her. When she catches his eye again, his face is unreadable but he doesn't look relaxed.

Theo is speaking and has everyone laughing. Everyone except Malfoy who looks like someone pissed in his drink.

"How's the house Hermione?" Neville asks, drawing her attention back to the table and not the tall blond across the room.

"It's a work in progress," Hermione smiles. "But work will start as soon as I agree to the plans with Pansy."

"Pansy?" Ron half yells. "Parkinson?"

"Yes. She's the best apparently." Hermione tells him and the rest of the group.

"Who told you that?" Padma asks curiously.

"Well, Malfoy did."

Ron snorts. "He would do, wouldn't he? Aren't those two shagging?"

Ginny elbows him in the side and smacks him across the back of the head. "Grow up, Ronald."

"Ow!" Ron rubs his head and glares at his sister. "Well, aren't they?"

They turn their eyes to her and she tries very hard not to blush. Hermione doesn't actually know if they are sleeping together or not, she never thought to ask and now she thinks about it, perhaps she really should have asked before she slept with him.

Twice.

"I have no idea," she tells them, standing to head to get another drink. "But it makes no difference to me who Pansy is sleeping with, she's renovating my house, we're not dating. I'm going to get another drink, does anyone want one?"

Everyone declines so Hermione makes her way towards the bar and waits for her turn. The pub is packed tonight and there's a long line for orders so she settles in for the wait. It really doesn't matter who Pansy is sleeping with, but it does matter who Malfoy is sleeping with seeing as they have slept together and he's given every indication that he would like it to happen again. A conversation to have very soon and definitely one she should already have had with him.

She feels him behind her a minute later.

“*Granger*,”

Hermione turns to look at him and the air leaves her in a woosh. “*Malfoy*. ”

He’s still dressed in the clothes he wore for work today; black shirt, black trousers and his damn glasses. But the tie is gone, as is the jacket. He looks deliciously casual in a way only he can but worryingly dangerous too.

And she wants to jump him.

“Having a nice evening with your — *friends* ?” He asks with only the slightest twitch of his mouth.

“Yes thank you, are you?”

He chuckles. “No. I’m not.”

She turns her head up to look up at him. “Why not?”

He leans down and rests his mouth by the ear. “Because I’d much rather be at my place, with you tied to my bed and my tongue buried in your delicious cunt, Granger. That’s why.”

She whimpers.

She can’t help it.

“Oh,”

“Oh, indeed.”

She feels his tongue sneak out and lick just below her ear and can’t stop the full body shudder.

“*Malfoy*, stop,” she grits out. “Anyone could see.”

His hand wraps around her wrist and he tugs. “*Then follow me* ,”

Her feet are carrying her in the direction he’s moving in before her brain has caught up. He walks them down the dingy corridor and towards a line of doors, reaching for one, holding it open and gesturing for her to step inside. It’s dark and smells a bit dusty but she doesn’t have time to worry about either point, because he pushes her against the closed door, murmurs a spell and kisses her.

His hands come up to fist one in her hair and one around her throat while his tongue seeks out every part of her mouth like he’s trying to rid her of every other taste but him. She reaches up to grab his hair but he captures her wrist easily in his hand and pins it above her head.

“I don’t think so,”

“I want to touch you, and as per your rules, I can as long as we’re not naked at your place.”

He pulls back and casts a dull Lumos so he can see her. “Is that so?”

She nods.

“And why would I want you to touch me after you’ve let another man kiss you, Granger?”

Her brain wakes up.

He’s jealous.

“Is this what this is about? You’re jealous?”

“And what if I am?”

She goes to laugh but stops when she sees the look in his eyes. “There’s no need to be, it’s just George struggling on his birthday and trying to cheer himself up—”

“He has no right to touch what’s mine,”

“What’s yours?” She says, completely at a loss for words.

“Yes, I thought I made that clear to you when you were last at Burton House,”

“How exactly did you make that clear to me? Did you ask me out? Did you make us official? Is that what shoving your cock in my mouth was? Because I don’t think that’s how it works, Malfoy.”

His nostrils flare at her crass words and he steps closer. “Watch your mouth, Granger,”

Hermione laughs then. Really laughs. “I’m not a child you can berate for swearing, Malfoy. Now if you’ll excuse me, I’m going to go back to my *friends*,”

His lips are on hers before she blinks, her legs are lifted up and wrapped around his waist and she’s grabbing fistfuls of his hair between her fingers whether he wants her to or not.

“You’re not going back to them, you’re staying here with me.” He growls, biting her lip so hard she feels a drop of blood.

She groans.

“You don’t own me,” she pants, biting down on his lip until she feels blood too. “And you can’t make me do what you want, whenever you want, Malfoy.”

“I don’t have to, you give yourself to me willingly,”

He rolls his hips and presses his erection right against her clitoris. Hermione squeezes him tighter to her and kisses him deeper. They’re just a mess of tongues and hands, rutting against each other, biting and licking the wounds they’re inflicting on each other.

"I'm going to fuck you like this, Granger," he pants into her mouth. "I'm going to fill you with my come and then I might consider sending you back to your friends with it sliding down your thighs."

"Oh, Gods,"

"My dirty good girl, you want that don't you?"

"Yes,"

"Because you're mine,"

"Yes,"

He kisses her again, his tongue so deep she almost chokes on it. "And you won't let another man lay a finger on you from now on, will you?"

"No,"

"Because this is what you need and I'm the only person who can give it to you and I don't share,"

"I don't share either," she pulls his head away from her throat and looks at him. "So I need to be clear on this right now, I don't want you sleeping with anyone else, okay?"

He looks at her in confusion. "Do you think I am sleeping with other people, Granger?"

She looks away and closes her eyes. "Well I don't know, do I?"

He pulls her face to look at him, "Well you should know. This," he kisses her again. "Us," he pushes his tongue deeper into her mouth before pulling back. "Is all I want. There is no one else. There will not be anyone else while we are together, does that make it clear to you?"

She sighs in relief and nods. "Yes, Malfoy. It does."

His hand drops between them and he slips past her knickers and sinks two fingers, far too easily, into her. She grinds herself onto his hand and drops her head back. Malfoy latches his mouth onto her neck and bites hard.

She climaxes with his mouth on her neck and his fingers pumping into her, pinned against the door of a dusty storeroom at the back of the Leaky Cauldron while her friends are outside with no idea of what she's doing. The feeling is sinfully erotic and it makes another wave of pleasure run through her.

"My good girl, fuck, Granger,"

"Please," she pants, trying to reach between them to release his erection. "I want you inside me."

"Just this once I'll let you tell me what to do, because it happens to be what I want too." He releases himself and thrusts fully inside her with one sharp, brutal thrust.

"*Fuuuuuuuck!*" He yells, withdrawing and thrusting back in with as much force as before. "Your cunt, Granger, it's fucking perfection."

Hermione moves her hips, desperate to find the spot that will have her climaxing again. He senses her impatience and withdraws, leaving just the very tip of him inside her.

"Who said you get to come again, Granger?"

"I—*please*?"

He moves forward, burying himself inside her fully. "Since you asked so nicely,"

He loses himself to the rhythm he sets, in, out, in, out. Deeper and deeper every time he thrust back inside. The grip he has on her hips is so hard she knows there will be bruises in the morning but she can't find it in herself to care.

She wants his bruises.

She wants him to claim her.

And it's at that very moment, a hand on the doorknob startles her,

Someone wants to come into this room.

"Malfoy! Stop!"

He doesn't.

He thrusts deeper and laches his mouth back to the spot he bit earlier.

"They can't get in here,"

The door rattles again and she hears voices right on the other side of the door.

"Stop!"

"I. Will. Not."

His hips pick up their pace again and her eyes roll into the back of her head as she feels another orgasm tear through her body, clenching and gripping his cock.

"That's it," he groans. "Does the thought of people hearing you turn you on, Granger? Do you want them to know we're in here? Know thay I'm fucking the Golden Girl against the door?"

"No,"

He chuckles into her skin. "Lies,"

“I don’t—it’s not—”

He grips her hips harder and thrusts once more before she feels his orgasm take over. She brings his face back to hers and kisses him through it, needing to hold onto the feeling of him coming inside her for one more minute. He kisses her deeply before going still.

“I’m going to lower you to the ground, are you okay?”

She nods and he places her back on her feet. She’s slick and raw between her legs, their combined release is as he hoped, sliding down her legs. She reaches for her bag to find something to clean herself up a bit but his hands close around hers.

“I don’t think so,” he tells her. “You’re going to go back out there to your friends and be reminded of what we just did for the rest of the night, is that clear?”

Her cheeks flame but she nods. “Crystal,”

He tucks himself back into his trousers and steps towards her. He cups her face and runs his thumbs along her cheekbones before leaning down to kiss her.

“If it isn’t already clear, Granger, I don’t share. I’m a possessive, jealous bastard and I won’t apologise for it.”

“I can see that,”

He kisses her again and then goes to the door. “Enjoy the rest of your evening.”

Then he leaves.

He doesn’t look back, he doesn’t say another word. He walks out of the room and back to his friends and leaves her to try and compose herself before she does the same.

Hermione decides to head to the toilets to try and collect herself before facing everyone. Thankfully there’s a cubicle free when she steps in and she locks herself in the small space, resting her back to the door and closing her eyes.

Fucking hell.

What has she got herself into? Having sex with Malfoy in a storage cupboard? She doesn’t recognise herself right now, this is not something she would ever have done before. She reaches into her bag and finds a mirror. The person reflected back at her has wide eyes, red swollen lips and flushed cheeks.

The person staring back at her isn’t a girl anymore.

No, the person staring back at her is a woman.

The woman in the reflection is dishevelled and still has a speck of blood on her lip from where Malfoy bit her.

The woman in the mirror looks confident and happy and more herself than she has been in longer than she cares to admit.

The woman in the mirror is alive and free and it feels fucking exhilarating.

Chapter End Notes

Hello 😊

So, Malfoy is staking his claim... kind of?

Most importantly, Hermione is beginning to like who she's becoming. Long may it continue!

As always, thank you all SO much for reading commenting, bookmarking and leaving Kudos. It blows my mind!

See you Sunday.

As It Was

Chapter Summary

Hermione tries to navigate the new dynamic with Malfoy and finds her home invaded by snakes.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Twelve

As It Was

Hermione walks into work on Monday and heads straight for her office, noticing Malfoy is not yet in his. She sets her bag down, takes off her cloak and starts to work through the many memos she has. When Claudine comes in, she brings with her a steaming mug of coffee and a reminder that the usual Monday meeting is in ten minutes. Hermione thanks her, takes a fortifying sip and decides to take her coffee with her for a little comfort she knows she's going to need. Taking a deep breath she smoothes down her skirt and heads out to the meeting room.

Harry is already speaking to Otto at the front, Hermione notices there is no Malfoy still.

Hermione heads over to her usual seat and settles in to wait for the rest of the team. When Malfoy finally does arrive a minute later, he doesn't falter, just heads straight over to what seems to be his usual seat on Hermione's other side. As he walks behind her seat, she feels a single finger drag along her bare neck briefly.

She tries, but fails to suppress the shudder it causes.

She turns to look at him as he unbuttons his jacket to sit down. He's dressed in black again, of course and he looks as delightful as always, although she misses his glasses which are absent today.

“Morning Granger, get up to anything exciting this weekend?”

She smiles. “Nothing memorable, no.” She teases him.

“That’s a shame,”

As he sits down, looking the picture of calm in his seat, she feels his hand come to rest on her knee under the table and slowly slide its way halfway up her thigh. She knows the second he finds what he’s searching for because his hand tenses.

Yes, I’m wearing suspenders.

And no, you won’t get to see this time.

She clears her throat and shifts her legs, unseating his hand just as Harry comes around the table and takes his seat.

“Morning, Hermione,” he greets her.

She turns her head to her best friend and smiles. “Morning, Harry,”

“Did you have a hangover as bad as mine on Saturday?” He grimaces and rubs his head like he’s still got the hangover.

“No,” Heroine laughs. “But then, I know when to stop.”

Malfoy shifts in his seat and Harry looks over her shoulder at him. “What about you, Malfoy?” Harry asks him. “Hangover Saturday or do you also know when to stop like Little Miss Control over here?”

Hermione takes a sip of her coffee and chokes mid swallow at Harry’s choice of words. He helpfully slaps her on the back.

“Alright there, Hermione?” He chuckles. “Did it go down the wrong hole?”

“Harry!” She splutters, shaking his hand off her back. “Stop.”

From the corner of her streaming eyes she can see Malfoy’s smirk.

Bloody hell, Harry.

“Much like Granger, I know when to stop and when to push it a little further.”

Hermione jerks as his hand comes to rest on her hidden thigh once again.

“Shall I get you some water, Hermione. You’ve gone red.” Harry summons a glass and hands her the glass of water which she takes and mutters a feeble thanks before sipping slowly so she doesn’t have to look at either of the wizards sat either side of her.

She manages to shift Malfoy’s hand a second before Otto begins to talk to the group. He spends the next ten minutes going over the ongoing case and anything else of importance. Hermione learns that Harry and Malfoy will be heading out to follow up a couple of leads for the rest of the week from tomorrow and is surprised to feel that she feels not only concern but disappointment that she won’t be seeing him.

"Malfoy, if you can send back anything you find that might aid Hermione in translating these runes that would be great," Otto tells him.

"Of course, I hope to have time to go over them with her today, if she's willing."

Why does he make the word willing sound so much more than it is?

"Sure, I can fit you in,"

The words are out of her mouth before she can stop them.

She's sure she blushes again.

"Excellent, well , that's all. You all know where I am if you need me. Aurors, good luck, be safe."

Everyone stands to leave and make their way back to their offices and Hermione follows suit. She's almost at her office when she feels him approach. She keeps her head high and acts like she doesn't notice, even going as far as to step into her office and go to close the door. He stops her with one large hand on the frame and a pair of intense grey eyes when she looks up.

"Granger, think you can fit me in now?" He asks with a salacious grin as he runs his eyes down her body.

"Of course," she smiles innocently. "Where would you like to do it?"

His eyes go wide but he recovers quickly. "The meeting room? More space to ... spread out."

Hermione leans in a little so they're not overheard. "Can we stop this? People are going to talk."

"Talk? About what?" He chuckles and smirks down at her. "I'll leave you to prepare, I'll see you there."

He closes the door behind him and Hermione leans against it.

She hadn't really given it much thought about how working with him was going to be, but apparently they were going to speak in innuendos and he was going to try to touch her up under the table.

Gods help her.

It's a little over two hours later when Hermione stands and stretches her arms above her head and draws the complete attention of the blond Auror in the room. She watches his eyes follow the pull on the buttons of her blouse and delights in seeing his eyes darken.

"I think I need to get something to eat," she tells him, picking up her wand and slipping it into her wand holster on her left wrist. "Did you want anything to eat? I can get it—"

"What I want to eat cannot be found in any shop, Granger," he tells her, standing up and prowling towards her.

He comes to a stop right in front of her and she raises her eyes to meet his. They stand and look at each other. She can feel the tension in between them, the crackle in the air. She has to remind herself more than once that they're at work, in a room with a whole wall of glass that means anyone walking past can see into the room too. It's like he can read her mind because a second later the glass frosts over and leaves them almost invisible to the rest of the DMLE offices.

Almost.

"Not here," she tells him.

He leans closer and inhales with his mouth at her ear. "Do you have any idea of the torture I've been in the last two hours, Granger? Working beside you but not able to touch you? Having to pretend I can be professional, try to work out these fucking Runes when all I want to do is spread you out onto the table and consume you?"

"I've been suffering the same, but it doesn't change the fact that we are at work and we are not—"

As if to prove her point, there's a quick knock on the door and Harry peeks around the door. She turns to see him looking at them while waving two scrolls in his hand. She doesn't realise Malfoy has moved until he clears his throat.

"What can I do for you, Potter?" He asks from much further away than he had been.

"I was just coming to see if you wanted lunch and to give this to Hermione,"

Hermione watches as he steps into the room and walks towards her, hand holding out an expensive looking scroll of parchment sealed with the same wax and ribbon the last one had been. She knows who it's from before she's even opened it and the sigh from Malfoy confirms it,

"Another one?" She asks Harry.

He nods. "Looks like it," he looks over her shoulder at Malfoy. "I assume you already know about this?"

"Obviously,"

"And what's it in aid of this time?"

Malfoy scoffs. “Why don’t you open it and find out,”

Hermione cracks the wax seal and uncurls the parchment.

Remembering Our Fallen

*Narcissa Malfoy and Draco Malfoy cordially invite you
to join them in remembering those we have loved and lost.*

There are no words that can heal the wounds of the horrors we have all lived through.

*But together we can remember,
and continue to build upon the foundations of our recovery.*

Saturday 1st May

- Malfoy Manor - 7pm

Hermione reads the parchment three times before she looks up at the two men who played such very different roles in the war that ripped apart so many families and lives. Many years have passed and yet everything still seems so vivid and like it only happened yesterday.

Life has moved on and Hermione finds herself living a life she never thought she would.

Harry leans closer to her and whispers in her ear. “Are you okay?”

She smiles and rolls the parchment back up. “Of course, ready for lunch?”

He looks at her with sadness in his eyes before he nods. “Malfoy? Are you joining us?”

“I have some things to arrange before we head off tomorrow, have a good lunch.”

Hermione watches him fasten the button on his jacket and stroll towards the door. “Are you coming back

after lunch?”

She tries to make her voice sound normal, unbothered, but she's not sure she manages it. She remembers what happened the last time he vanished at lunch and didn't come back. If he's not going to come back she wants to know.

He turns and nods his head at her. "Of course, Granger. We still have work to do."

She nods and watches as he leaves the room.

"Any luck?" Harry asks from beside her.

She sighs. "None, but hopefully soon. Let's go stuff our faces shall we? I think I'm getting cookies, in fact," she grins as she links her arm with his. "I know I'm getting cookies."

Hermione arrives home frustrated. Sexually mostly, but with work too. There has never been a Rune she can't decipher or make sense of until this. She knows it's something to do with Voldemort and his followers, she knows it's some kind of way of communicating and the Dark Magic being used is directly related to the reamoning DEath Eaters but she just can't come up with anything that fits.

And neither can Malfoy.

Malfoy.

Hermione has been feeling hot and bothered all day. She had no idea it was so exhausting sitting in the same room as someone you find so incredibly attractive but are unable to touch. She found herself hyper aware of everything he did or said. He'd be speaking to her about a Rune and she would be lost in the tone of his voice or the way his fingers were tracing the shape.

Her mind would take her to what his fingers felt like tracing her shapes, what his voice sounded like when he was telling her she was a good girl or describing what he was going to do to her. More than once he had to snap her out of her dirty day dream to focus on the work they had to do.

Because it *was* work.

Not foreplay, Hermione.

She kicks off her shoes and puts on the worn slippers she was wearing around the house due to the bare floorboards and nails everywhere. On entering the kitchen she smiles at the view and opens her fridge to get a glass of wine when there's a knock on the door. She huffs and walks over to open it only to be greeted with a sight she was not prepared for.

"Pansy," she smiles. "I didn't realise you were coming over tonight,"

Pansy smirks back at her .What is it with Slytherin's and smirking.

"I know, but I tried to owl you at work but you'd already left apparently—"

Her words are cut off by the popping sound of *Apparition* and the appearance of two men.

"Did you bring it?" Pansy asks, looking over her shoulder at them.

"Of course we did, Pans," Theodore Nott tells her, holding up the bag of food.

"And I bought this," Blaise Zabini holds up two bottles of wine, grinning. "From my very own vineyard, so you know it's the best."

Hermione laughs and opens the door wider. "I guess you're all coming in then?"

Pansy rolls her eyes. "These two can't do anything without me, do you mind?"

"Not at all, come on in."

Pansy walks through the door but the two men stand on the front step waiting. She stands there holding the door open and they glare at her.

"Ladies first, Granger," Blaise says.

"We're gentlemen," Theodore nods.

"Funny, I figured being Slytherin and a gentleman was impossible,"

She steps into her house and hears the two men battle for prime entrance after her, she looks over her shoulder and sees Theodore won.

"She's definitely been around King Dick if she's got that impression," Blaise says as he shuts the front door.

"Not all of us are like that, Granger," Theo tells her, handing her the bag of food. "We brought Italian, because everyone likes Italian."

"Thank you," she grins. "I was just wondering what to have for dinner too."

Pansy is in her kitchen raiding her cupboards for plates and cutlery before she opens the backdoor and heads out into the garden. "We'll eat al fresco seeing as the only table Granger owns is outside."

Hermione nods and reaches for some wine glasses out of the cupboard and Theodore and Blaise follow Pansy outside. From her spot in the kitchen she can see them unpacking food and getting comfortable and wonders, not for the first time, how she's suddenly got snakes in her house.

By the time she makes it outside everyone has a plate of food and is looking expectantly at her.

“Erm, yes?” She says.

“We’re waiting on you sitting down and getting food so we can eat,’ Theo tells her softly.

“Ah. Nice manners, Harry and Ron would have just started eating.”

Pansy rolls her eyes. “Weasley would be finished by now, no doubt. He has zero table manners.”

Hermione hands the glasses around before sitting down and getting a plate of food. “And you’d know this, how? When was the last time you even saw him?”

“Last week actually, I happened to see him while I was in Diagon. He was shovelling obscene amounts of food into his mouth while Potter tried not to vomit at the sight.”

Blaise sniggers.

“Harry is more than used to it,” Hermione says.

“Can we eat now?” Pansy says, looking at Hermione’s plate.

“Yes, sorry,” she grins, biting into a breadstick.

“So Granger, Pans tells us that you’re going to completely redo this whole house?” Blaise sits back in his chair and rests a knee on his other knee while balancing the plate of foot in his hand.

“Yes, it’s a love at first sight kinda thing and I’m told Pansy is the best at making a place a home.”

“That she is,” Theo beams, raising his glass to the Raven haired beauty next to him.

“She will bleed your Gringotts Vault dry, Granger. Fair warning.” Blaise says.

“I have a lot in there, I’ll be fine.”

“How’s Draco?” Pansy asks, watching her closely.

“Fine I assume? He’s off to follow up a couple of leads in the investigation with Harry for the rest of the week. Why do you ask?”

“Because King Dick has been acting weird lately, even for him. So I just wondered if everything at work is okay.” Panty tells her, still watching her a little too closely.

“As far as I know, and I don’t know a lot, he’s fine. You’d know more than I would.”

“Would I?” Pansy arches an eyebrow at her and Blaise and Theo’s eyes flick from her to Pansy and back again.

Hermione keeps the raven-haired beauty’s gaze and arches an eyebrow. She’s Hermione Granger, she doesn’t back down from anyone no matter how much she wants to head back

inside until they leave so they don't ask her what's going on between her and Malfoy.

"What are we missing?" Blaise asks.

"Nothing," Hermione says, trying to make it clear there is nothing anyone is missing.

Except perhaps her missing Malfoy's exceptional talent at making her—Pansy's voice snaps her out of that particular thought.

Pansy smirks. "I think we're all missing something,"

The raven-haired Slytherin levitates the bottle of wine from the table and refills all their glasses while Hermione takes a deep breath and pretends that she doesn't have secrets she wants to keep regarding her and Malfoy. They eat in silence for a few minutes before Theo asks about the house plans. Pansy embarrassed Hermione by telling him that she's asked for a shower and bath big enough for three so she can have threesomes with Weasley and Longbottom.

"Pansy!" Hermione half yells. "You suggested that, not me!"

Pansy howls with laughter. "You didn't exactly say no though,"

"I didn't say yes either!"

Theo laughs at how uncomfortable it makes her and continues to tease. "Weasley and Longbottom? Honestly, Gryffindoe princess, why not upgrade to the two of us?" He looks at Blaise who wiggles his eyebrows at her.

"I do not have threesomes!" Hermione covers her face and groans.

"Ah, but you haven't said no to an upgrade," Theo teases, "And we all know what they say about once you've had a Slytherin—"

Hermione decides to stop this conversation and says the first thing that comes into her head. "Who's saying you'd be my first snake?"

Blaise chokes on his drink, Pansy cackles and Theo looks at her with a little admiration in his gaze.

"Well damn, Granger," Blaise laughs as he wipes at the wine now sinking into the white of his shirt. "Who was it?"

The whole thing backfires and Hermione wishes she'd never started it.

"She's lying, aside from the present company and Malfoy, the rest of our house are trolls. And there's no way she's banged Malfoy," Theo smirks.

"Yeah," Blaise says, nodding in agreement. "I promise you, sweetheart, we know how to show a witch a good time, just ask Pansy,"

Hermione shoots her eyes to Pansy. “You said—”

Pansy just looks at her. “That time we were not having sex, Granger. I didn’t say we never did have sex, did I?”

Blaise leans over and steals a prawn cracker from her plate. “Jealous, Granger?”

She shakes her head. “No, I just—do you all sleep together? Malfoy too?”

They three Slytherin’s laugh then.

“Are you kidding? Malfoy doesn’t share Granger,” Pansy tells her.

“And certainly not with us if he does,” Blaise adds.

Hermione thinks about this for a second before turning to Pansy. “But you and Malfoy have slept together, right?”

She waves her hand in a dismissing way only a Slytherin can. “A couple of times, yes. But we’re best friends. He doesn’t see me like that and I don’t see him like that either,” Pansy reaches for her glass of wine and eyes Hermione over the rim. “Besides, I think he prefers brown hair and eyes and a woman who will do what she’s told. I don’t listen to anyone, Granger, least of all men,”

Hermione nods and takes another bite of her food while Pansy doesn’t take her eyes off her.

Don’t make it so obvious, Hermione.

No one speaks and perhaps sensing the awkwardness or maybe just because he doesn’t like silence, Theo sits up and speaks.

“Did you all reply to Narcissa about the gala?”

“Yup.” Blaise nods.

“Of course,” Pansy says.

Three sets of eyes land on her.

“Granger?” Pansy prompts.”

“Erm,” she takes a mouthful of wine and sits back. “Not as yet, no.”

Theo sits up a little. “Are you not coming?”

“I mean—I only got it today, while I was at work so I haven’t had a chance to think about it,”

Pansy puts her half eaten plate on the table and picks up her wine. “What’s there to think about Granger? It’s an event to raise money for those who are struggling since the war, people I assume you know and love, why wouldn’t you want to go?” Theo rests his hand on

Pansy's thigh and she looks at him. "What? I'm genuinely curious why she wouldn't want to go?"

"I didn't say I wasn't going, I said I hadn't had a chance to think about it. I might be busy,"

Pansy scoffs. "The day before the anniversary?"

Hermione's cheeks flame and she can feel the annoyance growing. "I do have a life, Pansy."

"Can we chill out a bit?" Blaise coughs. "If Granger can't make it, she can't make it Pans."

"I just think it's important we all go, that's all. It will mean a lot of Narcissa and Draco if we're all there,"

Hermione looks at the three snakes who nod and hold her gaze.

She sighs and takes a deep drink from her glass.

"Then I guess I'll see you all there."

Chapter End Notes

Happy Sunday, everyone!

I hope everyone is well and enjoyed this weeks chapters.

I have a couple of things happening in life right now, I'm really hoping the updates will continue to be twice a week, but they may end up being just on a Sunday if things continue how they are.

Thank you again for the comments, and kudos and for reading the little fic of mine - I appreciate you all SO much!

See you next week!

Call Out My Name

Chapter Summary

Things get ... hot.

Thirteen

Call Out My Name

The owl arrives with a note from Malfoy at midnight on Saturday while Hermione is sitting in her favourite chair reading a book.

Granger,

I know it's late but I just got back and I want to see you.

Burton House.

DLM

For five minutes Hermione just sits there, reading the few lines of text over and over. He's back and wants to see her? And he thinks the appropriate way of articulating that is to say hardly anything at all but tell her where he is? And he fully expects her to go to him, no questions asked?

She remains in her seat, her pulse picking up as she inhales the scent of him that has soaked into his parchment.

Her brain is telling her to stay where she is and not run because he's called.

But her heart and the part of her that wants to submit to him is pleading with her to get up, get dressed and go to him. It's been a full five days since she's seen him and has heard very little about what, if anything, there has been discovered while they've been away. Malfoy sent over one set of Runes that were found, they had already seen these exact Runes before so other than confirming that the same group of wizards left them, nothing else was learned as far as she was concerned.

Standing up, Hermione stretches and heads up the stairs and into her bathroom. The rickety shower beckons her in and she sighs, removing her pyjamas and pulling her hair on top of her head. She showers, casts a hair removal charm on all areas she wishes to be hair free and steps out of the shower, wraps herself in a towel and walks out of the steam filled bathroom.

Deciding what to wear is always the bit she struggles with the most. Walking over to her wardrobe, she selects a set of black lace knickers and matching bra and slips them on. As it's after midnight and she wasn't expecting to see him, she slips on a knit dress and leaves her hair down. Hermione slips her feet into a pair of flat black pumps and heads to the fireplace and steps in, throwing the *Floo powder* at her feet and calling out Burton House.

Hermione arrives in the lounge like before and to a waiting Malfoy.

He looks like he's fresh from the shower with damp hair and loose fitting pyjama bottoms. He's topless and treating her to the full spectacle that was his bare torso. His scars and Dark Mark fully on display for her. No shame. No embarrassment. Just unabashedly him.

Her mouth waters as she slowly meets his eyes.

"You're back," she says simply.

He nods.

"How did it go?"

He steps forward so quickly and tugs her to him, thrusting his tongue into her mouth and devouring her with an urgency that leaves her breathless. He doesn't speak, he doesn't ask how she is, what she'd like to happen. He doesn't tell her he's pleased to see her or even that she looks nice.

He picks her up and silently carries her over to the piano that faces the gardens. He places her roughly on the closed top and pushes up the hem of her dress. His big hands cover her stomach before they tug at the waistband of her knickers and drag them down her thighs, discarding them over his shoulder. She reaches out when he returns to her mouth, wanting to touch him. But he stops her.

Wandless magic secures her wrists above her head before her legs are pulled apart and secured in the same way leaving her completely open to him and at his mercy.

Fucking hell .

He wastes no time.

He drops his face between her legs and licks. He continues to suck and lick at her and only when she's clawing at her own hands and struggling with the binds does he look at her. His eyes are dark, no grey to be seen, just black and vacant, almost like he's not really there.

Hermione's heart stutters in her chest. "Malfoy?"

He still doesn't speak.

Only captures her swollen clitoris in between his lips and sucks. The tension in her stomach pulls tight and releases as he grazes his teeth against her as she climaxes. She calls out unintelligible words and pants her way through it all the while trying to clear her mind, only to find herself moving. She's in Malfoy's arms and being taken somewhere but her eyes are heavy and she can't find it in herself to worry.

When she opens her eyes again, they're back in the room they've been in before but she's not suspended to the ceiling this time, she's flat on her back on a huge silk covered bed and her arms are attached to the headboard while her legs are free to move. Why doesn't she remember him tying her to the bed? Did she fall asleep? Hermione looks to her left and finds Malfoy staring at her, his eyes are still dark but there's a tiny bit of grey now.

"Hi," she smiles. "Are you okay?"

He nods.

Still no words.

"Why aren't you speaking to me?" Hermione whispers feeling tears fill her eyes.

He swallows and takes a deep breath. "I don't trust myself to speak,"

"Why?"

"Because I'm in a foul mood and I say things I don't mean when I'm like this," he looks off to the side and then back to her. "Do you want to leave?"

She shakes her head. "No, why would I want to leave?"

He laughs, but it sounds brittle. "Do you want the fucking list, Granger? Because I'm a selfish bastard, because I didn't say a word to you when you got here just restrained you and got you off on top of my piano and now I have you tied to this bed and all I want to do is—"

He closes his eyes and doesn't open them again for what feels like an eternity.

"What do you want to do?" She asks.

"I want to—I want to hurt you and fuck you, I want to feast on you and give you more orgasms before I come inside you and watch myself dribble out of your beautiful cunt, Granger. That's what I want to do."

Hermione flushes and pulls her legs together to try and dull the ache.

He notices.

“So—why don’t you?”

He inhales sharply.

“Because I shouldn’t,” he raises one hand and runs a finger down the side of her face. “I know the things I want and need are not what’s good or right for you and I should leave you alone,”

“Don’t I get to decide what’s good for me?”

He smiles. “I don’t think you know what’s good for you, Granger. You’ve spent so long with the wrong people, how can you possibly know I’m the right one?”

Hermione keeps her eyes on him, gives him no reason to think she doesn’t want to be here, that she doesn’t know what she wants. Yes, she has spent too long with the wrong person, with someone she thought she loved and would be with for the rest of her life, but she knows that was a mistake, a choice made through fear and not true want.

“Because I’ve never felt so alive as when I’m with you, because I feel like I’m who I really should be when we’re together. You don’t get to set me free and then walk away, Malfoy,”

Hermione watches as he inhales, once, twice, three times. She watches his eyes go dark again, except this time they’re not vacant, they’re alive and filled with lust and want for her.

She arches her body and leans closer to him, knowing she’s taking a risk since he’s made it very clear she’s not to touch without asking when they’re together like this.

“I want you,” she tells him as she presses her lips to his. “I want every part of you, the dark and the light. I want you to show me what you want and teach me how to be everything you need. You said before I’m a blank canvas? Well that’s true. I’m your blank canvas to mark and create what you need, because Malfoy, I need it too.”

He kisses her then. The kind of kiss that sets her whole being on fire and consumes every part of her. He kisses her like she’s everything he needs and the sole reason he’s alive.

He kisses her like she’s his.

And she is.

“I can’t promise to be gentle, Granger and I definitely can’t promise you’ll like me very much once I’m done,”

She meets his eyes.

“That’s my problem,”

Silence fills the space.

The only sound is their breathing.

She counts them as the time ticks on.

One.

Two.

Three.

She counts the beats of her heart.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

Her hands are suddenly free and Malfoy is climbing off the bed.

“*On your feet*,” he commands.

She scrambles off the bed and to the floor in seconds.

She’s kneeling at his feet a second after that.

Before she can blink, his hand is wrapped around her throat and he’s squeezing, turning her head to meet his gaze.

“You want to see my darkness, Granger?”

Hermione nods.

The slap shocks her, making her cheek sing in delicious agony. The warmth of his hand still captures her face as his thumb runs across her heated cheek.

“Yes,” she says.

“You know your words?”

She doesn’t need to clarify what words he means. “I do,”

“Tell me,”

“Red and yellow,”

“Are you scared of me?”

“No,”

“Do you trust me?”

“Yes,”

He chuckles while he runs his thumb over the bottom lip. “I hope I trust myself half as much then,”

Hermione just looks at him, watching his mind battle with turning her away and keeping her close. Battling with the dark and the light, the good and the bad.

The dark wins.

She’s pulled from her feet and carried over to the centre of the room where the fireplace bursts to life warming the space. Malfoy tugs on her arms and pulls her wrists above her head, securing them above her with more non-verbal magic. The rope binding her is coarser than before and it bites into her skin quickly as she tugs her wrists, testing it.

“You’re going nowhere unless you say your words,”

“I don’t want to be anywhere other than here with you,” Hermione speaks the words so freely and honestly she surprises herself.

He kisses her again before pulling her legs further apart. “Let’s see if you still think that in five minutes,”

A very real sense of fear floods her system, her heart rate picks up and she feels perspiration cover her brow. He disappears for a moment and she hangs there listening but hears nothing. Then he’s back and holding three items in his hands. Malfoy holds them out as if it’s a game of show and tell.

“This,” he shows her the black solid, emerald adorned butt plug. “Is for that lucious arse of yours, have you ever played there before?”

“No,”

“Have you ever wanted to?”

“I’ve never been in a position to think about it,”

“We’re going to try it, yes?”

Hermione nods and sees his eyes flash. “Yes,” she adds quickly.

He places the plug on a table he conjures. “And this,” he holds out something with a solid black leather handle with lots of pieces of what looks like suede hanging from the handle. “Is a flogger. Ever seen one before?”

“No, but I can imagine what it does.”

Hermione skin flushes just thinking about how that will feel on her bare skin. Her back, her breasts, the inside of her thighs...

“You want me to use this?” He asks.

“Very much so,”

He swallows and places the flogger onto the table too before holding out the third and final item to her.

“And this,” Malfoy dangles a clip and chain contraption that has her eyes going wide. “Is one of my favourite things and I very much hope it will be one of yours too.”

“What—where does that—” She looks closer and answers her own unspoken question.

She feels a sudden rush of wetness between her legs.

Oh Gods.

Malfoy chuckles.

That same chuckle she’s heard many times before in her dreams and more recently in reality. The chuckle that has a direct connection to her libido.

Malfoy places the last item onto the table and steps closer to her, so close she can feel his breath on her skin and smell the mint on his breath.

“I very much want to spend some time torturing orgasms from you, Granger. Is that what you’d like?”

“Yes—”

Her words are cut off when his hand drops between her legs and finds her clitoris. He knows the exact pressure she needs to get off and within seconds she’s shaking, barely able to remain standing as her second orgasm of the night rips through her. Malfoy holds her up and lets her shudder her release. When the aftershocks have finished she opens her eyes and sees him gazing down at her in awe.

“I’ve never been so fucking aroused by another person in my entire life,” he leans down and thrusts his tongue into her mouth, kissing her, consuming her. He pulls back too soon. “Are you ready?”

“Yes,”

In almost silence he picks up the plug and raises her hips. She feels a lubrication charm before one finger probes at her arse. She jerks and he soothes her with a kiss to her shoulder.

“Steady, there you go, such a good girl,”

After a minute he slides another finger into her, quickly followed by a third. When she's sufficiently stretched she feels the prod of the plug and his voice telling her to breathe in and bare down.

The intrusion feels strange and heavy but not unpleasant. Malfoy reaches around and cups her breasts, tugging on her nipples while he sucks on her neck.

"How does it feel?"

"Good," she groans and he pinches one nipple.

"Not too much?"

"No,"

"Are you ready for my favourite toy?"

"Yes,"

He moves to stand in front of her and picks up the clamp contraption. He steps closer and drops his mouth to her breast, sucking on her left nipple before moving back and attaching the first clamp. Hermione leans into the metal and inhales when Malfoy tightens it. The bite is delicious and she looks up at him eager for the second clamp to be attached.

When both nipples are trapped in the metal he smirks at her.

"This one is the best, are you ready?"

Hermione nods while groaning, *yes*.

The third and final clamp takes some getting used to. Malfoy adjusts the clip slowly, starting with a gentle pinch and building up to an eye watering one by the end.

"How are you doing, Granger?" He asks, standing to his full height and watching her.

"Good—But—Gods, I need to come,"

It was all too much, the fullness, the bite in her most sensitive areas. Hermione felt like her whole body was hypersensitive and Malfoy wasn't laying a finger on her yet.

"Imagine how I feel, seeing you like this, fuck, Granger."

He unabashedly pulls his cock free and fists it, pumping up and down his length while gazing at her. He

looks feral, like he's barely containing the war that he battles inside himself.

She wishes he would stop and just set it free.

She watches as he moves up and down his hard length, gripping himself much harder than she would, all the while he's watching her, devouring her with his eyes.

Hermione felt like the most powerful woman in the entire world.

Malfoy releases his length and picks up the flogger.

“You’re going to keep count for me, okay?”

“How—how many?”

“15. Five for the amount of days it’s been since I’ve seen you and ten for the number of times just thinking about you meant I had to wank alone.”

Her whole body heated.

“Ready?”

“Yes,”

Malfoy moves behind her and Hermione takes a deep breath and closes her eyes, waiting for the first lash

the flogger. When it comes her inhales sharply and counts number one out loud. Malfoy takes a step to his left and hits again. Hermione counts. The sting and burn by number four is intense. He checks how she is on swing five and she confirms through gritted teeth she’s okay.

“Gods you look beautiful right now,” he tells her.

“Thank you,” she grits out as blow number six and seven land on her arse.

“So fucking beautiful and being so good for me, do you want to be good for me, Granger?”

“Yes—” Hermione groans as another hit lands between her shoulders.

“And your friends have no idea, do they? They have no idea you let me tie you up, that you beg for my touch,” he kisses her shoulder quickly then continues. “That you walk around with my come dripping down her legs and you love it, don’t you?”

“ Yessss —”

They continue to rain over her back, arse and legs until they reach number 15, by which time Hermione is hanging just about able to stand and seconds away from climaxing with no other stimulation than the clamps on her nipples and clitoris. Malfoy places the flogger on the table and comes to stand in front of her.

His pale skin is flushed pink and his erection is hard and swollen and begging for her mouth.

When did he get naked?

“Are you okay?” He asks.

"Yes, I feel—calm and safe and so fucking turned on I think I could climax without you touching me,"

He chuckles. "Well that's not going to happen."

He drops to his knees in front of her and drags her to him.

"You know, these restraints will higher or lower you as much as I need, so there's no real reason for me to kneel before you to lick your cunt," he pushes his tongue into her, making her shudder. "But the truth is, Granger, there's something very fucking humbling about being on my knees between your legs. And for a bastard like me, humbling is a very good thing."

With one hand he releases the clamp from around her clitoris allowing all the blood to rush back into her sensitive nub, while his mouth sucks it into his mouth and his free hand reaches up to release one nipple before tugging on it.

She screams.

Her orgasm makes her see stars and shake in her restraints as Malfoy continues to suck at her.

Hermione is aware of the plug being removed and the feel of herself moving across the room, still attached to whatever is securing her wrists. Malfoy places her on some kind of padded surface making her wince as the heat from her back springs back to life, before pulling her hips to the edge and thrusting into her.

She forgets who she is or where she is as he pounds into her, hands digging into her hips and teeth clamping into the skin of her neck. He's mumbling against her skin, soothing the bite with his tongue, but he never lets up.

In.

Out.

In.

Out.

He's racing her to the finish line and she's not sure she will get there again. Surely she can't?

She's proved wrong when his hand reaches between them and he swipes the pad of his thumb over her

clitoris, while simultaneously raising her hips a little and hitting a spot inside her that has her clutching him between her legs and calling out her climax just as he grunts and fills her with his.

She opens her eyes and he's standing between her legs, eyes glued to where he's just removed himself. Feeling embarrassed at his intense staring she tries to pull her legs back together but he stops her, pushing

them further apart again.

“What are you doing?”

“Exactly what I said I would, Granger,” she feels his finger at her core again, pushing his semen back into her. “Watching me dribble out of your cunt might just be my favourite thing yet.”

She sees that he’s still hard and stroking himself again.

“And I don’t think I’m quite finished yet,” he meets her eyes. “Not nearly finished.”

Dangerous Woman

Chapter Summary

Hermione attends the gala at Malfoy Manor.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Fourteen

Dangerous Woman

Hermione realises that Malfoy never lets her stay the night. No matter what time they finish having sex, he always finds a reason for her to leave; he has to be up early, he's exhausted from being away. There's always something.

When she arrives at work the next day, she heads into her office to find him already sitting there, waiting for her. She steps in, closes the door and casts a *Silencing Charm*.

“Can I help you?”

“Good morning to you, too,” he smirks at her.

“Well, you’re here early so I can only assume you want something. What is it?”

Hermione walks around her desk and places her bag on the floor before taking a seat and looking at him. He’s the perfect picture of calm; black suit and shirt, grey tie and waistcoat. His hair perfectly styled and his glasses sitting in place.

“You’re not a morning person, are you?”

She rolls her eyes. “You wouldn’t have any idea about that, would you?”

He frowns. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Well,” she sighs, shuffling some papers on her desk. “For a little over a month we’ve been
___”

She stops speaking when someone knocks on her door. Malfoy doesn't move nor look concerned.

"Come in," she calls.

Harry pops his head around the door, eyes widening when he sees Malfoy sitting on the sofa against the wall.

"Oh hey," he says to Hermione. "I was just wondering if you have time for lunch today? I haven't spoken to you properly in ages. I think it's time for a catch up."

Hermione smiles at her friend. He's right, they haven't really had a lot of time to speak lately.
"Sure, what time?"

"1.30? I should be back by then,"

"I look forward to it," she smiles at Harry, not looking at Malfoy watching the whole thing.

Harry nods and looks at Malfoy. "Can I speak to you about today, Malfoy?"

Malfoy looks at him and nods. "Ten minutes, I just need to go over the Runes with Granger,"

Harry nods, looks at Hermione as if to check she's okay before closing the door. Hermione doesn't say anything, just watches Malfoy stand and cast his own Silencing Charm over the room.

"As you were saying?"

Hermione takes a deep breath. "Well, Malfoy, for the past month we've been fucking," she sees anger flash in his eyes but continues. "And I've started to notice a pattern. We fuck and I leave. There's never anything more, I don't stay the night, we don't go on dates, we don't really talk, we just—"

"Fuck, yes, you've said that already," his eyes are glacial.

"I just—I don't know what this is. Do you care to tell me?"

He clenches his jaw and she watches as his eyes go from grey and angry to blank right in front of her.

"What do you want, exactly?"

"To know what this is? Is it just—"

He moves and leans across her table so he's inches from her face. "So help me Gods, if you say fucking again, Granger I won't be held responsible for what I do,"

She swallows. "So what is it?"

"Do we have to put a name to it?"

She shakes her head. “I guess not, but I just—”

“I’m not seeing anyone else, I’m only sleeping with you, that should tell you all you need to know.”

Hermione shakes her head. “Well it doesn’t. This is all new to me and I don’t know what I’m supposed to feel.”

Malfoy reaches forward with one hand and fists the back of her hair in his hands, tugging her closer. “Me, Granger. You’re supposed to feel me,”

His mouth is on hers and she’s kissing him with all the anger and passion she feels coursing through her veins. He bites down on her lip and she pulls back.

“No biting, we’re at work.”

He nods and kisses her once more before pulling back and running his thumb over her bottom lip. “You never told me if you are coming to the gala,”

Hermione shakes her head a little to try and clear the lust-filled fog currently filling her brain. “I—what?”

“The gala, are you coming?”

“Of course I am, why?”

“Good,”

“Malfoy, why do you want to know,”

“I just wanted to know if I’ll see you there.”

She swallows and the words leave her mouth before she can stop them. “Can we go together?”

He freezes.

“*Granger*,”

“It doesn’t matter,” Hermione stands and walks around her desk and to her door. “Forget I said anything. Forget I said anything at all. You’re clearly embarrassed by me and would rather we keep it a secret, I get it.”

Hermione goes to open her door and his hand wraps around hers stopping her.

“I am not fucking embarrassed by you, Granger, I just don’t want to announce every little detail of my private life to the entire Wizarding World.”

“Of course,”

“Granger,” he turns her face towards him. “I’m not embarrassed about you,”

She nods, tears filling her eyes. "Right,"

Hermione hears movement on the other side of the door and nods her head. "If you'll excuse me, I have to get to a meeting,"

Hermione opens the door before he can stop her and leaves him alone in her office.

Hermione tries not to fidget as she approaches Narcissa in almost the exact same way she did before. This time however, she's gone completely the opposite in terms of the colour of her dress.

Tonight's outfit is long sleeved, the neckline is high and it's black. There is however a slit to mid-thigh and there's another deep V at the back. Hermione may be unwilling to show anyone the scars that cover her torso, but her back is another thing altogether. Her heels are burgundy and so is the bag, a flash of her Gryffindor roots in a pit of far too many snakes.

Narcissa looks over the shoulder of the person she's greeting, a wizard Hermione doesn't recognise, and meets her eyes, Hermione smiles back softly and waits to be greeted by the Malfoy Matriarch.

"Miss Granger, it's so lovely to see you again," Narcissa smiles, reaching forward to take her hand like they're old friends. "I'm so very glad you could make it,"

She nods and smiles genuinely. "Of course, it's very kind of you to invite me."

"Nonsense, I think it's important we continue to move forward and build relationships with one another, don't you think?"

"Of course," Hermione breathes. "Very important,"

"I would ask Draco to escort you in, but I've not seen him for a while," she says.

"I'm more than able to escort myself i—"

"A lady as beautiful as you should never have to enter a ballroom alone," a voice to Hermione's right speaks. "I'd be honoured to escort you, Granger,"

She turns and sees Theodore Nott bowing slightly and holding his arm out. Dressed in an impeccably tailored suit that moulds to his tall frame perfectly, deep brown curls falling a little over his forehead, the smile tugging his lips brightens his whole face and there's no denying he's attractive and warm in ways his blond friend is not.

"Ah. Theodore, you are such a darling, thank you," Narcissa coos from beside her. "There you go then, Miss Granger, I have a lovely evening, I'm sure we'll have time to speak later,"

Hermione is completely put on the spot with no room to decline, so she does the only thing she can, she takes Theo's offered arm and follows him into the busy ballroom which has been transformed again with cream drapes and roses with floating candles casting a calm golden glow around the room. It's elegant and effortless and of course perfect for the reason they're there.

"It's like clockwork, isn't it?" He murmurs from beside her.

"What is?"

The snaps of flash bulbs alerts her to the presence of Rita and her photographer once again.

"Them," he turns and smiles at Hermione and there's more flashes. "And the fact that every eye in the place is on you."

Hermione smiles and shakes her head. "They're on *us*, not *me*,"

He laughs. "You really have no idea, do you?"

They continue further into the room, passing classmates and people Hermione knows by name but not personally. Theo walks them straight past Harry and Ginny and over to a small group of people who all have their backs to them. As they reach the group, so does the tall, imposing frame of Malfoy. She looks to her right and sees a small dark-haired beauty holding onto his arm.

So he can't attend with her but this beauty he can?

Having no desire to be anywhere near him, she tries to steer them away but Theo holds firm.

"Snakes," Theo then raises an eyebrow at us. "Our Granger,"

"Blaise," she greets with a smile.

"What are you doing, Theodore?" Malfoy asks.

"What does it look like? I'm escorting the most beautiful woman here, no offence Pansy, Astoria, since you were nowhere to be found." He grins at Pansy and she rolls her eyes.

So the woman holding onto Malfoy is Astoria. She doesn't really remember her from school but she knows that there were plenty of the Gryffindor boys who thought she was beautiful, Slytherin or not.

"None taken, Theo," Pansy rolls her eyes again

"Granger," Pansy says. Leaning forward to kiss her on both cheeks. "Nice to see you in something that's not denim and cotton."

Hermione laughs. "I can hardly renovate in silk now, can I?"

Pansy smirks. "Why not? I do."

“And how's the renovation going?” Theo asks from beside her. “Found the threesome bath yet?”

“The what?” Malfoy snaps.

Hermione meets his eyes. “It's not a threesome bath,” she glares at Pansy. “It's just a bath.”

“Oh, Granger,” Blaise teases. “You know the offer to change that still stands,”

Theo nudges her with his shoulder while Malfoy looks ready to hit someone. “Please take up the offer, I can promise you a very good time,”

Malfoy releases Astoria and steps toward Theo. “Nott,”

Theo looks up at the angry blond and smirks. “It's just a joke,” he leans closer to her and fake whispers. “I mean, it's not but—”

Pansy laughs and Blaise snorts while Malfoy glares at the tall man beside me.

After a few awkward moments, Hermione grows uncomfortable and loosens her hold on Theo's arm and catches his eye.

“I'm going to go say hello to some of my friends, thank you for lending me your arm. Have a lovely evening,” she smiles before turning around and making her way over to where Neville and Harry are standing.

As she walks away, Hermione can feel all their eyes on her, but the heat from Malfoy's gaze is like a flame licking up her spine. She focuses on not wobbling in her heels and keeping her head held high. However, movement to her left catches her eye seconds before Malfoy is standing in front of her and blocking Hermione's way.

“Can I help you?” She glares at him.

He raises one eyebrow at her and smirks. “Such hostility, Granger,” he drawls as he tugs on his French cuffs and straightens his back to his full height.

“Hostility?” Hermione whisper growls. “Am I supposed to be happy to see you?”

He leans forward a little, placing his hand on her elbow and resting his mouth by her ear. The closeness of him, the warmth of his breath on her neck and his scent makes an involuntary shiver run up the length of Hermione's spine and goosebumps cover her skin. He notices of course and Hermione feels him grin against her neck.

“Naturally, sweetheart. I'm always happy to see you, afterall.”

Hermione gasps when his tongue sneaks out for a fraction of a second and licks at her neck. She jerks back and tries to take a step away but he holds firm and meets her eyes. Hermione watches as he trails his gaze over her face, down the front of her dress to the split exposing some thigh and the red heels on her feet before coming back to her face.

“Just when I think you can’t be any more fucking stunning you go right ahead and prove me wrong, don’t you?” He shifts again and inhales, his eyes going dark. “You just can’t help yourself, can you?”

“I didn’t come here for you,” She meets his eyes without blinking. “Leave me alone, Malfoy.”

“Really? Is that what you want, Granger? Are you forgetting how I make you feel? Your body is reacting to me like it always does and you have no control over it. *And you love it .*”

He’s right about one thing, Hermione has no control over how her body reacts to him. Gods knows it would make this whole shitty situation easier if she did.

“Is she the reason we could n’t attend together?” Hermione shoots her eyes back at the group of Slytherin’s.

“No,”

“Liar,” she growls. “You tell me you’re not embarrassed by me, that you don’t want to have your private life common knowledge and then arrive with Astoria?”

“It’s nothing, she’s nothing,”

Hermione steps closer to him. “I think you’ll find I’m the one who’s nothing, Malfoy,”

She tugs her arm from his grasp and steps back colliding with another clearly male body making Hermione wobble, the person’s hands come to rest on her waist settling Hermione in her heels.

“Easy there, Granger,” Theo’s voice comes from behind her.

Hermione looks up and realises she’s caged in between two snakes with little chance of escaping easily. She removes Theo’s hands from her waist and presses her hands to her sides. And just stands there, glaring at Malfoy who looks furious now, with Theo at her back and just waiting for her chance to leave.

Thankfully, it only takes a moment and she takes her chance, successfully stepping out from between them both. Hermione doesn’t look back as a space opens up in front of her and she squeezes through and makes her escape, breathing a sigh of relief when she makes it to Harry and Neville. Hermione smiles at them both before taking a glass of champagne from a floating tray and downing it in one. Neville’s eyes go wide while Harry’s eyes focus on something over her shoulder.

“Hermione—” Harry begins before she cuts him off.

“Leave it, Harry, *please .*”

“But—”

Hermione shakes her head and takes another glass from a tray, turning to look at who else has arrived. Pretty soon our group of friends are altogether; George, Angelina, Luna, Seamus and Dean have all arrived and look as awkward as Hermione's sure she did at her first gala at the Manor. She makes the decision to get as many glasses of champagne as she can to help ease them into this and she's about to go on the lookout when four trays magically appear.

"Well, that saves time," Hermione grins, handing them around. "Drink, you'll feel better."

Harry grins. "I remember Lupin telling me the very same once upon a time. Except he was plying me with chocolate and not alcohol."

"Well," she grins back. "If he was giving you alcohol he still wouldn't have been the worst Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher we ever had."

When Pavarti, Padma and Susan arrive our little gang is almost complete. Hermione keeps her eyes on the entrance to the room waiting for the one person she's most nervous about being there. Ten minutes later, he steps into the room scowling. Harry walks over to where Ron is hovering and hands him a drink which he takes and downs in one. When they make their way over to our group his eyes go wide when they settle on her exposed thigh.

"Eyes up here, Ronald." Hermione tells him, clicking her fingers at him.

"Sorry," he grins a little sheepishly. "You do look amazing, Hermione."

"Thank you—"

Hermione is cut off by the *Sonorused* voice of Narcissa Malfoy. Everyone turns to face the witch who is dressed in the most beautiful silver robes and elevated once again on a small podium. Just as she begins to speak, Malfoy steps up to stand beside her.

"Oh, here we bloody go," Ron says from beside me, grabbing two more glasses of champagne from the ever present tray full of them.

"At least give them a chance, Ron." Hermione tells him. "Everyone deserves that."

"The day I give that prat a chance is the day you can bury me, Hermione,"

She turns her attention to the podium and avoids the stormy gaze of Malfoy.

"Thank you all for coming to remember those who we've lost and those who have been devastated by their loss," Narcissa looks out at the crowd standing before her and smiles softly at them. "I hope you'll join Draco and I in remembering the brave and fallen and those who continue to wake every day with a battle of healing ahead of them that they may not feel able to speak about."

Hermione feels a set of eyes on her and her skin heats. Flashes of their nights together fill her mind. She shakes her head desperately trying to clear it and keep her eyes focused on their host.

"I hope those who are able will donate generously tonight and those who cannot will find comfort in the presence of their friends. Remember we all shared this horrific experience and have had our lives ripped apart in our own way," she swallows thickly and Draco wraps his arm around her shoulder. "No matter where we stood before, we stand here together now and that means something powerful. Please have a lovely evening, share fond memories and allow each other to heal a little tonight,"

Everyone claps Narcissa, who Hermione watches with curiosity as she carefully wipes away a tear from her cheek. For all her bluster and Pureblood ways, she sees a woman who has indeed had her family torn from her just like everyone else has. She lost her husband and almost her son along with her sister, regardless of how insane she might have been and that kind of loss leaves a mark on one's soul. As she continues to watch Narcissa, Draco steps forward and locks eyes with his mother who shakes her head, leans to pat his arm and exits the podium.

"Now that's over, can we leave yet?" Ron asks from beside her.

"Ron, honestly," Ginny scolds him. "Just behave and stop thinking about yourself for once in your life!"

The Malfoy's open the dancing much like last time. Moving effortlessly around the dancefloor, the perfect Pureblood elegance in spades.

Harry and Ginny join the many couples soon after, Harry stepping on Ginny's feet and Ginny desperately trying to lead him. Hermione declines the offer to dance from Ron and makes her way to the side of the room to breathe for a second. She looks out of the room and spots the blond head of Malfoy with Astoria, dancing together with perfect coordination.

They look like they're born to it.

Born to be together.

And they are, aren't they?

Astoria is exactly who Malfoy is supposed to be with. A nice Pureblood girl who can continue the Malfoy line and host galas just like this. She'd be the Lady of the Manor and someone he can be proud to stand beside.

She wouldn't have to be a secret.

She wouldn't have to hide.

Feeling nauseous, Hermione finds a door to her back that leads outside and escapes while everyone else is distracted. The cool air hits her and she inhales deeply, pressing a shaking

hand to her stomach.

Why does this bother her so much?

It's Malfoy.

There was never going to be a future with him.

There couldn't be.

She was who she was and he was who he was and their lives would never ever work together.

Except they did.

In those secret, stolen moments, they worked together perfectly. They fit together like two pieces that were lost and were now reunited and they shouldn't. They had so much history, so many bad things had passed between them. But that was years ago, they were both children in a war they had no business fighting in. They were adults now, changed, mature adults.

But instead of being in that ballroom together, Malfoy is holding Astoria in his arms while they twirl around the dancefloor while she's standing on the veranda of his manor completely alone and wondering if she is in fact losing her fucking mind.

The sound of the door opening behind her has her feet moving her down the stone steps and into the shadows. She doesn't want to see or speak to anyone right now. A feminine laugh fills the empty grounds and Hermione sinks into a dark alcove away from sight.

"Draco, come on. You know it makes sense."

Astoria.

"I fail to see what makes sense about all of this, Astoria,"

"Everything makes sense, your mother adores me, my parents are desperate for us to make this official. You

don't have to play so hard to get, darling. I'm yours for the taking,"

Hermione leans forward to see the couple seconds before Astoria gasps out in obvious pain.

"You wouldn't know what to do with me if I took you, Astoria,"

His hand is wrapped around her wrist, tightly by the look of pain on the dark-haired woman's face. "Draco—"

His hand releases her wrist and trails up to her throat.

Hermione thinks she might vomit.

"What do you picture it being like when you picture us together, Astoria?" Malfoy's fingers wrap around her throat, angling her head back to meet his eyes. "Do you imagine us looking

deep into each other's eyes while we make love? You on your back, cradling me to you?" His thumb caresses her pulse point. "Do you imagine me to be a man who will worship you and treat you like the delicate flower you are? Do you picture flowers and kindness and adoration?"

"What—"

She sees Malfoy's hand tighten and Astoria's eyes go wide. "I am not that man and I will never be anything of the sort," Malfoy pulls his hand back and steps away. "So go back inside, forget this ridiculous notion you have of us being together and find a wizard who can be what you need. I am not him."

"Draco—"

"I said leave,"

Astoria falters for a second before she turns and heads back into the ballroom leaving Malfoy alone surrounded by darkness and the soft glow from the fairy lights. For a moment Hermione is rooted to the spot, trying to process everything she just heard. But then she realises she has to go back past him to get inside the manor to leave and he's showing no signs of wanting to return to the gala.

She stays where she is, waiting for him to move but he doesn't.

Her feet are starting to hurt and the cold is seeping into her bones, she has to get back inside. Hermione thinks her moment has come when he seems to move as if going back to the door so she steps out of the shadow and approaches the steps back up to the door that will take her back inside.

But Malfoy turns his head and looks right at her.

Hermione is rooted to the spot.

Not moving and barely breathing.

His eyes roam over her body before coming to rest on her face.

Realising there's no point in pretending she's not out here and hearing everything that was said between the pair moments ago, Hermione straightens her back and climbs the steps heading straight for the door. He lets her pass and she exhales in relief, only, when she goes to open the door it doesn't budge.

"You think it's that easy to leave?" He says from behind her.

"I'd like to go back inside, please,"

She feels his heat against her back and fights everything inside her not to lean back against him.

"I'd like a lot of things, it doesn't mean I get them,"

Hermione sighs. “Malfoy, please just let me go back inside,”

“No,”

She turns quickly and faces him. Standing straight and determined.

“What do you want, Malfoy? Not me and clearly not Astoria. What is it you want?”

“You don’t know a damn thing about me, Granger. Stop pretending you do,”

“Oh?” Hermione steps forward. “I know plenty. I know how you feel inside me, I know the sounds you

make when you come. I know that you get rock hard when you tie me up and when I submit to you,”

He presses forward so their bodies just touch, breathing deeply.

“I think I know quite a bit, Malfoy.”

“That fucking mouth of yours,”

His lips are on hers in a second, his hands on her hips pulling her into him and grinding his erection into her. She bites his bottom lip and takes her chance. She drops her bag to the floor and delves under his jacket, tugging on his shirt and running her cold hands across his heated bare skin. He winces and tries to pull back but she digs her nails into his sides.

“What do you think you’re doing, Granger?”

“Whatever the fuck I want to, Malfoy,”

Her hands drop lower to his zip and she tugs. “Do you know something? I know that when I reach into your trousers in a second you’re not going to be wearing any underwear and I’ll be able to wrap my hand around your cock,”

He groans and pushes his hips into her hand, she lowers his zip, releasing his erection into her hands. He’s hot and silky and hard in her grasp. She rubs her thumb across his tip, collecting his sweet pre-come and raising it to her mouth. Hermione makes a show of sucking it clean while he watches. Lowering her hand again, she pumps up and down his length while he pants and lowers his gaze to watch her.

“See? I do know you. I might not know everything, but I know enough to get you off, right here, right now,”

He pushes into her fist and she grins, fisting him harder like she’s seen him do many times.

“I know how to make you come, Malfoy, don’t I?”

“Yes you d—”

They freeze when they hear feet approaching from around the corner to where they're standing. Malfoy's eyes widen and she drops her hand, picks up her bag, turns around and walks towards the door, finding she can now get back into the ballroom. Malfoy has unlocked the door.

"Ah! So it is open!" Blaise half yells in her direction as she steps back inside. "We couldn't get it to open!"

"Oh?" Hermione laughs like it's the most ridiculous thing she's ever heard. "I think you've just had too many Firewhiskey's, Blaise Zabini,"

Hermione continues to walk further into the room as Blaise exits out of the door she just came in through. When she looks up, she meets the eyes of Astroia Greengrass, eyes blazing and a scowl on her pretty face. Hermione knows that Astoria must have worked out that Hermione was outside the whole time. She doesn't stop walking towards her friends or let Astoria's gaze make her falter. If Astoria knows she was outside and heard everything, that's her problem, not Hermione's.

She reaches the gang and smiles at them.

"Where have you been?" Ginny asks her, focusing her eyes behind her.

Hermione turns to see a perfectly put together Malfoy come back into the room with Blaise.

"Just getting some air, it's stifling in here,"

"With Malfoy?" Ginny asks, shocked.

"No, not with Malfoy, I didn't even see him out there,"

Hermione watches the two Slytherin's as they cross the room, catching a lot of female attention on the way to the bar, both ordering what looks like to be another Firewhisky . As Malfoy raises his glass to his mouth, his eyes find hers and with a barely visible nod of his head, he throws the drink back and turns to exit the ballroom.

"I don't know about you two, but I'm ready to leave," Harry says from beside her.

Hermione smiles and nods as Ginny reaches down and takes off her heels. "Lead the way, handsome, lead the way."

Chapter End Notes

Happy Sunday, everyone!

I hope you're all well and enjoyed this chapter.

It's one I have had written for ages, I knew this was where Hermione was going to see Astoria, I knew she was going to get jealous and I knew that Malfoy was going to make a bit of a mess of it.

There will be, what I've come to think of as, 'The Conversation' very soon. But for now ... they have to suffer a little while they work out how to navigate this. It's new for them both.

Thank you ALL for reading, commenting, leaving kudos and bookmarking this fic for later. I see you all, I appreciate you all.

See you on Wednesday!

Travelling Light

Chapter Summary

Hermione and Malfoy talk.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Travelling Light

Hermione doesn't hear from Malfoy for the rest of the weekend and doesn't really know how she feels about it.

She keeps herself busy agreeing to house plans with Pansy, reading in the garden and ignoring the anniversary of the Battle until Harry and Ron *Floo* over and they have coffee in the garden while they remember what they've been through and where they are now. Hermione feels uncomfortable the whole time knowing there are major things in her life her two best friends don't know about and even more things that they could know about if they just opened their eyes and really saw her.

Hermione is well into Monday before she sees Malfoy. She's busy working in her office when she hears his voice just outside her office. The door is open a crack and she can just make out his imposing height and blond hair while he speaks to Claudine. She tries very hard not to listen and even harder to pretend to herself that she doesn't want to walk over to her door, throw it open and demand he come into her office.

She looks down and pictures how it would go; he'd vanish everything on her desk, throw a *Silencing Charm* up and lock the door. He'd throw her onto her hard surface, open her legs and then he—

Knock knock .

Dragging her mind out of the gutter, Hermione clears her expression seconds before the man himself steps through into her office and locks eyes with her.

He smiles.

And Hermione melts.

"Good morning, Granger," he says, softly. "Do you have a spare ten minutes?"

“Of course,” she smiles back. “Come on in.”

He steps into her office, locks the door and she’s sure silences the room too. He surprises her by walking around her desk and pulling her out of her chair before pressing a kiss to her mouth. His hands come up and fist into the curls at the back of her head as he strokes his tongue against hers and lets out a soft groan into her mouth which she swallows down greedily. It’s a desperate kind of kiss and it throws her off balance a little.

“I’ve missed you,” he breathes into her mouth.

Hermione tenses. From him it’s practically a declaration of love.

“You know where I’ve been, Malfoy.”

“I know, but—after the gala and the anniversary this weekend I didn’t want to make things more complicated for you. Are you—were you okay?”

Hermione looks into his stormy grey eyes and nods. “Yes, Harry and Ron came over, I read my book, it was a nice, simple weekend. Were you okay?”

He looks out of her window for a second then back to her. “No, I wanted to come over and explain Astoria, I wanted to tell you why I went with her, but—” He stops and swallows.

“But?”

“Come to mine after work? We’ll have dinner.”

Hermione’s eyes go wide. “Dinner?”

He smirks. “Yes, we eat a meal together. You’re familiar with dinner, I assume?”

“Yes,” she scoffs. “But it’s not something we do. I come over, we fu—”

Malfoy stops her words with one long finger over her lips. “Don’t say it,” he shakes his head. “You said there was never more, no dates. This is as close to a date as we can get right now,” he looks her in the eyes as he speaks the next words. “I’d very much like to have dinner with you, Granger, will you do me the honour?”

She nods. “Yes,” Hermione can’t help but smile. “What time?”

He drops another kiss to her lips and rests his forehead to hers and inhales in a most unlike Malfoy way. “Come over when you’re finished, dinner will be at 7.30.”

“Okay, do I need to change?”

She looks down at her royal blue shift dress and nude heels then back to him. He steps closer, running one hand down over her arse and plucking at the material there, finding the suspender belt she’s wearing today.

“Absolutely not,” he growls. “You look beautiful today, do you know that?”

She blushes. "I like this dress and this colour,"

He brushes his thumb over her bottom lip. "You're always beautiful,"

They reach for each other at the same time, his hands in her hair. Her hands pull his neck down to meet her lips. They collide and bask in each other, all tongues and hands and panting hot breaths against heated skin. They forget the people on the other side of the door, they forget they forget they're at work, they forget the rest of the world.

"Malfoy, I need you to meet me in my office right now, another body has been found,"

Harry's stag Patronus startles them both and they spring apart, panting and flushed. For a second they just stand there looking at each other. Time stands still and nothing but the two of them exist.

Then Malfoy bursts their bubble.

"I have to go—"

Hermione reaches for him and rests her head on his chest, closing her eyes tight. "Please, be careful," she whispers into his shirt.

His arms tighten around her for a second before stepping back.

"I'll see you later,"

She watches him leave her office and walk down the hall towards Harry's office and swallows down the sudden sense of dread she feels for him.

When Hermione steps from the fireplace and into Burton House, the lights are dimmed and a soft sultry jazz is playing. She thinks she's on her own for a second before Malfoy steps into the room and Hermione forgets her own name.

He's changed since work. Gone is his usual black or grey.

Malfoy is wearing white.

And his shirt sleeves are rolled to the elbow, leaving his Dark Mark on full display.

He stalks towards her with more confidence and swagger than any one man should have and reaches for her hand, raising it to his lips and pressing a kiss to her knuckles.

"You look beautiful, Granger,"

“You already told me that earlier,” she grins.

“Well the fact remains, so I’ll say it again.”

Hermione watches him as he stands proudly in the house that’s his but that she’s barely seen any of and realises she desperately wants to see more of it.

“Can I have a tour?” She asks.

He hasn’t taken his eyes off her and she feels her whole body thrum with the sheer volume of attraction she feels for this man. “You, Granger, can have anything you damn well want,”

He reaches for her bag, places it on the coffee table and turns, pulling her along with him. They walk down the hall, one she’s been down before but never really bothered to pay attention to. It’s difficult to pay attention to anything that isn’t Draco Malfoy when he has you in his arms it seems.

He stops and opens a door to our left and indicates she should enter. She steps in and finds another large seating area, but this one screams masculinity. She twirls around the space before coming to a stop and looking at him.

“I can imagine you in here with your boys, drinking and having debauched conversations, no girls allowed?”

He flashes her a smirk. “Well, the boys have yet to come over, but this is a throwing back Firewhiskey and playing a few games of cards kind of place,”

Hermione steps closer to him and pushes her luck by wrapping her arms around his neck. He doesn’t stop her, in fact he places his big hands on her waist and looks down at her.

“And what about the girls?”

He drops his forehead to hers and smirks. “No girls, unless of course, you want to be our little server girl? I’ll even buy you the outfit.”

Hermione laughs. “And you’d want the boys to see me dressed like that, would you?”
Hermione raises an eyebrow at him.

“Absolutely fucking not, Granger,”

Hermione laughs again and reaches up on to her tiptoes to press a kiss to his lips. Malfoy kisses her chastely and then steps back.

“None of that, I’m trying to keep this not about sex and if you keep pressing yourself against me, talking about you being a wait girl and kissing me, I’ll take you to my room and fuck you like you’ve asked for a tip, understood?”

Hermione shudders and nods her head. “Understood,”

“Good, now follow me. There’s a lot more for you to see and dinner will be ready soon,”

“You’re cooking?”

Malfoy laughs. “No, I’m not cooking.”

She stops dead. “Then who is?”

Malfoy turns, looks at her then rolls his eyes. “Pippet is cooking,” he looks at her in the most challenging way, like he wants her to complain about it. “She’s a free elf, she gets paid an obscene amount of money and adores me. Problem, Granger?”

She shakes her head. “Only about her adoration. Will I have to fight her for your affection?”

He laughs and tugs her down to another door and turns a corner. “This is one of the bathrooms, it’s bright and light and boring,” he walks further down the hall. “This is my office,”

He opens the door and stands back so she can look in. It’s painted a dark green with bookcases that match the colour exactly which are stuffed with books she’s itching to pick up. There’s a huge dark, almost black wooden desk, a massive brown leather chair sits behind it. In front of the fireplace is a big brown leather sofa and a coffee stable. Hermione walks over to the fireplace and looks at the photos on the frames.

One of Pansy and Malfoy laughing at something, her arms wrapped around his waist. Another of Theo, Blaise and Malfoy all impeccably dressed in suits and looking at whoever is taking the photo in an impatient way before they all laugh and Malfoy tugs on his French cuffs.

And finally, a photo of Malfoy and Narcissa somewhere sunny, sitting together under an umbrella, Narcissa smiling adoringly at her son who smiles softly back. The kind of smile a son wears for his mother and only his mother.

Hermione senses Malfoy behind her and turns to look at him. “You look so much like your mother,”

He frowns. “I rarely get told that,”

She reaches out one finger and touches the small lift at the side of each other’s mouths. “The lift right here,” Hermione tells him. “And the gentle arch of your eyebrows, it’s all there in Narcissa’s features too.”

He lets out a breath and reaches for her hand. “It’s always, he’s so much like his father,” he shakes his head. “It makes me happy to hear you see my Mother in me, Granger. Gods knows I want to be like her.”

Hermione smiles and follows him out of his office and further down the hall. They stop at a room she’s been in lots of times before. “You know this room quite well, I think.”

She nods.

They move to the next door a little away. "Another bathroom," he indicates. "Do you want to see upstairs later?"

Hermione feels heat pool love in her stomach and bites her bottom lip. "I think it's wise,"

"In that case, follow me and prepare yourself,"

Hermione follows Malfoy the way they've already been and around another corner. The room they step inside next is a dining room fit for the pages of any home decor publication. The table can seat twenty easily, the chandelier is crystal and the walls are painted the most striking shade of blue.

"Blue? In the Prince of Slytherin's house? What on earth happened?" She teases him.

"Pansy happened," he drawls, shoving a hand into his trouser pocket and stepping into the room. "She said we can't go around for the rest of our lives wearing green and decorating like the Slytherin's we are. That there are more colours than green and black,"

"Well, she's right and I love this colour,"

He's behind her and wrapping his arms around her waist, pulling her to him and resting his mouth at her ear. "It seems like it's your colour, Granger,"

There's a crack and a small, smartly dressed house elf appears in the room with them.

"Pippet is wanting to tell Mr Draco that dinner is ready when he is," she smiles up at them. "And Pippet is wanting to welcome Mr Draco's guest and make sure she is having everything she wants for dinner?"

Hermione smiles and tries to step out of Malfoy's embrace but he holds tight. "I'm sure I will have, thank you, Pippet,"

Pippet beams at her and curtseys. "You is to call Pippet if you need anything, Miss,"

"Thank you, I will,"

Malfoy kisses her neck and nods. "We'll have dinner now, Pippet,"

The little elf disappears and seconds later, the table is set for two, candles casting a golden glow and full glasses of wine waiting at each place setting. Malfoy releases her and walks over to what she assumes will be her seat, pulling the chair out and gesturing for her to take a seat.

He moves to the other seat across from her and takes a seat, unfolding his napkin and placing it in his lap before he reaches for his wine glass and holds it aloft in her direction.

"You first dates and endless possibilities,"

Hermione swallows and echoes his sentiment before taking a sip of the delicious red wine.

“Is it to your liking?” Malfoy asks, placing his glass down.

“Very much so,” she beams, taking another sip. “You’re drinking wine, too?”

He nods. “I often do with dinner,”

Something Hermione didn’t know, but now she does. They sit in comfortable silence as a platter of meze delights appear before them. She looks down and notices everything she loves all waiting to be eaten.

“I had to guess what you’d like Granger, so I hope I have it right,”

Hermione licks her lips and helps herself to an olive. “You have it right so far, Malfoy,”

They each load a few items onto their plate and busy themselves with eating for a few minutes. Hermione watches as Malfoy delicately eats each bite, wiping his mouth in between mouthfuls and sipping on his wine with a small, content smile on his lips. Everything she eats is mouthwatering delicious and she finds herself helping herself to more as he watches her.

“This is delicious, Malfoy, thank you.”

He just nods.

“Granger, I want to get this out of the way so the rest of the evening can be ours, alright?”

Hermione puts down her fork and picks up her wine. “Okay,”

Malfoy takes what she assumes is a fortifying sip of wine before looking at her. “Astoria and I—our parents have assumed we would marry since we were very young. I’ve never given any indication that this would ber the case since I started Hogwarts, but Mother—” he looks to the side before looking back to her. “My Mother has her own ideas about the kind of marriage I will find myself in one day and the kind of woman I will marry,”

“And that’s Astoria?”

“Yes, in her eyes it’s very much Astoria,”

Hermione swallows. “And in your eyes?”

“I don’t see myself getting married, Granger. I don’t intend to further the Malfoy line, I don’t intend to subject a child to the opinions of the Wizarding World due to my father—and my—actions.”

“Oh,” Hermione says stupidly, not knowing what else to say.

“If marriage and children is something you have wanted for yourself—” he takes a sip of wine before looking back at her, eyes intense. “I can’t ever give that to you, Granger. And I will not be the reason you give up that dream,”

"I haven't thought about it, Malfoy. Things have been—chaotic to say the least and I don't know if I want those things or not,"

He nods. "May I ask one thing?"

It's her turn to nod. "Of course,"

"If the time ever comes, and we're still—doing whatever this is—and you decide you do want those things, tell me and I'll step back,"

Hermione feels a lump in her throat. "Okay,"

"Promise me, Granger. I may be a bastard but I will not deprive you of the things you want if I am unable to give them to you,"

"I promise," she says through the thickness in her throat.

He takes another sip of wine as the remaining food vanishes from the table and is replaced by fillet steak, potatoes and butter vegetables. Malfoy serves them both a helping while Hermione tries to get a hold on her emotions. Malfoy doesn't want to get married? It's truly not something Hermione has spent much time thinking about. She wanted to get her work life in order before she settled down, wanted to know that the world was as steady as it could be before she thought about anything so serious and permanent.

Then she'd lost her parents and her life was once again thrown into turmoil.

"Granger?"

She looks up and Malfoy is sitting waiting for her to begin their meal.

"Sorry,"

"Are you okay?"

She smiles weakly. "Of course,"

They eat a few mouthfuls before Malfoy speaks again. "My Mother always insists I attend functions that Astoria is attending to, with her. I know you heard our conversation in the gardens of the Manor so I won't explain how this means absolutely nothing to me. She knows nothing about me, what I want, what I need—she wants us to attend together but quite frankly, after how she behaved on Saturday, I don't think I'll be subjecting myself to any more of that nonsense."

"And if there are more galas, we couldn't attend together?" Hermione asks, desperate to understand why Malfoy declined before.

"Of course we could, whether we shall or not remains to be seen,"

Disappointment floods so she focuses her attention on the food in front of her but tastes nothing. When the plates are once again cleared and replaced with a delicious looking lemon

tart and coffee, Malfoy stands and moves from opposite to beside her.

"Granger, I haven't explained myself very well I don't think. I just—can we just be with each other how we are for now? Without inviting the opinions of the whole Wizarding world into it? You know as well as I do that everyone and their owl will have an opinion on Hermione Granger and Draco Malfoy being seen out together."

"I do,"

Malfoy takes her hand on the table and links their fingers. "I'm sick of being who everyone talks about, of having nothing that's just for me," he meets her eyes. "Can I have this? Please? Can I just have you all to myself with no one telling me their fucking opinions?"

Malfoy's vulnerability is something new to Hermione. The time they have spent together hasn't been exactly traditional 'getting to know you' time. They know each other to a point, but really they're strangers, meeting again when they've both changed and grown up and from what he's told her tonight, he still feels stifled and made to do things he doesn't want to. Just like he did when he was growing up and that makes her feel something deep in her soul. It makes her want to do everything in her power to make him feel like he has a choice.

Hermione leans forward and presses a kiss to his lips. "Yes,"

He deepens the kiss and fists his hands in her hair like he did in her office. "And can I have you, Granger?"

Hermione groans as his tongue probes deeper in her mouth, consuming her as he always does. "Yes,"

"Now?"

"Yes to that, too,"

"Thank fuck for that," he practically growls before lifting her off her feet and into his arms. "I have plans for you, Granger and they all involve us naked and sweaty and end in both of us coming. Do you want that?"

Hermione's stomach clenches and she nods. "Yes,"

"Do you have any idea what you do to me, Granger? How much you control every thought in my head—awake, asleep—it doesn't matter. You've taken over my fucking world and I can't think of any reason to stop it."

Hermione is lost for words and can't find a single one to articulate how she feels at his declaration. Malfoy continues to walk them out of the dining room and down the hall to the room they always end up in. He places her on her feet, waves his hand in the direction of the fireplace making a fire roast to life before meeting her eyes.

Gone is the Malfoy who tells her she consumes his thoughts.

Gone is the Malfoy who allows her to touch and kiss him.

This Malfoy leaves no room for either of those things.

No.

This Malfoy wants one thing and one thing only,

Her obedience.

And Hermione offers it freely.

Chapter End Notes

And there we have it.

The talk.

I hope this helps get inside Draco's head a little and understand a little about his why he is like he is.

Buckle up, things are about to get interesting ...

I'm blown away by the comments and kudos and bookmarks. Thank you, thank you, thank you for taking time to read my little fic. I cannot say enough how much I appreciate you ALL.

See you on Sunday!

Almost

Chapter Summary

Hermione works out the meaning of a rune and Draco takes her by surprise.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Almost

Hermione spends the next two weeks pouring over old tomes and rolls and rolls of parchment trying to find some kind of way in with the Runes—it's slow, tedious work. But she comes across something just as she's about to call it a day. Dread thrums through her veins making her pulse quicken.

She sends her otter Patronus to Malfoy and waits for him to arrive.

When he pushes open the door of the meeting room, he's barely inside before she's speaking.
“I found something,”

He walks over to where she's sitting and leans over her, so close she hears the second he inhales her hair.

“Malfoy,” she almost groaned, closing her eyes. “Not now, please,”

She feels his smile. “Tell me.

“These three are only present when these two,” she points to the Runes for wrath, justice and death. “Are present. They don't appear together at any crime scene or house that's been found that we know Death Eaters have been using as a safe house.”

Hermione had been shocked to find out the reason that, on the night Malfoy asked her to come over and told her he was in a vile mood. The Aurors had got information linking Death Eaters to a safe house in Wales. When they got inside, there was no one in there but items had been left behind.

Along with a Rune message.

Malfoy tenses above her.

“What aren't you telling me?” She asks keeping her focus on the parchment in front of her,

“Tell me what you think it means,”

“I’ve looked over and over at these for weeks and it seems like this particular Rune only made an appearance when you did,”

“Hmmm?”

Hermione turns in her seat and looks at him. His eyes are grey but blank.

He’s Occluding.

“Malfoy,” she says and she hears a wobble in her voice. “They mean you.”

He stands and straightens his cuffs like he always does when he’s trying to calm or regroup himself. “What makes you say that?”

Hermione gets to her feet and glares at him. “How long have you known?”

He stares back. “Does it matter?”

Hermione casts a *Silencing charm* over the room and frosts the glass wall. “Of course it fucking matters! I’ve been trying to work this out for weeks! I assumed you were doing the same. How long have you known this Rune means you?”

“A week,”

“And you didn’t tell me because? You enjoy knowing things I don’t? You wanted me to look fucking stupid?”

He scoffs. “Of course not,”

“Then why haven’t you told me?”

“Because I wanted to wait and confirm it for myself before I told anyone. You don’t look fucking stupid because A) You’re not fucking stupid and B) I haven’t told anyone yet!” His anger flares as he speaks and she winces.

Hermione is furious with him, with herself for not working it out sooner and with whoever it is leaving these cryptic messages for them to try and work out. She feels like she’s being taunted and she doesn’t like it,

“So it’s definitely Death Eaters?” She asks him.

He nods.

“And what do they want with you?”

He laughs. “What they always want with me, Granger. My death, my mother’s death. Justice for the traitors we are. The end of the Malfoy line.”

He says it so matter of factly that she winces. How can he speak about his demise like it's something he expects to happen. Horror suddenly takes her over. Does he expect it to happen?

"Are you in danger?" She finds herself whispering.

"No more than I have been since the end of the war."

Heremione's stomach turns over.

How could she have been so stupid?

The end of the war was supposed to mean safety to everyone. The Wizarding world rejoiced at the death of Voldemort, everyone started to mourn for those they had lost and try to move forward in a very different world. The Malfoy's had disappeared to France soon after and it was only when he came back to work at the DMLE that she really gave him a second thought.

"Granger, whatever you're thinking, stop it."

She looks at him and he steps closer to her. "How can I forget it, Malfoy? Someone wants you and your mother dead,"

"Nothing has changed, Granger," he reaches for her and pulls her to his strong, warm body. "We keep working on the rest of the Runes and we try to put whoever is behind this in Azkaban where they belong. My situation hasn't changed and neither has yours,"

"I'm scared," she admits, whispering into his chest. "What if—"

He lifts her chin to look at him. "Nothing is going to happen. I've kept myself alive this long and I don't intend to stop doing so now,"

Hermione doesn't think about where she is or who might come in, she wraps her arms around his broad shoulders and kisses him. She kisses him out of terror and dread. She kisses him until she's no longer wracked with fear but hope that everything will be okay and when she pulls back they're both pink in the cheeks and panting.

"Come over to mine tonight? I'll get us dinner."

"I can't tonight," he sighs. "Snakes get together at Burton House. And anyway, Pansy tells me you don't have a functioning house at this point."

She rolls her eyes. "So dramatic, I have a bedroom and a working toilet and shower. I have everything I need. And I didn't say I'd cook you dinner, just that I'd get you dinner. There's a delicious French restaurant just down the road I was going to get us takeaway."

"A bed is all I need for an evening with you, Granger," he sighs. "But can we do it another night? If I cancel now, they'll ask too many question and I—"

"You don't want to explain yourself or tell them about us. I know."

Hermione smiles but she doesn't think she does a very good job at convincing him that it doesn't still bother her that he doesn't want to tell anyone about them yet. He looks at her like he can hear every thought she's having so she leans in and kisses him again.

"Another night,"

"Tomorrow?"

She nods. "Yes,"

She agrees to seeing him knowing full well she has plans with her friends. She knows she will cancel her plans with them for the chance to spend some time outside of work with Malfoy.

"I'll very much look forward to it, Granger," he reaches for her, wrapping one hand around her throat and making her look at him. "Do you want to play? Or just have dinner?"

Her heart rate picks up and she swallows against his fingers. "I—I want to play,"

He beams at her. "Then I shall come prepared,"

Hermione wakes with a start to darkness and the sound of someone moving around downstairs. Heart in her throat, she reaches for her wand and climbs out of bed.

Making her way onto the landing she stops and listens.

It doesn't sound like there is more than one person down there but they're not being particularly quiet and given the state of the downstairs she's positive they'll hurt themselves before they even get to her.

She slowly creeps towards the staircase when whoever it is downstairs shadow appears in her hallway.

They'd made it through the maze of renovations and were on their way upstairs.

Hermione moves quickly but silently back into her bedroom and is seconds away from barricading herself into her room, wand pointed at her door, when he steps into the doorway.

"*Malfoy!?*"

His grey, slightly droopy eyes meet hers and he smirks at her. "*Granger.*" he slurs. "Put that down or I'll put you over my knee,"

He tries and fails to look stern.

“Excuse me?”

He nods at the wand in her hand. “Put. That. Down.”

She lowers her wand and he stalks towards her, stumbling slightly as he does.

“What the hell are you doing in my house in the middle of the night, Malfoy? And how do you even know where my house is?”

He reaches her and makes a grab for her hand but misses, falling flat on his arse onto her bed.

And laughing.

“Pansy,” he says simply. “And I came to see you, obviously,” his big hand goes to his shirt and he starts to unbutton it. “I came to see you and to ask you if you’d like to fuck?”

Hermione’s mouth actually pops open in shock. “That’s the least appealing suggestion I’ve ever heard,”

He props himself up on his elbows, shirt half open, eyes heavily lidded and raking over her body. “Oh please,” he slurs. “You want me all the time. I only have to be near you and I can smell how much you want me. You’re made for me, Granger and you fucking love it.”

Hermione straightens her shoulders and glares down at him. “You’re not usually pissed and inviting yourself into my house in the middle of the night! That seems to have the opposite effect on me,”

He arches a brow at her and sits up, tugging her to him by the waistband of her knickers. Quick as a flash, his fingers are inside her knickers and pushing into her. He looks up at her—grey piercing eyes and heated—and Gods if she doesn’t feel a pang of arousal wash over her.

“Really?” He challenges. “This is you *not* wanting me?”

He removes his fingers from her knickers and holds them up to the slither of moonlight, showing them both her arousal now coating his fingers. Before she has a chance to tell him to leave, he’s sucking his fingers into his mouth and swirling his tongue around them.

Her knees almost buckle beneath her.

He removes his fingers from his mouth and holds them up to her again. “These fingers could be inside you right now, Granger. Or my tongue, or my cock,” he shakes his head. “Instead you’re there, I’m here, neither one of us is naked nor getting off. There’s something seriously wrong with this whole situation, don’t you think?”

“I—”

He pulls her on top of him, cutting off her words and thrusting his tongue into her mouth. She tastes Firewhiskey and lemons and something smoky. He moves them so he’s laying on her

pillows and she is moving to straddle his chest.

“Malfoy, what are you—”

He slaps her arse and gazes up at her. “Move yourself over my face so I can feast on your cunt, Granger,”

“But I—”

He slaps her arse again. “That’s an order.”

She does what he asks and moves to straddle his face and realises he’s vanished her knickers. She’s squatting over Draco Malfoy’s face, in her bed, wearing just a camisole and he’s fully dressed and he’s about to—

“*Ohhhh, Gods, Malfoy,*”

He pushes his tongue into her body and swirls it around her clitoris before grazing it with his teeth. “See?” He murmurs from between her legs. “Isn’t this better?” He licks her again. “I have to say, as midnight snacks go, Granger, your cunt might just be the best fucking one,”

She can’t help but groan and grind herself onto his face, one hand steadyng herself on the wall while the other snakes into his pale locks and tugs.

“Fuck yes,” he groans against her. “Use me, Granger,” he continues to suck and lick at her before adding two fingers and pressing on her g-spot. “This is your one opportunity to take. Your one opportunity to do whatever the fuck you want. And I’ll lap up everything you give to me,”

“Malfoy—yes—fuck—”

She can feel she’s close, so close to the climax she didn’t even know she needed. One of his big hands reaches up, snaking under her camisole and finding her breast. He caresses it with warm fingers before pinching her nipple. The extra stimulation pushes her closer to her orgasm and she bucks and pushes him deeping into her, rotating her hips and encouraging him with words she has no control over.

“That’s it—fuck yes—just there—” She pants.

“So good, so fucking good, aren’t you? Are you going to come for me? I want to feel you dripping onto my face, Granger. Can you do that for me?”

He stops talking when she tugs on his hair and pulls him closer. He takes the hint, sucking her whole clitoris into his mouth and pinching her nipple seconds before he grazes his teeth across her bundle of nerves and his other hand slaps her breast. The shock of both actions has her orgasm ripping through her. She shudders and clenches her thighs around his face fore falling forward to rest her sweaty head against the wall.

She feels a tap against her thigh and remembers where she is sitting.

“Oh gods, sorry!” She flushes and crawls off his face.

“Don’t be,” he chuckles, reaching up and brushing his finger against her nipple again. “Who needs to breathe when they have you sitting on their face?”

Hermione smiles, a little embarrassed but pleased nonetheless. Her eyes catch movement to the side of her and she turns to see Malfoy, with his hand wrapped around his erection, pumping himself with the fingers that moments before had been inside her. He uses her climax to lubricate himself as he fists himself up and down.

“Do you want a hand?” She asks, closing her smaller hand around his.

“No, I’d like that mouth,”

He looks at her with pure want and need and she couldn’t say no to him, even if she wanted to,

She nods and crawls between his legs, tugging off his trousers and dropping them to the floor. Wrapping her hand around his cock, she leans over and takes just the tip into her mouth, swirling her tongue around him before removing her hand and taking him deeper.

He thrusts his hips up and pushes himself further into her mouth as she sucks and reaches down to cup his balls. He groans, fistng his hands into her hair and guiding her where he needs her and at what pace. Her mind drifts to the few times she’d done this with Ron and how, after a drink he’d take ages to climax, it doesn’t seem the same with Malfoy. She can feel him swelling in her mouth and double her efforts. He’s hot and heavy against her tongue and she thrums with how much she loves it.

His hands tighten in her hair and he shifts his hips. “That’s it, Granger, wrap those lips around my cock, you like that, don’t you?”

She can’t speak her agreement.

So she hums.

He bucks as the vibrations travel up his cock.

“So good—that’s it, love. Suck me,—take me down that glorious throat of yours,”

She swallows his praise and the shock at the affectionate term he chose to use as she continues to suck him deeper, lave him firmer and swallow as much of his length as she can.

“Going to come—too good—swallow me—don’t waste aa fucking dro—”

She cuts his words off with a well-timed graze of her teeth followed by a swallow that contracts her throat and pulls him deeper still.

She feels him flood her tongue as he pulls on her hair. The bite of pain doing crazy things to her still recovering body. She swallows what she can before releasing him from her mouth

and sitting up straight. Meeting his eyes she makes a show of pushing the few drops that have spilled over her chin, back into her mouth before swallowing.

“Come up here,”

She crawls up his body and he pulls her down to him for a kiss. His tongue sweeps her mouth, clearly not bothered about tasting himself. When he pulls away, he caresses her cheek with his thumb.

“Don’t get used to this, Granger,” his eyes are serious but still hooded. “The Firewhiskey has softened the edges,” he runs his thumb over her bottom lip. “I’m still a bastard and I still want your submission.”

She nods her head and goes to speak but he’s fallen asleep. His chest rising and falling, hands curled by his hips, naked and in her bed.

Hermione summons a blanket and places it over the both of them before she snuggles into his side and drifts off to sleep and to dreams of Malfoy and things she can’t admit to wanting while she’s awake.

Hermione wakes up alone.

Of course she does.

There’s no trace he was ever there, no lingering scent or scrap of clothing.

And most definitely not a note telling her he had to leave but he’d see her later.

Malfoy doesn’t do romance, he’s made that perfectly clear time and time again but she’d be lying if she said Hermione didn’t hope he’d have stayed so they could have sleepy morning sex and maybe a shower together. They could get breakfast and then he could go back to get ready for work.

She laughs at herself. At her foolish romantic ideals.

At some point, Hermione is going to have to accept that whatever this is with Malfoy isn’t like other relationships. She’s going to have to decide if she can deal with the unconventional nature of them being together.

Keeping their relationship a secret, not being able to go out on normal dates.

Potentially never being able to declare her feelings to him or her friends.

Hermione gets out of bed and goes to shower, reminding herself of his words from the other night.

"I'm sick of being who everyone talks about, of having nothing that's just for me. Can I have this? Please? Can I just have you all to myself with no one telling me their fucking opinions?"

As Hermione climbs into the shower she can't help but feel that she does understand Malfoy's reasons. Everyone will have an opinion on them being together, on Hermione Granger and Draco Malfoy being anything but enemies or rivals.

And with that logic, keeping them just for each other does make a lot of sense.

She just has to remind herself of that fact when she wakes up alone or desperately wants to tell her closest friends she's not single, she's not looking for anyone, that in fact—Hermione has found someone who makes her feel alive and more herself than she ever has before.

And Hermione especially has to remember his words when she gets ahead of herself and thinks about the future—their future.

Because the reality was, there might not even be one.

Chapter End Notes

Hey everyone!

Thank you as always for all your support and kindness - you're all the best!

There is a lot going to happen, changes to their dynamic and Draco is going to push at those boundaries. We'll see how Hermione deals with that.

Until Wednesday.

Such a Simple Thing

Chapter Summary

Hermione visits the Burrow and Draco is left shaken.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Such a Simple Thing

Hermione walks through the garden of the Burrow and prepares herself for the onslaught of Weasley's.

As soon as she steps over the threshold, a pair of muscular arms wrap themselves around her and she squeaks in surprise. Inhaling, she smells the scent of fire, wood and toffee and grins.

“Charlie! I didn’t know you were going to be here,”

Charlie releases her and grins down at her. “I didn’t tell anyone, thought I would surprise everyone with my presence.”

“Well it’s the best surprise,” she smiles genuinely at the big man. “How are things?”

“Busy, we’ve had three new dragons arrive in the last week, I figured I’d come back this weekend because I’m not sure when I’ll be able to for a while. How are things with you? I hear you finally have a house?”

They walk through the living room, into the kitchen and out to the back garden where everyone is sitting around the big table with cups in their hands.

“I do,” she tells him. “It’s a work in progress currently, but I love it. Will you have time to come over and see it before you leave? I’d really love it if you could.”

His big hand comes up to her shoulder and he squeezes. “I’ll make the time,” he tells her. “I’m so proud of you Hermione, you’re making your life what you want and I admire that,”

Hermione feels tears fill her eyes. “Thanks Charlie,” she whispers thickly.

“Brace yourself,” he chuckles as everyone turns to look at them. “They’re about to attack,”

Harry stands and comes over to greet her as Molly and Arthur follow close behind. “Hey Hermione,” Harry grins, giving her a hug. “I’m glad you could come over today, I’ve missed you.”

When he pulls back she looks into his happy green eyes and smiles. “I see you at work most days, Harry,”

“I know but that’s work. This is just us, being together and I’ve missed it,”

“Hermione dear,” Arthur says from beside Harry. “It’s lovely to have you here, how have you been?”

Hermione feels Harry squeeze her shoulder and walk back to the table leaving her to speak to Arthur and Molly. “Very well thank you, Arthur. How have you been?”

“Very well, very well—”

His words are cut off by a pair of tiny hands tugging on his trousers. “Grandad, please can you show me your treasures now?” Victoire, Bill and Fleur’s daughter asks him, looking impatient and determined.

“Yes, sweetheart,” he beams down at her, reaching for her hand. “Come on then,”

Hermione watches the pair walk hand in hand to Arthur’s shed and disappear before turning to greet Molly.

“I’ll never understand those two and their fascination with Muggle junk but it keeps them happy,” Molly laughs. “You’re looking well Hermione, I’m so glad you could visit today,”

Molly wraps Hermipne in a hug and Hermione feels herself momentarily overwhelmed with emotion. Since her days at Hogwarts, but especially since then and with the loss of her own mother, Molly has always been there, always felt like someone who wants the best for her. With the end of her relationship with Ron, Hermione worried that things would change between them. Nothing had changed, not with Molly and Arthur no the rest of the Weasley’s.

“Me too, been busy?” She asks the Weasley matriarch.

“Always something to do, but that’s how I like it. Can I get you something to drink? Eat? Lunch will be at one.”

“I’ll get her a coffee, mum,” Charlie says, still standing beside her. “Coffee?”

“Please,”

“I’ll leave you to spend some time with everyone, it’s my favourite thing having everyone together,” Molly whispers to her, looking over at the packed table. “I just wish—”

Hermione takes her hand and squeezes it. “I know, me too,”

The older witch meets Hermione's eyes, her eyes shining with tears at the loss of Fred they all still feel and Hermione thinks they always will. Molly wipes her eyes and heads into the kitchen while Hermione goes to the table and the many Weasley's filling it. Charlie hands her a cup and she takes a seat next to Harry avoiding the one next to Ron as his gaze lingers a little too long on her bare legs. It's warmer than most days in May and Hermione has opted to wear a navy shirt dress that nips in her waist and shows a modest amount of cleavage which by the looks of it, hasn't gone unnoticed either.

For a few minutes she just sits and listens to everyone trying to talk over one another, there always seems like there's so much to say and a fight to say it. Ginny stands and comes to sit on Hermione's other side, bumping her shoulder with hers.

"You okay, Hermione?"

"Of course," she says, turning to look at the redhead. "Are you?"

"Oh, you know me. Always trying to make the best of it. Has work been keeping you busy? I haven't seen you in what feels like forever."

Hermione shifts in her seat and tucks one leg underneath her. "It's been busy with work and the house renovations. I don't feel like I've not had much time for anything else,"

Lies.

Hermione has had time.

She's just chosen to spend any free time with Malfoy.

But she can't exactly say that.

"How's the house coming along?" Ginny asks her.

"It's a mess right now, but Pansy said this is the messy phase and that I'll see lots of changes happen very quickly once we get past it,"

"I still can't believe you're having Pansy Parkinson help you with this,"

"Actually Ginny, I think you and Pansy would get on really well. She's different to what she was like at school, they all are,"

"All?" Ginny asks, raising a brow.

"Yes, Pansy brought snakes over the other night,"

"Malfoy?"

She shakes her head. "Zabini and Nott," Hermione smiles. "They were a lot of fun—and inudenos."

Ginny laughs. "Perhaps we would get on then."

“How are you really, Gin? You look—”

Ginny sighs. “Tired? I don’t know if it’s over practising or I’m just run down but I’m exhausted all the time,”

“The season’s about to start, I guess you’re training every moment of the day?”

She nods her red head and leans it on Hermione’s shoulder. “And night sometimes,” she yawns. “I think I just need a holiday but Harry is so busy with work and the season is about to start and I don’t see it happening.”

“If there’s anything I can do to make it happen, you’ll tell me?”

Ginny yawns again and nods. “I will, but short of a miracle, it’s not happening.”

Molly comes over to the table to ask the men to come and help her bring lunch out while the women help lay the table. Ginny and Fleur make quick work of it and they’re sitting back down a few minutes later. When everything is ready, they all help themselves and the chatter slows down while everyone eats. Hermione is halfway through her chicken when Ginny abruptly stands and runs into the house.

“Gin?” Harry calls after her, standing to follow.

“Is she okay?” Molly calls after him.

“I’ll go find out,”

Everyone looks at one another and back to the door Ginny just vanished through. They eat in an awkward silence until Harry comes back without Ginny.

“She’s not feeling great, I think she’s exhausted from training so she’s gone to lay down for a while,”

As everyone begins eating, attention turns to Hermione when Fleur asks if Hermione is seeing anyone at the moment. Ron’s ears go red, Hermione blushes and Harry clears his throat.

“Not right now, no,” she says uncomfortably.

“We don’t all have to be married and popping out kids, Fleur,” George tells her, rolling his eyes.

“Popping out kids?” Bill rolls his eyes. “We have one child, George.”

“One more than the rest of us though, huh?” George grins before meeting her eyes and nodding, letting her know he’ll move the conversation away from that line any time she wants, which she’s grateful for.

Hermione can’t tell anyone about her relationship with Malfoy even if she wanted to, she has no idea what it is right now and she can’t exactly tell people that they have mind blowing sex,

he talks absolute filth to her and she has the most intense orgasms when he dominates her, can she?

Fleur isn't deterred however and asks Hermione once again about her love life. Hermione tries to be as polite and casual as she can be.

"No one serious, no. I'm busy with work right now."

"No one serious?" Charlie grins. "So, someone casual?"

Hermione laughs and shakes her head. "No one casual either,"

"All men are fools," George declares.

Charlie agrees.

Ron looks anywhere but at her.

Ginny makes an appearance a little later while everyone is demolishing Molly's famous treacle tart. She declines a slice looking a little green and sips slowly from a glass of iced water. Hermione looks at her friend and has a suspicion that it's not training that has Ginny so exhausted. Harry and Ginny leave soon after so she doesn't have a chance to speak with her, but decides she would visit her friend this week and check on her.

Charlie sends Hermione and owl asking if she's free for him to pop over on Sunday morning before he heads back to Romania, she replies letting him know she is and she'd see him soon.

Only, when the Floo flares to life a second later and two voices call out her name, neither one of them Charlie's, Hermione panics.

"Granger! Granger! Wherefore art thou, Granger?" Theo turns the corner into the kitchen a second later and grins. "Ah, there you are!"

"Morning Theo," she smiles back, looking over his shoulder at the petite raven-haired beauty behind him. "And Pansy. Why are you here?"

"Charming," Pansy smirks. "We come with gifts of paint and—"

"Breakfast!" Theo says happily and holds out coffee cups and bags full of pastry with a flourish.

"Oh, you shouldn't have," Hermione says, taking the coffee cup from the tall, handsome snake.

"Well, we woke up hungry and decided to get buttery pastries and Pansy said she had to come bring paint over and I wasn't going to pass up a chance to come over and cement the date for this threesome we're having, was I?"

"Ummmm,"

Hermione looks past Theo and Pansy and spots Charlie looking mischievously at her. "I didn't think you were the sort, Hermione," he grins.

"I'm not!" She exclaims. "Charlie, sorry, I didn't hear the Floo,"

"Not to worry, planning a threesome is way more exciting," he teases her.

"There's no threesome," she scowls. "Come in, this is Pansy and Theo. Theo, Pansy, this is Charlie,"

Charlie steps over the threshold of the kitchen and holds a large, covered in burn marks, hand out to Pansy who curls her tiny one into his and shakes.

"You're a Weasley," she states.

"Guilty, but I promise I'm nothing like the rest of them,"

He's not wrong. Where most of the Weasley's are as normal as can be, perhaps except Bill of course, Charlie works with dragons, lives in a modest wooden hut and doesn't and never has had a steady relationship for as long as Hermione has known him. Traditional is not a word anyone would associate with Charlie Weasley.

She watches as he releases Pansy's hand and steps towards Theo. Who hasn't said a word since Charlie stepped through and is now standing with his mouth open and green eyes wide.

"Charlie, nice to meet you,"

Charlie holds out his big hand to Theo, but Theo just looks at him. Pansy looks at Hermione and they both struggle to hold in their sniggers.

"This is where you shake my hand, Theo," Charlie teases him.

Theo closes his mouth and slides his palm into Charlie's, but jerks back a second later. "Nice —nice to meet you," he croaks.

Hermione watches with interest as Theo blushes and looks down at his feet. Charlie smirks and looks around the kitchen, or what's left of it.

"So this is the house," Charlie peers out into the garden and then back to her. "I love it, Hermione, I think you're going to be happy here,"

Hermione beams at him. He's the first person to see past the mess and work and see the home she will eventually have.

“Thanks, Charlie,”

“Are we having breakfast or not?” Pansy asks with a little huff. “I’m not nice when I’m hungry,”

Theo seems to wake up. “Just when you’re hungry?”

Pansy rolls her eyes and takes her coffee from the holder in Theo’s hand. “There isn’t enough coffee for everyone and I’m sorry Weasley, but you’re not having mine,”

Charlie laughs and she catches Theo biting his bottom lip and closing his eyes.

“It’s fine, I can make myself one,”

Quick as a flash, Theo holds out the remaining cup to him. “You can have mine, I don’t need it,”

Hermione and Pansy look at each other and smirk.

It seems Theodore Nott is smitten with the dragon handling eldest Weasley brother and by the looks that Charlie is throwing Theo, he’s a little more than interested too.

See? Hermione thinks attraction doesn’t always have to be complicated.

Sometimes it really can be such a simple thing.

At three o’clock on Tuesday, a knock on Hermione’s office door brings a tall, dominant blond with a pile of parchment and what looks like a book in his hands.

“What’s all this?” Hermione asks him as he steps inside and closes the door.

She’s instantly on high alert.

Malfoy closing the door usually leads to something inappropriate for work.

“These,” he holds up the parchment. “Are notes on the Runes I’d like you to look over in case I’m missing something. This,” he drops the black leather book on her desk. “Is a charmed notebook so I can contact you when we’re not together. No one except you can open it, just press your palm onto the cover and speak the words *Tu es incolumem mecum* and it will open for you,” Malfoy meets her eyes and doesn’t look away. “When a new message appears for either of us, the gets warm and the emblem on the front glows,”

Hermione’s eyes go wide. “What does *Tu es incolumem mecum* mean?”

She watches as Malfoy steps around her desk, he reaches for her chin and turns her face up to look at him. He's towering over her, strong and powerful yet she doesn't feel anything but safe.

"Tu es incolumem mecum," he says, leaning down to kiss her while running his thumb over her jaw, then dropping to her throat and leaning closer. "You are safe with me," he murmurs against her lips.

Hermione shudders.

Then leans forward to deepen the kiss.

He accepts, bringing his hands up to her hair and tugging Hermione to where he wants her.

She gives everything he demands and he takes it greedily.

"I'm free tonight for the dinner you promised me," he tells her as he steps back, hand still holding her jaw.

"Oh, are you now?" She teases. "What if I'm busy?"

He smirks down at her. "Then I'd insist you cancel your plans,"

Her blood heats at the possessiveness in his gaze and tone. "And—if I didn't?"

He chuckles and releases her. "We both know you would do whatever I said, Granger," Malfoy walks around her desk and towards the door. "You like being good for me and Gods knows I fucking love it. I'll see you here at five-thirty,"

Hermione doesn't have a chance to respond before he leaves, closing her door with a soft snap. She picks up the notebook and looks at the emblem on the cover. It's a simple Rune for protection, but paired with the words she has to say in order for it to open? It feels like more than that. Hermione jumps as the book warms in her palms and the Rune glows green. Following Malfoy's instructions, she places her palm on the cover and repeats the Latin phrase he told her to. The book clicks open revealing thick pages and a message from the man himself.

Malfoy: *It took everything in me not to lock your office door and take you on your desk, do you know that? You have no business looking that fucking beautiful while at work.*

Hermione's face breaks out into a massive smile as she reads his words. She replies.

Hermione: *What was stopping you?*

Malfoy's reply is instant.

Malfoy: *The fact I have to go and visit a potential safe house in five minutes with Potter. Otherwise, Granger, you'd find yourself on your back, your legs around my shoulders and my tongue buried in your cunt.*

She groans and clenches her legs together even while dread flows through her veins.

Hermione: *Later? Please be careful. I want to have dinner with you in one piece please.*

Malfoy: 5.30.

Hermione waits for a full five minutes for another message but none arrive.

She finds it difficult to stay focused on any work all the time she knows Malfoy and Harry are out searching a potential Death Eater safe house. She tries to concentrate on the Runes in front of her but finds they're just blurring into one. Frustrated, Hermione gets to her feet and walks to the break room to make a coffee, on her way back she peeks into Harry's office and finds it empty.

As she approaches hers, she pokes her head into Malfoy's and finds it equally as vacant.

Her stomach churns as the minutes tick by and there's no word on any development.

After another hour of waiting, she finally manages to focus on the Runes in front of her, she confirms to herself that the runes she identified as being used to communicate something to do with Malfoy are exactly that. They're always used with runes such as wrath, justice and death. But other than that, Hermione is still at a loss for what the Death Eaters are trying to communicate. She blocks out everything except the runes and loses herself to her work for the afternoon.

Hermione almost jumps out of her skin when the door opens and Malfoy steps into her office.

He's breathing heavily and his normally pale skin is flushed.

"Are you okay?" She asks, putting her quill down.

“Yes, Potter is too. But—Thompson isn’t. We encountered a problem while there,” he says like it’s normal. “We ran into a few—He got hit by a curse and is currently fighting for his life in St Mungos. Granger—”

She’s on her feet and in his arms in seconds. She notices the tremble in them straight away.

“What do you need?” She asks, knowing he’s struggling.

He inhales deeply and tenses. “You,” he tells her simply. “I need you. And I need privacy to do all the fucking things I need to remind myself that I’m alive and I’m in control,”

Hermione steps back, *Accios* her bag and cloak before reaching for his shaking hand. She looks up at him and sees just how much whatever they encountered has shaken him.

“I’ll see you at mine in ten minutes and I’ll do whatever you need me to. You’re safe with me too,”

Hermione leans up on her tiptoes and kisses him once, not sure if it’s what he wants or needs, but knowing it’s what she needs.

When she steps back, his eyes are closed and he’s breathing deeply.

Chapter End Notes

Happy (Very hot in England) Wednesday, everyone!

Phew, it's hot, hot, hot in the UK right now so I've been trying to keep cool while writing.

I hope you enjoy a little more Theo and Pansy in this chapter - I loved writing that scene.

There's lots to come in the next few chapters and if it's possible, Draco is going to get more confusing.

Thank you as ALWAYS for the comments, the Kudos, the subscriptions and for reading my little WIP.

It truly, truly means the world that you're reading and I appreciate you all!

See you Sunday!

Stay

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Stay

When Draco arrives at Hermione's house, he seems more frantic than he did when she left him at the office. He pounces on her the second he exits the Floo, gripping her hips, kissing her deeply and pushing her against the bare brickwork behind her. She winces at the sudden impact as his hands reach for her legs and she wraps them around his hips as his fingers tug at the hem of her dress and pulls.

The material doesn't give way and he growls his frustration, leaning back to pull his wand out of his jacket and muttering a slicing charm. The material splits in two and he grunts when he's able to get his hands on the bare skin of her thigh and hip, before he drops his wand and thrusts his erection up between her legs.

"Malfoy—"

He silences her with a kiss seconds before they're moving.

She's being placed on top of the table that's being used for storing the paint pots Pansy brought over and are going to be used to decorate the room. She doesn't have a chance to breathe before Malfoy is standing between her legs, vanishing her clothes and leaning over her to bite and pinch at her skin as she arches into him.

"Malfoy ple—"

"Ssssh. Don't speak."

His eyes are dark when she looks at him.

His touch, possessive.

His urgency, frantic.

"Fucking need you, Granger," he speaks against her skin as he bites and tugs at her nipples.
"Make me forget—feel alive with you—fuck—"

Hermione takes what he wants to give her and doesn't stop him.

He's lost to her at this moment.

He's lost to himself too.

His hands leave her and he reaches for his suit jacket, tugging it off and throwing it carelessly onto the dusty floor.

“Don’t it will get—”

Malfoy reaches one hand up to her mouth and covers her lips with his palm. “I said don’t fucking speak,”

He glares at her and she keeps silent.

She watches as his hands reach for his belt and he pulls it free. “Hands,”

She holds them out to him, allowing him to secure them with his leather belt, then with a spell she doesn’t catch, he has her rising off the table a little before she’s secured to the ceiling by nothing but his magic.

He strips out of his clothes and discards them like they’re worth nothing onto her floor. When he steps back between her legs, he’s stroking his erection and looking at her restrained hands.

“Fucking beautiful, you know that?”

Oh, so he can talk?

“You’re a silly, silly witch, Granger, you know that? I’m a controlling fucking bastard and you allow me to

restrain you and do whatever I want without a second thought,” he reaches his other hand forward and sinks two fingers into her.

She groans and arches into his touch.

“No one knows about us, no one knows I’m here. What makes you think you’re so safe with me?”

She doesn’t react to his threatening words. She looks into his face with nothing but determination and

openness.

“You told me yourself, I’m safe with you. Well you’re safe with me, too Draco. I’ll be whatever or whoever you

need me to be. Trust me,”

His eyes flash to hers at the use of his given name.

She didn’t mean to do it, it was a conscious thing, it just fell out of her mouth and felt right.

“*Granger*—” He cuts himself off and takes a deep breath.

He moves forward, hands reaching for her hands and for one second she thinks he is going to release her hands for this. He doesn't. He grits his teeth, lines himself up against her and with one deep, unforgiving thrust, impales her on his cock.

He keeps his eyes on her breasts as he moves inside her, watching as they bounce with each punishing thrust into her body. His fingers dig bruisingly into her hips as he drops his mouth to her chest and bites on her sensitive nipples. With a move so fast it leaves her dizzy, he flips her over and thrusts into her from behind. The table moves with them and the paint precariously balanced pots on the top begin to move with them.

"The paint!" She groans as he reaches between them and rubs circles on her clitoris.

"Fuck the paint," he pants from behind her.

A sharp slap connects with her bare arse and she clenches around him making him grunt. He doesn't let up, only brings one hand up and around her throat while he latches his teeth to the juncture of her neck and shoulder and bites down all the while his free hand continues to mark her arse with his hand.

The sensations altogether are too much and she comes, her climax ripping through her as she shudders and clutches at the table, shaking everything on top of it as she rides the waves of her orgasm. As one pot of paint falls to the floor, the lid dislodges itself and the contents pours across the floor, covering their feet in sage green paint.

Malfoy groans and drags her to the floor, climbing on top of her and sliding back inside of her, groaning at the feeling of their joined bodies while her hair and body soak up the paint spilling around them. Malfoy whispers a spell and her hands are released, then he's linking their fingers, dragging them above her head and moving inside her with his eyes locked on hers.

Hermione feels a switch, something changes in that moment.

They're no longer trying to work out what this thing between them is.

They know, in that second of time, exactly what they are to each other.

And it terrifies them both.

She can see it on his face and she's positive he can see it on hers.

She feels herself begin to shake around him, her body reaching for the climax she's desperate for all of a sudden. The connection is too intense, too raw.

"*Draco* —"

He leans forward and kisses her deeply, his tongue sweeping hers, claiming every part of her he can reach.

He pulls back and gazes down at her for a second, his eyes wide and clear and open to her. She knows everything has changed in that moment and knows whatever happens from this

point on, they can never go back.

Malfoy grits his teeth and with his fingers still wrapped around hers, he drops his forehead to hers.

“I’m going to come, Granger and I want you to come with me,”

“I can’t—”

“You can. You will—”

She nods and tilts her hips up to meet him. He moves his hips making his cock hit a spot so deep inside her she can’t help but grip his fingers tighter and wrap her legs more firmly around his waist. The pace he sets is unrelenting and has her tensing beneath him, Seconds later they’re both climaxing, shuddering and groaning in each other’s arms, covered in paint and sweat and each other.

And as she feels the first pulse of his release, he seals his mouth over hers and pants the sexiest word she’s ever heard in her life right into her mouth.

“*Hermione* —”

“We need to shower,” she whispers into the darkness of the room.

Neither of them have moved, Draco is still inside her, their hands still gripping the other.

“Are you okay?” His voice is raspy, but she can hear the concern there.

“Of course I am, are you okay?”

He sighs and withdraws slowly, coming to rest on his knees in front of her. His cock glistened with their combined releases and still very much erect.

“I don’t know, Granger,” she watches as he runs a hand across his face, not meeting her eyes.
“I don’t fucking know,”

Hermione sits up and reaches for his hand, linking their fingers together again. “Talk to me, what’s going on inside your head?”

He laughs. Empty and bitter. “Let’s go have that shower. We’re covered in paint,”

She looks down at them and laughs. “Pansy is going to kill you,”

“I’ll replace it, she won’t even need to know,”

He stands and holds out a hand to her. She takes it and he pulls her into him and kisses her, possessing every part of her with his mouth like always.

“I was rough with you,” he says, tracing her jaw with his thumb. “I didn’t ask, I took,”

“I wanted it, I like it, I’ll tell you no if I don’t,”

He looks into her eyes, grey to brown, both equally as open and clear.

“It doesn’t make it right. I know I shouldn’t but I also know I’ll fucking do it again,”

“Draco—it’s okay. I told you, you’re safe with me,”

His eyes darken at her use of his name again and he lifts her, kissing her as he walks towards the staircase.

“Be careful, there’s stuff everywhere,”

He doesn’t speak as he carries her up the stairs, into her bathroom and into the shower. He doesn’t put her down as he turns on the water, he doesn’t show any signs that she’s heavy or it’s a strain. He picks up her body wash and only then does he place her, carefully, on her feet.

“Let me wash you,”

She nods and stands before him, naked, covered in paint with water running down her body. His hands come up and begin to rub the soapy suds across her skin, pressing firmly in places the paint is worst. He doesn’t speak and she doesn’t either. She lets him take care of her, to wash away the evidence of their coupling. But she watches him, the way he blinks out the droplets of water from his long lashes, the way he flicks his head to push the hair that falls repeatedly forward and into his eyes, out of the way.

Hermione watches the reverence in his eyes as he begins to wash her hair, long fingers soaping up her scalp before he turns her and starts on the back. He turns her so she’s directly under the spray and rinses her hair and only when she’s completely clean does he work on himself. Hermione reaches for the soap and with lathered hands, holds them out to him, asking for permission.

His nostrils flare as he nods his approval.

Hermione makes the most of being able to touch him, being able to caress and knead his muscles. He’s absolutely glorious, so strong and defined, the scars on his skin only adding to that perfection. He’s not only grown into his features but his body too, filling it out and making him a man everyone watches when he’s in the room.

Hermione watches as the water travels down the lines of his body, leaving the most delicious looking trail. A trail she wants to follow with her tongue.

“Can I—” Grey eyes meet hers. “I want to taste you,” she tells him, leaning forward. “I want to trace every curve, every line with my tongue,”

He arches a pale eyebrow at her. “Do you now?”

“Yes,” she breaks all the rules and steps forward to wrap her hand around his hard cock. “I want to please you,”

“Then kneel,”

She does as he asks and when the tip of his cock bumps her bottom lip, she opens for him, taking him deep into her mouth and sucking. His hips jut forward, his hands go to her hair and he thrusts slowly in and out of her mouth. Hermione looks up as he looks down at her and she feels like a fucking Goddess. So powerful and strong to be given this gift.

“You’re beautiful,” he tells her almost tenderly as he pushes deeper still and hits the back of her throat. “You’re strong and powerful and so fucking beautiful and you’re all for me, aren’t you?”

She nods around his erection as he thrusts forward.

“You like this? On your knees with my cock in your mouth?”

She nods again.

“Stretching—” he groans and his head drops back. “—Fuck you take me so well, such a good, good girl,”

Hermione grins around him and sucks harder.

“Do you want me to come? Is that what you want, Granger?”

Hermione hadn’t failed to notice that she’s back to Granger.

Without warning, Malfoy tenses and floods her tongue with his climax. Like the good girl she is, she swallows every drop while never taking her eyes off his. The pleasure and need she sees reflected back at her is enough to start a spark of an orgasm low in her belly.

Hermione gets to her feet and turns off the shower. When she turns back around, Malfoy pushes her against the shower wall and drops his hand between her thighs. With more knowledge than he should have, he expertly twists his hand and presses two fingers into her, rubbing her clitoris with his thumb.

“Come for me, beautiful, I want to feel it,”

Hermione’s body obeys before she even has a chance to think.

When she’s finished shuddering, he kisses her softly, steps out of the shower and wraps his hips in a towel, handing her one too. Draco steps into her room and casually drops himself down onto her bed. He looks up at her, eyes clear and face soft, a small smirk lifting the corner of his mouth.

“You promised me food, Granger and after that, I need it,”

Hermione nods and walks over to her wardrobe to get changed. She opts for a pair of silk pyjamas, dropping her towel with no self-consciousness in sight. She hears his intake of breath but continues what she's doing, slipping the camisole over her head and stepping into her shorts. Walking past him, she twists her hair on top of her head and secures it with a clip.

"Are you going to get dressed or stay in the towel?" She asks him, coming to stand between his legs.

He wraps his arms around her waist and rests his head on her stomach. "I'll get dressed,"

"Okay, well, I'll phone for food. Any requests?"

He shakes his head.

"Would you like a drink?"

He nods.

"Are you going to speak?" She laughs.

He shakes his head again and she feels his smile against her.

"Okay well, I'll be downstairs when you're ready, take your time,"

In a moment of madness, she curls herself around him and presses a kiss to the top of his wet head. The act is intimate and gentle, and she doesn't push her luck for too long before she pulls back and turns to walk out of the bedroom.

They eat in the garden, her bare leg in between Draco's, his hand resting on her calf for most of the time they're eating. It's comfortable and easier than she thought it would be to have him in her space. He talks a little about the safe house and what happened but refuses to go into any detail.

When Hermione offers coffee Draco declines and stands, stretching his arms above his head.

"I should go,"

Hermione's stomach falls. "Go?"

He looks at her. "Home, I should go home,"

"You can—will you stay here? With me?" She asks in a small voice.

Draco looks out at the stream and shakes his head. "I have to be in work early tomorrow,"

“And you can’t go into work from here?”

Draco steps closer to her and holds her chin in his hand. “I don’t have anything here, and in any case, I don’t make a habit of staying over with anyone,”

Anyone.

Ouch .

“Okay,” Hermione nods, swallowing down the disappointment she feels.

She stands and walks back into the house in front of him, stopping in the lounge by the fireplace. The paint has been vanished, any evidence of their passion gone. Hermione watches in silence as Draco slips his jacket back on and looks at her.

“Don’t give me those eyes, Granger,” he shakes his head. “You know what we are, you know what I am,” he steps closer to her and makes her look at him. “This will all hurt a lot less if you stop expecting things from me that I cannot give you,”

She pinches her thigh to stop the tears from falling in front of him and nods her head. He leans down to kiss her, running his thumb along her jaw as his tongue brushes against hers.

“I’ll see you tomorrow,”

Then he turns, picks up a handful of green powder and calls Burton House, vanishing from sight in a flash of green flames without so much as a look back.

Hermione collapses.

The pain in her chest takes over as tears stream down her face and a sobs rips free from her throat.

She was sure after tonight, things were going to be different, they shared something monumental together, she’d felt it. There had been a shift and she was sure things would change.

No.

She hoped.

Draco had told her time and time again what he was and how things would be, yet Hermione continues to make things a bigger deal than they actually are.

No.

That’s not the truth.

She felt it.

She saw it with her own eyes.

He'd called her Hermione.

Surely he felt different too?

After five minutes, Hermione gets annoyed with herself for letting him do this to her again and drags herself off the floor and to the kitchen to make herself a cup of tea. She's halfway through making it when the Floo flares to life with a call and Ginny calls her name.

"Hermione?"

She picks up her cup, wipes her face and goes to the fireplace. "Ginny, are you okay?"

Ginny watches her, eyebrows raised and worry on her face. "What's wrong?"

Hermione laughs tearfully and wipes her head. "Nothing, just being in the house reminding me of why I have it, I just miss mum and dad. I'm fine,"

The lie rolls easily off her tongue and it seems to convince Ginny who looks sadly at her.

"I'm sorry, Hermione, I can't imagine how difficult it all is,"

Hermione nods and wipes her eyes again. "Why are you calling? Are you okay? Is it Harry?"

Ginny laughs and shakes her head. "No, we're both fine. Except—"

"Except?"

"I went to St Mungo's today because—well—"

Hermione knows what she's going to say before she says it.

"It turns out—that I'm—that we're—I'm pregnant, Hermione," Ginny blurts out quickly.

Hermione beams. "Oh, Gin, congratulations!"

Ginny shakes her head like she still can't believe it. "Thanks, I think," she laughs. "I mean we wanted children but we didn't really plan it to be now,"

"How's Harry?"

Ginny laughs again. "He's shocked but excited, Made some stupid joke that nothing could stop the Chosen One's sperm,"

Hermione cringes.

"Boys," both women say together and then laugh.

"Are you sure you're okay, Hermione?" Ginny asks softly.

"I promise I'm fine, nothing I can't handle,"

She hopes.

“Well, I couldn’t wait to tell you. Harry wanted to tell you in person but I just—you’re my best friend and I wanted you to know,”

“I love you, Ginny. You’re going to make wonderful parents.”

“Come over this weekend? I’d offer to cook but this kid doesn’t want me to eat anything at all right now,”

“I’ll be there, look after yourself and if there’s anything I can do, tell me,”

Ginny nods and they say goodbye, Hermione telling Ginny to tell Harry how happy she is for them both.

Exhausted from her day, Hermione heads up to her bedroom and climbs into bed and falls asleep almost instantly only to find herself in dreams filled with an identical Floo call with Ginny, only it’s Hermione announcing that she’s expecting and Draco is by her side.

Chapter End Notes

Well there we have it.

They finally used their given names ... and he leaves, again.

He really is going to be the most frustrating man for a while, but he'll get there, I promise.

Thank you all for reading the kudos and comments - you're all just the best!

See you Wednesday.

Breathe Again

Chapter Summary

A frustrated Hermione struggles with her day after such a monumental night before and Draco .. is Draco.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Breathe Again

Hermione wakes to the front cover of her notebook glowing and a message from Malfoy

Malfoy: I woke up hard and stroked myself to memories of your lips wrapped around my cock. It's a poor substitute and I hated it.

Hermione: That was your choice. Not my fault. You know where I am. I asked you to stay.

Malfoy: And you know why I didn't. Don't be petulant, Granger.

Hermione: I'm leaving for work, Malfoy. I'm busy.

Malfoy: Back to Malfoy already?

Hermione ignores the flash of the notebook as she leaves for work. She grabs herself a coffee from the Muggle coffee shop down the road and heads into her office. Hermione throws up a ward on her door to alert her to who is about to knock and ignores everyone else on the floor until lunchtime when she's forced to attend a debriefing on the safe house raid from the previous day.

Otto fills everyone in with Harry and Malfoy while Hermione ignores the tall blond trying to make eye contact with her. She knows she's being childish, that sex can be uncomplicated and that they're both adults and can deal with it. But something had changed last night between them and his dismissal only hurt more when she woke up this morning.

When the meeting ends, Hermione leaves the room, heads to her office and grabs her bag. It's a bright, sunny day and she plans to grab lunch and go outside to get some air and clear her head. As she's putting her wand in her holster her wards alert her to Malfoy's presence. She straightens her spine and pastes on an unbothered face seconds before he knocks and opens the door.

"Are you free?" He asks in his usual casual drawl.

"No, I'm going out,"

"Where?"

"It's none of your business, excuse me,"

Hermione tries to move past him but he blocks the doorway and refuses to move. She raises her chin to look at him and makes her annoyance clear.

"Excuse me, Malfoy," she says again through gritted teeth.

"You're mad at me,"

"I'm nothing at you, please remove yourself from the door so I can leave,"

He reaches out and presses a hand to her cheek. "*Look at me* ,"

She can't help it.

Her body responds like it always does, like she was born to obey him.

"Why are you upset? Because I wouldn't stay over? I explained why—"

"No, you didn't," she glares at him. "You made some pathetic excuse because we shared something that meant more than you're ready to admit and you got scared," she whispers to him. "Now please, move out of my way."

He steps out of the way and she moves past him to the lift. It's busy when it arrives but she pushes a path in and stands towards the back, only to regret the decision immediately.

"Hermione, it's so good to see you,"

Hermione grits her teeth. "Cormac,"

"Where have you been hiding? Did you get a new dress? I haven't seen this one before." He breathes on her neck, far too close for her liking. "You look ravishing."

Hermione takes a step to the side and puts some distance between them as the lift moves with a sudden jolt. Keeping her head down and as far away from Cormac as she can, she hopes not to have to interact with him anymore on the journey to the atrium. But of course, luck is not on her side right now,

“Are you going to the summer gala?” He asks closer to her again.

“Of course I am,” she snaps. “Everyone goes.”

“Do you have a date?”

She turns her head and glares at him. “I don’t think that’s any of your business, Cormac,”

“Would you like to—”

Hermione cuts him off. “Let me stop you there. I’m not interested in being your date, like I haven’t been the last seven times you’ve asked me. Please stop embarrassing yourself.”

They arrive at the atrium and Hermiopne makes a quick escape putting as much distance as she can from Cormac. She grabs her favourite chicken sandwich, a giant bag of crisps and two cookies from her favourite sandwich shop and heads to the big patch of grass at the bottom of Diagon. Finding a bench in the sunshine and right by the pond, she slips off her heels, puts on her sunglasses and sets out her lunch.

Breathing in the fresh air and soaking in the warmth of the day helps calm her down a little. She’s so angry—at everyone and everything—right now. Hermione’s life isn’t supposed to be like this, she’s supposed to be happy, in the job she loves and with the man of her dreams.

Why the fuck does the man of her dreams have to be the biggest arsehole around?

Ten minutes later, she’s sitting reading a book and trying desperately to forget everything when a shadow appears over her and she looks up. “What are you doing here?” She almost growls at Malfoy.

“Manners, Granger,” he scowls. “I’m grabbing lunch. May I join you?”

“No you may not,”

Hermione looks back down at her book and continues to eat her lunch. Malfoy sits down anyway.

“Why did you bother to ask me if you’re going to do whatever the hell you want anyway?”

“Manners,” he says as he opens up an identical packet to hers.

“Fine,” she huffs crunching noise into a crisp. “Why do you have that sandwich?”

“I was told it was the best, I thought I would try it,”

“Oh? So you do listen to what other people say sometimes?”

“Granger—”

“Don’t—”

“I don’t understand why you’re so mad at me.”

Hermione shifts, closing her book and tucking her feet under her before turning to look at him. “And that’s really the problem, Malfoy. You don’t see a problem in anything you do or say or how you behave.”

“I think that’s a bit unreasonable, Granger. I haven’t lead you on, I’ve been brutally honest with you in fact,”

“Brutal in the right word,” she mutters under her breath.

“All of this anger because I wouldn’t stay the night?”

“No, not just because of that. I thought—I thought we shared something special last night,” she says quietly

not wanting to be overheard. “It was different, it felt different and you can’t pretend that it didn’t. I was there. I felt it, I heard you—”

“I was there, I know what happened,”

“Then why are you acting like nothing has changed?” Hermione tries to keep her voice even.

“Because—”

“You gave me the notebook that only I can get into with the most beautiful password, you told me you needed me. I gave you everything you wanted and you still left me. Why? What am I doing wrong?”

One treacherous tear slid beneath her sunglasses and splashed into her lap.

He sees it.

One big hand reaches out and touches her hand where it landed. “I—Granger, I don’t know how to navigate this, it’s much more complicated than I thought it would be. But I don’t want to hurt you like this, I don’t get any joy from seeing you crying.”

Hermione keeps her eyes down, not wanting to look at him.

“Please look at me,”

She slowly raises her head.

He leans forward and removes her sunglasses.

“I’m a bastard and I’m—I’m sorry if my actions hurt you,” he swallows hard but doesn’t break eye contact.

Hermione sighs. “I just don’t understand this, I’ve never been with anyone like this before and I’m kidding myself I can do casual with no feelings and I can’t. It hurts, Mafloy, it really hurts. But not—not being with you at all is going to hurt more. I’m fucked whatever I do,”

His eyes tense at her choice of words.

“I just want to not hurt,” she whispers. “I’ve had enough, I just want to be—” she stops herself from saying the word on the tip of her tongue.

He signs and brushes his hand up her neck. “Can we just—please, can we just be as we are for now?”

“I don’t know if I can,”

He releases her neck and stands. “Think about it. If you want to talk, I’ll be at Burton House tonight.”

As he walks past her, he brushes one finger along her shoulder and everything inside her tingles.

When Hermione gets home, Pansy is speaking to the renovators while Theo lounges in her garden. Taking a deep breath she heads out to sit with the handsome brunette.

“Hey, Granger,” Theo says, opening his eyes and looking at her before frowning. “Bad day?”

“Something like that,”

“Can I help?” He asks in the most gentle, caring tone.

“I—I don’t think so, no. But thank you,”

Theo reaches over and rests his hand on top of hers. “Sometimes we think a situation is hopeless, when really, we just need to give it a little more time, yeah?”

Hermione feels tears spill over and wipes them. “Bloody hell, I’m sorry, Theo,” she groans, embarrassed to be crying at the poor man.

“It’s okay, Hermione, everyone needs friends and I hope we can be friends. I’m here for you,”

“I just don’t understand it and I want to, I hate not understanding something,” she laughs tearily.

“What don’t you understand?” He asks softly.

“Men,” she laughs. “I don’t understand men,”

Theo sighs too. “Oh, neither do I and I am one,”

Hermione looks at him and smiles. “Anyone in particular?”

Theo looks at her and cocks his head to the side. “You saw me make an absolute arse of myself in your kitchen, Granger. You know who I’m talking about,”

“Charlie,”

“Yes,” Theo sighs dramatically. “Charlie,”

“So send him and owl,”

“And say what exactly? Oh, hi Charlie, I’m the idiot who you met in Granger’s kitchen. Any chance you’d like to meet for a drink even though you’re in Romania and I’m in England?”

“Well, why not?”

“It’s ludicrous, is why not,” Theo tells her. “No one like him, would be interest in someone like me,”

“Someone like you? You mean handsome, kind, funny? Sure because no one wants those qualities in a partner, do they?” She rolls her eyes.

“You know who my father is, you know what he did, that he was a part of and therefore the brush I’m tarnished with,” Theo looks away from her. “Will that bother him? Do you think he would want to grab a drink?” Theo asks quietly.

Hermione reaches over and squeezes his hand. “People change, Theo. You’re not responsible for who your father is and what he did,” she smiles at him and he nods. “As for whether it will bother Charlie, I don’t think so. He’s—different from the rest of his family really, always has been. He lives in Romania and works at a dragon sanctuary, I don’t know how much there is to drink there, but I’m sure he’d like to have one with you anyway,”

Theo looks unsure and nervous all of a sudden. “I don’t know what got into me, Granger, I swear, I am never like that. I just couldn’t think with him standing there—”

“I know the feeling, Theo. There is just something about some people that just renders us utterly helpless,”

“Who is he?” Theo smiles at her, arching one brow.

“Someone I can’t speak about yet,”

“Ah, that explains the bad day,”

Hermione just nods and watches Pansy walk towards her. “Granger, I have good news!” The small raven-haired Slytherin sings. “The kitchen is going to start being put together next

week, so that will mean your downstairs will start being liveable again,”

“That’s wonderful news,” Hermione smiles.

“Why are you crying?” Pansy looks suddenly serious. “Theo, what have you done?”

The man holds his hands up. “I’ve done nothing!” He exclaims.

“It’s not Theo,” Hermione says.

“Then who do I need to kill?” Pansy scowls, sitting down on Theo’s lap as he wraps one arm around her waist in such a comfortable and easy way.

“No one,”

Pansy just stares at her. “If he’s worth having in your life, Granger, there won’t be any reason for tears.”

Hermione avoids Malfoy for the rest of the day and when she leaves the Ministry, she avoids looking in the direction of his office too. When she arrives home, the painting is finished and for a fraction of a second she regrets the colour. There’s no way she’ll be able to look at it now and not think about it flooding the floor and covering them both while Malfoy was above her, moving inside her, claiming every damn inch of her mind, body and soul.

Sighing, she heads up to her room to get changed, slipping into a pair of cutoff denim shorts and a flowy white top before pouring herself a glass of wine and heading out into the garden with a book.

And that’s where Malfoy’s Eagle Owl finds her.

“Hello, what have you got for me, then?”

The bird holds its leg out and sits waiting for her to read it.

Granger,

I’ve sent three messages to your notebook which you’ve ignored.

I've not been able to think clearly all day, knowing I've upset you so much doesn't sit well with me.

Please believe this is the last thing I want to do.

I want to invite you for dinner tomorrow. Burton House, 7.30.

I want to talk and try and work this whole mess out.

Please say you'll come?

DLM

Hermione reads the letter three times. The hot and cold nature of Draco Malfoy is exhausting. His owl stares at her until she *Accios* a parchment and quill and writes back to its master.

Malfoy,

I don't carry it around with me all the time, I'll see your messages when I'm next near the book.

I was planning to go shopping for a dress for the summer gala tomorrow as I have booked the day off work and I don't know what time I'll be home.

Another time.

HJG

Attaching the note to the owl's leg, Hermione watches it out of sight before she can't take the curiosity and goes to get her notebook. Pressing her hand to the cover she speaks the words and the cover falls open.

Malfoy: You left before I got a chance to speak to you. Are you busy tonight?

Malfoy: You have no idea how much I want you. In every sense of the world. But I need to work this out.

Malfoy: I'm sorry. I know I said it before but I am. Please will you speak to me?

Hermione closes the book and takes a long gulp of her wine. She can feel its effects working quickly on an empty stomach but she's not hungry, her stomach is in knotts and her mind is so torn. She knows he's trying, she really does. This is new for both of them, it's just—it hurts. The notebook glows again and she opens it.

Malfoy: Where are you going shopping?

Hermione: London.

Malfoy: Muggle or magical?

Hermione: Does it matter?

Malfoy: Can you just answer the question?

Hermione: Muggle.

Malfoy: Can I take you for lunch?

Hermione: And risk being seen together? Are you sure about that?

Malfoy: Can I take you to lunch or not?

Hermione: I suppose so.

Malfoy: I'll meet you at Tower Bridge at 1pm.

Hermione: I'll try to be there on time.

Hermione wakes the next morning to sunshine and blue skies. She stretches deeply and groans at the feeling of her muscles pulling. After a shower, she decided on a stone coloured linen maxi skirt and a white blouse. Pairing the outfit with a brown belt and heels, she pulls her curls up onto the top of her head in a bun with loose pieces of hair framing her face and falling out of the updo. Knowing it's going to be hot, she keeps her make-up to a minimum and grabs a brown bag and her sunglasses before heading down to grab coffee and breakfast.

When Hermione arrives in London, she feels her notebook warm in her bag and pulls it out to see the message from Malfoy.

Malfoy: It's hot today and I'd like to make the most of it. Can you spare the rest of the afternoon?

Hermione: Can you?

Malfoy: Can you not just answer the question, Granger? I wouldn't have asked if I couldn't.

Hermione: Okay. Calm yourself. I'll be free the rest of the afternoon.

Malfoy: See that wasn't so hard, was it?

Hermione: That's not usually what you want me to say.

Malfoy: Some of us have to work, Granger. I'll see you later.

Hermione laughs and puts the book away. She heads for the boutique shop she gets all her dresses for galas from and looks through the rails of beautiful dresses. She ends up trying on so many she can't decide which one to pick. This is where she wished Ginny had a mobile phone, she could send a photo and ask her opinion.

"Can I help you?"

Hermione turns to look at the young sales woman and smiles. "Please,"

"I'm Clara, is it for a special event?"

"Yes, a summer gala at work. I'm torn between three, could I get your opinion?"

Hermione tries on each dress as Clara ums and ahs. Until the very last dress Hermione has picked is put on.

"It's absolutely that dress!" Clara says excitedly. "You look absolutely stunning!"

Hermione looks at her reflection in the mirrors and turns around. "Do you think?"

"Without a doubt," Clara rushes out of the changing room and back with a bag and shoes in her hands. "Try these on and this bad,"

The heels are ridiculously high with gold sparkle details and the bag is a simple gold clutch. Hermione looks back to the mirror after slipping the shoes on and her mouth pops open. She looks like some kind of Greek Goddess. Her hair pulled up and soft, eyes bright wearing the most elegant, understated and sexy off white dress. The straps are wide, pulling into a gold knot at each shoulder, its neckline isn't too low but encasing her breasts like it was made for her. There's a band of golden beading under the bust and the material flows over her stomach and down to the floor.

Hermione turns to look at the back again, dips low and shows off her back perfectly.

"I love it," she grins at Clara. "Thank you for your help,"

Clara leaves her to take everything off and get changed back into her everyday clothes. Hermione takes all the items to the front of the shop where they're wrapped and bagged ready to take home. Hermione pays a small fortune for the outfit but doesn't regret a thing. Hermione is going to be taking the Ministry by storm at the summer gala, Malfoy will be there and she hopes she'll look good enough to drive him crazy.

Hermione: I've found my dress, taken it back home and I'm sitting having an iced coffee by the river.

Malfoy: I don't get to see?

Hermione: No, you don't get to see. You'll see at the gala.

Malfoy: How will I know what I'm matching if I don't see the colour?

Hermione's heart almost beats out of her chest.

Hermione: Is that your way of asking me to go with you?

She sits and waits for a response but none comes.

When the man himself approaches, Hermione swallows thickly and finds herself glad he can't see her eyes hidden behind her sunglasses. His suit is black, of course, along with his shirt tie and waistcoat. But he's switched out his glasses for sunglasses and he looks like a model strolling down Tower Bridge towards her, the eyes of every female in the vicinity watching him. He comes to a stop in front of her and leans down to press a soft kiss to her cheek.

"You look absolutely beautiful, Granger,"

"Thank you,"

“We’re just a short walk—” he glances down at her heels and groans. “Please tell me you can walk in those?”

“I’ve been wearing them all morning, of course I can walk in them,”

“Okay then,” he holds out his hand and she freezes. “You don’t want to hold my hand?” He asks surprised.

“No—I mean, yes I do but—”

“We’re in Muggle London, Granger. I think we’re safe from prying eyes, don’t you?”

He flashes a relaxed, mischievous grin, one she hasn’t seen since the Muggle bar weeks ago. “I guess so,”

When her hand fits inside his perfectly, he closes his much larger palm around hers and links their fingers, just like he did when they had sex. Heat floods her blood and a warm pulse begins between her legs at the innocent touch that means so much more. Surprising her, he lifts their joined hand to his mouth and kisses her fingers.

“If you’re ready, it’s this way,”

Hermione tries to quieten her racing mind as they walk. It’s like he’s a different person, calm, affectionate and open. Perhaps the one issue they’re going to have to overcome is the Wizarding world and not their actual relationship. Perhaps him not wanting to announce everything to everyone is the only struggle and he does want to be with her after all.

They walk for about ten minutes and arrive at a small dock where an expensive looking boat is moored. He keeps walking, taking her slowly towards the water before stopping, wrapping his hands around her waist and lifting her into the boat.

“Malfoy!”

He hops into the boat easily and looks over her shoulder. She turns and sees a man dressed in dark grey approach them.

“Mr Malfoy, I have everything ready for our departure, we can leave whenever you’re ready.”

Malfoy nods and tells him they’ll be ready in five minutes. Taking her hand again, he pulls her through the boat and towards the back where a large table is set for two and filled with a mouthwatering looking spread. There’s a sun canopy above them and cushions and blankets covering the padded bench seat.

“*Draco* —” He turns to look at her sharply at the use of his given name.

“Yes, Hermione?”

It’s her turn to be surprised. “You planned all this?” She almost chokes on her words.

He steps closer to her, reaching for her chin so she can look at him and removing her sunglasses so he can see her eyes. “I planned it for you,” he smiles softly. “I wanted to show you I’m not always a bastard and that I can do romantic things too, do you—do you like it?” He asks, sounding unsure.

Hermione lifts up to her tiptoes and fists the lapels of his jacket in her palms. “I love it,” she breathes, a second before she kisses him.

His hands come around her waist and he kisses her back. His tongue brushing softly against hers as she hums her approval into his mouth. A second later she feels the boat’s engines vibrate beneath them and turns to see them pull away from the jetty.

“I’m not ready to share what this is with the world yet, Hermione, but I want to share more—with you,” he turns her eyes back to him and she looks into open and honest grey eyes. “I’m not embarrassed by you, completely the opposite, but I have reasons for not wanting to announce it to the world. If you can be okay with that, then I’d very much like to date you,”

“Will you tell me why?” She asks softly, running her thumb against the back of his hand.

“Not right now, no,”

Hermione nods. “But can we try? To be a couple, even if it’s just for us for now?”

He swallowed thickly, his Adam’s apple bobbing, but nodded. “I can’t promise you I won’t mess up, In fact, I know I will—but if you can—if you can understand why and give me some time, then I’d like—no I want to try,”

“I can do that,”

“I’ve never wanted anything more than what I know, I’ve never wanted anyone—this is all new for me too, Hermione,”

Gods every time he used her name her whole body heated.

She steps into him and closes her eyes. “Say it again,”

“What?”

“My name, say it again.”

“*Hermione* —”

She groans, lifting up to kiss him again. Biting his bottom lip, raising her hands to his head to tug on his hair,

“This is a date—” he chuckles into her mouth. The chuckle that got her into this in the first place.

“We can kiss on a date,” she tells him.

“Not the way we kiss, we can’t—”

He presses forward and she feels the thick line of him pressing into her. “Oh—”

He arches on eyebrow and kisses her once more before he steps back. “I promised you lunch, have a seat,”

Hermione beams at him and takes a seat on the bench seat, looking out over the sparkling water of the Thames and the many historical buildings moving past them as they cruise down the river. She watches as he removes his jacket and takes a seat next to her. He reaches forward and picks up the champagne that’s been in the ice bucket, pouring some of the golden liquid into two glasses before handing one to her. She takes it and raises the glass in the air.

“To giving us a chance,” she murmurs.

He nods in agreement. “I’ll do my best,”

“That’s all I ask,” Hermione leans forward and presses a soft kiss to his lips before sitting back in her seat.

She feels him reach for her hand and link their fingers together and allows herself to just be in the moment, to enjoy his company and not worry about what the future may or may not hold for her. He said he would try and that’s all she can ask of him. She knows better than anyone what overthinking can do, so she makes a promise to herself to just allow whatever life has in store to happen for once, to trust that whatever is meant for her will make itself known.

She allows herself to be with the man who has turned her life upside down and made her feel things she’s never felt before.

She allows herself to be free.

Chapter End Notes

Happy Wednesday, all!

I've had this chapter written for a while, I knew it was coming and I was excited for it - I hope you enjoyed it.

I'm well ahead with chapters so the schedule will remain as it is unless something terrible happens.

I've been blown away by the love on this the last couple of weeks, I am so thankful for you all taking time on this, reading, commenting, bookmarking and leaving Kudos.

I wrote this for me and it's incredible that you're all enjoying it too.

See you on Sunday!

Lose Control

Chapter Summary

Hermione and Draco continue their date and Hermione gets to do something she's wanted to for a while ...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Twenty

Lose Control

“And that tastes good?” Draco asks her, eyeing her curiously.

“Would I put it in my mouth if it didn’t?” Hermione arches one brow at him.

His eyes darken a little. “I guess you wouldn’t,”

He watches her as she takes a piece of brie from the wedge she’s slowly making her way through, places it on top of a cracker and puts a dollop of the walnut and fig conserve on top. Hermione leans forward and holds it out to Draco.

“Trust me and open up,”

He smirks at her. “I think that’s my line—”

She glares at him and pushes the little cracker closer to his delicious mouth. “Come on, don’t be a baby,”

His hand rests on her thigh and he squeezes firmly. “I’m not a baby, as you well know,”

“Draco—*please* ,”

He groans and leans forward, opening his mouth and allowing her to place the cracker on his tongue before he closes his lips around her finger. She tugs it out and watches as he chews. His eyebrows shot up in surprise.

“I told you!” She laughs triumphantly.

She watches him continue to eat, the way his jaw moves and then his throat as he swallows. It's far too erotic seeing as he's eating a cracker but she can't help herself.

"I guess I'll have to trust you on what I'll find palatable, won't I?" He pulls her closer, pressing his mouth to her throat. "Any other suggestions on what I should eat next?"

She tilts her head back, giving him more access to her throat. He obliged her with more kisses and a scrape of teeth.

"I—the—" She pants, completely unsure of what she's supposed to be saying as his tongue comes out to lick the column of her neck.

"What's that?"

"We're supposed—to be—eating—"

He moves his hand under her skirt and slides it quickly up her thigh, coming to rest between her legs. His touch is electrifying, her whole body shudders at the sparks of pleasure he creates within her. She opens her legs a little more, allowing him to move her knickers aside and push a finger into her.

"Fuck you're always ready for me, aren't you?"

"Always—"

"Tell me something, *Hermione*—" She groans again as her name on his lips has arousal pooling where he's touching. "Are you this wet at work?"

"Yes—"

His finger pumps lazily in and out of her.

"You're in meetings like this?"

He brings another finger to join the second and she arches into his hand, desperate for more.

"Yes—"

"What is it exactly at work that turns you on so much?"

"Draco—*please*,"

"God I love it when you beg for me, beautiful. Answer my question,"

"You—" she groans and he presses down inside her. "You—you're what turns me on, those —"

Hermione bucks as his thumb presses on her clitoris, circling just how she needs it as her inner walls clench around his fingers.

"Those?" He prompts.

“Suits you wear—drive me—crazy—”

He chuckles and presses deeper.

“Can I? Please? Let me?” Hermione is panting now, not even able to speak in proper sentences.

“What? What do you want, love?”

Everything inside her tightens at his term of endearment. She’s desperate to come and of course, he’s going to make her ask for it.

“I want to come, Draco—please?

He withdraws his hand and settles back against the padded bench they’re sitting on. He looks calm and put together even while he licks at his fingers, meanwhile, she’s flushed and panting.

“Draco—what—”

“No,” he says simply. “You may not come right now,”

Her cheeks flush more and she mewls her displeasure. ‘Why?’

“Because you’re beautiful when you’re aroused and your skin is flushed and your eyes are bright and I want to bring you to the cusp of an orgasm over and over again before I give you what you want,” he looks at her and leans in to kiss her. “And this is a date after all,”

Hermione takes herself off to the toilet for a few minutes after that. She stares at herself in the mirror while she runs cold water on her hands and wrists in a desperate attempt to cool herself down. Her cheeks are flushed, and so is her chest and Draco is right, her eyes are bright. She groans, squeezing her legs together tightly before drying her hands and heading back to where Draco is sitting gazing out at the river and the many people walking around.

“Okay?” He asks, barely containing his smirk.

“Perfectly, thank you,” she smiles back, sitting next to him and popping an olive into her mouth.

“Can I ask you a question?” He asks her, running one long finger across her shoulder.

“Of course,”

“What’s your favourite flavour of ice cream?” He asks it so seriously Hermione can’t help but burst out laughing which makes him scowl.

“What?” She laughs.

He continues to scowl. “I don’t see what’s so amusing here. It’s a simple question,”

She leans forward and kisses him until he stops scowling. “I’m sorry. It’s just very un-Malfoy of you to ask such a question.”

“Well clearly it’s not, as I just asked. Answer the question,”

She smiles and kisses him again before she answers. “Vanilla,”

“Why?”

“Because it’s simple and just the perfect flavour. It can also be anything, if I want chocolate? I’ll add chocolate? I want strawberries? Same thing. If I pick a flavour it’s always only that flavour and that limits me. Why—” she leans forward and rests her mouth by his ear. “—limit myself? Why put such a limit on my pleasure, hmm?”

He lets out a small groan before he is hand is in her hair, tugging her to his mouth. “Why indeed,” he says against her lips before his tongue is in her mouth.

She loses herself to him, like she always does.

The smallest of touches and her skin is on fire.

When he pulls back, they’re both panting and Draco is sporting a bulge in his trousers which he doesn’t appear embarrassed about in the slightest.

“What’s yours?” She pants a little, going to sit back down a little way away from him.

“What?”

“Ice cream, what’s your favourite flavour?”

He tugs on his cuffs and reaches for his glass. “I don’t have one, more of a sorbet person myself,”

Okay,” she huffs. “Well what’s your favourite flavour of sorbet then, you posh arse,”

He just stares at her over his glass. “Lemon,”

Hermione gets an idea then. “Shall we play a little get to know you game?” She asks excitedly.

“Get to know you game? I’ve licked your cunt, Hermione, I’ve had my cock inside you while you clench around me. What more is there to know?”

His words have her cheeks flaming while he just grins. “It’s—can we—Gods,”

“What was that?”

“Can we just play? We’ll take it in turns to ask a question. I’ll go first—”

He cuts her off. “I think you’ll find I went first, but continue.”

“Gods, stop being so Malfoy will you?” She rolls her eyes. “Okay, favourite colour?”

He rolls his eyes at her. “Green,”

“But you always seem to wear black.”

“You didn’t ask what colour I like to wear, you asked what my favourite colour is,”

“Fair point. Have you—”

He leans over and places his hand over her mouth. “I don’t think so, you said one each.”

She licks his palm and his eyes darken before he removes his hand and sits back down.

“Favourite sex position?”

Hermione covers her face with her hands. “Draco, it’s not that kind of game.”

“Answer the question, Hermione,”

“On top,”

Her arches a brow at her and she keeps eye contact. “*Really* —”

She nods. “Where’s the best place you’ve travelled to?”

“France,”

“Where in—” She stops herself that time.

“Where’s the best place you’ve travelled to?”

“I haven’t really travelled that much. Not outside of Great Britain anyway,”

“Where would you like to travel to?” He asks and she raises her eyebrow at him. “Just answer the question,”

“Anywhere,” she smiles. “Italy to a vineyard, Norway to see the Northern Lights, Paris to see, well, Paris,” she grins. “I want to see the world, I want to see what Wizarding communities around the globe are like, I want to live, Draco. I don’t want to spend all my time at work or at home and get to the end of my days and have seen nothing,”

His eyes are bright and his smile is wide as she speaks. “You’re so beautiful when you speak about something you’re passionate about,”

Hermione blushes. “I think it’s my turn for a question,”

They spend ages asking each other silly questions, well, she does, Draco always finds a sensible or down right filthy question to ask her with a gleam in his eyes and a smirk lifting his lips. She learns that if he could get rid of one month of the year it would be February, that

he can speak French fluently and that he hates mushrooms because they're rubbery sponges that have no flavour.

He learns that her greatest dream is to be truly happy, that her favourite place to holiday as a child was Cornwall and that she always brushes her teeth before she does anything in the morning. Before they know it, the sky is starting to turn pink and they need to start making their way off the boat that is now docked where they picked it up.

"Do you collect anything?" Hermione asks him.

"Do your orgasms count?"

"No!" Hermione laughs rolling her eyes.

He thinks for a second. "Brooms and whiskey,"

"Expensive things,"

"You could say that. I also have a large collection of suits and cufflinks."

"I love your suits and cufflinks," she tells him low and soft.

He leans closer to her and removes the glass out of her hand, placing it onto the table and turning her face to him. His eyes are clear and open. He kisses her and everything just falls away. The boat they're on, the catcalls from the men on the river bank, life.

"I don't want this day to end," she murmurs softly against his lips.

"Me either," he breathes right back.

He leans closer and kisses her again, her hands coming to tug at his hair, his making their way to her waist as he pulls her into his lap and continues to kiss her.

"Let me get us a hotel room in the city. Stay the night with me?"

Hermione pulls back and looks into his eyes. "Really? The whole night?"

He nods, caressing her cheek with his thumb. "Really,"

She wastes no time leaning in to kiss him again, letting her tongue brush against his as her hips grind down in his lap, over his rapidly hardening cock. They're all hands and tongues and groans. Forgetting about everything except each other.

They stumble into the most expensive suite the hotel had, because it's Draco and he had to have the best of everything. He pins her against the wall before the door has even shut, his

hands under her skirt, his tongue in her mouth. Her hands go to his jacket, pushing it off his shoulders, the same with his waistcoat, before reaching for his tie.

He doesn't stop her and she relishes in being able to touch him like this. When he pulls open his shirt and her eyes feast hungrily on his bare skin, she almost drools.

"How are you so fucking gorgeous?" She groans, leaning to lick a line up his chest and he shudders.

"Your mouth—"

She stops his words by dropping to her knees, yanking open his zipper and freeing his erection into her greedy mouth. He flexes his hips, grabs a fistful of her hair in his hands and pushes forward. She closes her mouth around him, breathes through her nose and looks up at him.

"*Fuck* —"

Her hands tug at his trousers, freeing him completely to her and she finds his balls, cupping them in her hand and delighting in how they pull up closer to his body at her touch.

"Look at you—so good—so fucking good for me—on your knees—didn't need to ask—perfect for me—"

While Hermione continues to suck and lick at him, he babbles above her while he thrusts into her mouth. For one second she thinks he's going to give this to her, he's going to let her take control.

But this is Draco.

And that isn't how he works.

He's removing himself from her mouth and hauling her to her feet a second later. She's lifted off her feet and he's carrying her over to the huge bed in the room off the main lounge area of the suite. The floor to ceiling glass gives the most breathtaking view of London but she doesn't get to enjoy it. He throws her onto the bed, his hands going to his shirt and waistcoat and tossing it onto the floor. He's wearing just trousers, his cock standing proudly against his stomach. He tucks himself away as much as he can before he looks at her.

"Lack back,"

"What?"

He moves forward and settles her back on the mattress before he walks over to a lone chair in the corner, drags in over and sits himself on a chair at the foot of the bed and looking down at her. Slowly, he raises her legs, long fingers wrapping around her ankle before pressing a kiss there then resting her foot, heels still on, on his shoulder with the heel digging into his skin.

The sight has heat pooling between her legs. He looks so fucking sexy and so turned on his eyes are almost black. He reaches for her other ankle and does the same. Shifting he dips his head and kisses her inner thigh. She gasps as the first press of his lips and the slight stubble on his jaw.

Gods, she wants him inside her.

“Can we not have sex?”

“We will,”

He dips his head again and she sits up on her elbow and goes to remove her legs from his shoulders, he grabs a hold of her ankle and holds on tight.

“You don’t have to—” His eyes snap to Hermione’s and he stops her words with a look.

“I’m not doing this for you. I’m doing this for me. Now, lie back.”

The next thing she feels is his tongue tracing the length of her and pressing a firm circle around her swollen clitoris. She groans and drops her head back, reaching forward to sink her hands into his hair.

Her hands are secured about her within a second and Draco is glaring at her from between her legs.

“I think you’ve taken enough liberties today,”

“But—”

He slaps her inner thigh and grazes his teeth on her clitoris and she mewls, pressing her hips closer to him, desperate for the orgasm he’s been teasing her with all afternoon. He doesn’t relent. He doesn’t give in and let her orgasm. He teases her for a long time, bringing her to the edge and pulling back over and over and over again until she’s sobbing with the desperation to come.

“*Please —*” Hermione begs. “I can’t— *Draco—Please—*”

“You didn’t think I’d let you come so easily, did you, love?”

“I just—I’m being good—please?”

He chuckles against her and presses two fingers inside of her. “You’re making such a mess for me,” he presses a soft kiss to her. “But I find that I’ve never seen anything more beautiful than your soaking wet cunt,”

Hermione groans and tries to close her legs, but he’s holding them firm.

“It’s even better because you’re still wearing your clothes. You’re so desperate for me you didn’t even think you get undressed,”

“Draco —”

“I know, I know. Soon,”

“How soon?”

He bends his head and sucks her clitoris into his mouth while his fingers press onto her g-spot.

She explodes around his tongue and fingers, shaking and shuddering, sweat covering her body and all the breath leaving her body in one go. She thinks she blacks out for a second at the intensity because when she opens her eyes, she’s naked and Draco is above her, gazing down at her while he strokes his cock.

“Fucking beautiful,” he tells her, reaching for her breast. “Are you okay?”

She nods her head and tries to stretch.

“Do you want your hands free?”

“Please?”

He releases her and immediately takes both wrists in his hands, massaging them and pressing a kiss to her palms.

“Are you exhausted or do you still want me inside you?”

Despite having had the most intense orgasm of her life mere seconds ago, her body is already demanding more. She sits up and raises her chin, asking silently for a kiss. He obliges and she’s breathless in seconds.

“I still want you inside me,” she tells him.

He surprises her by moving to lay with his head on the pillows, his hand on his cock, moving up and down. Hermione just watches his big hand move. Up. Down. Up. Down. Before lets himself go and tucks him arms tucked behind his head with a smirk on his face.

“What—”

“Ride me,” he orders.

“Ride … really?”

He nods and settles back more into the pillows. She moves hesitantly over his erection and watches his face. He doesn’t flinch, move or give any indication that he’s enjoying this. He just stares at her. She reaches between them and guides the tip of him inside her, the second the blunt head of him connects with her wet heat, Hermione groans.

Draco simply lays there.

She moves slowly down his length and clenches around him.

He doesn't move.

"Is this okay?" She asks, feeling really self conscious.

"Sure,"

Sure? That's all he's got for her?

She rotates her hips.

Nothing.

Hermione lifts off of him until just the tip of him is inside her then slowly sinks back down.

Nothing.

She leans forward, placing her hands on the headboard so her breasts are inches from his face and begins to really move, knowing they're bouncing how he likes.

Nothing.

Not even a glance at her chest.

Hermione feels the frustration and embarrassment bloom over her. It colours her cheeks and chest and has her faltering.

Why isn't he reacting?

Why is he just laying there?

She meets his eyes and the only sign that he's enjoying himself is the almost black gaze that meets hers.

"Touch me," I plead. "Do something, *please*,"

Still nothing.

Now Hermione just feels angry. Angry that he has her in bed, naked, willing and writhing on top of him and he's giving her nothing. His hands are still behind his head, his face impassive. But his erection twitching inside her tells Hermione he's into this, so she decides that if he's going to remain impassive, then she's going to at least get herself off in the most delicious way she can.

Hermione refocuses her attention to herself, she closes her eyes and drops her head back, grinding her hips how she needs it, angling herself so his cock both hits inside her and brushes her clitoris every time she moves. Hermione leans her left hand on the headboard but brings her right to touch her breasts, tugging and clawing at her nipples as she moves.

The familiar spark of pleasure begins in her stomach and she knows he's watching her, she can feel him. Hermione speeds up the closer she is to her climax, rotating and lifting her hips, She runs her hand from her breasts to between her legs and rubs herself, pushing herself closer and closer to her orgasm. She can feel it coiling and tightening. Hermione feels her whole body flush and with a gasp and a shudder, Hermione tips over and gives herself over to the waves of pleasure flooding her body.

When she finally opens her eyes, his hands are no longer behind his head but gripping the headboard either side of her hand as if to stop himself from touching her. He has a crazed, dark look on his face and his knuckles are white from how hard he's squeezing.

Hermione grins and moves herself but he stops her with one word.

"Mine,"

She meets his eyes and nods. "Yours,"

He flips them both, plunging into her so hard she winces. "Did you like that, Hermione? Riding me, taking what you wanted in your favourite position?"

Her hips lift to meet his. "Is that why you did it?"

"It took everything in me to not pound into you, not to flip over and take," he leans down and kisses her, swallowing her cries of pleasure. "I wanted to give you this, to show you—" he groans and lifts her legs higher up, opening her to him more. "I wanted to show you that I'm yours for the taking, Hermione."

"Draco—"

He looks at her, resting his nose against hers. "I can't stop this," he breathes. "I control everything, and yet i can't control what you do to me,"

She clenched around him at his honesty, her smile bright and her eyes open to him as he links their fingers and held them over her head as he continues to chase his own release. When it happens, he lets out a groan and a desperate *fuuuccckkk*, before he stills above her.

Later, with the city lights stretched out before them, Hermione settled into his side, his arm wrapped around her while his thumb traced patterns on her skin, he took a deep breath and kisses the top of her head.

"It terrifies me what I feel for you, Hermione,"

She tries to move but he holds on to her.

"It doesn't need to,"

He kisses her head again. "It does, I've never—I don't know if I can be who you need me to be,"

She manages to slide out from his grip and meet his eyes. "You already are, I don't want you to change. Who you are now is who I want, Draco."

He smiles at her, soft and almost shy. "I'll try not to hurt you," he says sadly.

He leans up and kisses him softly before he rolls her onto her back and spends the rest of the night buried inside her, whispering words across her skin and panting promises into the darkness.

Chapter End Notes

Happy Sunday all 😊

Well, there we have it, their first 'official date' and I think it went pretty well, don't you? Hermione is slowly getting him to open up, slowly making him let her in - for how long, I don't know.

We have the summer gala to happen in the next chapter so buckle up!

Thank you all so much again for the love and kindness about this fic, I adore sharing it with you so thank you for being here. I appreciate all your comments and kudos, I really do. THANK YOU!

Enjoy your Sunday and I'll be back on Wednesday!

Morning Glory

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Twenty-One

Morning Glory

Hermione stretches as she wakes up, the delicious pull of her sleepy muscles causing a groan to slip free from her lips. She becomes aware of not only different sheets beneath her but an entirely different bed and too much light.

Turning her head she winces at the sunlight streaming into the room, from massive floor-to-ceiling windows and the entirety of London stretched out before her.

Then she spots him.

Draco.

Fast asleep, on his back, one arm resting on his bare stomach while the other rests close to hip.

He stayed.

For a few minutes she just lays there and stares at him. His face is softer in sleep, his full lips relaxed and pink. His hair is falling onto his forehead and sticking up at all angles while his chest rises and falls. He looks warm and content and she hopes he is, because she's never felt more safe or content than she does in this very moment.

The sheer joy she feels at having finally spent an entire night with him and having him stay until the morning and not be home when she wakes is immense. Her heart feels like it might explode out of her and she slaps a hand over her mouth as a delirious giggle tries to escape.

After watching him for a few more minutes, taking in every line and muscle of him, she decides she can't pass up the opportunity to wake him up in the most delicious way possible. Slowly lifting the sheet that's resting over the area she needs access to, she slides across the bed and bites her lip at the naked skin now available to her greedy eyes.

He's perfection. Utter mouthwatering perfection.

And he's all hers.

He's not fully erect, but he's not completely soft either and she plans to change that. He shifts in his sleep, his hand reaching for something. Her? He finds her skin and rests his hand firmly around the top of her thigh and seems to settle again.

Don't you wake up yet.

Hermione takes the opportunity to dip her head, close her mouth around his cock, he groans softly in his sleep, hips thrusting up to press into her mouth even in sleep. Heat begins to pool in between her legs and she lips one hand to rub slow, lazy circles around her clitoris while she sucks him.

She knows when he wakes up because his hand comes to her head as he tugs on her hair and thrusts into her mouth. Draco's breathing picks up, he's panting and gripping her hair tighter in his fist. She feels his other hand reach for between her legs and when he finds her hand already there, his head snaps off the pillow, his eyes wide open and fixed on where she's pleasuring herself.

"What a fucking sight," his voice is deeper and a little gravely from sleep. "I see exactly why you wanted me to stay the night now,"

She grins around his cock, looking up at him but not stopping what she's doing.

"And look at you, multitasking like such a clever girl," he grins at her. "You're being such a good girl this morning, aren't you?"

His hand moves from her thigh to join hers between her legs. She's so wet that their fingers slip against each other as they both try to fit. Hermione moves his fingers down and without speaking begs him to slip them inside her. He understands the unspoken request and she groans around him at the fullness of three of his fingers.

For a second she stopped sucking, just holding him in her mouth while she absorbed the pleasure pulsing through her. She can feel her release coming, it's so close she can almost reach out and take it.

But Draco stops.

Her eyes flash to his.

"You stop, I stop."

Challenge accepted.

It takes seconds for her climax to hit its peak and she can't help but remove her mouth from his throbbing cock to groan out her orgasm as she shudders with her hand and his still between her legs. He removes his fingers, sits up and wraps his fingers, sticky with her release around his cock and looks at her.

"On your back,"

She moves so she's laying flat and opens her legs, waiting for him slip inside her and fuck her to another orgasm.

"You want another?" He asks, slowly stroking himself, mixing her release with the pre-come leaking from the tip of him.

"Please—"

"So greedy," he leans down and kisses her. "So needy for me, aren't you, love?"

"Always, Draco—"

He's still not used to hearing his name from her and his eyes darken when it leaves her lips.

"What about mine? About what I want, hmm?"

"You can have whatever you want,"

Her arches a brow and continues to stroke himself. "Can I?"

She nods. "Yes,"

He climbs over her, straddling her chest, his free hand running over her nipples and pushing one breast into the other.

"Then I want to come on your tits," he tells her. "I want to cover you and have you massage it into your skin. I want to paint you white with my come,"

Hermione feels a pulse between her legs. "I want that too,"

He shifts a little more, gripping himself harder and closing his eyes. "Push your tits together for me, Hermione,"

Her name from his lips has a similar effect on her. She does as he asks, pushing her breasts together as he looks down at her, cock in hand. He reaches behind and pushes two fingers inside her and she gasps.

"A little lubrication,"

He wraps those fingers around himself and coats his cock in her release, stroking up and down before pushing himself between her breasts. The pleasure on his face as he slides his erection slowly forward before drawing back is heady. Seeing how much pleasure he gets from her is delicious.

"That's it," he moans, biting his bottom lip and thrusting forward. "Let me see that tongue of yours,"

Hermione opens her mouth and pokes her tongue out so the next time he moves forward she can lick the shiny head. After three more thrusts he loses all control and fucks her breasts

like he can no control over what he's doing. Watching him lose control is sexy as hell and she wants to see more of it.

"You're so sexy," she tells him, deciding to praise him like he praises her. "Your cock is so ready to come, isn't it?"

He groans and his eyes darken. "It really, really is —"

"Are you going to come over me, Draco—?"

He squeezes his eyes tight and moves one hand to tug on her nipple. "Yes—" he bites out. "Yes. I. Fucking. Am."

"Come then," she almost whispers. "Show me who I belong to,"

That does the trick.

He opens his eyes, thrusts hard one more time and in a move she wasn't expecting, slaps her breast hard before pulling back, wrapping his hand around his erection and pumping his release all over her chest. Hermione looks down and watches as streams of hot come hit her chest, marking her as his as he grunts above her.

When he's finished he shifts off her and reaches down to pull two fingers through his release before pressing them firmly between her legs. With an arched brow he repeats the act but this time presses them into her mouth.

"Who do you belong to, Hermione?" He asks, eyes dark and voice low.

"You—"

He moves to kiss her, consuming her with just his mouth.

"Whether my come is inside you or not, you're mine, and you won't be given any opportunity to doubt that. Do you understand?"

Hermione nods.

"Excuse me?"

"Yes, Draco. I understand."

He kisses her once more before looking at the clock on the bedside table. "As much as I'd like to continue this, we're late for work,"

Hermione jerks and goes to get up but he pulls her back to him. He breathes into her ear. "Good morning," he kisses below her ear once. "Waking up next to you could very well be my new addiction,"

"You won't hear me complaining,"

He chuckles. “No, I highly doubt I will. Now, up! We’re late and can’t wear yesterday’s clothes to work.”

Hermione stands before walking toward the bathroom to freshen up. “Well I can’t,” she says as she enters the bathroom. “No one would notice if you did seeing as all your clothes are the same anyway,”

He gets to his feet and is on her in seconds. “You have a smart mouth, do you know that?”

He pulls her hands above her head and pushes her back against the cold marble tiles. He looks down at her and a smirk pulls at the corner of his mouth.

“I do,” she admits, grinning. “But it seems to get me what I want so—”

He shocks her by throwing his head back and laughing. Laughing so deep and loud it bounces around the bathroom filling the space. He drops his head to her and brushes his nose along hers.

“Get showered, I’ll use the other bathroom because if I shower with you, we’ll never get into work,”

“Okay,” she says, stealing a kiss. “See you out there in a bit,”

Hermione grins the whole way through her shower, on her Floo journey home and even when she arrives an hour late to work apologising for sleeping in.

In fact, she smiles all day.

And so does Draco.

Chapter End Notes

Hey everyone!

So, I apologise for the short chapter today. The chapter was just getting too long and the most sensible place to break it up was here.

However, fear not! Sunday's will be a BIG chapter to make up for it!

Thank you as always for being here, I appreciate you all!

See you on Sunday!

Jealousy

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Twenty-Two

Jealousy

Hermione finds herself sitting with Draco on the bench he found her on a couple of days ago, just off of Diagon eating her favourite sandwich and basking in the sunshine. It's a beautiful day and she feels happy, warm and content.

“So,” he begins, turning to face her. “The summer gala,”

“Yes, what about it?”

“You mentioned before if my asking about your dress was an invitation for us to attend together?”

She nods her head, putting her sandwich down and swallowing to clear the lump that's blocking her throat, suddenly feeling very nervous about what he's about to say. He looks out to the pond before meeting her gaze.

“It's not, Hermione.”

She swallows thickly and nods, feeling so much disappointment she thinks she might choke on it. “Okay then,” She manages,

“It's not a no forever,” he says smoothly, calmly. Totally Draco about it. “It's just a no right now. But I want you to be okay with this and truly okay, not just tell me you are and then we have a problem in two days time,”

“I get it, Draco,” she almost glowers at him.

He chuckles at her. “Have I told you how sexy I find it when you're angry at me?”

Her mouth pops open. “That's—you're absurd.”

He smirks at her, his eyes heating before he speaks again.

“There is also the small fact that I'll be attending the gala with Astoria,”

Hermione's eyes flash to his and her teeth snap together. “Astoria?”

“It's one of a couple of events we already agreed to attend together,”

“And? You’re a grown man. You can change the plan. You told me you weren’t attending any more events with that woman after the last time.”

“It’s not that simple and I’m not arguing with you about it. I just wanted to inform you, Hermione, because I don’t want any more upset between us, I just—can it just be calm for a while?”

Hermione appreciates him telling her, she really does. But does he really think he can inform her of this and then expect her to be okay with it? That he can just say he wants it to be calm when he’s just dropped that on her?

“Upset?” She almost chokes out. “Of course I’m upset, Draco. You’re attending a fucking gala with another woman when you’ve made it very, *very* clear you’re seeing me and only me and that you expect me to do the same.”

He reaches for her hand on the bench but she snaps it away from him. “I am only seeing you, I have zero interest in anyone else,”

“Except Astoria at the damned gala! At the fucking Ministry where we—where I work,” she tries to take a deep breath. “I have no choice but to attend and watch the two of you together! Do you have any idea how humiliating that will be?”

“No one knows about us, what’s there to be humiliated about?” He glares at her.

Hermione stands up, grabbing her bag and turning to look down at him. “If you really have to ask that, then you’re not the person I thought you were. Have a great time and the gala with Astoria fucking Greengrass, Malfoy, I’m so over this,”

Without giving him a chance to follow her, she *Disappartates* on the spot and back to her house. She knows she has to go back to work, she has work she needs to do, but she just needs a moment to breathe. She rests her back against her front door and sucks in a breath, squeezing her eyes tight. Why does everything have to be so difficult all the time? Just when she feels like things are finally getting to a place where they can be together and just enjoy that, something happens and it feels like she’s being kicked in the stomach.

“Pans, I don’t think this is the colour for—”

Theo’s voice floats in from the kitchen as he steps over the threshold holding a pair of pastel lemon voile curtains, he spots Hermione and frowns.

“What’s happened?” He asks as he puts the curtains onto the messy table top and walks over to her.

“Nothing,” she lies, brushing the tears she hadn’t noticed, off her cheeks. “Why are you here?”

“That’s a lie,” he frowns. “Every time I see you, you’re crying. What is it? Who is it? Who do I need to kill?”

Theo pulls Hermione into his strong arms and settles his chin against the stop of her head. It shouldn't feel

so normal, so comforting because she hardly knows the man, yet it feels like the comfort she feels right in this moment has always been there.

“It’s noth—”

“Granger?” Pansy asks from beside them. “What’s going on?”

Hermione pulls back and looks at her. “I think I’ve made a terrible mistake and I can’t take it back, nor do

I want to. But I don’t want—” Hermione struggles to stop the words leaving her mouth knowing she can’t talk about this to anyone, but especially the pair in front of her.

“Who is it?”

“I can’t—I can’t tell you,” Hermione whispers.

“You can tell us anything,” Theo says from above her, arms still wrapped around her. “We’re your friends and we care about you.”

This just sets Hermione off more.

“I thought I had a date to the summer gala and now I don’t and the guy I’m—he’s going with someone else,”

Pansy scowls and Theo squeezes her tight before stepping back. “I had no idea you were seeing someone, but he’s a prick if he’s giving up the chance to go with you.”

“He’s definitely a prick,” Pansy agrees. “So, we need to get you a date?”

“No it—”

“Hermione Granger,” Theo says, stepping back and looking down at her. “Will you do me the honour of attending the summer gala with me?” He does a little bow but keeps looking at her hopefully.

Hermione laughs. “It’s for Ministry staff, Theo. You are not Ministry staff,”

“No,” he smirks. “But you are,”

“I love this idea,” Pansy grins from beside her. “Everyone thinks Theo is gorgeous,”

“Thank you, darling,” Theo beams at her.

“If this prick who doesn’t want to go with you is there, it will piss him off immensely to have Theo on your arm and it will serve him right,”

“Okay,” Hermione agrees.

A feeling of dread fills her stomach as the words leave her lips.

They have no idea just how much Hermione attending with Theo will piss him off.

Hermione checks herself in the mirror one last time before she heads down the stairs to wait for Theo. The dress looks just as good as it did in the shop, her hair is behaving itself and her make-up is flawless. As it should be, she's taken over four hours to get ready with Pansy's help. It's a very strange thing to feel anything remotely like affection for Pansy Parkinson, but Hermione cannot deny that the Slytherin who caused her so much upset at Hogwarts has matured into a firecracker who seems to understand Hermione. She hears the Floo activate and Theo calls up the stairs.

"Oh, beautiful! Your Prince Charming has arrived!"

Hermione grabs her gold clutch and heads down to meet him. As she comes into view Theo's mouth pops open and his eyes go wide.

"Fuck me," he half yells.

"Thank you," Hermione laughs, "But aren't you in love with Charlie?"

He scoffs. "Charlie doesn't know I exist," Theo steps closer and holds out his hand. "You look stunning, Hermione, I think I might just have to rethink Charlie now,"

"Charlie definitely knows you exist," she rolls her eyes at him. "And you look rather handsome yourself," she laughs.

Dressed in a black suit and waistcoat, white shirt and black tie he does look gorgeous.

"One moment please," Theo studies her dress, squinting his eyes a little, stepping around her and then back to the front. "There we go,"

He gestures to his tie that now perfectly matches the gold beading of her dress. "Ready?"

Theo holds out his arm and she takes it. "Ready,"

Hermione takes a deep breath and follows her date for the night into the *Floo*.

When they arrive, the ballroom is packed with people. There are garlands and lights above them and what looks like a waterfall off to one side. Hermione takes a moment to scan the room, trying to spot the blond head of Malfoy but she doesn't see him.

"Is he here?" Theo asks softly from beside her while smiling at the camera.

Hermione smiles too then shakes her head. "Not that I can see,"

"Let's get a drink," Theo walks them in the direction of the bar and helps himself to two glasses of champagne, handing one to Hermione.

"To being the most attractive people here and everyone wanting to be us or be in us!" He laughs, chinking his glass with hers.

Hermione takes a mouthful and nods her agreement. She watches as couples fill the floor to dance, watching how elegant they all look moving together, all smiles and perfect steps. When the song ends and another begins, one that's more upbeat and faster, Theo takes her glass and puts his down along with it on the bar. He takes her hand and guides her over to the dancefloor, he pulls her to him and joins the couples on dancing without hesitation.

"Gods I find these galas tedious, the music is dire, isn't it?"

"You asked to come," she tells him, trying to keep up. "What music would you prefer?"

He moves them quickly, not breaking a sweat or panting even a little. "I don't know," he says, moving them across the floor. "Just not this,"

Hermione laughs, throwing her head back as Theo spins her out dramatically and then pulls her back to him. As the song comes to an end, he dips her low, laughing as he brings her back up right before bowing to her. Another song begins and he moves them across the dancefloor again.

"I think you secretly enjoy the galas, Theodore," Hermione tells him. "I think you love getting dressed up and dancing,"

"Oh I do," he agrees. "I'd just prefer it not all be played on strings,"

"Shall speak to Kingley? As for the Weird Sister next yea—"

The words get stuck in Hermione's throat as she locks eyes with Malfoy over Theo's shoulder. His eyes are glacial as he watches the two of them dance. Her feet falter and Theo grips her tighter.

"Tell me you're not drunk already, Granger?"

"What?"

"Are you drunk?"

"No, it's just—"

“What are you doing here, Nott?”

Theo turns them to face Malfoy and smiles at him. “Ah, Draco!” He beams. “I’m accompanying Hermione. Apparently the prick she’s been seeing decided to bring someone else and I couldn’t, no *wouldn’t*, have her upset about someone who clearly has no brain—” Theo stops talking and looks to where Astoria has just stepped up beside him. “Speaking of,” he sneers at her.

“Theodore,” Astoria purrs, completely ignoring Hermione.

“Astoria,” Theo tightens his hold on Hermione. “What are you doing here?”

Hermione watches as Astoria wraps her hand around Malfoy’s elbow and smiles up at him. “I’m here with Draco, of course,”

Theo looks at Draco and raises an eyebrow at him. “Surely you could have chosen someone else,”

“Theo,” Hermione says softly beside him. “Can we go and get a drink, please?”

Malfoy meets her eyes and she feels that same pull she always does when she’s close to him. He looks devastatingly handsome and even with the scowl on his face, she’s never seen a more beautiful man in her life. But she needs Theo to stop spilling her secrets to the very man who caused her emotional outburst at the house.

“Of course, love,” Theo drawls and she sees Malfoy flinch at the term of endearment he’s sometimes called her himself. “I’ll see you later, Draco,” he tells the blond. “I hope I won’t be seeing you later, Astoria,”

Theo guides her off the dance floor and to the bar again, handing her a glass of chilled champagne.

“Actually Theo, I just need the loo. Keep my drink for me?”

He downs his glass and holds hers. “If I drink it, I promise I’ll get you another one,” he winks at her.

“Deal. I’ll be right back.”

Hermione turns and makes her way out of the ballroom and to the ladies. She steps inside and places her bag on the counter, looking at herself in the mirror just as the door opens and Malfoy steps inside, silencing the door and locking it.

“What do you think you’re doing?” She half yells at him.

He walks towards her. “I could say the same for you,”

“Excuse me?”

“Why are you here with Theo?”

“You have absolutely no right to ask that when you’re here with Astoria,”

He steps into her, lifting her up to sit on the counter pushing himself between her legs. “No right?” He growls at her, lifting his hand to wrap around her throat. “I have every fucking right, Granger—”

“Back to Granger are we?”

“You started it, calling me *Malfoy* in the park,” he looks at her and his eyes are blazing.

“Gods you’re so childish—I do something you don’t like, so you retaliate? Are we still at school?”

He ignores her, devouring her with his eyes. “You look—fucking hell—you’re stunning,”

His mouth is on her a second later, his tongue pushing into her mouth while his fingers trace her throat. Hermione loses all use of her brain, only able to think about how delicious he tastes, how perfect he feels and how much she wants him to take her right there on the counter.

“Why are you here with Theo?” He asks again.

“Because I didn’t want to come alone and the person I wanted to attend with has another woman hanging off his arm, again!”

He kisses her again, biting down on her lip until they can both taste blood.

Hermione groans.

“You don’t get to tell me I can’t come with Theo when you’re here with Astoria,”

“I told you why I’m here with her,”

“And I told you it’s humiliating,” Hermione finally gets some sense back as her anger boils over. “I get that

you don’t want to announce whatever this is to the world, but I won’t stand by and watch you bring other women to events where I’m there too, Draco, I won’t,” Hermione brings her hands to his hair and tugs. “You’re possessive? You don’t like to see me with other men? Well guess what?”

She leans in and kisses him, biting him hard and swiping her tongue along the split before pulling back. “I’m possessive too!”

She doesn’t know how she manages to get out of the toilets and back to Theo, but she does. She’s healed her lip and checked that every hair is in place. He’s where she left him, talking to none other than Cormac McLaggen. Hermione stops just behind him and meets Theo’s eyes, shaking her head.

“Ah, love, you’re back,” Theo smiles at her, holding his hand out to her.

“Sorry it took a little longer than planned, there was a queue.”

Cormac’s eyes go wide when they settle on her dress and he takes her in greedily. “Hermione you look—”

“Doesn’t she?” Theo agrees.

“Are you here together?” Cormac asks her.

“Yes,” Theo and Hermione answer together.

“Like, you’re a couple?”

“No,” Hermione says, at the same time Theo says, “Yes,”

Cormac laughs. “Well, which is it?”

Theo wraps a hand around her waist and laughs, leaning his chin on the top of her head. “It’s early days,

isn’t it love?”

A flash of white catches her attention as Malfoy comes back into the room and makes his way straight

over to them, a scowl on his face and eyes flashing but not a hair out of place. He looks perfectly calm, as always.

“Ah, so I guess a dance is out of the question?” Cormac asks.

“Absolutely, I don’t let her dance with anyone.” Theo scowls and tugs her closer to him just as Malfoy

appears.

There’s an awkward moment where he spots Theo’s hand on Hermione’s waist and then clocks who they’re talking to. She knows he doesn’t like either but he has very little he can say unless he plans to stake his claim on her right in the middle of a Ministry gala. Which Hermione knows he will not.

“Ah,” Theo smiles in Malfoy’s direction. “I see you got rid of your date,”

“She’s not my date,” Malfoy sneers at him.

Theo doesn’t react.

“Funny,” Theo begins. “I could have sworn that’s what you call the person you attend a function with? Hermione? Am I right? Am I *your* date?”

Hermione watches Malfoy’s jaw snap and his fists clench at his side.

“I guess so,” she croaks out.

Theo has no idea the guy she’s spoken about is standing right in front of them and looks about to ram his fist into Theo’s face.

“There you go then,” Theo says simply. “Let’s dance, shall we love?”

Theo pulls her away just as Malfoy steps forward and seconds later they’re being swallowed up in the crowd.

“King Dick is in a terrible mood tonight, is something going on with him?” Theo asks her as they dance.

“No idea, why would I know?” Hermione lies as smoothly as she can.

Theo meets her eyes. “You tell me, beautiful,”

Hermione doesn’t respond, she just follows Theo’s lead and keeps her eyes off the packed ballroom.

Throughout the night, Hermione catches glimpses of Malfoy around the dance floor. He doesn’t dance with Astoria at all and half way through the night Hermione spots her storming away from Malfoy with a face like thunder. Hermione and Theo spend a little time with Harry and Ginny but Harry is busy being *The Boy Who Lived* as is always the case at these types of events and Ginny always stays by his side to put an end to conversations that have run their course or are getting too personal.

There’s a moment when she’s subjected to dancing with Cormac who asks her when Theo is in the toilet. She tries to decline but he pulls her onto the dancefloor and into his arms. He stands far too close and puts his hands far too low on her back. During one turn she meets the eyes of a tall, murderous looking blond and tries to steer them away from Malfoy only to be rescued by Theo.

“I thought I said I don’t share, Mclaggen,” Theo almost growls as he tugs her out of the man’s grip.

“Oh, my mistake,” Cormac grins. “Lovely as always, Granger,”

Theo insists they dance again and Hermione agrees. But as Hermione’s feet begin to throb, he agrees it’s time to call it a night. He leads her to the Floo saying goodbye to people they bump into on the way and they arrive back at Hermione’s house a few seconds later.

He takes her hand, placing a kiss on the back of it before bowing to her. “If he saw you tonight, he’ll be so fucking pissed he brought a second rate witch instead of attending with you, Granger,” Theo looks at her seriously. “The man is a fucking idiot,”

Hermione blushes. “Thank you,”

“I had a wonderful evening with you, I’ll be your *date* anytime you want, okay?”

The way he looks at her makes her think he knows more than he's letting on.

"Okay," she nods.

"Go get some sleep," he kisses her cheek before stepping up to the fireplace and throwing a handful of green powder in and stepping through. "I'm sure Draco will have a lot to say to you at work on Monday,"

Then he's gone.

Hermione closes the Floo not wanting any chance of Malfoy making another late night appearance tonight. She takes off her shoes and climbs the stairs. As she steps into her bedroom she sees the notebook Malfoy gave her is glowing brightly on her bed and goes over to see what he wants.

Malfoy: You left? I assume you're at home?

Malfoy: Are you at home?

Malfoy: I just tried to Floo over. It wouldn't let me. Are you at home?

Malfoy: Hermione, I swear to fucking Gods, if you've gone home with Nott

Malfoy: I need to see you. This is all a mess and I fucking hate it. I know you're not with Theo, I know you wouldn't do that. Please will you let me know you're home safe?

Hermione sighs and picks up her quill to respond.

Hermione: No, I'm not with Theo. I'm at home about to climb into bed. Goodnight Malfoy, I will not be responding to any more messages until the morning no matter how many you send. Go to sleep.

In fact, Hermione doesn't respond to any messages for the rest of the weekend.

And she keeps her Floo closed too.

He's in Hermione's office when she arrives for work on Monday morning. She expected as much.

The door closes and he's on her, his hands on her face, his tongue in her mouth, pushing her against the wall and pinning her to it. He bites and sucks and kisses her so deep their teeth clack together, but he doesn't stop. His hands dive under her dress, pulling it up to her waist and his fingers are pushing inside her before she has a chance to take a breath.

"Who do you belong to, Granger?" He asks angrily.

"No one—"

"The fuck you don't," he bites her lip and she tastes the familiar metallic of her own blood on her tongue.

"Stop—" She pushed him but he refused to move. "Malf—"

"And stop fucking calling me that!"

Her head falls back against the wall as he continues to kiss her, bite her neck and thrust his fingers in between her legs so hard she winces a little.

"It—your—name!" Hermione groans and he brushes his thumb across her clitoris.

"Draco—" he pants into her mouth. "Call me Draco or call me nothing at all,"

He uses a slicing spell on her dress and suddenly she's standing before him in her underwear and heels and he's unzipping his trousers, freeing his erection and lifting her up, wrapping her legs around his waist. Hermione grips his shoulders and calls out a second later when he buries himself to the hilt in one brutal thrust.

"Silence the door!" She pants as he starts to fuck her.

"I. Already. Have."

It's indecent the sounds they're making. The slapping of skin, the moaning, the wet kisses, the thud of her back against the wall.

"You're mine," he tells her. "You belong to me, Granger—"

Hermione bites his lip and tugs on his hair to make him look at her. "Don't call me that either!"

"Now you know how it feels," he bites out, reaching between them to press a finger to her clitoris as he continues to thrust inside her. "You make me so fucking angry,"

“You make me angry!” she half yells. “You have the power to make me feel like I’m nothing and everything!”

He growls and kisses her again. “You could never be nothing,”

“Then why do you make it feel that way?” To Hermione’s horror she feels tears spring to her eyes. “Why do you make me feel like the one thing you can’t live without when we’re together then go so cold it’s like I don’t exist to you? How can you take Astoria fucking Greengrass to a gala I’m attending and be okay with it? How does this not affect you like it does me?”

He looks down at her and slows his hips, reaching up to wipe away the tears covering her cheeks.

“Hermione—please, don’t,”

She shakes her head, loosening her grip on his waist so he puts her down. She repairs her dress and tries to smooth her hair, keeping her back to him.

“Everytime I think we’ve got this worked out, you do this. You behave like someone I don’t want to be around, Draco. I can’t—I can’t keep doing this,”

She feels him behind her and steps forward, but he wraps his arm around her waist and stops her, pulling her to his chest.

“I’m sorry—I’m trying,”

“It’s not enough,”

“I’m terrified, Hermione,” he whispers in her ear. “I’m terrified of losing you, I’m terrified of being with you,” he sighs and turns to look at him. “I need you and I don’t know how to show you that or how to accept it,”

Hermione moves back and looks into his stormy eyes and feels more tears fall. “You’re terrified? How do you think I feel? I’ve never felt like this before and everything I feel for you is swallowing me whole, Draco. And you’re the one who’s terrified?”

Draco pulls her to his chest and kisses the top of her head as she rests her cheek on his chest. They stay like that for a long time, just breathing and trying to calm down. When Draco pulls back she wipes under her eyes and steps back too.

“I have to go and meet Potter at a suspected safe house, but I don’t want this to be where we leave it. Will you come over tonight? We can talk and work through this?”

Hermione just nods.

Draco steps forward and raises her chin to look at him. “I want this, I want you. I just—I don’t know what I’m doing,”

Hermione doesn’t have words.

"I'll be at Burton House by eight, I'll see you there."

He straightens his shirt, brushes his hand through his hair and exits her office leaving Hermione standing there completely confused and emotional about the whole thing.

Chapter End Notes

It's Sunday, already?

Phew. Okay. That was a lot.

I guess we'll see how things go on Wednesday!

Thank you for reading, for all the wonderful comments and for the Kudos. It's more than I ever expected!

If you'd like to find me on Instagram or TikTok search for smudgesonapage

See you Wednesday!

Try

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Twenty-Three

Try

Hermione steps out of the fireplace at Burton House at eight that night and Draco is waiting for her. He's freshly showered and dressed in a pair of black trousers and a black shirt, open at the neck and rolled to his elbows.

"Evening, Hermione," he smiles as he steps towards her and presses a soft kiss to her lips.

"Hi," she breathes, inhaling the scent of him which makes her feel calm and rooted all at once.

"I thought we could sit outside for a while, it's warm enough and I haven't shown you the gardens yet,"

"That would be lovely,"

He glances down at her heels and frowns. "As beautiful as they are, may I suggest you remove them?"

Hermione nods and reaches down to slip her feet out of her simple nude slingbacks and places them neatly on the floor before taking the hand Draco holds out to her. They walk in silence out the big glass doors and onto the patio. The gardens are large and green with a wildflower meadow and rows and rows of sweet smelling purple lavender. There's a fountain and pond and way out ahead of them a greenhouse and what looks like vegetable gardens.

"I didn't picture you to have such a wild garden,"

He runs his thumb across the back of her hand and brings it to his mouth to press a soft kiss there. Her stomach flutters and she hopes that this is how it can be from now on.

"Wild?" He teases. "I wanted the opposite of the Manor gardens for myself, this is how a garden should be,"

"Maintained yet wild," she bumps her shoulder with Draco. "Much like the man himself?"

He smirks at her and tugs her to him. "You'd know, wouldn't you?"

He kisses her amongst the lavender and swaying leaves of the trees above and for one blissful, beautiful moment, Hermione allows herself to picture her life with this man.

Growing together, learning from each other. Having a life together.

“I’m starting too,”

He walks her down the steps and onto the grass, they pass the meadow and turn a corner to find a white wooden gazebo with a table set for two and what looks like champagne on ice.

“Are we going to talk?” She asks.

“Yes,” he says simply.

He leads her up the stairs and sits her on the bench seat before filling her glass and handing it to her. She can’t help but think about their one and only date, of being on the Thames without a care in the world and the silly game they played there. Her mind inevitably turns to the passionate night they shared together, the one night he stayed where he was supposed to and they woke up together too. The slow morning they shared, the sex and how it felt different, more. Draco fills his own glass and comes to sit next to her.

“There are many things I know I do well,” he starts. “I’m good at my job, at understanding Dark Wizards, I’m good at flying high and fast and tipping myself upside down,” he looks at her and she grimaces. “And I’m good at reading people. I’m good at being the best because I was born to think I was and I think you’ll agree I’m also really good at sex,” he looks at her with heated eyes and she blushes. “But I’m terrible at trying to be the man you want and deserve and navigating this—*relationship* ,”

Hermione lets a soft laugh leave her mouth. “I’m not going to inflate your ego and disagree, Draco. You’re terrible at this, but I think I’m just as bad,”

He reaches for her hand and links their fingers. “I think you’re better at being open about it,”

“I’m not ashamed to be with you,” Hermione tells him honestly.

“I’m not ashamed either,” She arches a brow at him. “I’m not. I just know that being with me is complicated. It brings with it so much negativity and the thought of you getting caught up in all of that is—I won’t allow it,”

“Who says it’s your choice to make?”

He meets her eyes and doesn’t look away. “I do,”

Hermione takes a deep mouthful of her drink before speaking again. “Have you ever thought that that’s half the problem? You constantly needing to control everything? What does it matter what other people think, Draco? I’m an adult, I’ve helped end a war. Do you honestly think I care if people disagree with who I spend my time with?”

“It will be more than merely disagreeing, Hermione. You’ll get spat at in the street, you’ll get *Howlers* every morning, people will actively avoid you, they’ll stop you climbing higher in the Ministry, you’ll become an outcast because of your association with me.”

“Association ?” She laughs. “You think this is all this is?”

Wide, open grey eyes meet hers and search her face. “What would you call it?”

Hermione swallows. “I don’t know yet because you constantly try to sabotage it. But you can’t possibly know what will happen if people know we’re dating, how can you?”

“Because I’ve seen what they do to my mother,”

“I’ve been to the gala’s people love your mother, Draco,”

He laughs. Empty and bitter. “You’ve seen the people we allow into our home interact and adore her, the rest of the world is a very different thing,”

“I’m still big enough to deal with it,”

He sighs and takes a drink. “Be that as it may, I don’t want to put you through it,”

“Perhaps on this you don’t have a choice. Perhaps on this I make the rules. Perhaps on this matter how I feel is actually more important than what you want, have you ever thought of that?”

He puts down his glass and pulls her into him, kissing her with an intensity that leaves her breathless and panting against his mouth, her whole body tingling and singing with desire for the man beneath her.

“I love it when you’re fierce like this, do you know that?”

“I do,”

Draco rests his forehead to hers and inhales. “I’m sorry for Astoria, I shouldn’t have attended with her, I should have gone alone,”

“Yes you should,”

“And Theo?”

Hermione pulls back. “What about Theo?”

“Do you think you should have gone with him knowing I’d be there?”

Hermione wiggles off his lap and puts a little space between them, he reaches and takes her hand anyway.

“Attending with Theo *as friends* is very different, Draco. Astoria has made it perfectly clear that she wants to be the next Mrs Malfoy,” she rolls her eyes. “The way she touches you and looks at you—it’s perfectly clear you have a history together and to everyone in that ballroom it makes perfect sense that you’d be together,”

“Except to me,”

"No, I think it makes sense to you, too. She's everything you've been raised to want and expect in a wife,"

Draco moves and brushes her cheek with his fingers before turning her head to face him. "Except she's not, Hermione. She represents everything I don't want, everything I don't expect in a wife. She may make sense to everyone else but to me? She makes not only no sense, but is the polar opposite of what I want,"

"But you do have a history?"

"If that's your roundabout way of asking if I've slept with Astoria, then the answer is yes. I'm no saint, I'm not going to pretend before you and I started—that I was celibate before. I wasn't and unfortunately I didn't always make the best choices and I'm sorry you're having to deal with the ramifications now,"

Hermione swallows and tries to keep her face blank. "And she will do whatever she can to you back in her bed. That's something I do understand about her,"

His lips tilt up in a smirk. "You want to sleep with me again, do you?"

Hermione rolls her eyes. "Draco," she leans closer to him. "The way I feel about you? The way you make me feel? I don't want to sleep with anyone else ever again,"

He has her on her back and is looming over her in seconds. His hands in her hair, his fingers under her dress and slipping inside her knickers. Hermione arches into him and opens her legs as much as the dress will allow. She allows him to tug on her lip with his teeth, to brush against her tongue with his and to bring her, with startling speed, to the edge of an orgasm.

But she pushes him off her panting.

"We're talking, not having sex," she tells him, sitting back up. "This is also our issue, we can barely be together alone and not get carried away,"

She watches him as he sits back down, resting one arm along the back of the bench and bringing one thumb up to his mouth to brush away the smudge of her lipstick.

"I can't control myself around you," he looks at her and smiles. Not a smirk, but a genuine smile. "You say I make you feel alive? The feeling is mutual. There isn't a second of my day that you're not in my mind, Hermione. I drive myself crazy because I'm consumed by you,"

Taking a shaky breath, Hermione tries to gather her thoughts. He's so powerful and all consuming that all rational thought seems to leave her brain when she's with him. Nothing else matters; not her friends, not work. Nothing. It's a dangerous place to be. She tries to steer the conversation back to the real issues and not their total lack of restraint.

"I attended with Theo because after I left you in the park, I went to my house and he and Pansy were there. I was upset and they were worried,"

Draco reaches for his glass and takes a small sip. "They're as protective of you as I am. I hear about you from them all the time,"

“Really?”

“Hermione, when my friends let you in, you can’t get back out. They’re fiercely loyal and protective and there’s something about you that brings that out in not just me but in them too.”

Hermione smiles. “I like them. They’re—they seem to understand me more than the friends I’ve had for years do right now,”

“Because they’re not seeing you from Hogwarts, they’re seeing who you are now,”

“Have you told them about us?”

“No,”

“Will you?”

“Eventually, but I’m not at that stage right now. If they knew how I’d behaved, Pansy would have my balls and Theo would hold me while she cut them off with a blunt knife while Blaise encouraged her,”

Hermione laughs. “They’re not that bad—”

Draco raises an eyebrow at her. “Yes, they’re that bad.”

“So, this leaves us where exactly?”

Draco moves closer and kisses her below her ear. “It leaves us trying to work it out. I promise to try and stop being so heavy handed. I informed Astoria I will not be attending any other galas or events with her. And one day,” he kisses her again. “I hope I’ll not be such a coward and have the courage to ask you to attend with me instead.”

Hermione turns her face to meet his lips. “I’d like that,”

Pippet appears with a crack and smiles at them both. “Pippet is telling you that dinner is almost ready if yous is ready,”

Draco smiles. “We are, thank you, Pippet,”

“Yous is wanting dinner outside?”

“Yes please,” Hermione says before Draco can say otherwise. “Thank you, Pippet,”

The little elf beams at Hermione and disappears. Draco chuckles from beside her and Hermione turns to look at him.

“What?”

“I can see I’ll have to keep an eye on you both,”

Minutes later the table is set and Pippet is telling them that the salad is feta and watermelon and that she will be back with the main course when they are ready. The food is delicious and Draco seems relaxed and content. They speak about the case and how things are beginning to heat up. Hermione frowns and apologises for not being more help with the case, Draco waves her off, telling her she's helped more than she knows but the Aurors have it from this point.

Hermione reaches for Draco's hand and makes him look at her. "I need you to promise me, you'll be safe,"

He raises an eyebrow at her and squeezes her fingers. "I'm always safe,"

"No, I mean it. I need you to be sensible and walk away if things go wrong. I know you want to put a stop to this, I know it's personal for you, but you have people who lo—you have people who want you to be in one piece, who want you alive, Draco,"

He meets her eyes and leans to kiss her softly just once. "I promise I'll be safe, but I have to do my job, Hermione and that comes with risks,"

"I know that," she sighs. "Just don't take more than necessary,"

Hermione wakes up alone and in her own bed the next morning, much to her annoyance and frustration. After their wonderful evening together, she made the choice to leave and go back to her house. Hermione wanted to try and get a balance between the two of them and sex always complicated everything. Turning over to reach for her notebook, she sees it's already glowing.

Draco : Something very strange happened this morning ...

Hermione smiles and replies.

Hermione : And what was that?

His response is immediate.

Draco : I woke up with a smile on my face.

Hermione laughs.

Hermione : Bloody hell! Has Hell frozen over?

Draco : Witch! I missed you, did you sleep well?

Hermione : Not as well as I would have with you here.

Draco : The offer was there if you remember. You decided to leave, I was ready for a sleepover.

Hermione : Can we have one tonight?

Draco : Absolutely we can. Can I make a request?

Hermione : Depends what it is ...

Draco : Wear the green lingerie.

Hermione : Okay. Can I make one?

Draco : Hermione, you can make as many requests of me as you want. Name it.

Hermione : Wear your shirt unbuttoned at the neck, the sleeves rolled up to your elbows AND your glasses for me?

Draco : Have a forearm kink, do you?

Hermione : Draco ...

Draco : It's a deal. I'll be out of the office today, but I'll see you at Burton House at 7.30. Be safe.

Hermione : YOU BE SAFE! X

Hermione spends the day going over Runes on another case after Otto tells her the Aurors have it from here and he thanks her for her help. The morning goes by in much the same way most mornings do and nothing overly eventful happens until a knock on her door at just gone noon.

"I'm here to see if you're free for lunch," a voice from her door says.

Hermione looks up at beams at Ginny in her doorway.

"Only because your boyfriend and father of your child is busy,"

Hermione stands and goes to hug Ginny. She holds her at arm's length and looks at her friend. "You look well, Gin. How are you feeling?"

"Today okay, yesterday I didn't get out of bed or eat anything because the little one in my stomach doesn't like me to eat most days,"

"After everything you're doing for them? Seems a bit harsh to me, baby Potter,"

Hermione grabs her bag and they head out to Diagon for lunch. She's delighted when Ginny says she's craving Hermione's sandwich and demands they go to get one right this second. Hands full of sandwiches, crisps and cookies, they walk the short way to the park and take a seat on what Hermione now thinks of as Draco and her bench.

"So, update me on all the things. What's going on with the house, dating, sex,"

"The house is coming along really well, I'm thinking of having a housewarming in a few weeks actually, get everyone together, let Pansy show off her interior skills,"

Ginny takes a bite and turns her nose up at the sandwich, wrapping it up quickly and gulping down lots of water.

“Baby doesn’t want it after all,” she groans.

“I’ll take mine back to the office. Think you can manage some crisps?”

Ginny picks one from the bag and tries it. “Seems okay,” she tries another and then another. “I still can’t believe you’re friends with the snakes!”

“They’re really good to be around,” Hermione shrugs.

“And Theo is gorgeous so that doesn’t completely suck,”

“He’s very much not interested,”

“Oh, I know. Apparently, Charlie is visiting for a week and he has a date,”

“With?”

“Theo of course,”

“Finally. I think they make such a cute couple,”

“I don’t know him, but I wouldn’t mind him joining the family just for someone to look at,”

Hermione laughs. “What is it with you and men with dark unruly hair?”

Ginny sighs and leans back. “I honestly don’t know. So, you’re not sleeping with Thoe, are you sleeping with anyone?”

Hermione shifts in her seat a little. “Maybe,”

“What!?” Ginny exclaims sitting back up. “I was joking, who?”

“I’m not ready to tell anyone yet, we’re just … seeing how it goes for now,”

“Okay, fine. Is he good in bed?”

Hermione blushes. “Oh yes,”

“And he treats you well? Looks after you?”

“For the most part, we’re still working each other out and life is complicated,”

Ginny nods in agreement. They spend another twenty minutes discussing baby related things, Ginny tells her that they’re officially moving in together and that Molly is not pleased they’re procreating out of wedlock but also can’t be mad because she wants all the grandbabies. Ginny walks with Hermione back to Diagon and heads to the *Leaky Cauldron* to Floo back to Harry’s for a nap while Hermione heads back into work for the afternoon and tries not to

picture herself in Ginny's shoes, growing a child she can't help but picture with blond hair and grey eyes.

Hermione has barely stepped out of the floor before she's being spun around and pushed hard against the wall. Draco towers over her like he always does, caging her in as his hands come up and around her throat, his lips crashing to hers. He consumes her in one kiss, forceful, lust-filled and powerful. It feels like an eternity since he's been like this and heat explodes over her skin as his free hand skims down her body and under her dress. Draco's too skilled fingers brush under the lace of her underwear as he tugs Hermione's lip between his teeth and bites down hard.

"Draco—"

"*On your knees .*"

Hermione obeys.

She doesn't know how to do anything but obey him.

He calls to the hidden, dark parts of her soul that she's spent her whole life trying to ignore, he always has. Hermione never feels more like her than when she's with Draco and finds she's whoever people want her to be when she's not. Folding to the floor, Hermione tucks her feet under her bottom and drops her gaze.

He towers above her, still decked out in his lavish finery from his day. Shiny dragon skin shoes, perfectly tailored trousers and shirt. He loosened his tie a little but not removed it and in a second Hermione knows why. His finger trails down her face and comes to a stop under her chin before he raises her face to meet his steely gaze.

He's calm.

Hermione can see it in his eyes.

He doesn't want fast and furious tonight, he's in it for the long haul and nothing will change his mind.

Hermione watches as he tugs on his tie and removes it from around his neck slowly, making a show of slipping it from his shirt collar, sliding the silky material between his long fingers before grasping it firmly in both hands. He doesn't speak as he circles Hermione and drops to his haunches behind her.

She wants desperately to turn her head, to see him, kiss him, touch him,

But she knows the rules and she obeys, because they both need them.

And It's been too long since they've been together like this.

Gentle fingers caress her arms before tugging them behind her back, pulling on Hermione's hands so they rest palm up. He doesn't move. It doesn't even sound like he's breathing. He's putting Hermione on edge, making her mind race with exactly what he's going to do next. It's too quiet and Hermione flinches when she feels his warm skin on hers, caressing her palm. Once Hermione's hands are secure behind her back he drops a kiss to the back of her neck making a shudder travel the length of Hermione's spine.

At once, every little annoyance from the day, all the stress begins to leave her muscles. Her shoulders drop, her neck relaxes and Hermione feels calmer. She feels more like her.

This is what she needed.

What she wants.

And Draco knows it.

Because he needs it, too.

Hermione hears the metallic clatter of his belt and anticipates with delight what's about to happen. Draco comes to stand before her and she raises her eyes, watching his long fingers unbutton his trousers and slowly disappear into his boxer-briefs. He doesn't speak as he lowers the waistband and releases his erection. Hermione inhales and reminds herself to stay where she is even when every cell in her body is demanding her to lean forward and claim her prize.

It feels like forever since she's been with him like this and she is desperate.

"You want this?" he asks, his cocky, arrogant mouth tipping up into a smirk.

Hermione nods.

She watches greedily as his fingers wrap around his length and move up and down in long, firm movements. He's glorious, there's no two ways about it. Her mouth waters just looking at him and he knows it. He groans as he moves his fist up and down his shaft, bucking his hips forward, so close Hermione can almost reach the tip.

"Draco ... *please*,"

"What do you want, Hermione?"

"You. Always you." He smirks, enjoying my pleading.

He stops fisting himself and bends down to kiss her, pushing his tongue forcefully into her mouth, so deep Hermione feels like she's going to choke on it. "You know how much I enjoy your pleading,"

Hermione doesn't say anything.

She just sits and waits.

And he lets her, relishing in the power he has over her, knowing she'll crawl to him if he asks.

He doesn't move, doesn't change his expression, just stares down at her like she's some kind of mystical being he's found sitting on his carpet.

Then he steps forward.

Hermione inhales, her mouth filling with moisture in preparation to take him between her lips.

His hand wraps around his erection again and she drinks him in, memorising every stroke, suppressing a shudder every time his knuckles go white as he fists himself harder. Bringing her eyes to meet his. Hermione can see they're dark, flaming with the intensity of his pleasure, they're almost black.

Hermione knows that look.

He steps infinitesimally closer and holds her chin with his free hand,

A second later he groans as the first splash of his release hits the corner of Hermione's mouth. The shock of its warmth and the surprise has her mouth popping open which only serves as the perfect target for him. He shudders and angles himself over her, releasing his orgasm over her parted lips, into her mouth, spilling out onto my chin. Hermione remains still, lapping at the very tip of him before he rips himself away, breathing heavily.

"I thought—"

He shakes his head and tucks himself away. "I don't think you deserve it just yet, beautiful. But don't worry, before the night's out, you will."

Chapter End Notes

Happy Wednesday, everyone!

I hope you're all well and enjoyed this chapter.

Just a little heads-up, it's a Bank Holiday this weekend in the UK and I'm going away for the weekend with family so there won't be an update on Sunday this week - sorry!

I'll be back on Wednesday though, I promise!

Thank you all for reading as always, for leaving such wonderful comments and Kudos.

See you next week!

Better Together

Chapter Summary

Hey everyone!

It's a day early because I have to go away for work and the wifi will be sketchy!

It's a smaller chapter too, but don't worry ... the next few will be bigger and we'll have lots to enjoy!

Thank you for all your comments and kudos and bookmarks and all the good things that keep me going. You're all amazing!

See you Sunday!

Hermione wakes with a start, blinking to clear her eyes. It takes a few more seconds to realise she's not at home.

The bedsheets aren't hers and the warmth she's surrounded by is staggering. Almost at the same time Hermione becomes aware of hot and heavy pressure across her stomach and up to her left breast. There's a consistent gentle warm puff of air on her neck too. Turning her head she looks and finds Draco asleep next to her.

They're in *his* bed.

Hermione has never woken up in his bed the morning after, Draco has never before allowed her to stay the night. Hermione relishes the moment. She's naked, gloriously comfortable and warm. Hermione concentrates on what she feels. He's naked too, very much naked. Draco's bare skin is pressed against her side, his morning erection prodding her hip and his head resting on her shoulder. He's wrapped around her and sleeping soundly and her heart rate picks up with the knowledge that he's relaxed and content.

Hermione wants to reach down and wrap her fingers around him, She wants to remove herself from his grasp and wake him up with her lips wrapped around him again. But she knows the second he's awake this ends and she's really not ready for that to happen. Hermione sighs and snuggles deeper into his embrace, his palm twitches possessively on her breast and Hermione closes her eyes and drifts back off to sleep.

The next time she wakes up, things are very, *very* different.

Draco's warm skin is no longer pressed against her side, his hand is no longer on her breast. In fact, Hermione's hands are above her head and secured to his headboard while a warm, firm tongue laps between her legs. She tries to move her legs only to find her ankles are

pulled wide apart and straining against the bindings wrapped around the corners of his four poster bed.

How on earth has he managed to do this while she's been asleep?

Hermione looks down and he's settled between her legs, his mouth inches from her core.

"You finally decided to wake up then — " he mumbles against her, sending vibrations through her overheated flesh.

"I was awake before you," she pants, testing the tightness on the ropes again and swallowing back a groan. "I went back to sleep because *you* were taking so long."

He turns his face and nips my inner thigh. "Really,"

"Uh huh, you were resting," Hermione smirks at him and moves her eyes to the top of his canopy as he continues his assault on her clitoris. "At least, most of you was."

My hips buck as he sucks the bundle of nerves into his mouth and Hermione hears his dark chuckle. "I can assure you, I'm rested and ready to work up a sweat."

He slips two fingers inside her and she groans. "Good to know,"

"I think I see the merit in sleepovers, Granger,"

He sucks on her clitoris at the same time he pushes against that knot inside her. "You do?"

He kisses the side of her thigh and she can feel his smile. "I do,"

"So we can — *oh Gods* — do this again?"

He chuckles and licks her again.

Hermione is climaxing a minute later and Draco is hovering above her a second after that, gazing down at her and smiling a soft, relaxed smile. He presses a kiss to her lips and hooks her now untied leg around his hip. Dropping his forehead to hers, he thrusts into her and stills.

"I could become addicted to waking up like this, you know," he whispers, almost like he doesn't want to admit it.

"I could to,"

"The more I get, the more I want and the more I want the scarier it becomes,"

Hermione desperately wants to wrap her arms around his shoulders, to comfort him and let him know that it's okay, they can work it out together, they don't have to have all the answers, that it's okay to be terrified of what they feel. But he still has her hands restrained and she feels something deep inside her that tells her he needs it that way.

“It’s okay,” she breathes. “We’re okay,”

Draco moves with deep, practised thrusts, bringing them both closer to the climax that’s sending tingles throughout her body. Hermione closes her eyes and listens to the words coming out of Draco’s mouth that he just doesn’t seem to be able to stop.

“So fucking good—keep you here—your cunt is mine—you are mine,”

Hermione’s orgasm crashes at his last three words, her whole body shudders and tenses and in the midst of her climax, Draco grips her hips so tight she knows she will bruise and thrusts one more brutal time before groaning in her ear and finishing inside her.

There’s silence in the room for a couple of minutes, everything is still except their rapidly moving chests. Both catching their breath, both covered in sweat and each other. Hermione doesn’t remember ever feeling so safe or happy or content.

“We have work—” Draco murmurs against her neck, even as he starts to move within her again.

“We do,” she agrees, arching her hips up to meet him.

“And I have a meeting about a safe house raid—”

She can feel him back to full hardness and working her up again as he hits the most delicious spot inside her.

“Then you should—”

Hermione’s words are cut off as he bites down on her neck and thrust hard.

“I—should—make you come again—” He pants.

“Please —”

Draco looks down at her and smirks. “You’re so needy, love.”

She clenches and he groans. “For you, always,”

“Two and you already want a third?”

“I want one-hundred with you,”

“Only one-hundred?”

“Today—” she lifts her hips again. “One-hundred today,”

Pansy was in her element.

After Hermione mentioned that she thought about having a housewarming party, Pansy declared she would arrange the best damn party anyone had ever had.

Hermione had no choice about it. All she had to do was invite the people she wanted to be there and Pansy would do the rest. Hermione had tried to tell the Slytherin that it didn't need to be anything massive, just a few friends over for some drinks.

But Pansy disagreed.

"I just think," Hermione said, sighing. "That we don't need a wall of Firewhisky shots for everyone or a feast for a hundred people,"

Theo laughed from across the padded bench seat in the garden. "Pansy will do whatever she wants, Granger and you have no way of stopping her."

"I'm beginning to work that out,"

"You'll have a great time, everyone you love will be here," he tells her, handing her another piece of chocolate which she immediately dipped in her tea, making him grimace.

"I have no doubt about that, it's just I'm—"

"Subtle?"

"Yes, and Pansy is not. I don't want to be fancy, I just want to celebrate having this house with my friends."

"Which just so happens to have a few Slytherins included,"

Hermione grins over at Theo and holds her hand out for more chocolate. He rolls his eyes and hands it over before popping a piece into his mouth too.

"It surprises me too. But you're kinda the best, you know?"

He nods. "I do, love,"

"And Pansy too, but don't tell her that,"

"Never," he grins.

"And Blaise is funny,"

"Hilarious,"

"And Draco—"

"Oh? It's Draco now?" Theo arches an eyebrow at her.

"Well, I've got to know him more and it's become Draco, yes," Hermione tries to keep it carefree and easy.

Theo leans closer and smirks at her. “How much of Draco have you got to know, Hermione?”

She blushes.

“A lot—” She finds herself confessing and avoiding her eyes.

“Hmmm. So you’d be the reason he’s sporting a smile more often these days? And why, when I visited him at Burton House this week I could smell what I know is your perfume? And—” he teases her. “Why was there a pair of green silk knickers in the hallway?”

Hermione really does blush then.

The knickers in the hallway, that Draco had torn off her body seconds before he took her against the wall with said knickers acting as a restraint for her hands behind her back.

“I couldn’t possibly say.”

Theo throws his head back and laughs. “Sure you can’t. But if you could?”

Hermione runs a hand over her face and peers at him through her fingers. “I’d probably say that I’m in deep and I think he is too, but that he doesn’t want to tell people so please, please, keep this to yourself, Theo.”

Theo reaches for her hand and tugs it away from her face. “I won’t tell anyone, I promise. But I’ve known for a while, definitely since the gala. He had his bollocks all twisted out of shape because I was there with you and he was being a bellend and went with Astoria,”

“I know,”

“Astoria fucking Greengrass? Really?” Theo shudders. “That woman is a wart on society. I don’t know why he ever thought it was a good idea to be with her. Celibacy is better than that old bitch,”

Hermione laughed. “I think that’s a bit harsh.”

“Do you? Because I don’t. She tried to trap Draco with a pregnancy, did you know that?”

Hermione’s mouth dropped open. “No!”

Theo snapped another piece of chocolate off and handed it to Hermione. “Yes, their families had been trying to secure a match before the war, everyone thought it was going to happen. Then the Noselette came back and everyone went to war and marriages were not something many people thought about or arranged,”

“Understandable,”

Theo nodded. “However, Draco and her would I don’t know, fuck? There weren’t many options during the war and she was there and it was easy,”

Hermione shuddered.

“Exactly. Anyway, war ends, the Noselette is killed thanks to you and the Boy Who Lived and was sexy about it—”

“Excuse me? You fancy Harry?”

Theo rolls his eyes. “Since Fourth Year,”

“How did I no—”

“Focus! The war ends and Astoria somehow manages to convince Draco that she’s still the best option when at this point, anyone is better than her. He has too much to drink and the next week, she claims she’s pregnant and it’s his baby,”

“That would explain why he’s such a stickler for *Contraception Charms* and potions,”

“Of course one simple spell and the lie was uncovered but the damage was done. He went to France and she spent the whole time trying to work out how to get him back. And to this day I’m delighted to say, it hasn’t worked and hopefully now,” he leans closer and whispers. “It never will,”

“I can’t believe that,” Hermione gulps down her tea and almost chokes. “And yet he still goes to galas with her?”

“It’s easy and it keeps his mother quiet,”

Hermione tries to take in what Theo has told her. Astoria really was a piece of work.

“Please don’t mention I’ve told you this,” Theo says quietly. “Draco is very private and he’d hate it if he knew I’d told you that.”

“I won’t tell a soul,” Hermione promises.

“And don’t tell Potter about me founding him sexy either, it will make the fact we’re both your friends very awkward,”

“Not to mention you’re lustng over Charlie—”

“Oh, that man,” Theo groans dramatically. “Will he be invited to your housewarming extravaganza?”

“It’s not an extravaganza!” Hermione growls. “I’ll invite him, it depends on the dragons,”

“It’s so sexy he looks after dragons. I bet he’s one in bed,” Theo grins and wiggles his eyebrows at her.

“I wouldn’t know—”

“But I hope one day, I will. And I’ll tell you all about it.” Theo laughs.

Bathroom

Chapter Summary

Happy Sunday, everyone!

The 1st September, the beginning of the BEST time of the year!

I hope you enjoyed this chapter.

I just wanted to apologise for being slack on updating tags. I've updated them because as one comment rightly said, Draco and Hermione's relationship is currently a bit toxic. It is. Draco is very much in the mindset of "I know best." Which we all know he doesn't always.

I've updated tags and I hope everyone feels that they are right for this part of the story. I'll continue to update as I feel it needs it.

Thank you SO much to everyone for commenting, reading and Kudos.

Never in a million years did I think people would love my two idiots as much as I do.

See you all on Wednesday!

Bathroom

Hermione looks at her reflection in the mirror and smiles. The soft dusty pink dress flows over her hips and the daring V-front dips a lot lower than she'd ever have dreamed of wearing before. But Hermione doesn't feel the embarrassment over her scars any longer. Draco adores her body, he spends hours tracing every curve and scar, licking and kissing every inch of her skin. Hermione has never felt more beautiful or sexy in her life and with the charms Pansy taught her to keep her chest in place, she feels confident she looks good.

Her hair is partly down with stray curls framing her face and falling around her shoulders. Smokey pink and brown eyeshadow and a nude gloss finishes the look. She looks over at the shoes Pansy left out for her when she went back to change before the party started. Gold heeled sandals that remind her of the shoes Baby in the Muggle film Dirty Dancing wears, are sitting waiting for her to slip her feet into. They're a lot higher than the ones in the film and Hermione decides to humour Pansy and wear them for a while before slipping them off and walking barefoot. It's a summer party and the garden has the softest grass she's itching to feel under her toes.

Hermione steps into the lounge when the Floo activates and Pansy steps through quickly followed by Theo and Blaise.

“Oh, Granger,” Theo grins at her. “Come to me, show me your outfit in more detail,”

Hermitone laughs and takes his hand. “Behave, Theodore,”

Theo twirls her around and then pulls her gently into his arms. “You look breathtaking, beautiful,” he presses a kiss to her cheek and she smiles. “Happy housewarming!”

He hands her a big box and she takes it, thanking him before placing it on the table in the corner, Blaise steps up to her and presses a kiss on her cheek making her blush a little.

“Granger, my eyes will never recover from such beauty,” he tells her flirtily.

“Thank you,”

“I bring two gifts,” he holds one out. “A housewarming gift for you to open later and wine for now, from my vineyard,”

“Ah,” she beams. “I was going to say you shouldn’t have but I know this is delicious so, thank you,”

“Okay, okay, enough mauling,” Pansy scoffs. “Granger, your guests are going to be arriving any time now, are you ready?”

Hermione holds her hands out to her friend. “Don’t I look ready?”

Pansy eyes her and smiles. “You look more than ready,” she steps towards her, dressed in a mini black dress and thigh high boots, red lips, smoky eyes and her beautiful raven-hair wavy and sexy. It’s only then Hermione spots the tattoo winding its way around her upper thigh.

“How did I not know you had a tattoo!?” Hermione gaps.

“Well, have you seen my thighs in the last week? No. So how would you?”

Theo laughs and Blaise raises his eyebrows at her. “She’s rebelling,” Blaise tells her.

Pansy glares at him. “Apparently, I am no longer a Parkinson, so my darling mother informs me. I’m a

disappointment and I have lost my inheritance due to my lack of a Pureblood proposal, my un-ladylike ways and because I told her to go fuck herself. So I figured, can do whatever the fuck I want, lady like or not,”

Hermione doesn’t know what to say. Comforting the Slytherin is not something Pansy appears to want, so Hermione decides to compliment the tattoo. She kneels down and runs a finger across the snake that wraps around her thigh. As she does so, it slithers and winds tighter.

“The magic is insane,” she breathes.

“Thank you,” Blaise says grinning.

“This is your work?” Hermione asks, surprised.

“It is. Intrigued? Did you want a lion on your arse? I could make it roar and everything.”

Hermione is still on her knees by Pansy’s thigh when the *Floo* roars to life again and Charlie steps through into the lounge, a smirk on his lips.

“Hermione, I didn’t realise how much I’d enjoy seeing your race between another girls thighs until this very moment.”

Pansy bursts out laughs, Blaise chuckles, Theo scowls and Hermione goes bright red, immediately standing up.

“Hey Charlie,”

The tall ginger walks over with his hands full and leans down to kiss her cheek. “You look beautiful as always,” He looks past her to Theo and smiles. “As do you, Nott,”

Theo blushes and walks into the kitchen.

“You can’t honestly be serious, Hermione?” Ron glares.

“Excuse me?”

“You invited *Malfoy*?”

Hermione looks over her shoulder and rolls her eyes at him. Flicking her wand to arrange more glasses in a pyramid on the counter. “Yes, I’m perfectly serious, *Ronald*,” she moves to the left of him and gets the bottles of wine to line up neatly. “He works with Harry and I. Was I supposed to invite the rest of the DMLE and ignore him? We’re not teenagers any more, he’s an adult, we’re adults.”

“It doesn’t mean you have to socialise with him!”

Hermione takes a step closer and glares at him. “Firstly, this is my house, my party and my choice. Secondly, if you don’t like who I’ve invited, the door is that way,” she points her wand over his shoulder.

Ron swallows down whatever retort he’s about to give and leaves the kitchen, going to join his brothers outside. Hermione takes a deep breath and turns to face Ginny who is sitting on the counter eating a massive bowl of sweetcorn like they’re crisps.

Ginny pokes Hermione in her ribs as they both watch Malfoy stop to greet Harry. "When," she breathes in Hermione's ear. "Did he get so—"

"Grown up?"

"Gorgeous! I swear to Gods the more I see him, the more I think you're definitely not the only person having sex dreams about him. I wonder if he's a disappointment in the cock area? I mean look how tall he is! He can't be surely."

Hermione takes a sip of her wine and leans into Ginny's legs as she sits on Hermione's new counter without a care in the world. "You're very much taken, Ginny. Stop ogling him and stop talking about another man's penis!"

"I'm not dead. I'm also pregnant and have so many hormones racing through my body I'm constantly gagging for it. And I'll be completely honest here. I often look at men right now and try to imagine what their cocks are like," She laughs as Hermione makes a face. "I'm also glad to hear it hasn't escaped your attention just how gorgeous he has grown to be. He was so ... pointy as a teenager."

Hermione is about to respond but the words die in her throat as the man in question makes his way over to them all while Ginny smiles. When he comes to a stop in front of them he inclines his head at Ginny.

"Weasley,"

"Really?" She scoffs. "You know my first name, *Draco* ,"

"Indeed I do, *Ginevra* ,"

Ginny bursts out laughing and reaches out to pat him on the head before leaping off the counter with more agility than she should have ."Behave while I'm gone," she tells Hermione. "Don't do anything I wouldn't do."

They both watch her red head disappear into the crowd of people with amused expressions on their faces before Draco turns his attention to her. It's then she spots a beautifully wrapped present resting in his hands.

"A housewarming gift," he tells her while holding it out.

"Oh," Hermione says stupidly, putting her glass down. "You really didn't need to do that."

"My mother would say otherwise,"

Hermione places the box on her counter and tugs at the beautiful bow before finding a way in to unwrap it. Then gasps when she sees what's inside, her eyes snapping to him. Hermione reaches inside the box and carefully pulls out the copy of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* . A very old copy.

"Oh, Draco, you really, really shouldn't have. It must have cost a—"

His hand reaches out and settles over hers; it's warm and soft and the connection has her blood heating like always. "Every home should have the classics," he smiles. "Especially our favourite ones."

A shiver runs down her spine. "You remember,"

"I'm not likely to forget after the impassioned lecture you gave me, Hermione,"

She glares at him. "It wasn't a lecture,"

"Really?" he teases. "It seemed very McGonagall-esq to me."

Hermione laughs a little remembering how long she went on about this story. They were curled up naked in his bed, both laying on their tummies with the moon as their only light. He asked her what her favourite book was and she shocked him by telling her it wasn't *Hogwarts: A History*, but *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. He admitted he hadn't read it but that he would.

"Have you read it yet?"

"I have," he smiles at her and she feels her legs wobble at how beautiful he looks. "I enjoyed it," he tells her softly.

Hermione swallows and tries not to flush everywhere as his grey eyes heat as he takes in her outfit. For the time his eyes are on her, nothing else exists. She forgets the house and garden are filled with her friends and contemplates leaning forward to kiss him.

"You're breathtaking tonight," he leans in a little. "I wish I could take you upstairs and remove every single item of clothing with my teeth,"

Her breath catches. "It wouldn't take long," she tells him, leaning closer without thinking. "There's only this one," she gestures to her dress.

His hand reaches out and twirls a curl around his finger. "Fuck. I want you so fucking badly right now," he breathes, inching closer, so close she can feel his breath on her skin and the heat radiating from his body. "I'm aching and if I could—"

The sound of laughter makes them step apart just as Harry comes into the kitchen.

"Malfoy!" He calls, already a couple of drinks in. "You came!"

Draco sighs and mutters so softly only she can hear. "Unfortunately, not. Later perhaps,"

He meets her eyes and she whispers one word. "Absolutely,"

Harry grabs him a beer and leads him outside. Hermione watches as he takes a sip and winces and places it on the table as he joins his gang of Slytherin's. It's then that Hermione fully gets to look at him. He's as casual as he ever gets today. He's wearing a black shirt rolled to his elbows, dark-grey trousers and Dragon hide shoes. His sunglasses are perched on his nose and his hair is falling slightly over his forehead. He's absolutely gorgeous and she wants to

scream and shout and tell everyone he belongs to her. She can't though, so she pours herself a glass of wine and heads out into the garden and to her friends.

As the evening progresses, Hermione watches with fascination as Pansy can't take her eyes off of Neville. She's found any excuse to stand close to him and his eyes keep drifting down to the small witch so often Hermione is sure he's going to have eye strain. A warmth at her back alerts her to Draco's presence.

"Is Neville checking Pansy out?" He asks her, dipping his head to rest his mouth at her ear.

Hermione shudders. "As much as Pansy is checking him out, yes,"

"Huh," He inhales and his voice tickles her bare skin. "What time is this winding down?" He asks, running a finger along the exposed portion of her neck.

"I don't know, I didn't exactly state a time—"

She hears him inhale. "Foolish,"

"I know—"

"Hermione! Come and settle this!" Theo calls over from his spot next to Charlie and Harry at the C-shaped padded bench by the firepit.

"Come with me?" She says, turning to face Draco.

"I'd love you *come* with you,"

She rolls her eyes and turns to walk over to her friends in bare feet, lifting her dress a little so she doesn't tread on it.

"What am I settling exactly?" She laughs as Theo pulls her into his lap and wraps an arm around her waist.

She looks up and locks eyes with Draco. He doesn't look impressed at her positioning but she shakes her head at him. He knows Theo is her friend and he knows the only person she wants is him.

"Who's tougher? An Auror or a dragon tamer?"

Hermione looks between Harry and Charlie who both grin drunkenly at her. "Well—"

"An Auror—" Harry declares. "We duel to kill, Theo. It's not for fun!"

Harry is more than a little drunk, his green eyes bright and his smile easy. He's sitting back, one arm along the back of the bench, clutching a beer in his hand. Hermione loves seeing her friends relaxed and happy and as she looks around the garden she realises everything she wanted this house to be is coming true,

"But they're fucking dragons!" Theo half yells. "They breathe fire and shit,"

Charlie laughs and shakes his head.

“But Aurors fight Dark Wizards. They kill—”

“As do dragons!” Theo interrupts him. “And you can’t rationalise with a dragon—”

Hermione looks up and raises an eyebrow at Draco who is standing close to the table listening to the drunk idiots try to compare careers.

“I think both have danger and they’re both tough,” she says.

“But it’s fire!” Theo exclaims.

“Theodore,” Draco drawls his name as he takes a seat. “Both are dangerous, both are fucking thrilling I’m sure, does one have to be better?”

Theo laughs. “You’re asking me this? The man who has to be the best at everything?”

“We’re not talking about me specifically,” Draco reminds him.

“And if we were?”

Draco smirks. “Naturally I’m going to say an Auror,”

Hermione and Theo laugh and Charlie scoffs. “When was the last time you rode a dragon?”

Draco meets Hermione’s eyes and his lips twitch. “Not recently. Hermione?”

Hermione blushes and takes a mouthful of her wine. “Not for a few days,”

Theo and Charlie laugh and she grins at them.

Hermione listens to Theo, Draco and Charlie chat but moves herself out of Theo’s lap. Knowing he knows full well what he’s doing and how much it’s clearly bothering Draco, she decides to put a stop to it. His fists open and clench on his thigh and he grips his glass of Firewhisky just a little too tight.

Looking out at her group of friends all around the garden she laughs. Harry has hooked up a speaker into the garden and is currently bouncing around to music their wizard friends have never heard of. Ginny is laughing at him from her place on the swing seat Pansy found for the garden, while Neville and Ron chat to Blaise about Quidditch all under the watchful eye of Pansy.

When her bladder protests at how much she’s had to drink, she excuses herself and heads back into the house to the bathroom. Looking at her reflection in the mirror, she’s pleased to see her makeup and hair don’t look a complete mess. She looks relaxed and carefree and she feels good.

She opens the door and walks across the landing when a warm hand wraps around her waist and pulls her back into the bathroom.

“What—”

Draco’s mouth is on hers a second later, his tongue pushing past her lips and into her mouth. His hands lift her up and she wraps her legs around his waist as he kicks the door closed and locks it.

“I’ve waited all fucking night to kiss you,” he breathes into her mouth. “I’ve been going insane. Fucking Nott with his hands on you, going to fucking kill him—”

“Don’t be jealous,” Hermione pants, kissing him deeper. “I don’t want him. I want you,”

He pulls back and looks at her, eyes dark and heated. “Say it again,”

“*I want you,*”

“*Fuck—*”

Her hands drop between them to his belt buckle and he draws his hips back to give her room. She slips her hand into his trousers, finding him bare as always and tugs him free. Swiping her thumb across the swollen head of his erection and spreading the pre-come around the tip of him while he watches.

“You’re beautiful, do you know that?” He tells her.

“Thank you,”

“One of these days, I’ll stop being such a fucking coward and tell the world you’re mine, I want to. I just—”

Hermione brings her free hand to cover his lips and shakes her head. “Right now, it doesn’t matter.”

He pants as she guides him to her and he slips inside. Her head falls back against the wall as his head rests in her neck breathing deeply.

“Please move—”

He does.

Thrusting into her as his hands grip her hips. The sound of skin slapping against skin bounces around the room and a groan leaves her lips.

“You’re so fucking tight, every fucking dammed time—”

“Draco—”

“I know, love,”

“Hermione!?”

Theo's voice calls up from downstairs and she tightens her grip around Draco as their eyes meet.

Neither one of them has any plan to stop.

"Hermione!? Are you up there?"

"In the bathroom, I'll be down in a—" Hermione's words cut off as Draco brings his finger to press against her clitoris and thrusts inside her. "I'll be there in a minute!"

"Oh, love, you sure will," he breathes, picking up his pace.

"Have you seen Draco?" Theo asks again.

"No!" She calls back, meeting his eyes and watching his mouth tip in a smirk.

"He must have left, okay, well, I'll have a drink for you when you come back! Don't be long!"

Hermione shakes her head, biting her lip as Draco somehow manages to pull her breasts free and latches his mouth around on nipple and bites.

"Great!" She calls back. "I'll be coming any second—"

Draco chuckles as he bites down again and she shudders as she climaxes. When she finishes shuddering around him, he lowers her gently to the floor and fists his cock.

She doesn't have to ask her what he wants.

She drops to her knees and opens her mouth, allowing him to slip past her lips. She tastes her release on him as she sucks him deep. He's close, she can tell. Reaching up, she pushes her luck and brings her hand to cup his balls as she takes him deeper in her throat.

"Good girl—" He groans. "That's it—fuck—so—close—"

She looks up at him and sucks.

"Wanted to have you walk around with my come sliding down your legs—" he pants. "But didn't want to ruin your dress—"

Hermione removes him from her mouth and grins. "Such a gentleman—"

He responds by fisting her hair in his hands and pushing back into her mouth so far and hard she gags. His eyes darken and he pulls back.

"Are you okay?"

She nods. Taking him further into her mouth again.

It doesn't take long. She knows what he likes and he allows himself to be taken care of.

He explodes in her mouth a minute later and Hermione swallows every drop.

Draco helps her to her feet, kisses her deeply and tells her he has to leave.

“I wish I clouds stay—”

“It’s okay,”

“I’d very much like for you to join me for breakfast tomorrow though,” he smiles shyly.

Hermione nods and agrees to go over to Burton House for breakfast the next day.

When she steps out into the garden again, Theo raises an eyebrow at her like he knows what she was doing and Ginny looks at her with a curious expression.

But neither say a word.

And Hermione is thankful for it.

Naked

Chapter Summary

Ahem.

Well, Pansy had fun, huh?

I was planning for this to be a longer chapter, but I ran out of time to do edits and I have to go away for work tomorrow!

I hope you're all enjoying my two idiots in love as much as I am.

Things are going to start getting ... hectic within their world in the next chapter or two so hold onto your knickers!

Thank you as always for commenting, leaving Kudos and just being here. When I have a day where I want to delete it all because I think it's shite, your comments keep me going.
THANK YOU!

See you on Sunday!

Naked

Hermione wakes up the next morning, hangover free and starving.

After she went back into the garden, Theo somehow managed to get everyone dancing to the Muggle music Harry was playing. Theo surprised her by thoroughly enjoying the music and demanding she help him get a speaker (Oh how she laughed) so he could listen to more of it at home.

The weather was still hot and Hermione opts to wear a simple spaghetti strap summer dress in a rust colour and slips on a pair of sandals. Pulling her hair up onto the top of her head and grabbing her sunglasses, she steps into the Floo calling out Burton House. When she steps out of the fireplace, the room is empty. She looks out to the garden and jumps when Pippet appears in front of her.

“Miss is early,” the little elf says. “Mister Draco is in the shower, Pippet is tells him you’re here,”

“Thank you, Pippet. I’ll sit here?” Hermione gestures to one of the sofas.

“Pippet thinks that will be good,”

Hermione takes a seat and waits for Draco to arrive. When he does her mouth goes dry.

Casual and dressed in a slate grey button down and trousers, he looks absolutely delicious. His sleeves rolled and hair falling onto his forehead.

“I didn’t expect you yet,” he smiles, walking over to kiss her.

Barefoot.

Hermione has no idea why the fact Draco is barefoot has her skin heating, but it does.

“I wasn’t sure what time to come over and I was awake,”

He stops in front of her and leans down to kiss her. A soft, yet passionate kiss. He tastes of spearmint toothpaste and smells clean and fresh.

“Are you hungry?”

Hermione lets her gaze roam over him and nods. “Very—” she rakes her eyes over him. “I think I should have told Pippet I’d tell you I was here myself and joined you in the shower,”

He grins at her and kisses her again. For one delightful second, she thinks he might just take her on the sofa and have breakfast later, but Pippet pops back into the room and he straightens.

“Would you like breakfast in the garden? Pippet thinks it would be nice, yes she does,”

Draco laughs. “The garden is perfect, thank you Pippet,”

Pippet takes clear delight in setting their table outside for breakfast, placing a vase full of wild flowers in the very centre and handing Draco a pale pink rose while nodding in Hermione’s direction.

“I think this is for you—” he smirks, handing it to her.

Pippet frowns at him and shakes her head. “It’s not from Pippet! It’s from Mister Draco—”

Hermione laughs and takes the flower, inhaling the sweet scent. “Thank you, *Mister Draco* ,”

Breakfast is delicious; pastries and fresh fruit and yogurt along with the freshest coffee and orange juice Hermione has ever had. Draco spends a lot of the time trailing his hands in her hair and by the end of breakfast he’s managed to uncoil most of her hair.

“Don’t wear your hair up,” he breathes against her neck. “I love it down,”

Hermione rolls her eyes while she pulls it back up. “Well, it makes me hot when it’s down in this heat so you’re doing to have to deal with it,”

Seconds later she feels the unmistakable sensation of a cooling charm and her hair is once again around her shoulders.

“I’ll find other ways to keep you cool just so I can see it down,”

He wraps his fingers around her neck and pulls her mouth to his. The first brush of his tongue has her shuddering and when his hand finds its way under her floaty summer dress and he finds she’s not wearing any knickers, he shudders too.

“If I’d know you weren’t wearing anything under here I’d have just had you for breakfast,”

“Your dislike of underwear is rubbing off on me, what can I say?”

Hermione unzips his trousers and finds him bare to the touch as always.

“Yous is finished with breakfast now?”

Pippet’s voice breaks through their lush-filled haze and they both pull back, Draco clearing his throat.

“Yes, thank you Pippet,” Draco meets her eyes. “Hermione and I would like to spend some time alone, please take the rest of the morning off and I’ll call if I need anythings,”

Pippet gives them a knowing smile before disappearing with a crack,

“Time alone?” Hermione asks, leaning back and opening her legs a little.

His eyes are between her legs in an instant.

“Yes—” he moves and has his head between her legs a second later.

After the briefest swipe of his tongue he shifts and lifts her above him. Her hands are secured behind her back and he’s licking at her with a warm, soft tongue while she struggles to balance.

“Draco, I can’t—”

“You can,”

Focusing her weight to her knees and shifts over his face until she feels more stable.

“There you go,” he tells her from between her legs. “There’s my clever girl, knowing how to get what she wants,”

He licks and sucks at her, drawing cries and moans from her lips. She feels him shift a little and then something cool and slightly rough is being inserted into her.

“What are you—”

“I’m still hungry,” he tells her, licking and sucking harder between her legs. “And I thought the combination of your cunt and strawberries would be one I’d enjoy,” he bites down on

what she now knows is a strawberry and she feels the juice run down her slit and over his chin. He licks it up. “And I was most definitely right,”

Hermione shudders and struggles to stay upright. “*Oh, fuck, Draco!*”

He chuckles and the vibrations have her orgasm so close she can feel it. “That’s it—be a good girl for me and come on my face—”

Hermione doesn’t need any encouragement.

She climaxes with a scream that bounces around them. Wobbling and struggling to settle, he takes mercy on her and lifts her off his face. He wraps his arms around her and Aparates them into the lounge.

When they land he walks them over to the piano and lays her on top of it. Hermione can’t help but remember what he did to her before on this piano and hopes for a repeat performance. Draco removes her dress, restrains her and strips from his own clothing, discarding them to the floor. Hermione takes a moment just to appreciate how fucking gorgeous he is. He catches her watching him and responds by wrapping his hand around his cock.

“You’re such a tease,”

“I know, love. Do you want something?”

He doesn’t take his eyes off her, just continues to work himself over while staring at her.

“Yes, you,”

“You have me,”

“Your cock then,”

He chuckles. “You can have that, too,”

When he’s positioned between her legs, he snaps his fingers and holds up a thin piece of silk.

“Have you ever been blindfolded before?”

Hermione shakes her head.

“Would you like to be?”

“I don’t—I know know,”

“Tell me why you’re not sure?”

Hermione takes a deep breath and speaks. “I’m tied up, I can’t move. The only sense I have is my hearing and my sight. I think I’d find it too—vulnerable to lose my sight,”

He reaches down and traces her jaw. “I can understand that,” he smiles. “But what if I told you, that it makes everything so much more intense. That you’ll feel everything to a much deeper level?”

Hermione swallows and nods her head. “I trust you,”

The words seem to affect him deeply, his eyes darker and his mouth pops open in surprise before he kisses her deeply and withholding nothing.

“I hope I never give you reason to take that trust back,”

Draco secures the blindfold across her eyes and Hermione feels a strange sense of calm wash over her. She thought it would make her feel vulnerable but in fact, it seems to have had the opposite effect on her. As he brushes her nipples with his thumb, every nerve in her body sings. When he draws a circle around her other with his tongue she feels it between her legs.

“Draco—*please?*”

“Do you like it?”

“Yes—I need—*more*—”

He pushes the head of his cock into her and they groan. The sensation of having him inside her without being able to see is overwhelming. She arches her back, pushing herself on to him and biting down on her lip when he withdraws and thrusts back in.

“Oh, love. Can you feel that?”

“Yes,” she breathes.

“So perfect for me, aren’t you?”

“Yes—”

“Going to come for me again, aren’t you?”

“Please—”

His hands are on her hips, squeezing so hard while his mouth sucks on her nipples. The feeling is unlike anything she’s ever felt before. All she wants is to be able to touch him, but she can’t. She has to lay there and take it.

“*Fuck —*” he groans. “I’m fucking addicted to you,”

It’s at that point the Floo activates and a voice she knows calls out Draco’s name.

“Draco, I keep meaning to ask you if you—”

Draco stills.

Hermione knows she blushes but she can't do anything about the situation seeing as she not only spread-eagled but blindfolded on Draco Malfoy's fucking piano completely naked with the man himself buried to the hilt inside her.

"*Pans* —" Draco almost drawls, gripping Hermione's hips tighter. "Can you leave?"

There's a second of hesitation before Pansy speaks again. "Is that—Hi Granger,"

Hermione can hear the amusement in her voice.

"Hi," she squeaks out, going even redder still, she knows it.

"So this is interesting," Pansy laughs. "The bastard who was going to attend the ball with—"

"Can we please do this later, Pansy," Draco bites out.

Her heels click on the floor and Draco leans over her.

"I can wait. It doesn't look like you'll be long,"

Draco turns his body, Hermione can feel it because his cock changed angle and she has to swallow down the groan threatening to leave her throat.

"No, leave," he growls. "Now,"

With a huff that only Pansy could achieve, her heels retreat back to the fireplace, Hermione hopes anyway and calls out her address.

"Fine, not like I haven't seen it before. Yours anyway, Draco. Granger ... well I have seen more of you than I planned to and I can't say I'm disappointed,"

"*Pansy!*" Draco yells

Pansy cackles. "If you both think this is over, you're mistaken."

"Don't say a fucking work to anyone, Pans, or I swear—"

"Oh Draco, hurry up and come, it makes you a much nicer person. Granger, I'll see you at yours at seven tonight, we have a lot to talk about,"

And with a roar of the Floo, Pansy finally leaves.

Say It First

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Say It First

Pansy is waiting for Hermione when she *Floos* home.

The raven-haired beauty is sitting with her legs tucked underneath her, a huge glass of wine in her hands, eyes glinting and lips not even trying to fight the smirk tugging at them.

“Do you want wine first or shall we get down to it?” She asks, arching one brow at Hermione.

Hermione slips off her sandals, drops her bag on the floor and takes a seat next to her. “What do you want to know?”

“What do I want to know? I want to know everything, Granger,”

“You practically saw everything!” Hermione squeaks in embarrassment.

“I’ve heard that squeak before,” Pansy cackles, making Hermione’s cheeks glow red. “Are you embarrassed? Because there’s no need to be,”

“You saw me—”

“Being thoroughly fucked by King Dick himself? Didn’t you ever wonder why I call him that?” She wiggles her eyebrows at Hermione and she blushes more.

“I thought it was because he can be an arse—”

Pansy pats her patronisingly on her head. “Well, sweetheart, now you know it’s because his co—”

Hermione leans over and covers her mouth. “I beg you not to finish that sentence,”

Pansy laughs and bites her hand. “Relax, you two are so hot together. So you’re sleeping with ‘I need to control you’ Malfoy so I have to ask, are you sure you don’t have a exhibitionist kink? Because I know Theo and I—”

“Pansy —” Hermione groans. “Can you please stop?”

Pansy just cackles more at the sheer embarrassment and takes a big gulp of wine. “You could have told me you know?”

Hermione pours herself a glass from the bottle on the white wooden coffee table and sits back. “He doesn’t want people to know yet,”

“Because everyone knows everything and he also doesn’t want you to be tainted by association …”

“Pretty much,” Hermione sighs. “But I think Theo has an idea,”

“Since the gala?”

Hermione looks at Pansy. “Did he say something?”

“Yes, he said Draco was acting more of an arsehole than usual and was being possessive over you for no reason. Draco knows Theo is not interested in sleeping with you, well, I say not interested, I mean, he won’t if he knows Draco is sleeping with you,”

“He didn’t like that I attended with Theo. And hang on, I thought Theo was gay?”

“Then he should have asked you himself, the stupid stubborn idiot,” Pansy rolls her eyes.
“And Theo? Gay? No, darling. Theo loves *everyone* ,”

Hermione laughs. “I wouldn’t have minded him going by himself, but he took—”

“Astoria,”

“Yeah,”

“I’d have gone with him,”

“He said they’d agreed to go before—well before we started—whatever this is.”

Pansy turns to look at her. “And what is this?”

Hermione doesn’t meet her eyes. She knows what she feels, she knows what she’s trying to convince herself it’s not because it’s too soon and it’s too complicated and Draco can’t even admit to his friends that there is something going on.

“Granger?”

“ He makes me feel safe and he understands me and what I need more than I do. Which I don’t even understand Pansy,”

“He’s not who everyone thinks he is. He’s caring and kind and he protects those he cares about fiercely,”

Hermione looks at Pansy and knows she can see everything Hermione feels and for once, Hermione just wants to admit it to someone. She doesn’t want to say it’s nothing, she doesn’t want to pretend.

“Oh, Pansy,” Hermione whispers, meeting her eyes with the sudden onslaught of tears. “I think I love him,”

Draco : What did Pans have to say to you?

Hermione : She wanted details. I just told her things were new and we were seeing how it went.

Draco : I'll speak to her. Are you free tonight?

Hermione : There's no need. She knows to say nothing and honestly, it helps having her know because it's really difficult not being able to speak to anyone about this, Draco.

Draco : I understand. Who would have thought you and Parks would be such good friends?

Hermione : I KNOW! But she's the best, really she is.

Draco : I'll have to agree to disagree about that. Now, answer my question.

Hermione : I'm not free, no. I'm going to Harry's for dinner.

Draco : Tomorrow?

Hermione : Can we have a sleepover?

Draco : It depends entirely how good you are for me ...

Hermione : I'll be the best girl for you, I promise.

Draco : Fuck. Are you sure you can't cancel and come over?

Hermione : Positive. I can't come over. I'm going to be late for work, so are you. See you later x

When Hermione follows Harry through the Floo to his flat after work, she feels her notebook heat inside her bag. Ginny gives Hermione a massive hug and ushers her into the lounge for a drink and some nibbles. While Harry gets change and Ginny checks on dinner, Hermione reaches into her bag for the notebook to see what Draco has to say.

Draco : Are you still sure you can't come over?

Hermione : YES! I'm here now x

Draco : I fucking hate my life right now. Lunchtime wasn't enough. I can't taste you on my tongue anymore. I can't feel your hot cunt on my face either. I need reminding just how well your thighs grip me, love.

Hermione : Draco!

Draco : Remembering the feel of me as I slide down your throat are you? I bet you have your legs pressed together, don't you?

Hermione : Yes. I'm soaked and you can't do anything about it. They're back, Behave. x

They're discussing Ginny's plans to move into Harry's flat officially over the next month, much to Molly's disgust when the Floo springs to life and Ron steps through.

"Hi," he grins at Hermione as he walks over to sit next to her. "I didn't know you were going to be here too,"

Hermione smiles back. "Likewise,"

Hermione watches as Ron takes in her bare legs far too intently. Harry notices too and throws a pillow at his friend, scowling.

"She's not a piece of meat, mate,"

Ron at least has the decency to blush. "Sorry,"

Ginny gets dinner ready and they all sit around the table like they have done many times before. Ron tells them all about how well everything with the shop is going and that George has so many ideas for new products. Ginny surprises Hermione by telling her she has an appointment at a Muggle hospital in a week for a scan.

"When Harry told me that's possible in the Muggle world, I knew we had to do it! We'll get to see them, Hermione,"

"I know," Hermione laughs. "The Wizarding world has so many things the Muggles don't but also so much they could learn from them, too."

"Speaking of, how is Theo getting on with his speaker?" Harry asks Hermione.

"Well," she chuckles. "He's a big fan of the Rolling Stones apparently,"

Harry laughs. "And Oasis,"

"Who—?" Ginny asks, looking confused.

"Muggle bands. After Hermione's party, Theo asked if I could get him a speaker so he could listen to some more music." Hermione tells them.

"You're really friends with them then?" Ron asks.

"Yes, I am." Hermione says.

"It baffles me," Ron shakes his head, taking a deep drink from his glass of Butterbeer.

"What's there to be baffled about?" Ginny asks. "We're adults, why do we have to constantly focus on what happened a long time ago when we were all children?"

"Because they—"

"*Were* —children too, Ron," Harry adds. "I have to admit I felt odd about working with Malfoy at the beginning but he's a brilliant Auror and we are making the progress we are and finally getting closer to putting those who should have been in Azkaban for years, where they should be, thanks to him and his understanding of Dark Wizards,"

"Well he would know, wouldn't he?"

"Ron!" Ginny snaps.

"Do you know something," Harry glares at their friend. "Out of everyone, he's the one they want most. He's the one they go after and it's him they want dead. And he still turns up for work everyday, goes on every raid and puts himself in the direct line of danger. He's changed, I've changed, we've all changed and I feel nothing but thankful for having him working next to me."

Hermione swallows down the lump in her throat. Not just at Harry's declaration that he likes Draco and feels safe working alongside him, but that the Death Eaters they're trying to find want him dead. It's not news to her, but hearing it from Harry makes her feel sick.

"Oka—" Ron begins. "But the rest of them?"

Hermione sighs. "The rest of them are hilarious and kind and if you could be bothered to get to know them, you'd see that too,"

The rest of the evening goes by without any more stupid comments from Ron and they all part on good terms. Hermione *Floos* home and climbs her stairs to bed. After Hermione washes her face, pulls her hair up onto the top of her head and climbs into bed she notices the notebook is glowing and she grins as she holds her hand over the cover and whispers the words to unlock it.

Draco : Are you home yet? Can you let me know when you are?

Hermione : Just climbed into bed. Home safe Have you had a nice night?

Draco : What are you wearing?

Hermione: What are you 13?

Draco : I was nothing like this as a teenager. I was an arrogant prick who thought he was better than everyone.

Hermione: And the difference is? ;)

Draco : I'll show you the difference next time we're alone if you like.

Hermione : What have you been up to this evening?

Draco : I got called into the office. A raid.

Hermione : Did Harry know? He didn't say anything? Is everything and everyone okay?

Draco : We didn't tell him. He deserves a night off. Yes. Everyone is fine. I'm just exhausted. I can't wait to spend the night with you again.

Hermione : Me either. I'm going to sleep now so tomorrow comes quickly! I'll see you tomorrow x

Draco : Unlike me ;) Sleep well, love x

Hermione's heart leaps when she sees he signed off his last message with a kiss.

There are people running around the DMLE offices when Hermione arrives at work the next day. Hermione plasters herself to the wall when a group of Aurors dressed for combat come screeching past. She tries to find someone to ask what's happening but everyone is busy. Deciding the best thing she can do is get to her office and try to find out what's going on, she makes her way in that direction. As she gets closer she sees a blond head inside, hunched over her desk.

"Draco?"

He turns to look at her and her door closes behind her.

"I have to go—" he steps towards her, tangling his hands into her hair at the back of her neck and tilting her face to meet his eyes. "—They've found them. My Uncles."

Hermione's pulse picks up and she feels sick. "Then you need to stay here!" she cries. "They want you dead, Draco, you can—"

He presses a kiss to her lips, cutting off her words. When he pulls back his eyes are black and closed off.

He's Occluding.

"I have to go, Hermione. I have to end this. They want me—they want my mother dead."

"That's exactly the reason you need to let everyone else handle—"

"*I will not,*"

"Draco—*please*—" A tear rolls down her cheeks as her voice breaks.

He drops his forehead to hers and inhales. "Please don't," he breathes against her face. "I have to go. It's my job. We have the best team and I'll be back before you know it,"

"Promise me,"

"Granger—"

She tugs out of his grip. "Don't call me that!"

He pulls her back to him. "Please don't be angry with me,"

"Angry with you? I'm terrified, Draco. What if you don't come back? I can't watch you walk out that door—"

He kisses her deeply, with such ferocity and passion she feels like she'll choke on it. "Then close your eyes and take a deep breath," he kisses her once more. "I'll be back."

He *Disapparates* and is gone before she can open her eyes.

Hermione paces.

She spends the next two hours pacing her office and then when that space becomes too stifling, she heads out to the main part of the DMLE offices and paces there.

She's not the only one.

Anyone who hasn't gone on the raid is there.

Wide eyes and worried faces.

They're all worried.

All waiting to hear anything but nothing comes.

Good or bad.

In a bid to keep busy, Hermione and a handful of other people decide to go and tidy the meeting room that's been left in chaos since the departure of the team. There are cups and glasses, paper and quills everywhere. It doesn't take long to get everything back to its usual tidy state. Just as they're all filing out of the room the alarms for backup are piercing, ricocheting around the space and making everyone freeze.

ASSISTANCE NEEDED!

ALL AURORS!

PLEASE RESPOND!

AUROR MALFOY DOWN!

CRITICAL CONDITION!

ASSISTANCE NEEDED!

ALL AURORS!

PLEASE RESPOND!

AUROR MALFOY DOWN!

CRITICAL CONDITION!

Hermione watches in horror as all remaining Aurors grab their badges, cloaks and wands and *Apparate* out of the office. One by one they vanish before her eyes leaving her alone and standing frozen to the spot with the alarms still ringing through the room.

ASSISTANCE NEEDED!

ALL AURORS!

PLEASE RESPOND!

AUROR MALFOY DOWN!

CRITICAL CONDITION!

ASSISTANCE NEEDED!

ALL AURORS!

PLEASE RESPOND!

AUROR MALFOY DOWN!

CRITICAL CONDITION!

Malfoy is injured.

Critical condition.

Malfoy is injured.

Hermione does what her heart is telling her to do. She bolts to the lifts and down to the atrium, ignoring anyone who speaks to her and throwing green power into the fireplace and half yelling, half sobbing St. Mungos as she vanishes in flickering green flames.

He has to be okay.

He has to be okay.

HE HAS TO BE OKAY.

Chapter End Notes

Happy Sunday, everyone!

So, here we go ... we're entering the chaos part of the story. There is lots about to happen so please, buckle up!

Everything is written and has been for a while, I'm just not sure what the chapter count will be as I'm not entirely sure where I will split them - but I just wanted to reassure you, that it's written and ready to upload!

As always, THANK YOU for reading and commenting - I really so appreciate it all. It makes my little heart so happy.

See you on Wednesday!

Skin and Bones

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Skin and Bones

When she arrives at St Mungo's, the commotion in front of her has Hermione stumbling from the fireplace. She looks around the room, the many black robed wizards clashing with the lime green of the Healer's robes making identifying who is who easily. She spots Harry and rushes over. He's holding a wad of material to his head which is gushing with blood.

"Harry!" She cries, stepping close to him and getting his attention.

"Hermione! Fuck you're okay! What are you doing here?"

She reaches for his hand and presses harder on the injury to try and stem the blood flow. "Of course I'm okay! What is going on?"

Harry's eyes search her face and look over her like he's looking for something. "You were—"

"Auror Potter, please come with me, we need to look you over."

They both look and spot a kind but harassed looking Healer trying to guide Harry to a room so she can do her job. The stubborn man tries to side step her but Hermione glares at him.

"Harry, go," she pushes him in the direction the Healer is gesturing. "You're no help to anyone in that state."

He nods then reaches for her hand and meets her eyes again looking panicked. "Are you sure you're okay?"

She nods. "Positive."

The Healer manages to get Harry to leave and they both head into a room down the corridor. Hermione takes a deep breath and tries to work out exactly why Harry keeps asking her if she's okay.

Why wouldn't she be?

Harry comes to sit with her in the waiting room when he's been patched up. He's absolutely fine but agitated and restless, Hermione reaches for his hand and squeezes his fingers in hers.

"Talk to me, what happened?"

He takes a deep breath. "You were there, Hermione. Or at least, we were led to believe you were," Harry says quietly.

"I don't understand, I've been at work, Harry. How could I be—"

It dawns on her then what he must mean.

"Polyjuice?"

He nods, removes his hand from hers and rubs it down his face. "We have no idea how they did it or why. But we got in too easily, there was nothing. Then we heard—" Harry takes a deep breath. "You were screaming. I knew it was you and so did Malfoy. It's not a sound either of us will ever forget after—" Harry swallowed thickly and she doesn't need him to finish that sentence.

"Malfoy took off, he ran straight towards the sound and didn't listen to me telling him to wait for backup. I've never seen him move so fast,"

Hermione's hands start to shake and she pushes them under her thighs to hide it.

"He was three steps into the room when they started casting, I couldn't get in to get to you at first, there were so many spells flying around. Your screams cut off and I—I thought I was too late and then the spells just stopped. Everything just stopped. Backup arrived and we stormed the room but Malfoy was out cold and bleeding and there you were, tied to a chair and bleeding heavily. Only—"

"Only it wasn't me." She whispered.

"It wasn't you,"

"And he should have known that. He saw me right before he left." She tells him. "Harry—Draco, is he—"

"We don't know yet, they're still working on him. He got hit in the chest with a lot of Dark Magic, magic I've never seen before."

"Harry—What happened to the—the Death Eaters that were there?"

Harry sighs and looks angry all at the same time. "They're in custody. We have Malfoy to thank for it, they were so preoccupied with him, we had the chance to get in there and secure them before they could leave."

"And can we keep a hold of them this time? Make sure—"

"They'll be living out the rest of their lives behind bars, Hermione. I'll make sure of it."

“Auror Potter?” A Healer in green robes stops in front of them and they both look up.
“Auror Malfoy is stable,”

Hermione feels herself sway in her seat, her vision coming in and out of focus as the Healer explains to Harry the current state of Draco. He’s so focused on what she’s saying, he doesn’t notice her reaction.

“You may go see him after his mother has visited with him, she’s been informed and is on her way.”

Harry nods. “Thank you for letting me know,”

The Healer walks away and Hermione sinks back into her seat.

It’s five hours later when everyone else has gone home and Narcissa has left Draco’s room. She pretended to leave right along with everyone else but went and hid in the toilets.

She couldn’t leave without seeing him.

Hermione waits for the Mediwitch to leave his room then slips inside.

Her hand flies to her mouth and tears fill her eyes the second she sees him.

For such a tall man, he looks painfully small in his bed. Pale and still but thankfully alive and breathing.

Hermione crosses the room and sits in the chair that’s been placed next to the bed. She softly puts her bag on the floor, wipes her eyes and then reaches for his hand. He doesn’t stir, just continues to lay still and breathing softly.

“I told you to be safe,” she sobs into his hand, pressing kisses to the back of it. “You told me you’d be back and now I find you in the hospital,”

Tears flow freely down her cheeks, splashing on his blankets and their joined hands.

“You have to wake up, Draco—”

Her sobs become too much then. Too much to be able to speak. She rests their hands on the bed and drops her forehead on top of them. She listens to his breathing; steady and soothing.

The quiet must pull her into sleep because she wakes up to his other hand in her curls. Her head snaps up and he’s gazing at her, eyes black and bruised, still deathly pale but awake and looking at her.

“Draco —” Her voice breaks and tears fall from her eyes as he attempts to smile at her.

“Hey—” he croaks. “I’m—okay—”

“You—”

Hermione lets every overwhelming feeling rush over her and sobs into the blankets. Everything has happened so fast and she hasn’t had a chance to process any of it.

“You need to leave—” Draco croaks. “My mother will be back and—”

Hermione whips her head up and glares at him.

“Really? You’re doing this now?”

His eyes flash but he’s in no state to do anything except glare at her. “Yes, I’m doing this right now,” he slips his hand from hers, eyes flashing to the glass panel in the door and if anything, this hurts more than his words. “This doesn’t change how I feel about the knowledge of our—whatever this is, Granger.”

“Don’t—” Hermione stands abruptly causing the chair to fall back with a crash. “Fucking call me that!”

“Please don’t make this—”

“What? Don’t make it what Draco?” Hermione walks away from his side to the foot of the bed. “You’re so infuriating! I drop everything when the alarm goes off to tell everyone you’re down, I rush here, I sit in the waiting room until everyone leaves, I hide in the fucking toilet so no one sees me come in here because I can’t leave without seeing you! And you tell me to leave so your mother doesn’t see me here?”

His hand lifts and he reaches for her, but she shakes her head.

“I thought things had moved forward, I thought we were on the way to—it doesn’t matter,” Hermione swipes at the angry tears falling down her cheeks. “You’re okay, you’re going to be fine,” she says almost to herself. “Feel better, Malfoy,”

“Granger —”

Hermione winces when he calls her that again and opens his door, leaving him lying in his bed.

Hermione *Floos* home, kicks off her shoes and screams.

She screams until her throat burns and there is no air left in her lungs.

Angry, hot tears roll down her cheeks at her absolute stupidity.

She'd known what he felt and where he stood, she was stupid to think that anything would change that, even him nearly dying. Once again, she's let her feelings get in the way.

But what else was she supposed to do?

There had been a definite switch in how he's been lately. He said he hoped that one day he'd be brave enough to ask her to attend a gala with him, that he wanted her in his life, he sent her so many messages in their notebooks, he was starting to ask her to stay over. Everything was pointing to the fact he was falling for her just as much as she was falling for him.

"Hermione?"

She jumps at the sound of her name from behind her. When she turns around, Harry is standing there and looking worried.

"Harry—" Hermione brushes the tears from her face and tries to smile. "What's going on?"

He steps towards her, arms out. "I was going to ask you the very same thing,"

Something inside her breaks. Harry catches her up in his arms and squeezes her tight, his cheek pressed to the top of her head as she cries.

"I don't—I don't—Oh, Gods, Harry—"

"Hey, ssssh, come sit down,"

He leads them both over to the sofa and sits down with her, his arms still awkwardly wrapped around her while she tries to stop the tears from falling while making the most inelegant noises she's ever heard come from herself. When she finally feels like she can breathe, she pulls back and looks at her friend.

"Do you want to tell me about it?" He asks softly.

"About what, exactly?"

"About why you were sitting crying and holding Malfoy's hand at St Mungo's?"

"You saw me,"

He nods sadly. "I just need to know you're okay, the rest doesn't matter."

Hermione wipes her eyes and tries to find the words to explain the mess she finds herself in right now.

"Draco and I—"

"It's Draco now—"

She looks at him and nods. “It has been for a while,”

“So you’re—?”

Hermione blushes and tries to speak through her embarrassment. “We’re—Gods, Harry. We’re sleeping together. As for what else it is? I wish I knew.”

Harry goes red and rubs the back of his neck uncomfortably. “You’re both adults, you can—sleep with—whoever you’d like to, Hermione. I don’t understand why you think it needs to be a secret?”

“I don’t, it’s just—Draco doesn’t—he thinks I’ll be tarnished by association and he doesn’t want to announce his private life to the world.”

“And what about you? Do you want to announce it to the world?”

Hermione lets a few tears fall. “More than anything,” she whispers. “I think—”

Green eyes meet hers and he nods, smiling softly. “You love him,”

Harry says it so simply, like it’s the easiest thing in the world but it’s not.

It’s. Not.

Hermione nods. “I haven’t said it, I haven’t told him. And when I heard that call today I thought I’d never get

my chance and then he woke up and he asked me to leave,”

Harry sighs and rubs his face. “As much as I’d like to rant and rave about him. I get it. We’ve all lived under the microscope for our whole lives. I can understand wanting to have something that’s only for yourself, that no one else knows about. Ginny and I decided to keep the pregnancy to just the family for this very reason.”

“But what if he never wants to tell anyone about me, Harry? What then?”

“Then you decide if you want that too or if being together and being able to show your relationship to everyone is what means the most to you.”

“I know it is, I can’t be someone’s secret, Harry. I can’t love him in the dark,”

Harry reaches for her hand and squeezes her fingers. “Then I think you have to tell him that,”

When Harry leaves, Hermione takes a shower and crawls into bed with her bag. She can feel the warmth from the notebook through the material and takes a deep breath before fishing it

out, murmuring the words and opening it.

Draco : I messed up. I shouldn't have told you to go without explaining why. Hermione, this is not how I want to tell my mother about us. I don't want her to walk in and find out. I want to tell her. I want to not be the coward I know I am and admit to her that I care about you. But I'm not ready. And I'm sorry that my not being ready is causing you pain, because it's the last thing I want to do. Please don't be mad at me. I want us to keep working through this, but I'm always getting it wrong and fucking it up and I'm sorry. They said I can leave tomorrow and I'd really like to see you. Will you come over to Burton House? Can we have dinner? Please let me know either way. I wish you were here and I wish I wasn't such a fucking coward. You deserve better than this and I hope one day I'll be able to give it to you. Xx

Hermione lets the tears fall.

They spill out onto the page and yet the words remain unspoiled.

For one moment she lets the feeling of hope take root in her heart before she replies.

Hermione : I don't need you to get it right all the time. I just need you to try. To talk to me and to not push me away. I thought I'd lost you today. I thought I'd never get a chance to tell you how much I feel for you and how much I want and need you in my life. Then when you woke up, you pushed me away. I get that you're scared, but I'm scared too. You're not ready to tell people? Well I am. It hurts so much that I have to hide you, hide us. That I can't tell people how proud I am of the man you've grown to be, how much you make me happy and how safe I feel when I'm with you. I hate that I have to write this here because I can't tell you in person because you pushed me away. I'm terrified of what I feel for you and that you might not ever feel it back. You're right, I do deserve better than this and I hope you'll keep trying because I don't want to not have you in my life, Draco. But I don't want to hurt either. Let me know when you're home and I'll come over. Get some rest and I'll see you tomorrow.
X

Chapter End Notes

Phew.

There we have it.

I think we all knew he was going to react first, think later. It's Draco, after all.

I know I say it every week, but I honestly am blown away by the love you all have for this little fic. I began writing it for myself, because I had an idea that wouldn't leave me

alone. To think that people (YOU!) are reading and enjoying it, is incredible.

Thank you SO much. I adore and appreciate you all so very much.

See you on Sunday!

Gravity

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Gravity

Hermione lets work know that she's not feeling great and takes the day off work.

In truth, she's not feeling great.

She's exhausted and she feels sick with worry and her stomach is churning. She never did well with

uncertainty and everything in her life feels uncertain right now. Making herself a cup of coffee, she takes it outside to sit in the sunshine and just breathe in the clean air for a while. She tossed all night, Draco's words going around and around in her head.

I wish you were here and I wish I wasn't such a fucking coward. You deserve better than this and I hope one day I'll be able to give it to you.

Hermione hopes he will too.

After a hot shower, Hermione checks her notebook and sees two new messages from Draco.

Draco : I'm sorry I keep pushing you away and making this so difficult for you. I know I don't deserve you, I know you deserve someone who is capable of declaring their love to you and telling the world how he feels. I'm trying. I promise you with everything I am, I am trying.

Draco : I hope you got some sleep. I'm being discharged at ten, my mother is insisting she be there when I get home. I'll make sure she's gone by two if you'd like to come over. We can talk. We can do whatever you want, I just need to see you.

Hermione : Are you feeling okay? Do you need anything? Let me know when she leaves and I'll come over. I took the day off work so I'm free all day.

Draco : I just need you.

At two on the dot, Draco sends a message letting her know he's home alone and she can come over. Hermione tries not to dwell on the fact she has to wait for the house to be empty before *Flooding* over.

When she steps out of the fireplace, Draco is sitting in one of the big armchairs and goes to stand.

"Don't get up," she tells him, walking over to sit on the sofa opposite him. "How are you feeling?"

"Exhausted, a little sore. Hungry—" His eyes meet hers and she tries very hard not to fidget.

"I can call Pippet to get you something to eat?"

"Nothing Pippet can bring me will be sufficient," he looks at her. "You're too far away over there,"

"And where do you suppose I sit?"

He taps his lap and arches a brow at her. "Here's fine with me."

She rolls her eyes. "Don't be absurd, you were in St Mungo's not a couple of hours ago, Draco. You need to rest and to recover."

"What I need," he groans as he stands. "Is to be reminded of what your lips feel like. Or does my current state disgust you?"

As he comes to sit next to her on the sofa, she lets her eyes roam over every inch of him. He's pale, still bruised and he looks like he's in pain. But disgusting is not a word she would ever associate with Draco Malfoy.

"Of course not. I just think—"

"Don't—"

"Don't what?"

He reaches for her and pulls her towards him. "Think,"

The second his lips are on hers, she doesn't think of anything except how much she's missed him, how wonderful he tastes and how much she needs this man. He groans into her mouth, sweeping his tongue against hers as he fists the hair at the back of her neck in his fingers.

"This is all I need, Hermione. You."

Hermione selfishly allows him to kiss her for a few more minutes but when he tries to lay her back she puts a stop to it and moves backwards.

“We need to talk,”

He nods and settles back into the sofa. “Can I get you a drink?”

“A coffee would be great,”

Draco calls Pippet who seems delighted to see her and only too keen to help them with anything they need. When they’re both settled with their drinks, Draco looks at her and waits.

“Where do you see this going, Draco?” Hermione blurts out.

His eyes go wide. “Dive right in,”

“I have a lot of feelings for you, I won’t pretend otherwise. I know it’s not been very long, but I’ve never—I’ve never felt like this about anyone before and I just want to know if you see a future in this before I get any deeper. I told you I didn’t want to hurt any more and I meant it.”

He rubs a hand over his face and tries to speak, but doesn’t seem to be able to find the words.

“I can’t be your secret, Draco. I can’t,”

“You’re not—”

“Yes,” Hermione meets his eyes. “I am. Why?” Her voice comes out as a croaked whisper. Smaller than she’s ever heard it before. She stands, trying to put some distance between them.

“Why?” Draco demands. “Why do you think? I’ve told you before, we’ve been over this. Because I cannot—I will not have you tainted by association, Hermione!” His voice roars, the pain he’s in is clear as day. “They hate me,” he chokes out. “Whatever I do, no matter how courageous, how strong, how fucking dangerous,” his glassy eyes meet Hermione’s. “*They hate me*. They see what they always have, a Death Eater, a Pureblood who hates Muggleborns and I will not do that to you. I will not have people judging you and hating you because you choose to chain yourself to me,”

“Don’t I get a say? Doesn’t what I want mean anything? Doesn’t the fact I know you’re not those things mean anything to you?”

Draco stands and closes the distance between them in three long strides, his hands reaching for her head, the long fingers of one hand tangling in her hair as the other wraps possessively around her throat.

“What you want means *everything* to me. *You* mean everything to me,” he drops his forehead to hers and takes a shaking breath before he kisses her with startling ferocity. “But I will not subject you to the vile things they say about me and I will not put your life in danger

because—" he closes his eyes and swallows thickly. "I love you," he whispers like the words are causing him pain.

Hermione reaches up and covers his cheeks with her hands and it's only then she realises they're shaking.

He's just declared his love for her and even though it's everything she wants, there's something telling her that this isn't enough.

"I love you too and without you I have nothing," tears began to fall thick and fast over their fingers. "In everything I choose you. Choose me Draco, please," her voice breaks on his name. "*Choose me,*"

"I do, but I refuse to risk you, Hermione."

Hermione pulls back and stares at him, eyes wild and a pain so powerful in her chest she thinks she might crumble under the weight of it.

"You promised me everything!" Hermione yells at him, everything she has felt in the months they have been sneaking around coming to the surface. She storms towards him, until she's standing in front of him and there are mere inches between them. Draco, so much taller, broader and stronger even when he's injured, looks down at her, a steely gaze clouded by his emotions.

"You promised me everything and have given me nothing! I'm your secret, Draco! No one knows about us, no one sees us together. You're a coward and I'm sick and tired of having to live unseen. I did that before, you told me you see me, but you don't. You want me to be as invisible as everyone else does!"

His hands wrap around her arms and he shakes her, the hysteria rising up her throat and threatening to engulf them both.

"I gave you everything I could,"

"Well it's not enough!"

"I don't have anything more to give you," he glares at her.

"Yes you do. I'm not asking for you to change the fucking world Draco, I don't want your money or your Manor or your fucking titles, I just want you. I just want you to be proud of me, proud to be seen with me, not to leave me a fucking secret all the time! I just want you to love me—"

The tears are falling before Hermione can stop them, and really, what's the point? These things need to be said, they have needed to be said for a long time and she's denied them for too long. Draco's face falls at her brutal words and his eyes soften, one hand leaving her arm to capture her chin and pull her eyes to his.

"Proud of you? Fuck, I want to scream it from the rooftops I'm so proud of you.,"

“But you won’t,” Hermione sobs. “Because you’re too worried about what everyone else will think about us,”

“No, I’m not.”

“Yes you are. Even after everything we’ve shared, you still can’t stop your old ways enough to admit to our world that you’re in love with a Muggleborn.”

“*Stop it*,”

“Does the truth hurt, Draco? Does it? Does it hurt to know that I see through you? That I know exactly what holds you back and stops you telling your mother about us? Your friends?”

“Pansy knows,” he says like this means something.

“Not because you told her! Because she happened to make an unexpected housecall and saw you fucking me on the piano!”

He has the audacity to smile about the whole thing and it just has more anger spilling out of me.

“They’re not stupid, Hermione, they know, I just haven’t explicitly said we’re together,”

“Then maybe you should,” Hermione steps towards him. “You told me you see me, you told me that I was hurting and no one around me seemed to care but that you did. You lied,” she wipes at her face angrily. “No one has ever hurt me more than you have keeping me a secret. I’m pathetic for staying,”

“*Stop*,” he breathes, reaching for Hermione again.

“You stop. Make me yours or set me free, I don’t deserve this.”

He just looks at her, fear and sadness in his eyes. “You are mine and I will never set you free,”

“Tell me,” Hermione demands. “Tell me we can be a real normal couple right this second or I’m leaving.”

He steps closer to her, reaching for her face and angling her head up to meet his eyes. “Why are you so fixated on this? Am I not enough? Is what we have, not enough?”

The words burn like acid, corroding her skin and muscle, seeping into her very soul. She swallows and tries to clear her head, rid herself of the agony.

“Not enough? Draco, you’re everything!”

He reaches for her, trying to pull her to him. “Then let me be enough,”

Hermione shakes her head. “You are everything to me, but I need more.”

He sighs heavily, his thumb running back and forth along her jaw. “You think I want it to be like this? You think every fibre of my being doesn’t scream your name? Do you really think this is nothing to me? You think I enjoy causing you pain?”

Hermione pushes down the shudder his words draw from her. She closes the door on the emotions he makes her feel and straightens her spine, not backing down, not allowing him to do this again.

“You do nothing to change it so I assume you do.”

His eyes flash and he crashes his mouth to hers, pushing his tongue into her mouth and invading her soul with his kiss. Hermione’s hands reach up and grasp handfuls of his hair, pulling him closer to her. She melts into him. She has no control over what her body does when it’s close to him. This man controls her mind, body and soul and yet he doesn’t want her, not really. Not in any of the ways that truly matter.

He pulls back breathing hard. “I can’t change it,” he kisses her again softly this time. “I can’t.”

The words he’s told her over and over again dowse Hermione in ice and she steps back, stumbling on her unsteady legs. “You can change anything you want, Draco. You’re brave and strong and the best man I know. You just don’t want to. I’m not enough for you,”

“I want you.” he tugs on her hand causing her to trip back into his body. “I’ve wanted you since the first moment I saw you, long before I even understood what want really was. It’s always been you, Granger.”

Hermione lets out a bitter laugh. “And we’re back to Granger, are we?”

“It is your name,” he smirks.

That damn smirk.

The smirk that caused all this trouble to begin with.

“No, it’s your box for me. Whenever you think I’m getting too close or whenever you feel you’re finally allowing yourself to be who you want to be and not who they tell you you are, I’m Granger, and you’re Malfoy. You do it to remind yourself that this,” Hermione gestures between them. “Is a temporary thing and it’s all within your control. I’m fucking sick of that box and I’m sick of this whole situation. I’m sick of secrets and lies. I’m sick of you pushing me away and then demanding I come back and I’m absolutely sick of never being able to tell anyone that it’s you who I spend my time with, it’s you who’s made me change, it’s you who’s woken me up, and that it’s you who I lo—”

Hermione stops herself, choking back the words she desperately wants to tell him but won’t, because she will not destroy herself any more. She doesn’t meet his eyes when he reaches for her hand.

“I’m sorry,” he whispers.

"You're always sorry, *Malfoy*," his sharp intake of breath at her use of his last name makes Hermione almost falter.

Almost.

"It's not enough."

Hermione looks at him.

He looks at her.

And in that moment Hermione sees his feelings for her and she knows he sees her feelings for him too.

And in that moment they both know that no matter how much they want it, this can never be their life.

Every silly dream she's ever had of them publicly declaring their relationship, of getting married, of having his child, crash around her while she stands there looking at the man who owns her yet won't be seen with her, Hermione leans forward and gently press her lips to his, she allows herself a few more beautiful tormented seconds to memorise just how he feels before she step back.

"We've lived through so much pain, we don't deserve more and we're always hurting each other,"

"*Hermione* —"

"I can't do it anymore. It hurts too much and I can't do it,"

"Stop," he breathes. "I can be better. I'll do better. Please—"

Hermione looks at him, glassy brown eyes to grey.

Hurt. Pain. Sadness.

"Goodbye, Draco." she whispers.

Then Hermione turns and runs from the room and away from the one person who made everything okay.

Chapter End Notes

Okay. So ..

It looks like we're nearing the end.

I've put the chapters as 36 - but this may change if I decide that the chapters need to be broken down a little more.

A little warning (and I'll remind you again on Wednesday too) that the next couple of chapters will contain new tags and trigger warnings.

Please be mindful and please check before you read.

Thank you as always for the support and kindness about this fic, it means the whole world.

Until Wednesday ...

The Night We Met

Chapter Notes

Hey everyone,

I said a couple of chapters ago that there was a lot to happen ... well .. this chapter is one of those chapters.

I'm putting this at the beginning because I'm letting you know the tags have been updated and to please, please go and check you're happy to read the following chapter.

Look after yourself and only read if you feel like you can.

They're about to turn a massive corner but it's going to hurt to get them there.

Sending love and thanks as always for reading, commenting, leaving Kudos and for all the support you have given this fic.

I appreciate it all and I cannot thank you enough.

Okay, deep breath?

Ready?

I'll hold your hand ...

Hermione wakes in the middle of the night to pitch black and the most excruciating pain in her stomach. She groans and throws out her arm, reaching for the side of the bedside table, managing to claw herself up and into a standing position before the pain hits her in full force and she doubles over and vomits over the floor. As she crawls, her hand slips on something warm and wet.

“*Lumos* ,” she cries out in agony.

Her wand casts a glow from beside the bed but it doesn’t reach where she is.

“*Accio!* ” she cries out as another wave of agony rips through her body.

When her wand lands onto the floor beside her hand, Hermione sees what it was she slipped on.

Blood.

Bright, red blood.

Confused, Hermione tries to stand but slips on the wetness covering the floor.

Where on earth is this blood coming from?

Hermione makes it to the bathroom before everything swims in front of her eyes and all she sees is black.

Hermione wakes with a start. Her eyes snap open and her breathing comes in short sharp bursts.

“Hello Miss Granger, can you take a deep breath for me, sweetheart?”

Hermione turns her head and meets the gaze of a gentle looking Mediwitch standing beside her bed.

“In through your nose, out through your mouth. You can do it, copy me,”

Hermione does what the Mediwitch tells her to do.

In.

Out.

In.

Out.

“There you go, keep going,” she smiles softly, taking Hermione’s hand in hers. “It’s okay, you’re in St Mungo’s, you’re safe and I promise to answer any questions you have when you’re a little calmer, okay?”

Hermione nods and focuses on her breathing. Each breath gets easier and when she no longer feels panic coursing through her, she looks to the Mediwitch and asks the question on the tip of her tongue.

“What happened?”

“Well,” the Mediwitch begins. “Your friend rushed you in after she found you collapsed and bleeding on your bathroom floor. We can’t say how long you’d been there but you’d lost a lot of blood.”

“Who?” Hermione croaks. “Who brought me in?”

“A Miss Parkinson,”

Pansy.

“And why—why was there so much blood? Did I fall? I don’t remember falling?”

The Mediwitch smiles sadly at her and clasps her hand in hers again. “Miss Granger—”

“Hermione, please.”

“Hermione, from what you’ve said, what I’m about to tell you is going to come as quite a shock to you. Is there anyone you’d like to be here with you while we speak?”

Hermione shakes her head. No.

“Sweetheart,” the Mediwitch begins. “You were pregnant. The blood loss came from—”

“*Pregnant?*” Hermione interrupts in a high voice.

There’s no way.

“Yes. I’m very sorry to tell you that you lost the babies. I’m so sorry,”

“*Babies?* There were—”

The witch nods sadly and squeezes her hand. “Sometimes nature has other plans for us, I’m terribly sorry for your loss, Hermione. I wish I didn’t have to be the one to tell you something so horrific.”

Hermione can’t process the words.

Pregnant.

Twins.

Loss.

“How—how far—?”

“We estimate four to six to eight weeks.”

“I was so careful. How can it possibly—”

“There has been a faulty batch of Contraception Potion recently, you’re not the first person who has been caught out,”

Hermione just nods. Not able to process what she’s hearing.

She drops her hand to her empty stomach and the first tears begin to fall.

How can you grieve something you never even knew was there in the first place?

“Are you sure there’s no one I can ask to come be with you? A friend?”

"No, thank you," Hermione tries to smile. "I just—I need to process this first. Thank you,"

The witch smiles and pats her hand. "If you need anything, just use your wand to call and I'll be straight back. Please try to rest,"

Hermione watches her leave, watches her return to the world outside her room like Hermione's world hasn't just been tipped upside down.

When Hermione wakes up, Draco is standing in her room.

She meets his eyes and she's positive the pain she feels, both — physically and emotionally — is clear on her face. How can it not be? She's lost something she never knew she wanted and Hermione feels so alone in all of this. Because who can she talk to about this whole pathetic mess? In that moment, Hermione misses her mother more than she ever has since her passing. She wants desperately to be held by her, to be soothed and told everything will be okay and that she's loved. She wants to be told she's not a failure when she feels it in her bones that she is.

The sinking feeling in the pit of her stomach tells her she deserves this.

She brought this on herself. Making stupid, selfish choices. Allowing herself to get so consumed by someone who isn't able to love her like she needs to be loved. Who won't tell their friends or mother about them. As Hermione cradles her stomach she feels tears fall.

She might have deserved this, but they didn't. They were innocent and created in love, she knows this. They deserved a life, they deserved to be loved and now they're gone. Ripped from this earth before they even got a chance and she couldn't protect them. She failed before she even knew she had them.

His eyes spark meeting hers, the grey of an approaching storm and full of emotion. Before he has a chance to speak, before he can make anything worse, Hermione speaks.

Three little words that will change their lives forever.

"It was twins."

Hermione must pass out because when she wakes up the room is cast in a soft golden light and Draco is fast asleep on the chair beside her bed.

He's still there.

Wincing, Hermione tries to sit up and the movement must wake him, because grey eyes meet hers and he sits up, leaning towards her.

“What do you need?” He asks, his voice croaky.

“Nothing,”

“Hermione, *please* — ”

“What Draco?” She sighs, laying back down.

“Can we talk? We can’t leave things how they are,”

“You want to talk?” She almost laughs. “What do you want to talk about?”

He reaches for her hand and tries to lace their fingers together. “Us. I want to talk about us.”

“Is there even a us at this point?”

Hermione tries to keep hold of her anger, tries to be cold and put a wall up in self preservation, but she

can’t. She never has been able to with him.

“Yes, there is. At least, I want there to be. I’m sorry—I can’t keep saying it, you shouldn’t have to keep hearing it, but I’m so fucking sorry” his voice breaks and she looks at him.

“Draco— *don’t* — ”

He brushes away the tears that fill his eyes angrily and clears his throat. “I treated you appallingly. I pushed and pushed and still expected you to be there after because why wouldn’t you be?” He wipes his face again. “I shouldn’t have caused you so much distress, I should have been gentle with you, perhaps if I’d been a better person, a more deserving person they’d—we’d—”

Hermione’s heart breaks and she pulls his hand to her lips, pressing a kiss there. “You had nothing to do with this, it’s no one’s fault,” she sobs. “Things just happen, life isn’t fair. People lose the very things they’ve dreamed of and the innocent suffer. It’s—it’s—”

“Hermione, *please*—I can’t see you cry anymore, *I can’t* ,”

She wipes at her eyes and tries to swallow down her emotions but it’s no good. Every part of her aches, every part of her is in pain for the loss of their children. Children she didn’t even know they’d created but loved so very much anyway.

“I want you to come home with me when they discharge you, okay?”

“Draco—”

"Hermione, please let me do the right thing. Let me look after you and care and protect you like I should have all along, Please let me show you I can be a better man, I can do better,"

"How are we going to explain that to people? I can't go back to Burton House Draco, people will ask questions. No one knows about us, how am I supposed to explain what's happened when you don't want to tell people we're—"that we were together?"

He moves, coming to sit on the edge of her bed and taking her face in his hands. "I don't fucking care," he leans down and kisses her softly. "I'm not losing any more, Hermione. I'm sick of being afraid and not putting what I want first. I'm done being a coward,"

"What does that mean exactly?"

"It means," he kisses her again, softly and with so much care more tears fill her eyes. "I'm with you and—I—" Draco swallows and he presses another kiss to her lips. "I love you, Hermione,"

She swallows his words right along with the tears falling down her cheeks. "I love you, too," she breathes against his lips. "I'm so sorry I couldn't keep them safe,"

He shakes his head and pills her to his chest. "Don't, just—fucking don't,"

They sit like that for ages. Both crying and trying to comfort each other the best they can over the loss of a future and a family that neither of them really knew they wanted. They grieve together, for the loss of their children that they'll never meet. They grieve the future of sleepless nights, children's laughter and acceptance letters to Hogwarts that will never arrive. They mourn the future that was so cruelly ripped away from them before they even knew it was happening.

"Promise me," Hermione breathes against Draco's neck. "Promise me we'll be okay? Promise me that this isn't where we end?"

Draco pulls back and brushes the hair out of her face, smiling sadly with tear streaks on his beautiful face. "I promised you everything, Hermione and you're right, I've failed you on that, but it stops now. I promised you everything and I intend to deliver on it,"

Hermione is discharged the next day with strict instructions to rest and come back if there are any issues. Hermione thanks Tabitha, the Mediwitch who was there when she woke up for her kindness and support before she leaves. The witch wraps her arms around her and tells her that her future is bright, even if it seems dark right now. Hermione smiles and nods but doesn't really feel any conviction in it.

Draco is there to take her back to Burton House just like he said he would be. He wraps his arm around her as they enter the Floo and appear back in the lounge of Burton House and to a

panicked Pansy.

“Pans—” Draco sighs. “I told you not yet,”

Pansy ignores him and walks towards her, holding her arms out and wrapping Hermione in a very tight hug. “Fucking hell, Granger. Never do that to me again, okay?” She chokes.

Hermione nods and sobs into her neck. “I’ll try,”

Draco rests his hand on her back and Hermione tries to pull back but Pansy won’t let her.

“Pansy—” she half sobs, half laughs. “Can we sit?”

Pansy lets go and takes her hand. “Do you want wine? I need a fucking wine,” she groans sitting down next to Hermione on the sofa.

“It’s not even eleven,” Draco sighs. “Coffee or tea, Pansy?”

“Coffee with a shot of Firewhisky, fuck my nerves are shot to shit,”

“Pippet!” Draco calls, taking a seat on Hermione’s other side.

The little elf appears and takes a small curtsy. “Yes Mister Draco?”

“Can we get coffee and tea and something small to eat please?” He asks the elf.

“Of course, is there anythings Miss Hermione and Miss Pansy would like?”

Pansy requests some of Pippet’s delicious shortbread and Hermione says that will be perfect. Pippet surprises her by stepping closer and taking her hand in her warm little one.

“Miss Hermione will feel better, I looks after her and Mister Draco until they do,” she tells her softly. “I is sorry. Very sorry,”

Hermione feels a tear fall down her cheek before she can stop it.

“Thank you, Pippet,” Hermione whispers tearily.

The little elf vanishes leaving silence.

“So is someone going to tell me what the fuck happened? Draco won’t say a thing to me but apparently the fucking house-elf knows?”

Draco sighs again and picks up Hermione’s hand.

Pansy spots the move and glares at Draco. “And you’re being openly affectionate now? Have you decided to stop being such a dick about this?”

“Pansy—” Hermione begins but is stopped by Draco.

“I’ve apologised to Hermione, I don’t see why I need to repeat that apology to you.”

The sneer very much back in place.

“You don’t,” Pansy says, returning his sneer. “But if you do anything else to hurt her,” Pansy squeezes her hand. “I’ll fucking hex you back to the Manor minus your bollocks so your mother can deal with you, do you understand?”

Draco tries to hide the twitch of his mouth but fails. “Perfectly,”

Pippet reappears with a tray laden with coffee, tea and more treats than they can possibly eat. When she leaves them again, Draco busies himself making them all a drink and placing a biscuit and a small lemon cake on a plate for her. Hermione’s heart can’t help but swell at the change in him and now much he’s trying.

“I—” she begins, turning to look at Pansy. “We—”

Pansy senses something big and puts down her plate and cup. “Granger—”

“I had a miscarriage,” Hermione whispers. “Twins. We didn’t—I didn’t—it was a shock,”

Pansy lets out a sound of shock and grief and vanishes Hermione’s plate and cup before wrapping her arms around her. She squeezes Hermione so tight she thinks she might be trying to put every shattered piece of Hermione back together.

“I’m—” Pansy lets out a sob. “I’m so fucking sorry,” she whispers.

Draco doesn’t let go of Hermione’s hand the whole time Pansy is hugging her. He remains a warm, steady presence beside her and she’s grateful for it. When Pansy releases Hermione, she wipes her own tears then uses her sleeve to dry Hermione’s cheeks.

“You’ll be a wonderful mother, Hermione,” she whispers. “And Draco will be a wonderful father if that’s what you both want,” she tells her. “But for now, just feel whatever the fuck you need to, okay? And know that you did nothing to cause this, neither of you.”

Hermione nods sadly at her friend and turns to face Draco who looks as heartbroken and she feels, and wraps her fingers tighter around his.

The next two days are filled with resting, talking and visits from the Slytherin’s.

Theo has tears in his eyes before he even steps out of the Floo. He wraps his arms around Hermione and tells her he’s sorry over and over again. She tries to tell him it’s not his fault, it’s not anyone’s, but he keeps repeating the same words over and over again anyway. When he does finally release her, she sees a very on-edge Draco practically chewing his hand off.

“Oh, calm down you big blond idiot. I think it’s perfectly clear she’s in love with you and not at all interested in anyone else!”

“*Theo* —” Draco almost growls.

“I mean it, calm down.”

Draco huffs and sits down loudly in the armchair next to the sofa. “How long are you planning to be here?”

“As long as my beautiful best friend needs me to be,”

“I don’t need you,” Draco scowls.

“Well, it’s a good job I wasn’t talking about you then, isn’t it?”

“I don’t need your help here, *Theo*,” Draco scowls at him.

“Well,” Theo huffs, wrapping Hermione in a hug and settling back onto the sofa. “It doesn’t really matter what you do or don’t need right now, does it? Hermione is the one we need to look after,”

“Which I am doing,” Draco says.

“Boys—” Hermione huffs. “I’m right here and I’m fine, *Theo*,”

Theo just kisses the top of her head and waits it out with Draco scowling the whole time.

Blaise *Floos* over next, closely followed by Pansy and Draco looks like he’s about to turn into his name sake and start to breathe fire. Pansy brings with her a massive bag that turns out to be filled with all kinds of potions for a girly afternoon of pampering that Theo tries desperately to get an invite to. Draco shoo’s him into the *Floo*, tells Hermione that he’ll be in his study and call if she needs anything before pressing a kiss to her forehead. When he reaches the door and looks back at her and she swears her world comes to a standstill.

On day three, Hermione finally feels up to telling Harry and Ginny.

She *Floos* over, leaving Draco at Burton House much to his annoyance and tells them everything. Ginny throws herself at Hermione and sobs until her body is wracked with shivers and Harry has to calm her down.

“I didn’t—I never—Oh, Gods, Hermione I’m so—”

Ginny doesn’t quite get the words out but Hermione knows what she’s trying to say. There aren’t any words to make the reality any better anyway, she doesn’t need words, she doesn’t really need anything right now. When Hermione explains it was down to a faulty batch of Contraception potion, Ginny’s eyes go wide.

“I—it’s how—” Ginny hiccups. “The faulty potion got us too,” she sobs. “I would have—I should have—said—something,” she sobs harder.

“Gin,” Hermione sniffs, devastated to see how upset Ginny was. “It’s not your fault.”

“But if I told you—you could have taken extra care and you wouldn’t—”

Harry looks helpless, arms wrapped around Ginny and desperately trying to calm her down. When Ginny can barely keep her eyes open, Harry takes her into their room to lie down for a while and comes to sit back down with Hermione. He sighs and stays silent for a few minutes before expressing again how sad the whole situation is and wrapping her in a hug. They sit and have a cup of hot sweet tea and he holds on to her hand.

“It’s been a lot for you. Is there anything I can do?”

Hermione puts her cup down and turns to look at him. “Yes actually,”

“Name it,” he smiles sadly at her.

“Don’t say anything to Ron,” she eyes Harry carefully. “It’s a lot to explain and we both know he won’t be as—understanding about the fact it’s Draco. I’m just not ready for that yet,”

“Hermione,” Harry sighs. “It’s totally up to you when you tell him. He’s not going to hear it from me and Gin, okay?”

Hermione lets some more tears fall before she leans in and kisses Harry wetly on the cheek.
“Thank you, Harry,”

When Hermione arrives back at Burton House, Draco takes only a second to appear in the room, scoop her into his arms and carry her into his room. He settles her into bed on the softest sheets she’s ever felt that are saturated in his scent and more comforting than anything else in the world currently is. He lays down beside her and rushes the hair off her face, looking at her with a sad smile on his face.

“It will get easier, love,” he tells her softly and with more care than she expects from him.

“Promise?” She hiccups, tears running down her face, feeling utterly exhausted from the last few days.

He kisses her forehead and pulls her into his arms. “I promise,”

Nothing Hurts Like Love

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Nothing Hurts Like Love

Everything in Hermione's life twists and changes in front of her eyes.

Draco is more attentive and present than she could have hoped for and Hermione finds that the only time the ache in her chest is any less is when they're together, when she doesn't have to pretend because he feels it too.

They fall into a surprising routine of waking up together and letting the silence and warmth in the room

gently rouse them both from sleep. No matter how much they move in sleep, Draco always seems to find a way back to her during the night and she more often than not, wakes up to his hand resting protectively over her empty stomach. It's both a massive comfort and a constant reminder of what's happened. Her bruised heart feels as unsettled and battered as it has since that awful day but she can't think of any other place she would rather be.

The days start to blend into one and Hermione only knows it's a different day than the previous one because of Draco's insistence that she showers each morning and eats regular meals. On the orders of the Healer, Hermione takes a rest in the afternoon while Draco checks in with work. Since his uncles are awaiting trial and Harry has taken over the majority of the workload, he's not been needed in the office much at all. Draco told her there's still no sign of Greyback but the attacks have stopped, anyone who might be involved seemed to have gone to ground.

One afternoon, Hermione wakes from a nap to voices down the hall. She stretches gently and climbs out of bed. At first she thinks it's Pansy based on the fact it's a female voice and a very agitated Draco. She makes her way softly in the direction of the voices when she hears Draco speak.

"Mother, it's not that simple and you know it,"

"Darling, it's entirely that simple. Come over for dinner, whatever have you got planned that's so important?"

There's almost too much time before he speaks again.

Narcissa is here and asking questions. It doesn't go unnoticed by Hermione that this is the time for Draco to tell his mother about their relationship. Whether he will or not remains to

be seen. She knows she should leave, let them talk without her listening, but the desire to know what he will say is too much.

“I have—” Draco falters.

“Who is it, Draco? Who has you so tied up in knots? It can’t be Astoria and it’s most definitely not Pansy, who is it?”

Draco sighs and speaks again. “I can’t tell you,”

Hermione hears the sound of heels clicking one floor before coming to a stop. “You can tell me anything, Draco. Do you trust me so little you cannot confide in me? I love you and I promise to help if I can,”

To Hermione’s horror she hears Draco’s heartbroken sob fill the space and Narcissa’s shocked gasp. “Oh, my darling, what is it?”

“It’s Granger,” Draco says quietly. “We’ve been—it’s all been—*Mother*,” his voice breaks on the word. “It’s all my fault,”

Hermione sinks to the floor at the pain in his voice and the realisation that he really does blame himself for what’s happened.

“What is?”

“She lost them,”

“Lost what, darling?” Narcissa sounds confused now.

“*The babies* —” Draco chokes in a whisper. “*My babies* —”

There’s silence.

Broken only by the sound of sorrow so fragile it might shatter any second.

Hermione wipes the tears from her eyes and is about to stand when Narcissa speaks.

“I don’t—” she clears her throat. “I don’t pretend to understand what’s happened, Draco, but from what I can guess, you’ve been in a relationship with Miss Granger and—”

“I didn’t tell her, Mother,” Draco says. “I didn’t tell her in time how I felt and I caused her so much pain and distress that I made her—”

“No! Draco, darling, nothing you did would have caused that. Nothing,”

“I ruin everything I touch. I was awful to her. I pushed her away and I treated her—and now —”

“Why didn’t you tell me?”

“Because I knew what you’d say,” he sniffs. “She’s not a Pureblood, mother, I know how you feel—”

“Stop right there,” Narcissa cuts him off. “I am disappointed in you, Draco. After all this time, after everything I have done you think I care about blood purity? I just want you to be happy! I’ve told you this countless times,”

“And what about everyone else? What about what they think?”

Narcissa sniffed. “I raised you not to care what other people think, Draco. We—”

“I don’t care for me! I care for her!” Draco’s voice rang out loud and clear. “The thought of anyone behaving towards her like they do us, mother. It’s abhorrent. I can barely tolerate it for you let alone H—”

“The Wizarding world adores, Miss Granger,”

“But they hate me—”

“Darling, we cannot control what everyone else thinks of us. But I think you’ll find that people are not as bothered by our name as you think they are. People have moved on, slowly but they have moved on. You’re allowing yourself to deny both of you a future because of what ifs. You’re perfect for each other, I’ve known it for some time,—”

“How—”

“Darling,” Narcissa laughs gently. “You think I don’t know my own son? You think I’m oblivious to how much you watch her at the galas? How your arrangement with Astoria came to an abrupt stop soon after you two became reacquainted? You think I don’t know when my son is in love?”

Draco’s choked, tear filled whisper fills the room. “What do I do? How do I fix this?”

“Some things cannot be fixed, Draco. We have to find a way of accepting them no matter how painful they are. Your father and I—”

“Mum, *please* —” Draco sounded pained.

“We wished for a big family, but it was not to be. I’m no stranger to the pain of child loss and if Miss Granger would ever like to talk, please tell her she is always welcome in my home,”

“I don’t know what to do,” Draco said, so quietly she almost missed it.

“You just have to try, darling. Try your best and love her without hesitation, that’s all she needs I’m sure of it,”

Draco finds her still curled on the hallway floor once he's seen Narcissa out. She's too exhausted and sore to pretend she didn't listen to their conversation and invade his privacy but he doesn't seem angry as he slides down the wall next to her and picks up her hand, bringing it to his lips.

"I'm sorry I listened, the second I knew it was your mother I should have left,"

He kisses her hand again. "You didn't hear anything I wouldn't tell you. How are you feeling?"

"Sore, sad, lost,"

He meets her eyes and presses a kiss to her temple. "Me too,"

"How can I be so sad when I didn't even know they existed, Draco?"

He leans over and rests his hand on her stomach. "Because they were a part of you—"

"They were part of you too,"

"And that's why I'm sad."

"You told me—the first night we spent together—that you had no intention of becoming a father—"

He drops his head back against the wall and sighs. "I didn't account for you, did I? I didn't expect for that one night to become anything, Hermione. I didn't expect—" he leans forward and pulls her into his lap. "I didn't expect to fall in love with you, for you to become everything. I didn't expect you to turn my world upside down and make me want things I swore I never would. I didn't expect to want a life, to live and not just exist,"

"So you're—" Hermione takes a deep breath and tries again. "You're not just here now because we lost the babies and you feel like you don't have another option?"

Draco tenses under her. "No," he takes a deep breath. "No, I'm not just here because of that. I guess I deserve that, for you to worry that that's what this is," he looks at her. "It's not. How you left the hospital and then losing the babies made me wake the fuck up, it made to face how much of a coward and a failure I've been and I was terrified I'd lost you,"

Hermione runs her hands down the back of his neck while he tries to calm himself.

"Was this a catalyst? Yes. Do I feel like I have to be here? No, I *want* to be here. I want to be with you and I want to have a future with you. I'm not here because of what happened, I'm here because I love you. I'm done being a coward,"

They sit together on the floor in silence for a long time before he speaks again.

"I went back there, you know,"

“Back where?”

“To Hogwarts. After the gala for the anniversary of the Battle. I had apologies to make, to so many people. The person I was then—he feels like a stranger to me now. It’s too painful to remember, too painful to walk the corridors and not see the people I hurt, the people we lost, the person I was before. But I had to.”

“That’s a really brave thing to do, I’ve only been back once, it’s—it’s the place of so much trauma for all of us.”

Draco kisses her temple again and rests his head against hers. “So I went back. McGonagall—she was far too gracious. She excused all my behaviour and cowardly choices. She forgave me. She even apologised to me. Told me she should have helped more, I was a child and I had no choice,” Draco’s voice thick with emotion. “Flitwick, too. And Sprout and Pomphrey. Even Hagrid,” He laughed. “He told me he knew what it felt like for everyone to hold things out of your control against you.

Tears filled Hermione’s eyes at his confession. She knew that no one worth anything would look at the man Draco Malfoy had become and see anything but bravery and strength. He survived a childhood with the most evil of the world sharing his home and he had no say in any of it.

“I walked the empty corridors, discovered rooms I’d never seen before. That place is truly bigger than any one person can ever fathom with secrets upon secrets. I made it my mission to discover them all and still, I barely scratched the surface.”

“I know,” she laughs softly. “Even with Harry’s map there are things I’m sure we’ve never discovered,”

Draco huffs out a laugh. “That fucking map. You know he told me about it? Told me it’s how he got out of situations he never should have and how he knew where I went all the time during Sixth year.”

“It’s a really good map,” Hermione smiles.

“For you three, perhaps. Not for the Death Eater trying to cause unimaginable chaos,”

Hermione sits up and cups his face in her hands. “That’s not who you are now, you didn’t have a choice,”

He looks at her and nods.

But she’s not sure he truly believes it yet.

“So as I walked the corridors and found rooms I’ve never seen before. I found a room and hidden inside

that room was a mirror. Huge and gold and more ornate than anything I’ve ever seen before.”

“The Mirror of Erised.”

Although Hermione had never seen the mirror, she'd heard Harry and Ron speak about seeing it First year. How Harry went back and sat in front of it for many nights before Dumbledore appeared, explained what it did and warned him not to go looking for it again.

Draco's voice floats over to me again. "I didn't know what it did for a time, but I stood there, staring at what it showed me." His voice trails off as he looks at the blank wall in front of him.

"What did it show you, Draco?"

"You." His eyes meet Hermione's. "It showed me you. *Us*, really. And our families—*my family*—smiling. Happy we were together. And nestled in your arms—" Draco stopped talking, his voice breaking at the end. "And I knew then that what I wanted most, what I never even admitted to myself, what I would give my life for, I would never ever get. And I was right, wasn't I?"

Hermione's sob rips from her chest with such ferocity she chokes, gasping for breath at the utter unfairness of the word to have ripped from them something so precious.

"No, you're not right, In time—if we want—we can make that a reality, Draco. It doesn't have to be a dream,"

"Would you want that?" He asks in a small voice. "With me? Even after everything?"

Hermione shifts a little and looks him straight in the eye. "I love you—" she tells him. "I want everything with you. But—we have to heal first, we have to learn to be together without hurting each other,"

"I agree," he breathes. "My mother—"

"You told her, I heard,"

"She's heartbroken for us, Hermione. I've been such a selfish idiot. She just wants me to be happy,"

"That's all any parent wants for their child—"

Hermione doesn't try to stop the sob from breaking free, doesn't try to stop the tears or to pretend the pain in her chest isn't crippling. Draco holds her. He holds her so tight she feels nothing but him. When her tears dry and her breathing has gone back to some kind of normal, Draco speaks softly, his lips moving against her temple.

"You spoke to Potter?"

Hermione nods. "He actually already knew—" she takes a deep breath. "He saw me at St Mungo's. He's been nothing but supportive and kind about it, so please don't feel like you need to be all possessive and protective,"

He laughs. "I don't know how to be anything but that, Hermione,"

“Well,” she smiles, wiping the tears from her eyes. “Tone it down a bit, yeah?”

“I can’t promise—” Draco stands and lifts her like she weighs nothing, walking towards his bedroom. “But I’ll try. For you, I’ll try,”

A week later, Hermione feels ready to go back to her house and after a heated discussion with Draco, she finds herself stepping through her *Floo* and into her lounge.

There’s trepidation when she climbs the stairs, not knowing what she’s going to find. But everything is clean and smells fresh. There’s no evidence of what happened and she says a silent thanks to Pansy for making it that way. Hermione unpacks her bag and heads down to the kitchen to make a coffee. She’s just about to pour the milk into her mug when the *Floo* flares to life and two voices call her name.

“Hermione?”

She steps over the threshold and smiles. “What are you two doing here?”

Pansy and Theo hold up their hands and show the many bags they’re holding. “We know you don’t have food and we were not going to miss the chance to spend time with you without King Dick around,” Pansy tells her.

They both bring the bags into the kitchen and Theo shoos her into the lounge with her coffee. They both return with trays of food levitating beside them five minutes later. Hermione smiles and tucks her feet underneath her while the two Slytherin’s make themselves comfortable.

“So—” Theo begins. “How are we doing?”

“I’m—as good as I can expect to be. But I’m sick of talking about me, what’s going on with you two?”

Theo and Pansy both look at each other and then laugh. “Who’s going first?” Theo asks.

“You, obviously,” Pansy snorts.

“Right, well,” Theo begins, taking a bite of a tiny pastry. “Charlie came over and we went for dinner and drinks and—”

“Fucking,” Pansy finishes for him.

Theo glares at her. “I’ll do that when you tell Granger all about your—”

“Okay!” Pansy yells. “I’ll stop,”

Hermione looks at Pansy with curiosity but Theo gets her attention again.

“We went for dinner and drinks and he came back to Nott Manor and he gave me a kiss and I might have tried to persuade him to stay by grinding my erection into his insanely large erection—”

“I don’t need as many details as Pansy does, Theo,” Hermione says blushing.

“Right,” he smirks. “He wouldn’t stay the night, even though he said he wanted to. He didn’t want to give the wrong impression and fuck—” he sighs and shifts in his seat. “—if that didn’t make me hotter,”

“And? Are you seeing each other again?”

“Yes,” he beams. “I have a Portkey to Romania for a weeks time and I *will* be staying the night,”

Hermione grins. “Well, you seem delighted about that,”

“I’d be more delighted if I’d slept with him, but I’ll be able to report back on that front after next week,”

Hermione laughs and turns to Pansy. “What’s your news?”

“Yes, Pansy,” Theo laughs softly. “*What’s your news?*”

Pansy glares at Theo. “My news is. I went on a date with Neville,”

“*Neville*, now is it?” Theo teases.

“Well, there are other names I could call him but I don’t want Granger to get any redder,” Pansy looks at Hermione and grins. “But what I will say is, for a Gryffindor, the man loves to lick my snake more than I thought he would,”

Hermione groans.

“It’s always the quiet ones, isn’t it?” Theo says like he’s considering it. “I bet you’re a freak in the sheets, aren’t you, Granger?”

“I’m not answering that!” Hermione squeaks.

“Theo, darling, we know she is. We know Draco and I told you what I walked in on,”

“Pansy!” Hermione chokes.

“What?”

“You didn’t have to tell everyone—”

Pansy scoffs. "I didn't tell *everyone*. I told Theo—"

"And Blaise," Theo adds helpfully.

"And Blaise, obviously,"

"Obviously," Hermione groans, covering her face.

"What's to be embarrassed about? You've got an incredible body and Draco has an incredible body. There's no shame."

"I'm not ashamed, I'm just not used to my friends seeing me—"

"Being fucked on a piano?" Pansy says.

"Well—"

"I've never fucked on a piano, what's it like?" Theo asks seriously.

"From what I saw, it was very enjoyable. I think you're too tall though. I guess you could always be bent over it?" Pansy considers the idea.

"I think I need a lie down," Hermione almost groans.

"Are you going to sleep?" Theo asks. "Or are you going to do a little self-care because all this talk of sex is getting you hot and bothered?"

"Can we please stop?" Hermione can't help but laugh.

Theo gets up and comes over to wrap his arms around her. "And my job is done, I just wanted to hear you laugh again, beautiful."

That has tears filling Hermione's eyes and she's just wiping them away when her Floo roars to life and Draco steps through. His eyes fix on her instantly and he scowls at Theo.

"What are you doing?"

"Nothing," Theo says, rolling his eyes.

"Then why is Hermione crying, Theo?"

"Draco—" Hermione starts but stops when he leans down and kisses her.

"Are you okay?" He asks against her lips.

"Yes, Theo is just being lovely and it doesn't take much to set me off right now,"

He nods and kisses her again before pulling up a seat, pulling it over to the sofa, picking up her legs and sitting down with her feet in his lap. Pansy and Theo look at each other and smile.

“You know,” Theo begins, handing Draco a drink. “I never thought I’d see the day that you were happy and open with someone. Love looks good on you, Draco,” Theo smiles genuinely.

“Really good,” Pansy adds, pretending she’s not wiping away a tear.

“How long are you two planning to stay?” Draco says pretending to be annoyed but Hermione knows she isn’t.

“A while,” Pansy smiles sweetly at him.

“Oh joy,” Draco sighs.

They spend the afternoon together, Pansy and Theo winding Draco up while he pretends to care but loves it really. Hermione enjoys watching them all interact while having Draco’s hands running protectively over her any chance he gets. When Theo and Pansy leave, Draco carries Hermione upstairs and into her new bathroom where he runs the most extravagant bath and climbs in behind her. With soapy hands, he caresses her body softly and with delicate care, but even with the softness of his touch, she’s under no illusions he doesn’t want her. His erection is prodding her in the back after five minutes.

“There’s no way I can be naked and soapy with you and not get hard, love. It doesn’t mean anything,”

“I want you,” she breathes. “But I’m not ready—”

He kisses her temple and brings their joined hands to rest on her chest. “And I don’t expect you to be,”

:I miss being with you like that, it seems like forever since we’ve—”

“And we have forever to go, love. Let’s not put pressure on any part of us for now, hmm?”

Forever.

Hermione’s heart swells at the thought of a lifetime with Draco.

After a few minutes a thought suddenly pops into her mind and she moves so suddenly water splashes out of the bath and Draco tenses behind her.

“What?”

“Your birthday!” she turns to face him, eyes wide. “I forgot your birthday!”

Draco chuckles and pulls her back to him. “And?”

“And? How could I be such a—”

“Hermione, stop, it doesn’t matter. I don’t like my birthday and I was glad not to be reminded of it,”

Hermione settles back against him. “I’ll make up for it, just you wait,”

He smiles against her head and hums. “I’ve no doubt about it.

They’re silent for a few minutes. Hands caressing without the urgency of anything more. Hermione lets her mind drift over the last week and feels like she’s starting to see a little light again.

Hermione sighs and leans into him a little more. “Draco?”

“Hmmm?”

“I always wanted it to be like this, you know?”

“I know. I’m sorry I was such a bastard,”

“I loved you though,” she brings their hands up to her mouth and kisses them. “I love you still,”

Draco shifts her head back and kisses her. “I know. I don’t deserve it but I love you, too,”

Chapter End Notes

It's Sunday already? How did that happen?

Well, I hope you enjoyed that chapter. They're healing together, Narcissa knows and I think ... I *think* they might just be okay.

As always, thank you for your comments and Kudos and taking the chance on these two idiots in love!

See you on Wednesday.

Happy Birthday

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Happy Birthday

Hermione spends the remaining summer recovering and getting her life back on an even keel. There are many moments that she knows will stand out for her for a long time; some for good reasons, others for not such good reasons.

Telling Ron about her and Draco's relationship was a big moment and one that actually didn't go at all how she thought it would. She invited him over to her house for lunch and they sat outside in the sunshine while consuming vast amounts of pasta with the richest cheese sauce and garlic bread. Her plan was to feed Ron before she told him, knowing only too well he's awful on an empty stomach.

When she refilled their glasses and sat back, he watched her, eyes looking intensely at her and knowing she had something important to tell him before she even spoke,

"Just tell me, Hermione. Whatever it is, it's okay," he reached for her hand and squeezed her fingers.

Hermione took a deep breath and tried to figure out where to start with it all.

"I'm in a relationship with Draco," she blurted out.

His eyebrows raised. "*Malfoy?*" Ron said.

"Yes,"

"Since when?"

"A while," she cringed.

He looked off into the distance and she saw the boy he once was and not the man he'd grown to be for a second before he looked back at her and took a steady breath.

"I'm not going to pretend I get it, Hermione, because I don't," he looked at her and smiled. "But even I can see you're happier lately and I don't think—as much as I'd like to—I don't think I make you happy, not like that."

Hermione felt tears fill her eyes and she wiped at her face. "I think—" she swallowed through the emotion she felt at finally speaking about this with him. "I think we're friends, best friends, and we were never going to be more than that. We got caught up in the war and everything that came with it, didn't we?"

He squeezed her fingers. “I think so, yeah,”

“I still love you and you’re still one of my best friends, Ron. I just want—I want you to be happy and find someone who makes your whole world tilt and when it’s righted itself, you realise that the person responsible is the person who makes everything make sense. That they’re the person who just understand you without you having to explain it,”

Ron’s eyes go wide. “And Malfoy does that? For you?”

Hermione smiles. “Yes, he does.”

“Huh.”

After a hug, Hermione tells him about the miscarriage and to her complete surprise, Ron wipes away tears and tugs her to him, murmuring words of comfort and telling her she’ll make a wonderful mum one day. They demolish the pile of cookies she made with giant mugs of coffee before she gives him one last squeeze and walks to the *Floo* with him.

“You’ll come to my birthday?” Hermione asks as he grabs a handful of *Floo powder*.

“Of course I will,”

“And you’ll be on your best behaviour with Draco?”

“Honestly Hermione, the oddest part of this whole thing is going to have to call him Draco,” he sniggers.

Hermione laughs and kisses his cheek before he steps into the grate and vanishes with a smile only Ron Weasley can give her.

Draco: I miss you. Can I see you?

Draco: Must I write in here every time I want to see you? My Floo is open to you, yours is open to me, can I not just come over?

Draco: You’re not even replying! What are you doing?

Draco: Okay, this is getting really old now, Hermione. Are you okay?

Draco: If you don't reply in two minutes, I'm coming over.

Draco: I'm coming over. Fuck this bollocks.

Hermione is alerted to Draco's presence by the wards he helped her cast while she soaks in the bath.

"Hermione?"

"In the bath!" She calls back.

He bounds into the room a second later and looks at her. "Well," he smirks. "Wet and waiting for me, huh?"

Hermione lays back and pulls one leg out of the bathtub to rest on the side, he watches the move hungrily.

"Wet? Yes. Waiting for you?" Hermione brushes her hands over her wet breasts and smirks. "Always,"

His eyes darken and he steps forward, hand on his belt, before stopping himself. "May I join you?"

She moves forward and nods. "I'd love you to join me."

She watches as he removes every item of clothing slowly, clearly giving her a show. Hermione watches as his long fingers reach for his cufflinks, removing them with care and consideration before placing them onto the vanity to his right. Then he removes his tie, in slow deliberate moves. That too is placed carefully onto the vanity. Next is his wand holster, which she's seen countless times before, but seeing it stretched across his broad shoulders, framing his strength so perfectly, makes her mouth water.

By the time his hands reach for the buttons on his shirt, she's insanely aroused and desperate for those fingers to be on her skin. But he doesn't rush. Of course he doesn't. Draco does everything in life at his pace, no one rushes Draco Malfoy.

His shirt is pushed from his shoulders and he's standing before her with a naked torso but still wearing in his trousers. She knows he'll remove his shoes and socks before he takes them off which will leave him gloriously naked for her. Hermione watches with desperate need as his hands go to his belt. Why on earth are his hands on his belt so insanely sexy?

"See something you like?" He asks, arching one brow at her.

“Lots actually,”

“Hmmm?”

“Are you getting in here or not? The water is getting cold,”

“You’re a witch, make it hot again,” he drawls.

“I’d much rather you just get in here, Draco,” she rolls her eyes.

“You’re such a demanding little thing, aren’t you?”

His hands remove the rest of his clothes and he stands before her, naked and muscular and utterly delicious. His broad shoulders, his narrow waste, strong thighs and firm stomach. His cock hands heavy between his legs and she can’t help but squeeze her thighs together. He’s perfect for her.

“Scoot forward then,”

She does as he asks and when he’s settled behind her, his erection prodding her, she reaches behind him and wraps her hand around his cock, squeezing firmly.

“Going straight for it, I see,” he groans, thrusting into her hand.

“That little show was all the foreplay I need,”

His hands come up to cup her breasts, his mouth on her neck. “Are you sure you’re ready?” He asks, breath hot and teasing on her neck.

“I’ve been ready for weeks, you’re the one who hasn’t been ready,”

He turns her face to his and looks into her eyes. “You know I’ve been desperate to be inside you, Hermione, but things needed to—”

“Heal, yes, I know. But I’m fine now and I want us to be together like that again,”

He kisses her, pushing his tongue into her mouth and caressing hers with possessive urgency that speaks of his desire to be inside her too.

“*Draco* —” she pants into his mouth.

“Yes, love?”

“*Please* —”

“Oh how well you beg,”

His hands drop below the water and he lifts her to straddle his hips with his cock pressing against her but not inside. She tries to shift but he stops her.

“Do you want this to be gentle? Or do you want this to be—”

"I want to feel and I want it to be us," she breathed into his mouth. "Whatever you want, I need,"

Without uttering a word, her arms are behind her back and secured by something that's rough and soft at the same time. His mouth drops to her breast and he bites down hard making her arch her back and groan at the same time.

"You're so fucking gorgeous, do you know that?" He asks, flicking his tongue over her nipple.

"You tell me often," she groans.

"And do you believe it?"

"Yes, when you tell me I do,"

Hermione feels his hands on her hips and then lower, two fingers slipping inside her and finding her wet and ready for him. He takes a moment to rub small circles around her clitoris before thrusting those two fingers deep inside her. Hermione arches up, tightening her thighs around his fingers.

"Please, Draco—"

"In a minute, love,"

He teases her for what feels like forever before he withdraws his fingers and fists his cock in his hands. For a moment he slides his hand up and down his length and just gazes at her. His eyes are dark, pupils blown wide in arousal.

"How did I get so lucky?" He asks her, reaching forward to pinch her nipple.

"I don't—"

Her words are cut off when he lowers her onto his cock. Slammering her down and making her wince at the size of him. It's been weeks and her previous familiarity with him seems to have vanished. She feels full and stretched and it's both delicious and painful at the same time,

"God you feel—" she groans.

"You're so fighting tight,"

"Move, please—"

He begins to move. Shifting her down as he thrusts up. The water swirling around them as they race determinedly towards their release. They're nothing but sounds and moving water. Hermione knows it's spilling over the edges of the bath but can't bring herself to care. When Draco finds her clitoris and bites down on her nipple at the same time he thrusts up into her, her climax crashes over her.

"*Oh Gods* —" she cries.

“Fuuuuuuuuuck!”

With one final brutal trust and the most animalistic groan she’s ever heard, Draco finds his release and sinks his teeth into her neck, pouring himself into her as she clenches around him.

Everything looks elegant and romantic; the lighting, the decoration, everything. Pansy has outdone herself and Hermione feels her smile take over her whole face as she surveys the marquee in the garden. The summer warmth is fighting with the autumn chill but the room is a comfortable temperature thanks to the many charms cast on the space. When Draco offered his garden to host Hermione’s birthday dinner, she couldn’t say no. It was beautiful and the perfect setting for the celebration. Hermione agreed to the location providing she could get ready at her house and then Floo over, Draco tried to change her mind but soon relented.

“Do you like it?” Pansy asks, coming into the room behind her.

Hermione turns to face her and smiles. “I love it,” she smiles.

Dressed in a black mini dress with a red lip and nails that match perfectly, her long bob in loose curls and smokey eyes, Pansy looks incredible.

“You look sensational, Granger,” pansy grins. “I knew green was your colour,”

“Like black in yours, you look—”

“Hot? I know,” she grins.

“Everyone will be arriving soon, do I need to do anything?”

“No, everything is taken care of, just enjoy your birthday,”

Hermione hears a set of feet approaching and turns to look as Draco enters the gazebo and her mouth pops open. Dressed in charcoal grey trousers and a waistcoat, he looks divine, But what really surprises her is his choice in shirt colour. He’s wearing white. He strolls towards her, a smile tugging on his lips as he takes in her dress. Green, with floaty sleeves and a long skirt but with a split up her left leg. It’s fitted and yet floaty and she loves it.

“You’re dressed just for me, aren’t you?? He says when he reaches her.

“You were not who came to mind when I picked this,” Hermione lies.

Because he was exactly who she thought of when she picked this dress. When she went shopping with Pansy and they found this dress they both stopped and said one word. Draco. Because they both knew how he would feel about it.

“Lies,” Pansy whispered from beside her.

“Pansy!” Hermione growls.

Draco reaches for her and rests his hands on her waist. “No need to pretend, love. I know you dressed for me.”

Hermione smiles. “And did you dress for me?” She said, running her hands down his front.

“Of course,” he smirks at her.

“Okay, the sexual tension is rolling off you two, Draco go get a drink, you’re not having sex before this thing even begins!”

“I think Hermione can decide what she does, Pansy,” Draco tells her.

Pansy arches one brow at Hermione who understands perfectly what she’s being told.

“We’ll have sex later, go get a drink,” she whispers to him.

Hermione watches him walk away and her mouth waters at the sight of his arse encased in the perfectly fitted trousers.

“Just hold it together for a couple of hours, Granger, your guests are arriving,” Pansy nods to the entrance to the gazebo and spots Theo walking towards her with Charlie.

“Hey beautiful!” Theo calls as he reaches her, sweeping her into his arms and swirling them around. “You look stunning!”

“Thank you,” Hermione grins as he puts her down and Charlie scoops her up. “Hey Charlie,” she laughs.

“You do look beautiful, Hermione,” he tells her before placing her gently on her feet once more.

“Could we please keep the manhandling of Hermione to a minimum?” Draco calls over from the bar.

Theo rushes over to Draco and picks him up and attempts to twirl him around too. “Put me down, Theo!” Draco growls.

“I just didn’t want you to feel left out, handsome,” Theo teases him.

“I could live my whole life without you doing that and not feel left out,”

Theo just kisses his cheek making him scowl more. “I think I liked you better when you were single,” Draco scowls at him.

“Oh, I didn’t,” Pansy says, coming up to wrap an arm around Theo. “He was insufferable. He’s much happier with regular cock,”

Theo kisses her cheek. “As are you, Pansy,”

Draco shudders and walks away. “This is where it ends for me.” he calls over his shoulder coming to stand next to Hermipne and resting his hand on her hip.

“They’re happy, leave them be,” she tells him.

“Happy is fine, I just don’t want to hear about their sex lives baring in mind Thro is with a Weasley and Pansy is with—”

“Neville!” Hermione calls as he steps towards them looking tall and handsome in his dark blue shirt and grey trousers.

“Happy birthday, Hermione,” Neville beams, kissing her cheek and giving her a hug.

“It’s so good to see you,” she tells him honestly. “How’s life at Hogwarts?”

“Good, good. Surreal at times. I’ve lost count of the amount of times I’ve ignored a student because I just forgot I’m a professor,”

Hermione laughed. “I imagine it’s odd, but you’re enjoying it?”

Neville nods at her then spots someone over her shoulder and smiles. She doesn’t need to turn around to see who it is he’s spotted.

“Go get a drink, Pansy will be on hand to help you,” Hermione teases him.

Neville just nods and makes his way over to the tiny Slytherin who, to Hermione’s surprise, greets him with a kiss and a grope of his butt. Draco shudders beside her.

“It’s going to take me a lifetime to get used to that,”

“What?” Hermione turns to him. “Your friends being happy?”

“No,” he scoffs. “My friends fucking Gryffindors,”

“You’re fucking a Gryffindor,” she whispers to him.

“That’s totally different, you’re the only decent one there is,” he tells her. “And I haven’t had a chance to tell you just how fucking gorgeous you look tonight,” he drops a kiss to her lips and pulls her closer. “This dress is made for you,”

“Flattery will get you everywhere,” Hermione grins and kisses him back.

“Including into your knickers?”

“Well, if I were wearing any, yes, but seeing as I’m not—”

“Urgh,” a voice behind them says. “That’s absolutely disgusting.”

Herrmipne turns and Ron is standing there looking a little like he might be sick. Draco sneers and she slaps his chest in warning.

“Weasley,”

“Malfoy,” Ron manages with a swallow before holding his hand out to him.

Draco just stares at it.

“You make Hermione happy, I don’t have to get it, but I’m glad she’s happy,”

Draco blinks and reluctantly shakes his hand, albeit quickly. “Thanks,”

Ron gives her a hug then makes his way over to where Neville is standing with Pansy, Charlie and Theo. She watches for a few minutes as they all talk awkwardly and then Theo makes a joke, everyone laughs and the awkwardness vanishes. Looking at Draco she grins and leans in to kiss him with hopes that everyone can get along and be friends.

Later, they all sit around on big fluffy sofas with drinks after a wonderful dinner and the best birthday cake Hermione has ever had in her life. Harry has Ginny’s feet in his lap and is making her eyes roll into her head every time he presses on the arch of her foot. Pansy is sitting next to Nevill but so close she’s practically in his lap. Blaise is casually chatting to Padma who keeps flashing him heated looks when she thinks he’s not looking and Theo and Charlie are holding hands while Theo enjoys winding Ron up.

“I’m telling you,” Theo announces too loudly. “Don’t knock it till you’ve tried it!”

Ron shudders. “That’s my brother!”

“There are other dragon tamers at the sanctuary besides your brother,” Theo tells him.

“Except, none of them have the nickname Dragon Dick so—”

“*Theo!*” Everyone except Pansy yells.

“What?” He laughs. “It’s true!”

“We don’t need to hear it!” Ginny yells.

“You’re all so boring!”

“Babe,” Charlie laughs. “Just keep it to yourself,”

Theo leans in and kisses him and still too loudly tells the redhead, “But do n’t you keep it to yourself, I expect the full experience later, right?”

Everyone either laughs or groans and then they all down the remains of their drinks shaking their heads at the curly haired Slytherin who has no boundaries at all.

The big grandfather clock in the hallway chimes, letting them know it's two in the morning and the darkness around them confirms the lateness of the hour. The evening's birthday celebrations have been a long, leisurely affair with many laughs with friends and lingering looks, soft kisses and gentle caresses that grew more heated as the minutes ticked by between Hermione and Draco. As the evening wore on, the need to be closer became almost too much to ignore and it was with relief when everyone left and Draco stood and held out his hand to her, signalling the end of the evening.

Draco walks a little ahead of her, winding his way down the dark corridor with confidence and ease. Hermione watches him, drinking in the long lines of his back stretching his white shirt and waistcoat, the length of his strides and the paleness of his hair. When he steps into the lounge and disappears, Hermione picks up her pace to be reunited with him once again. As she walks through the doorway, all the air leaves her lungs. He's seated on a low backed, silver padded bench that sits in front of the huge windows that look out onto the manicured gardens and pond which sits in the grounds of Burton House. As her steps falter, he raises this head slowly and those steely grey eyes lock onto hers.

Hermione stops moving, stops breathing at the intensity in his gaze, her blood heating, her skin becoming covered in goosebumps. With one look he has said everything any other man would need a thousand words to express. A smile tugs at the corner of his mouth and he holds a hand out to her. It takes Hermione a moment to remember how to walk, but the second her brain remembers, she's moving towards him and taking his hand. He's gentle, too gentle, when he wraps his fingers around hers and tugs her forward between his open legs.

"Have I told you how beautiful you look tonight?" He mumbles against her stomach.

"Not that I recall. I do know you like the dress though," I tease him. "But seeing as it's my birthday, I think you should tell me."

He kisses across her hip bones before raising his eyes to hers. "It's not the outfit, it never is. It's you," he stands quickly, bringing his hands up and into her hair. "Your curls, your beautiful curls," he breathes into her face. "Your lips, so red and plump, your eyes shining with so much happiness I can barely stand it." He leans down and presses his mouth to hers, softly.

Hermione brings her hands up to wind her fingers into his hair and she to deepen the kiss but he stops her. "I'm not made of glass, Draco, you can be rough with me, I won't break."

He smirks and drops his head to press kisses to her bare throat. "Oh, I'm very aware you're not made of glass, Hermione but I want to bask in your glow tonight not snuff it out."

His hands run down the length of her spine and she arches into his hands. "Kiss me," she whispers.

He raises an eyebrow at her but brings their lips together, his tongue brushes against hers and Hermione's knees threaten to buckle beneath her. He moves us back, taking his seat on the bench again before pulling her to straddle his hips, his hands coming to rest on her waist. Hermione kisses him again, needing to taste him, needing to be closer to him. She shifts her

hips and feels his erection line up against her perfectly. Hermione groans and the vibrations ricochet through her body and come to rest at her core.

“I need you,” she pants as his hands run agonisingly slow circles on her hips.

“Do you not have me?”

“I need more of you,” she murmurs against his mouth, moving her hands to the buttons on his shirt. “I need to see you, feel you. It’s my birthday after all and I am supposed to get exactly what I want today,”

He breaks our kiss and leans back, resting one arm on the back of the bench arrogantly. “Then by all means,” he spreads his legs a little more and raises his chin to her. “Take what you need.”

Hermione slides off his lap and comes to kneel on the floor between his legs. She can see the flare in his eyes at her new position. One of his favourites, and mine too. Slowly, Hermione reaches for the top button of his shirt that sits against his throat. With sure fingers she pops it open and pulls it away from his skin before leaning forward to press a kiss against the bared skin. He inhales and drops his head back. She keeps her eyes on him as she continues her journey down his torso, stopping to kiss every delicious inch of skin that is slowly revealed to her greedy eyes. His hands twitch and more than once Hermione sees them raise as if he’s going to touch her, but he doesn’t. When she reaches the last button and pushes the material open, his eyes snap open and they’re dark, heated and wanting.

“Stand up.” he orders.

Hermione stands like she was made to follow his orders. Because that’s exactly what she was made for. Taking a step back she waits for his next command, but he just roams his eyes over her body. When his eyes finally raise to meet hers again he smirks and with a flick of his wand her dress vanishes and a small shocked gasp leaves his lips.

“I should have known,” he smiles.

Green silk and black lace, tight, tiny and bought only for him and he knows it. Hermione steps forward and he spins her around, groaning when he sees just how tiny the knickers are.

“You said you weren’t wearing any?”

“At that point I wasn’t. I changed into these a little while ago,”

He pushes her to bend at the knees and presses a kiss to her bare cheek before biting lightly into the skin. Then she’s moving, being lifted to straddle him again except now his trousers are open and he’s reaching between them to free his erection with one hand while the other curls around her neck bringing their mouths together in a searing kiss. Hermione gasps when she feels the heat of him pressing against the thin material of her underwear, then his fingers are inside her, firm and steady, pressing into her wetness and rubbing her most sensitive spots.

“This is mine,” he half growls at her, sucking on her neck before moving to her breasts.
“These are mine.”

“Yes,” Hermione groans as his mouth clamps down on her nipple.

He moves his fingers inside of her, making her clench and shudder. He knows just how to please her, he’s always known, there’s never been any awkwardness, just pure, blissful pleasure.

He bites down on her nipple again, almost like he’s getting her attention. “Such a beautiful, greedy cunt, Hermione.” His voice is gravely and the mixture of that, his fingers and the explicit words he’s using has a sudden wave of pleasure coursing through her body, “Shift for me, let me feel your heat wrapped around my cock.”

Hermione does as he asks, rising up onto her knees for him to angle himself so she can sink down onto him. Steadying herself on his shoulders, Hermione lowers herself down while he holds her knickers to one side, never bothering to remove them. When he’s fully inside, she drops her forehead to his and lets out a long, delicious groan at feeling him inside her, feeling so full.

“Move, ride me, *please* ,”

It’s his *please* that does it, urges Hermione on, has her grinding and rotating her hips. His lips crash to hers and Hermione begins to make love to him; his hands on her waist, the moonlight basking them in the most beautiful ethereal glow. Being able to touch him, to control this is so unlike him that she relishes the freedom, running her hands under his open shirt, over his shoulders, squeezing the naked skin beneath her fingers. So of course he has to control it, Hermione’s hands are being tugged back without his hands leaving her hips and she feels the magical bind securing them behind her. He’s a master of nonverbal spells to keep the element of surprise and Hermione finds his competence so fucking sexy.

“You didn’t think I’d allow you to take so many liberties, did you?” he breathes into her neck, moving her, setting a punishing rhythm beneathher. “Not even on your birthday, love,”

Hermione grins as he bites her neck. “Never,”

He laughs softly and moves one hand between them, manipulating her body like only he knows how. Within seconds Hermione feels her climax building, feels him swell and thrust harder into her. He meets Hermione’s eyes and without speaking a word gives her the permission she needs to fall into a breath-stealing, body shaking climax which only intensifies when he seals their lips together and groans his own release into her mouth.

They sit panting and clutching each other, the intensity of their evening still ringing through the room. Draco’s hand begins running up and down her spine and he presses his lips to her neck.

“Happy birthday, love,”

Chapter End Notes

Hey everyone,

I'm so sorry it's been a while. I'm really not very well and just haven't been able to be on my computer.

I'm still very much trying to recover so updates may be once a week until we're done. I'm hoping I can make it twice a week, but I wanted to let you know it might not be.

Thank you for being kind, I hate to vanish but it was most unexpected and I'm just trying to get better.

Thank you for all your comments and kudos and love - I hope you enjoyed the chapter!

Hopefully see you Wednesday if not, Sunday!

Encore un Soir

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Encore un Soir

At eight am on Saturday morning while Hermione and Draco sat eating buttery rich pastries and drinking steaming cups of coffee, Hermione dressed only in Draco's shirt from the night before and Draco wearing a pair of green checked pyjama bottoms and a white t-shirt, an owl tapped on the window. Draco stood and went to collect the letter attached to its leg.

"It's from my mother," he said softly as he sat back down.

"Ah," Hermione met his eyes and nodded that he should open it.

She watched as he cracked the green wax seal and opened the parchment. His eyes read over the contents before he smiled and handed it to her.

Dear Draco and Hermione,

I hope you are both well and that Hermione had a lovely birthday.

I wanted to invite you both for dinner — a belated birthday celebration and a perfect way for us to get to know each other a little better, Hermione?

However, I understand that the Manor holds traumatic memories for you both and wanted to offer a dinner somewhere else as an option should that be more comfortable for you both.

Please let me know when you have had a chance to think about it.

I very much hope to see you both soon.

With never ending love, darlings.

Your Mother (Narcissa)

When Hermione met Draco's eyes, the hope there made her breath hitch. Hermione knew he saw his mother regularly and that he hoped she would want to get to know her too. But he never asked, never pried. He let her set the pace and only when she was ready, would they go and spend time with Narcissa.

"I'd love to meet with your mother, Draco," Hermione told him honestly.

"Really?"

"Yes," she nodded. "Please write back and tell her we're free tomorrow evening if she is,"

He reached for her hand and linked their fingers. "Do you want me to ask her here instead? You don't have to go to the Manor,"

She squeezed his fingers back. "I've been back to the Manor for the galas. It's okay,"

He leaned over and kissed her. It was soft and full of devotion and Hermione felt herself grow warm under his affection. Hermione knew her life was changing, things with Draco were becoming more serious and even though they kept their relationship to Burton House or her home mainly, their friends knew and celebrated their growing relationship with much affection and encouragement. The next natural step was for Hermione to build a relationship with Narcissa because she knew there could be no relationship with Draco if there wasn't one with his mother.

"Have I told you how much I love you?" He murmured against her lips.

"Not yet," she smiled against him.

"I love you," he said easily. "It still terrifies me how much sometimes,"

Hermione pulled back to look at him. "Me too,"

When Draco sat back down and pulled his mother's letter back to him, his eyes filled with what Hermione was sure was hope, he looked so young and relaxed it made her heart fill with love for him. When he looked up and caught her staring, his shy smile melted her right here in his dining room.

"I'll write back to my mother after breakfast," he told her.

"And then?"

"And then," he beamed at her. "It's time for your birthday surprise,"

Hermione did as she was told with no questions asked for a change.

After they finished eating their breakfast and Draco had written back to Narcissa letting her know they were free to attend dinner at the Manor the next day, he told her to go shower and get ready for the day. He asked only two things of her.

1. She wore her hair down
2. She wore what was comfortable for a day on her feet

Hermione showered and after drying her hair she left it down as requested. She decided to wear a white blouse tucked into a knee-length black skirt. She paired it with a pair of black stockings attached to a green lace suspender belt and finished the look with black heeled ankle boots with plenty of cushioning charms. She applied just enough makeup to give her a little boost and grabbed her tan woollen coat. When she met Draco in the lounge, he was dressed in all black; a smart shirt and trousers with a slate grey wool coat sitting next to him.

“You look gorgeous,” he smiled as he stood to kiss her. “Are you ready for your day?”

“Yes,” she beamed. “When do I get to know what you have planned?”

He laughed. “When we get there,” he tapped her nose. “Don’t be so impatient.”

He put on his coat and held out his arm for her to hold. “We’re travelling by *Portkey*, are you ready?”

She gripped his arm tightly and nodded. “Yes,”

A second later, they vanished and appeared in a square in what she suspected was Wizarding Paris going by the French awnings and signage around the square.

“Paris?” She squeaked.

He gathered her closer, pressing a soft kiss to her lips. “Paris,” he confirmed. “Happy birthday, love,”

Hermione could die this very day, in this very place and be okay with it.

Surrounded by the most breathtaking architecture of the L'Offre En Salle Ovale, having the opportunity to browse through the many incredible tomes and to be given the gift of doing it with no one else in the building was mind blowing. When Draco told her that her first stop of the day was the National Library and that they were being granted private access for the remainder of the morning, her jaw had hit the floor.

“How on earth is that possible, Draco?”

“My family basically paid for the building when it was first built, I can get access to anything, any time,”

He said it so casually and with such nonchalance that she was reminded again just how powerful the Malfoy family was and always had been. As they walked into the building, Draco laced his fingers with hers, bringing them to his lips every few minutes. And when they'd pushed open the doors and she'd got her first glimpse of the magnificent room, Draco had captured the moment on a magical camera because he said he wanted to remember it forever.

Draco was the perfect companion, letting her almost glide around the room, then laughing softly and carrying the many books she just *had* to look through. He spent the morning with a smile on his face and his hand never far from hers. She tried so hard to focus on him, she really did, but this was the Hermione Granger equivalent of taking a child to Disneyland and she wasn't going to waste a single second of the time they had there.

When their time was up, Draco waved his wand and returned all the books to their correct place before pulling her into his arms and kissing her until her legs grew weak and she felt like she might melt into a puddle on the centre of the floor.

The next stop was lunch in the most delightful little bistro with a view of the river and the Eiffel Tower. They dined on salad and soup, followed by a selection of French cheese and finished the meal with coffee and the most mouthwatering macarons she'd ever tasted.

They spent the afternoon exploring Wizarding Paris because she'd never been before. They bought expensive French truffles and drank the most delicious hot chocolate that made Hermione groan indecently and Draco's eyes darken. When Hermione yawned, Draco guided her to the hotel they were staying the night at. It was, in true Draco style, elegant and extravagantly decorated. The staff couldn't do enough for them and when they were shown to their—private—lift, Hermione just stared open-mouthed at him while he smirked.

When they stepped into the suite Hermione left one word slip from her mouth.

“*Fuck,*”

Draco was so amused he didn't even tell her to watch her mouth. As she walked further into the room, she just couldn't get over how big it was, It was the biggest hotel room she'd ever seen, decorated in golds and blacks and with the most breathtaking view of Paris.

“I can't believe this,” she breathed, standing out on the balcony and watching the people below move around and take in the sights.

“Do you like it?” He asked, coming to stand behind her and wrapping his arms around her waist.

“Draco—” Hermione breathed, resting her head against him. “It’s all been incredible, but it’s too much.”

“Nonsense, love. You deserve the world and I intend to give it to you,”

Hermione turned in his arms and looked up into his grey eyes. “I don’t need the world, Draco. I just need you. Always just you,”

He smiled softly and kissed her again. “Now, we have a dinner reservation tonight and there is everything you’ll need in the wardrobe. Do you want to have a bath? A nap? Tell me what you want,”

She let her eyes roam over his broad chest, the column of his neck, the fullness of his lips. How his hair felt so effortlessly over his forehead and his grey eyes just sparkling with devotion for her.

Hermione knew exactly what she wanted.

“I want to go inside and have you remove all my clothes before we lose track of time in each other,”

“Well,” he grinned. “Who am I to argue with the birthday girl?”

“Are you sure this isn’t too much, Draco?” Hermione called from the bedroom of their suite.

She looked at herself in the mirror again and ran her hands down the front of the green cocktail dress Draco had arranged for her. It was a halter neck and skin tight until it hit her thigh when the split opened up with a frill that ran the length of the dress to the floor. He’d not only bought a dress, but shoes, a bag and the most exquisite bustier to wear underneath the dress. The note that accompanied the lingerie said the included suspenders and stockings could be worn later, if she so wished.

Draco walked into the room, already dressed in an impeccably made black three piece suit and white shirt and stopped when he saw her.

“Fucking hell, Hermione,” he breathed. “I don’t think anything could have prepared me for this vision,” “You like it?”

He stepped forward and wrapped a hand around her waist. “I picked it, of course I love it,”

“And you’re sure it’s not too much?”

“Love, it’s perfect.”

Draco took her hand and walked them to the lift and out of the hotel and into Wizarding Paris once again. The restaurant they had their reservation at was just a few minutes away and she noticed they caught a lot of attention on the walk to it. Women stared blatantly at Draco and she wasn't so blind as to not see the appreciative glances men were throwing her way too.

When they arrived at the restaurant, Draco steered her into the very expensive looking entrance and spoke in rapid fluent French to the small man who welcomed him with warmth and happiness. Hearing Draco speak French was without a doubt one of the sexiest things she'd ever heard and it made an embarrassing amount of wetness pool between her legs. They were guided to a table towards the back and Draco pulled out her seat for her, only seating himself when she was settled.

Champagne was ordered and the choice of meal was taken care of courtesy of a seven course tasting menu that Draco assured her she would love. With champagne flutes raised, Draco toasted her with love shining in his eyes. “To my beautiful Hermione, happy birthday to you my love, I hope there will be many more to celebrate together.”

Hermione smiled and took the first sip of the best champagne she had ever tasted.

The meal was divine. Draco teased her throughout with casual touches and lingering looks and by the time they reached dessert, the most mouthwatering chocolate delight, Hermione was ready to head back to their hotel and spend the rest of her night making love to him. When he spent longer than necessary licking the remains of the chocolate from his spoon, Hermione was about to combust right in the middle of the restaurant.

“*Draco—*” she practically groaned.

His eyes twinkling he smirked at her. “Yes, love?”

“Can we please—” Hermione swallowed when he licked a small piece of chocolate from his thumb, his signet ring glinting in the candle light. “Can we leave?”

“Whatever you want, Hermione,”

She leaned forward and kissed him, pushing her tongue into his mouth and groaning at the bitter taste of the coffee mixed with the sweetness of the chocolate on his tongue.

“I want you,” she told him.

The walk back to their hotel took longer than the one to the restaurant. They made the most of being in Paris and being able to kiss each other in the street without everyone knowing who they were. Draco pushed her up against walls and she pressed her hands to his skin under his jacket. By the time they both tumbled into the suite they were panting and flushed and Hermione was ready to have him inside her. Thankfully Draco felt the same and had her against the wall before the door had even closed.

“You’re so fucking beautiful,” he breathed in her ear, his hips digging into hers.

“And you’re unbelievably sexy,”

“What do you want, beautiful? What can I do *for you?*”

“Touch me, kiss me, make me yours,”

“Oh, you are mine, Hermione.” Draco kissed her throat before wrapping his fingers around her neck and looking into her eyes. “I don’t know I got so lucky, but for some insane fucking reason you love me and I’ll live every day trying to be worthy of your love,”

Hermione gripped his face in her hands and made him look at her. “You are worthy, Draco,”

He smiled at her and picked her up, carrying her into the bedroom and laying her on the bed. Looming over her, he kissed her before murmuring against her lips.

“How do you want it?”

Hermione knew what he was asking and she knew how to answer. She didn’t need words, she didn’t need to say a single thing. She slipped off the bed and folded to her knees at his feet. She heard Draco’s inhale and then his fingers were on her jaw.

“Are you sure?”

Hermione nodded. “Yes,”

Draco takes a deep breath. “Then stand,”

Hermione got to her feet and stood waiting for the next instruction. He walked around her and ran a hand down her back.

“Take off your dress,”

Hermione unfastened the dress at her neck, pulled the material down over her chest and let it pool at her feet. Standing in just her bustier and heels, hair down and falling around her, she stands proud and waits for him to decide what he wants to do with her. She feels him at her back, his breath at her neck and his hands come up to cup her breasts.

“Leave this on,”

Hermione nods.

“Do you trust me?”

“With my life,”

He groans softly and his hands leave her breasts before coming up to secure a silk blindfold across her eyes. He secures it at the back of her head before lifting her up and placing her onto the bed. With her vision gone, everything seems so much more intense. She can hear the sound of voices from the street below from the balcony, she can smell Draco’s clean citrusy scent and the coffee and chocolate on his breath.

“Hands,”

She holds her wrists together and allows him to secure them above head to the bed frame.

“Ankles,”

He does the same with her legs, but he spreads them wide before securing them to the bed. A soft hum leaves her lips at the feeling of being completely at his mercy but also completely free. Hermione gasps when he feels his hot breath between her legs.

“Draco—”

He doesn’t answer her, just thrusts his tongue inside her then adds two fingers, pressing inside her just how he knows she likes while he sucks on her clitoris. Twisting his fingers inside her, his signet ring presses against her heated skin and she groans.

“That fucking ring—” she groans.

“Yeah?” He smiles against her thigh. “What about this fucking ring?”

“It just feels—” Hermione’s words cut off as he pressed it firmly against her clitoris. “So fucking good against me,”

He chuckles, that chuckle she remembers from her dreams long ago and sucks on her again. She’s ready to climax in seconds but he stops, leaving her panting. Draco climbs on top of her and presses his still fully covered erection between her legs.

“Do you feel what you do to me?”

“Yes,” she pants.

“Do you want this?” He asks, rolling his hips. “Do you want my cock, love?”

“Yes,”

Removing himself from on top of her, she hears his belt drop to the floor and readies herself for what she knows will be an earth shattering orgasm. But Draco is so adept at casting nonverbal spells, Hermione doesn’t hear anything, she just feels the blunt probing of something much smaller and thinner than his erection probe at between her legs. It slips inside her easily and then it begins to vibrate. Hermione groans and pushes her hips closer, to take more, to feel more. He chuckles.

“So greedy,”

“For you, always.”

“This isn’t me though, is it? As you very well know. You know every vein, every curve, every inch. You know this is inadequate and a poor imitation of my cock.”

“What is it?” She breathes feeling the vibrations increase.

“ You. Tell. Me. ” he nips at the delicate skin of her upper thigh with each word. “ And one more idiotic word suggesting it is my erection and I won’t be held responsible for what happens next.”

Hermione focuses her brain, trying to make sense of what is currently inside her. It’s hard, very hard and thinner than anything she’s used to. She clenches herself around it trying to get a better understanding but it doesn’t really help her. After a few more seconds and a sharp thrust Hermione thinks she knows what it is.

“Are you using your wand?” She shudders as the pleasure intensifies.

Hermione feels his grin against her thigh. “You really are the brightest witch of our age, aren’t you?”

“Why?”

“Why not? Now every time I use it, I’ll be reminded of just how tightly your greedy cunt gripped it, gripped it as if it really were my cock,” he withdraws his wand, moves up her body and thrusts it between her open lips. “Suck.”

She does as he asks, tasting the sharp tang of her arousal and the hint of spice and wood.

“Not to mention I’ll be able to smell you with every spell, every charm, every incantation,” he removes the wood from between her lips and she hears him licking it too. The knowledge has desire running through her. “Perhaps others will pick up the scent. I’ll be hard every time I use my wand now, Hermione, are you happy? Happy I’ll be walking around with an erection all day long because of you?”

Is she happy she arouses him so much?

Yes.

Because he does the exact same to her. Just thinking about him can cause her blood to overheat and her pulse to quicken. She’s never felt anything like it, the connection isn’t purely physical, it’s bone deep, soul scorching.

It’s everything.

“I’m waiting.”

“Yes,” Hermione manages. “Yes, knowing I arouse you so much is like … the air I breathe, Draco. I need you to need me as badly as I need you.”

He settles between her legs. “I do need you as badly as you need me. Without you, I have nothing. Without you, I’m no one.” His voice is soft but his declaration is loud and strong.

“Touch me,” Hermipne pleads. “Let me touch you.”

He shifts and Hermione feels her hands free of the bindings. He drops his mouth to hers a second later and she wraps her arms around his back. As is always the case, the kiss

consumes her. A kiss is never a kiss when it's Draco. While some kiss with merely their lips, Draco kisses with his soul, whole and all encompassing.

When he pulls back the words tumble from her lips without her control. "I love you," Hermione tells him. "I love you so much it terrifies me. Will it ever stop being so terrifying?"

He releases the bindings on her ankles and hitches her thigh up higher around his hip and kisses across her chest, bringing his hand to rest over her heated skin.. His long fingers tap the tattoo of her racing heart and he draws a breath.

"I love you. With every fibre of my being, in every language and place. What I feel goes so far beyond love I'm petrified you'll finally come to your senses and see me for who I am. And then where will I be?"

"You'll be with me. Because I do see you, Draco Malfoy. Blindfolded or with sight. I see you and I feel you within my soul. I will never leave. You'd have to make me."

"Then we'll always be as one, for I shall never banish my heart and you carry that now."

Hermione expects it slowly after their declarations, She imagines long kisses and slow, deep thrusts. But she should know better than to think speaking words of complete devotion will cause him to be so gentle. His love makes him harder, his thrusts more brutal. His teeth leave marks and his fingers bruises.

The rhythm he sets when he buries himself inside her is punishing, his thrusts so deep Hermione knows she'll be sore for days, but nothing stops him. Not her cries of pleasure or her winces of pain as he bites and grips her skin with urgency.

He banishes the blindfold only to smother her with his desperation, he pulls back from his savage kiss only to choke her with his fingers on her throat. Looking into her eyes to show her all of him, with nothing between them. It's intense and consumes them but it's breathtakingly beautiful.

When his fingers reach between them and he rubs her clitoris, Hermione gives everything she has to him, surrendering herself to his hands and body because she needs this. She needs him to take everything away and leave her with only his touch to focus on,

Hermione climaxes with a scream that leaves her throat raw. Only then does he settle his mouth at her neck, bite down and allow himself his own climax. He shudders and licks at the bite mark on her skin, his fingers claw at her thighs and he spreads her so wide she feels like her hips will pop.

"You're mine," he growls, kissing her. "I own you and you," he bites her lip. "You fucking own me and I have never needed anyone as much as I need you."

"I know," she kisses him deeply. "I feel exactly the same,"

Draco pulls her into his arms under the covers. He vanishes her bustier and presses every inch of her naked skin to his. With the moonlight filtering into the room, they make love,

slowly and clutching at each other murmuring three little words that mean everything over and over again; *I love you, I love you, I love you.*

Chapter End Notes

Wednesday already?

We're fast approaching the end of this little fic and I feel both sad and excited for you to read it.

It's been with me for so long, I'm not entirely sure what I'm supposed to do when it's finished.

Thank you as always for your kindness - I appreciate you all so much.

See you on Sunday!

The Monster Mash

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The Monster Mash

“Will you please try and relax, love? You look beautiful,”

Draco wraps his big hand around Hermione’s and kisses her temple as they walk towards the sunroom at Malfoy Manor. Hermione feels sick. It’s not meeting Narcissa that’s the problem, it’s not even really being back at the Manor. It’s that this step feels bigger than any other they have taken as a couple so far. If Narcissa doesn’t like Hermione, she knows there will be big issues between her and Draco. Just as they reach the door, Draco pulls her to the side and looks at her.

“My mother is going to love you, because I love you. And because no one who’s ever met you doesn’t love you, Hermione. This is going to be fine,”

Hermione nods and lets Draco lead her into the sunroom and to where Narcissa Malfoy sits, the picture of elegance and serenity. When she spots them, she rises to her feet and walks to meet them.

“Darling,” Narcissa smiles warmly at Draco. “You look so well,”

Draco allows his mother to wrap her arms around his while he kisses her cheek. Watching the mother and son interact, it’s clear they love and adore each other. When Narcissa turns to Hermione, she sees there’s warmth and affection in her eyes still.

“Mrs Mal—” Narcissa cuts her off and grabs her hands.

“Narcissa, please,”

Hermione nods. “Narcissa, it’s lovely to see you,”

“Likewise, darling. Please, come sit down and we’ll have a drink before dinner.”

Draco guides her to the sofa opposite where Narcissa was sitting before they arrived and lets her sit down before he joins her. As soon as his butt hits the seat, he reaches for her hand and places their joined hands on his thigh. Narcissa spots it and smiles.

“What can I get you to drink, Hermione?” Narcissa asks.

“A wine would be lovely, thank you,”

“A Firewhisky for you, Draco?” His mother asks.

“Yes please,”

“Clover,” Narcissa called softly.

A little house-elf popped into the room dressed in a pale pink dress and gave them all a curtsy. “Master Draco, it is so good to be seeing you!” The little elf beamed at Draco before turning to Narcissa. “What can Clover do for you, Mistress?”

“Can we have drinks please, Clover?”

“Yes, of course, Mistress. Clover knows Master Draco likes Firewhiskey and Mistress likes the elf-made wine,” Clover turns to look at Hermione and smiles. “What can Clover get for Master Draco’s—”

She interrupts and gives the little elf her name to stop anything awkward from happening.
“Hermione,”

Clover smiles. “What can Clover get Miss Hermione? Clover can gets you anything you likes,”

“Wine would be lovely, thank you, Clover,”

Clover popped away and left them alone. Draco squeezed her fingers and she squeezed back.

“Shall we clear the air and get us on the right path?” Narcissa suggests.

“There’s really no need—”

“Hermione, I am painfully aware that being here is *difficult* to say the least and I want you to know how much it means to me that you’re here,” Narcissa smiles. “I hope in the future we can be close and form a bond that will become precious to us both,”

To Hermione’s horror, Narcissa’s words have tears pooling in her eyes. She shakes her head and feels them drop onto her cheeks. “I hope so too,” she croaks.

Draco looks at her and pulls her towards him to place a kiss on her temple. “It’s okay,” he breathes softly.

When Hermione looks at Narcissa, she sees tears in her eyes too. When Narcissa moves from the sofa and comes to kneel in front of Hermione, she feels herself lost for words.

“I know life has been brutal to you recently, Hermione and I am truly so very sorry for everything that has happened to you. I would like you to know I understand your turmoil and distress and I hope I can help you heal from the pain of that loss, even a little bit,”

Hermione lets out an inelegant sob and feels arms wrap around her. Not from the side, but from the front. Narcissa Malfoy is wrapping her in a hug and comforting her.

“My sweet girl, everything will get easier,” she whispers in her ear.

It’s at that moment, Clover appears again with a tray full of their drinks. When she looks around the room, the little elf looks devastated. “Oh, Miss Hermione,” she says sadly. “Clover knows and Clover is so sad,”

The little elf comes over to Hermione and places her drink on the table before reaching for her hand. “One day, it will be better, yes it will. You and Master Draco will come to MIstress and tell her that there will be a new baby and Clover will help with them, yes she will. Clover helped with Master Draco and he was a good boy,”

Hermione laughs and the certainty in which Clover says the words, like it’s a fact. “I’d like to hear about MAster Draco as a baby one day, Clover,”

“I don’t think we need to tell the baby stories, do we, Clover?” Draco sighs from beside her.

Clover grinned at him. “One day, Master Draco. One day,”

Narcissa chuckled softly and after squeezing Hermione’s hand, went back to sit down.

The evening went by quicker than Hermione thought it would. She found Narcissa easy to talk to and when she was sitting back and listening to Draco and Narcissa talk, she felt herself fall deeper in love with him. He was gentle and kind to his mother, he treated her with respect and adoration and Hermione found it very attractive.

Narcissa sat and listened to Hetrmione gush about their trip to Paris and expressed pride at Draco for organising such a romantic break away for Hermione’s birthday. When it started to get late Narcissa smiled and looked at Draco.

“Draco darling, why don’t you show Hermione the library?”

Hermione almost shot up out of her seat and tugged him with her. Draco noticed her excitement and grinned at her.

“You’ve done it now, Mother,” he laughed. “She will want to live in there,”

Narcissa smiled. “We must not deprive Hermione of the things she loves most, Draco. You are welcome here anytime, Hermione. It’s about time the library got the love it deserves.”

With a kiss to their cheeks and an invitation for a girls only tea the following week, Narcissa left them to explore the library. As soon as the door closed, Draco had her pulled out of her chair and pressed against the wall.

“She adores you,” he growled, pressing into her and tangling his hands in her hair. “Are you sure you need to see the library tonight?”

Hermione shook her head to try and clear it. “Yes—” she croaked.

“Fine,” he moaned. “Perhaps I’ll fuck you against the shelves like I pictured doing since that first meeting in at the Ministry,”

“You—what?”

He tugged on her hand and led them out of the room, adjusting the front of his trousers and he went. “You drove me crazy, that scent of yours and those curls. I wanted to clear the lift and press you against the wall. When I got home that night and went into the library, all I could think about was having you in there and pressing you against the shelves,”

Hermione tried her best to keep up but her mind was racing and her legs felt wobbly. “Draco—”

He turned to her, eyes a darker grey than usual. “Yes?”

“I love you,”

He leant forward and kissed her. I love you, too.”

The Malfoy library was vast. There were books on every subject she could imagine and more than a dozen copies of *Hogwarts: A History* all immaculate and most first editions. Hermione lost herself to the shelves and only stopped when Draco appeared, hands going to his belt as he approached her.

“Draco—we can’t,”

“Why ever not?”

Hermione backed up and her back hit the shelf behind. “Because—” Draco rested his hands on either side of her head on the shelves behind her and dropped his nose to her throat.

“Because?”

“Your mother—”

“Is tucked up in bed, a loooooooong way from here,”

His mouth began peppering kisses up her throat and along her jaw. She could feel the affect he had on her and was struggling to think of reasons not to let him fuck her where they were.

“Clover might—”

“Clover will not interrupt us unless called,”

His hands drifted below the hem of her dress, climbed up her thigh and slipped inside her knickers, finding her wet and ready for him like always.

“Open your legs,”

Hermione's legs opened without her even thinking about it.

"Such a good girl for me," he breathed against her ear. "You want me to fuck you amongst the books, love?"

"I—"

His fingers curled inside her, his thumb brushing her clitoris making her legs shake. "Give me your hands,"

Her hands were in his a second later and raised above her head a second after that.

"Keep them there,"

Hermione nodded and watched as he freed his cock and ran his big hand up the length. Her mouth watered, she wanted to taste him but she knew she wasn't going to get a chance to. This was Draco's fantasy and she was to go along with it. He reached down and lifted her legs around his waist, lining up his erection against her.

"Going to fuck you now, love. Going to slide my cock into this beautiful wet cunt and have it grip me tight so I know where I am,"

Hermione shuddered.

When he slid into her, inch by inch, she felt herself stretch and her body ready itself to accommodate him. They shouldn't fit together so well, but they did. She was desperate to touch him, but his eyes told her better than any words could, not to move.

It was hard.

Hot.

Punishing.

Hermione had no control over what happened, her hands above her and Draco pushing and pulling her off of his cock how he wanted, how he needed. When his thumb found her clitoris, she detonated with such force Draco winced. He had no choice but to follow her and with his usual bite to her neck, he came inside her and growled her name into her neck.

Time, as it always did, flew by and before she knew what was happening, Hermione was putting the finishing touches to the Halloween decorations before everyone arrived. When Hermione had suggested a party to Draco he agreed, then she told him it would be fancy dress and he scowled.

"I'll not come in fancy dress, Granger," he told her.

"Oh yes you will, Malfoy," she glared at him.

Hermione looked down at herself and grinned. She loved her costume. Hermione spent ages deciding on what to wear but finally decided to dress in the clothing from her favourite book. Although the Victorian clothing was modest, the low neckline and corset made her breasts look fantastic. She knew her undergarments were not historically accurate but no one would know, except for Draco and she knew he wouldn't care less. From the kitchen Hermione heard the Floo activate and heard Draco call in to her.

"In here!" Hermione called back.

Footsteps neared the kitchen and when she turned around and saw him her mouth actually popped open. He was dressed as a Victorian gentleman, complete with frock coat, waistcoat and top hat.

"You look—" She began.

"Fucking gorgeous," he said, stepping closer to her, his eyes on her chest. "This is particularly delightful," He said, running a finger across the swell of her breasts.

"We match," Hermione beamed. "I never thought you'd come dressed as this,"

"Well," he grinned as he kissed her. "I wanted to come dressed as something respectable and since you made me read almost the entirety of Sherlock Holmes stories, I thought this was the best option,"

Hermione leaned into him and cupped between his legs. "I approve,"

He moved out of her touch and shook his head. "Not a good idea, these trousers are so fucking thin,"

Hermione laughed just as the Floo roared to life and Theo's voice called out.

"Hello!"

Hermione and Draco stepped into the lounge and Hermione laughed. "Theo, are you—"

"My name is Maximus!" Theo half yelled. Holding his sword out by his side.

"Who the fuck is that?" Draco asked, clearly confused.

"He's—"

"I'm a gladiator, obviously,"

"Since when do you know what a gladiator is?" Hermione asked him, going over to kiss him on the cheek.

He wrapped one arm, the one not holding the sword thankfully, around her waist and grinned.
“I think I rock this outfit,”

“You look great, but how do you know what a gladiator is?”

“Well,” Theo said. “Since Potter helped me set up a TV and I watched some documentaries about Ancient Rome and the Colosseum and the gladiators who fought in organised games for entertainment,”

Draco looked confused but shook his head and eyed Theo's legs. “Do they all wear skirts?”

“It's not a fucking skirt, Draco!” Theo growled. “It's called a loincloth!”

“And is that a gladiator's way of saying skirt?”

At that moment, the Floo roared to life and Pansy stepped through closely followed by Blaise. Pansy was dressed as a Medusa in a floaty green dress with what looked like real snakes in her hair. Hermione let out a little gasp as the petite woman stepped towards her but Pandy kist laughed.

“It's a charm, they're not real, I promise,” she laughed. “However, I know these are and I'm jealous!” She gestured to Hermione's chest and Draco groaned from behind her.

“You look fabulous,” Hermione told her, giving her a quick hug and kiss on her cheek.

“As do you,”

“What made you choose Medusa?”

“What else was I going to come as? I'm a badass, she's a badass. It was the obvious choice,”

“Okay, enough hogging the limelight, what about me?” Blaise called from behind Pansy.

He stepped forward and Hermione looked him up and down. He was dressed immaculately in a long cloak, suit and bowtie and as she met his eyes he flashed her a grin and she spotted fangs.

“A vampire, I like it,” Hermione nodded.

“A bit boring, isn't it Blaise?” Theo asked, stepping up to him. “Your biggest weapon is a tooth and mine is a sword.”

Blaise looked Theo over and frowned. “Why are you wearing a skirt?”

“My question exactly,” Draco said, rolling his eyes.

Hermione got everyone a drink and greeted everyone as they arrived. Harry and Ginny arrived Hermione couldn't help but smile at Ginny who had dressed herself as a pumpkin. She glared at Harry dressed as an Auror.

“This is just your work clothes!” She hissed at him.

“I’m aware, but since I’ve been working nights the past week I didn’t have time to think of anything else,”

Ginny ran her hand down his chest. “Not to mention i find it sexy and now I don’t feel so sick, my sex drive is mental, so,”

When Ron arrived as Hermione was standing next to Draco, she had to remind him to be nice. Because Ron came dressed as a Quidditch player. George came as a phoenix and randomly burst into flames every ten minutes and emerged covered in ash. She had no idea how he did it but the magic was remarkable even if it did leave a mess all over her house. By the time everyone arrived they had a cat (Luna) a Mandrake (Neville) a Healer (Padma) and two cowboys (Seamus and Dean)

As everyone drank more, the noise levels grew and grew and Hermione was thankful her nearest neighbours were miles away. After a few drinks, Hermione watched as Theo bounded up to Harry and whispered something to him. Harry grinned and handed him the speaker from his pocket. Theo looked delighted and a few minutes later the unmistakable sound of the Monster Mash came on.

“What on earth is this?” Draco asked her, looking in Theo’s direction.

“The Monster Mash,”

“The monster, what?”

“Hermione!” Theo bounded over and took her hand. “Do you know this song?”

Hermione laughed. “Yes, Theo, I know this song.”

“Good! Can you teach me the dance? I heard there’s a dance?”

For the next ten minutes Hermione was sandwiched between Theo and Harry while they all did

the most ridiculous dance moves. Draco watched with a smirk on his face while they pretended to be monsters and laughed till their stomachs ached. Thankfully, Theo switched to other music after that and everyone returned to having a drink and eating.

“You made quite the impression with the dancing, love,” Draco grinned, leaning down to kiss her. “Your tits were almost breaking free for a moment there,” he added, dropping a kiss to her neck.

“They were?” She groaned as she felt his teeth.

“Hmmmm, a second more and I’d had to have come to wrangle them back into your dress,”

“And how would you have done that?”

“Ah, well, that would be telling,”

Hermione pushed Draco back and shook her head. “We’re not having sex right now,” she told him.

“No,” he grinned. “We’re definitely not having sex right now, but we could be,”

Hermione rolled her eyes and looked over at where Pansy was sitting in Neville’s lap. He had one arm around her waist while his other hand rested on her thigh. Her head was turned to face him and he was completely invested in whatever she was telling him.

“Pansy and Neville look very cosy,” she whispered to Draco.

He turned his head in their direction and nodded. “Indeed they do,”

“I think it’s lovely, Neville is the best person and he’ll look after her.”

“Hmmm,”

Hermione moved to look Draco in the eye. “You doubt that?”

“No, I just never thought Pans would fall for Longbottom,”

Hermione pressed herself to Draco and linked her arms around his neck. “It’s funny,” she told him, pressing a soft kiss to his lips. “I didn’t think I’d fall for you either. You Slytherin’s have a strange way about you but it just pulls you in and once you’ve fallen? You don’t want to get back up,”

Draco’s eyes softened and he wrapped his arm around her waist, pulling her into him. “It’s funny,” he began, just like she had. “I didn’t think I’d fall for you either, but you Gryffindor’s have a way of capturing our hearts, and gripping us tight in your claws you can’t escape and more to the point, you don’t want to,”

Hermione kissed him.

She kissed him because she loved him and she wanted to show him just how much.

“Oh, stop it you two!” Theo groaned from beside them. “There are other people here!”

Draco scowled but Hermione stepped away and grasped Theo’s hand. “Come on then, gladiator Nott, show me your moves,”

The evening was winding down. After Ginny and Harry left half an hour ago, everyone else followed leaving just the snakes and Neville. Pansy was still in his lap and both of them looked a little tipsy and content with each other. At some point, Draco and Theo had started a

game of Wizard's Chess while Blaise watched, smirk firmly in place. Hermione lounged on her sofa, switching between talking to Pansy and Neville and watching Theo lose at chess.

"You don't think about what you're doing, Theodore. That's your problem."

"Excuse me, yes I do!"

"Then why is all your focus on the queen?"

"Because she's the most powerful piece."

Draco moved one of his pieces and looked at his friend. "Check mate,"

Theo scowled and Blaise laughed. "I don't know why you play him, Theo,"

"Because one day I'll beat his pale arse,"

Draco moved over to where Hermione was sitting, lifted her feet up and placed them into his lap once he was settled. His long fingers pressed into her soles and she couldn't stop the groan that slipped from her lips.

"Guess we know what Granger sounds like having sex," Theo teased, sitting on the floor and refilling his empty glass.

"Actually she—" Pansy began but Neville placed a hand across her mouth.

"I beg you not to finish,"

"Ohhh, I guess Longbottom is into controlled orgasms too, Draco. Perhaps you could compare techniques?" Theo laughed, wagging his brows.

"Can we ever just have a normal conversation?" Draco scowled. "Must we always talk about sex? Is it because you're not getting any you have to keep talking about it?"

"Who's not getting any? Me?" Theo asked, shocked. "I'm getting plenty, I haven't had a dry spell since I lost my virginity,"

"And we've heard about it all," Blaise said.

"And can we even class it as a dry spell when you're wanking all the time?" Theo added.

Pansy laughed and high fived him.

"Remind me why you two aren't together?" Neville asked Pansy.

"We've slept together a lot, but be in a relationship? Never, I would kill him,"

"Right?" Theo nodded. "And anyway, I have my dragon tamer now,"

"So that's getting serious?" Hermione asked.

Theo beamed. "Well, I've not fucked anyone else and I'm spending Christmas with him so —"

"Does Molly know?" Hermione asked, sitting up.

"Charlie said it's not unusual for him to stay in Romania, so I don't think it will be a big deal,"

"You'll be back for the New Years Ball, right?" Pansy asks.

"Of course, do you think I'd miss the biggest night of the year?"

Hermione looked at Draco for an explanation. He looked a little uneasy when he met her eyes. "Mother's ball on New Year's Eve. It's been the event of the year since I can remember,"

"Seriously Hermione, it's the best!" Pansy says excitedly. "And you'll see for yourself this year!"

"Will I?"

Draco takes her hand and raises it to his lips. "Yes, you will love. I'd very much like it if you accompanied me to the ball,"

Hermione's mouth went dry. "But there will be a lot of people there,"

"I know,"

"And you want me to go with you?"

"I do," he smiles at her.

She looks over at Pansy who is beaming at her, then down to Theo who looks pleased and then to Blaise who gives her a small nod and smiles.

Hermione leans over and kisses Draco softly. "Then I'd love to go with you,"

Chapter End Notes

Happy Sunday!

We're getting terribly close to the finish line now ... two chapters left and we'll be done.

I am not looking forward to it.

Thank you all for reading and leaving Kudos and comments. It makes my heart feel full.

See you on Wednesday!

Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas

When December hit, so did the news that Greyback had been found, arrested and was due to be sentenced within the week. Both Harry and Draco were both relieved and delighted that the final piece of the puzzle was completed and everyone who should be in Azkaban would be. With the closing of the case came a huge sense of relief for everyone, but no one as much as Draco. He seemed more relaxed and settled and Hermione noticed the change immediately.

It was over tea with Narcissa in the week leading up to Christmas that Narcissa asked Hermione what her plans were for Christmas.

“Well, I usually spend it with Harry and the Weasley’s at the Burrow since my parents aren’t with me anymore,”

Narcissa smiled sadly and took a sip from her tea cup. I was wondering—” Narcissa hesitated. “I was wondering if you’d spoken to Draco about spending Christmas with us?”

Hermione smiled. “We’ve spoken about it yes,”

“And may I ask if you’ve decided on whether you’ll be spending the festive season with us or not?”

“We spoke about it a lot and we decided I was spend Christmas eve at the Burrow as normal and then come over in time for dinner at Draco’s and spend Christmas with you both.”

Narcissa smiled. “It will be a new chapter, I think. With Draco insisting we have Christmas at Burton House. Clover is very excited to be there and spend time with Pippet,”

“Do they know each other?”

“Oh yes, they’ve been friends for a long time. They’re terribly sweet when they get together,”

“Narcissa, what does Christmas look like for you and Draco?”

Narcissa put down her tea cup and looked at Hermione. “Well, in years gone by it’s not been full of joy, I’ll admit. But when Draco was a child, it was filled with joy for both Lucius and I. Things changed as you can imagine. What does it look like for you, Hermione?”

"Well, when my parents were still with us, it was filled with decorations and turkey and too many roast potatoes and chocolates called Roses and Quality Street that have wrappers that look like jewels that I would eat too many of with a big mug of coffee," Hermione smiled, feeling a tear fall down her cheek. "Then when I was at the Burrow it was chaotic and loud with a table straining with food and games and—love. It was filled with love. And I desperately want that again,"

Narcissa looked at her with tears in her eyes too. "I hope we can create that from now on, Hermione," she smiled. "I'm especially curious about these chocolates, tell me more about them."

On Christmas eve, everyone Hermione loved could be found in the lounge of Burton House with a glass in their hand waiting for dinner to be served. Harry and Ginny were there, Harry's hand resting protectively on Ginny's growing stomach. Ron and Neville were talking by the big window, Theo and Blaise were talking to Draco, laughing about something she couldn't hear while Pansy was speaking to Narcissa.

To Hermione's surprise, Theo told her he was going to be there and that his *Portkey* would take him to Charlie later that night. Everyone was happy and Hermione couldn't remember when she'd felt this happy. At that moment, Draco looked up and met her eyes, they were happy and clear and the smile he flashed her had her stomach dropping in delight. He held his hand out to her and she walked over to join the group of snakes.

"Are you okay" He whispered to her as he pulled her into him.

"Very much so, I was just thinking how I can't remember being this happy,"

She met Theo's eyes and he raised his glass to her. "Cheers to that, beautiful,"

When a very proud Pippet and Clover announced that dinner was ready, everyone filed into the dining room and took a seat. Draco sat at the head of the table with Hermione to his left and Narcissa at his right. When everyone was seated. Draco stood and smiled at everyone in the room.

"I don't think I'm the only person who didn't see this being how the year ends?" He chuckled. "But I also hope I'm not the only one who feels happy that it is,"

Hermione reached up and took his hand, he gazed down at her and brought her hand to his mouth, placing a kiss on her knuckles. "What a difference a year makes. Happy Christmas, everyone,"

Christmas morning found Hermione waking up warm and wrapped in Draco Malfoy. He was still fast asleep, breathing softly into her neck, arms around her and his morning erection nestled against her backside. For a few minutes, Hermione just soaked it all in. Out of the window she could see snow falling rapidly painting everything outside perfect crisp white. Never in a million years did she think that the end of her year would be spent at Burton House with Draco Malfoy but here she is.

With everything that happened over the summer, Hermione has been reminded to never take anything for granted, to tell the person you love how you feel and to appreciate every moment you have with them. Life, she knows, never goes how you think it will and the best thing to do is to allow it to happen—the good and the bad,

Hermione knows the second Draco wakes up, because he tightens his grip, pushes his erection into her and kisses her neck.

“This is the best Christmas morning I’ve ever had,” he breathes. “And I’ve had some wonderful ones. Happy Christmas, love,”

“Happy Christmas, Draco,” she grins, bringing their hands up to kiss his fingers.

“Do you know what time it is?”

Hermione turns in his arms and kisses him. “Time for me to get up and open my presents?”

He chuckles and dips his head to kiss her throat. “I think, it’s time for me to fuck you into this mattress.”

Hermione gasps when she feels the tip of Draco’s cock slip just inside her. “How did you manage that?” She groans and he rocks against her.

“You’ll find I can do many things, Hermione. My cock knows where it wants to be,”

Lifting her leg to rest on his hip, opening her to him, Draco pushes forward and they both groan at the feeling of being joined again. With one hand, Draco pulls her free arm around her back and holds it there while he presses kisses to her throat and thrusts into her.

“You’re so tight—so fucking good for me—you’re so—”

There’s a loud *pop!* And Pippet appears at the side of their bed. Hermione buries her head in Draco’s neck and sinks her teeth into his skin to muffle the laugh leaving her lips. The movement makes Draco growl.

“Pippet is wanting to wish Mr Draco and Miss Hermione a happy Christmas to lets them knows that Misses Narcisssa is downstairs waiting to have breakfast,”

“Happy Christmas Pippet,” Draco says, his voice strained and husky. “Please tell my mother, Hermione and I will get showered and be down in half an hour,”

“Of course, Mr Draco,”

Pippet leaves them alone and Draco looks down at her. “I hope that is the first and last time I have to converse with Pippet while my cock is inside you,”

Hermione laughs again and Draco groans.

Breakfast completed, they head into the lounge to open presents around the roaring fire and Christmas tree. Draco gives his mother a beautiful brooch made of diamond and sapphires that is her namesake along with a scheduled *Portkey* to visit her family in France in January. Narcissa is delighted and beams at her son.

Narcissa gives Draco a pocket watch that belonged to her father and a stack of sweets. He blushes at the stack but wastes no time opening a bar of his favourite chocolate from *Honeydukes* and popping a large piece into his mouth.

Draco gifts Hermione with a diamond necklace in the shape of a heart that steals her breath away when she opens it. He helps her put it on and when the clasp is closed, Hermione feels the warm hum of his magic radiate through it.

“There’s protective magic, I’ll also be able to find you at any point and at any time should anything happen,”

Hermione kisses him and says thank you under the watchful gaze of Narcissa. The other part of Hermione’s gift is a trip to Blaise Zabini’s vineyard in Italy in May. Hermione is delighted and throws herself into Draco’s arms and kisses him while he chuckles.

“I’ve always wanted to travel!” She tells him.

“I know, love. I remember,”

When Hermione hands Draco her gift, she watches as he opens a brown leather wand holster along with new cufflinks engraved with a dragon. He thanks her with a deep kiss and when he tries to pull back, she whispers in his ear.

“There’s something else for you, but I need to give it to you when we’re alone,” she says quickly,

His eyebrows raise and he grins at her. “I look forward to it,”

They spend the day together eating too much good food and drinking the most delicious elf-wine Narcissa and Clover brought with them. After lunch they go for a walk in the grounds of Burton House, the pond frozen over and making the best backdrop for some Christmas

photos. Hermione and Draco get one together before Hermione captures one of mother and son that makes Narcissa's eyes fill with tears.

When they go back to the house, Clover and Pippet are ready with steaming cups of coffee and tea for them and Hermione spends an amusing hour watching Narcissa and Draco choose which Muggle chocolates they want to try and by the end of their little tasting session, Narcissa declares her favourite is the Strawberry Dream while Draco refuses to share the Signature Truffle with anyone.

As evening pulls in, Draco tries to teach Hermione to play chess but once again, she finds herself frustrated and declares the game is just not for her. After sandwiches and tea, Narcissa bids them both goodnight and retires for the evening, thanking them both for a wonderful day. Draco watches as she climbs the stairs, a small smile on his face.

"It's the happiest I have seen her in a long time," he admits when they follow upstairs soon after. "All I have wanted since I was a child was for her to be happy,"

Hermione links their fingers and brings them to her mouth. "She is happy, I think,"

As they step into Draco's room, he closes the door and rests his back against it. "Now, you said something much earlier about there being a present that we needed to be alone for me to receive?"

His long body resting so casually against the door while his eyebrow is arched makes Hermione feel funny in her tummy and she nods. "Come take a seat, please,"

Draco does as he's told, sitting on the edge of his bed and looking expectantly. "I hope my present is seeing you in nothing but the diamonds I have you,"

"No," she grins, going over to her bag and reaching inside of the box nestled inside.

Carrying it over carefully, she asks him to hold out his hands and places it in his palms. She nods and he unties the bow and lifts the lid to reveal a leather bound book. Raising his eyes to hers, he places the empty box beside him before turning the cover. A plain black page meets his eyes. Then he turns that one and his eyes shoot to hers.

"What is this?" He practically growls.

"What does it look like?"

"It looks like a photo of you wearing practically nothing, Hermione,"

She peeks over and hums in agreement. "It does, doesn't it?"

Draco turns to the next page and groans at the two page spread containing photos of her in her green lingerie and heels next to one of her silhouettes in the windows of the lounge downstairs wearing nothing but one of his ties. As he flips through the book he finds photos of her on his office table in one of his shirts, another of her outline in a steam filled shower and one towards the back of her in his old Quidditch jersey with his name across her back while she kneels on his bed.

Draco places the book behind him and drags her to him. He pushes his tongue into her mouth and kisses her deeply while his hands scoop up the hem of her dress, roam past the tops of her stockings and slip inside her knickers.

“You’re fucking exquisite,” he growls into her mouth. “But I have to fucking ask, who took those pictures, Hermione?”

“I know you’d ask,” she groans and his fingers thrust into her. “Pansy—” Hermione groans as his thumb swirls around her clitoris. “Pansy—helped!”

“Thank fuck for that,” he pants, biting her neck. “If it had been a complete stranger—”

“Never—” she pants right back. “Do you like them?”

He pulls back, locking eyes with her. “Like them? They’re works of fucking art, I love them,”

“Good—” Hermione tries to remain standing as she feels her orgasm climbing. “Please—”

“Come for me,” he breathes into her neck. “Come for me like the good fucking girl you are —”

When Hermione climaxes, Draco is the only thing keeping her standing.

And she hopes that will be the case for the rest of their lives.

After spending a wonderful Christmas with Draco, spending mornings together in bed and afternoons by the fire wrapped in each other and after seeing the level of love and devotion Draco had for her, there was really no reason for Hermione to doubt anything anymore.

Life was getting itself on track and Hermione was excited to see what the next year would hold for them both.

When Draco spoke to Hermione one afternoon about not being able to escort her into the ballroom for Narcissa’s New Years gala because he always escorted his mother since his father was no longer able to, she accepted, without any feeling of doubt that he didn’t want to be seen with her or any flutter of rejection.

Hermione considered accepting Theo’s offer to escort her in but decided against it. There was only one man she wanted to arrive on the arm of and for tonight that wasn’t able to happen. Hermione felt strong and her independent streak enabled her to walk into the ballroom, head held high and alone, knowing she was anything but.

Hermione looked at her chosen family standing awkwardly together — Gryffindor’s and Slytherin’s all standing together and to her surprise, being friendly to one another. Everyone

milling around, Draco and Narcissa made their big entrance a while ago and would open the dancing any moment. Hermione couldn't wait for a dance with Draco. She makes her way over to the group who have grown in size over the last year and beams at them. Theo holds out his hand to her.

"Looking gorgeous as always, Hermione." He tells her with a massive smile on his face.

Hermione felt gorgeous tonight, in a floor length fitted gown that hugged her curves and made her feel like a goddess. The diamond necklace Draco had given her for Christmas around her neck made her feel claimed in the best possible way and she knew it had caught the eye of many of the guests.

Theo holds out his hand to her and Hermione goes to take it, only for another to slip their hand into hers. She knows who it is without even looking. But she turns to see Draco and smiles.

Devastatingly handsome in his black suit, his grey eyes meeting hers, open and brave.

A small smile riffling on his lips.

"Hermione," he smirks at her. "Would you do me the honour of opening the gala with me?"

Hermione's mouth goes dry and she stumbles a little in her heels as her legs try to fail her.

"Now?" She almost squeaks, not prepared for this. "But you said you always open it with Narcissa?"

Draco leans closer, resting his lips to hers and kisses her lightly. "Yes,"

"But right now? With everyone watching and knowing you should open it with your mother?"

"Here, now, forever," he says simply. "I love you and I want the whole fucking world to know. My mother encouraged it, Hermione. She wants them to know too,"

As Draco leads her out onto the empty dance floor, she's positive every eye in the room is on them because one thing she's learned is that, wherever Draco goes, everyone follows. He draws people in like a magnet, people just want to be close to him. Regardless of his past, Draco Malfoy had grown to be a charismatic man and people were drawn to that and since Hermione is with Draco about to open the New Year gala that he's historically always opened with Narcissa, they're looking at her too.

"Eyes on me, Hermione," Draco's voice is deep and clear, easily heard above the noise of the room.

"But they're looking," she whispers breathlessly.

"Then let them."

He pulls her into his arms as he settles them on the dancefloor that is empty except for them, He rests her

hand on his shoulder, places his hand on her waist and takes Hermione's smaller one in his large one.

"I'll lead, follow me and I'll keep you safe," he says, meaning more than just this dance.

Hermione drops her eyes to his chest and he releases her hand to raise Hermione's eyes back to him.

"I know you will, you always have," Hermione croaks, her voice coming out in a whisper.

The music begins and with shocked whispers from the many people around them, Draco Malfoy and

Hermione Granger open the Malfoy New Year Gala.

Draco kisses her hand and steps onto the raised platform to join his mother. Theo stands on one side with an amused looking Charlie, while Harry and Ginny stand on her other. Their other friends are flanking her either side. The room goes quiet and Narcissa thanks everyone for coming, she's flawless and has the unique ability of making you feel like she's talking only to you. When she turns to Draco, he meets her eyes and clears his throat.

"As we fast approach the end of this year, I wanted to thank you all for joining my Mother and I to celebrate a fresh start," he looks at Hermione and her stomach flutters. "This year I have been reminded of the gift of surprise, because I have been given the best one in Hermione Granger. She has taught me more about who I am than anyone or anything has in my life so far,"

Theo whoops and Pansy calls out, "Here here!"

"Everyone knows my past and I for one will never allow myself to forget it, but I hope moving forward we will all focus on the future and what's in store for us," Draco raises his glass and looks at her and only her. "Please raise a glass to those you love, those who understand you and those who make you a better person,"

The time is ticking down, everyone has a glass of champagne in their hands, their eyes bright and excitement fills the room. But Hermione only has eyes for Draco. The evening has been

wonderful, filled with dancing and good champagne. Draco has barely left her side and they have spent most of the evening laughing with their friends.

With ten seconds to go, everyone counts down. Hermione turns to Draco and watches him, wanting to remember this moment forever. As the countdown ends and a chorus of happy new year explodes around them, Draco leans his forehead to rest against Hermione's. All the breath leaves her body and everything around them vanishes in the seconds that follow as his hand comes to rest under her chin and lifts so her mouth is millimetres away from his mouth.

"Happy new year, Hermione Granger," he breathes seconds before his lips touch hers and fireworks explode outside and across my skin at his touch just as everyone rushes outside.

"Happy new year, Draco," Hermione chokes, the emotion of his declaration in front of so many people knocking her off centre.

He pulls back and brushes her tears away before he kisses her again. "This year, it will all be different, I promise you."

Hermione nods, swallowing down the emotion she feels washing over her. "I think ... I think I might just believe you."

Chapter End Notes

Hey everyone,

Celebrating Christmas a little early, but who cares?

We're almost at the end and I am a little excited but also sad.

I can't believe it's here.

Thank you SO much for always supporting and encouraging. I hope you enjoyed this chapter and Draco's growth within the story. I know there were times he was driving

everyone mad.

I'll be back on Sunday to post the epilogue where you'll find out where our two idiots in love end up.

I hope to see you then!

The Reason

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Epilogue

The Reason

Time was running out. If Hermione didn't get back to Draco's within the next five minutes the whole evening would be ruined. Glancing at the clock on the wall again, she mentally groaned as Harry began going through the plans for Saturday like he hadn't already told her about them.

"So when Ginny arrives, you're going to all get ready together and I'll have—"

"You'll have James, yes, Harry. We've been over this so many times. Are you okay?"

Hermione watches as he runs a hand over his face and groans. "Yes, I'm stressed, that's all. When we set the date to get married, I wasn't expecting Ginny to be pregnant again,"

"Well, whose problem is that?" Hermione grins at him.

"Well ours, obviously. But Ginny is not good at anything at this stage of pregnancy, and we're days away from getting married which is insane. We should have just delayed it all like I said—"

"Harry," Hermione stands, glances at the clock again and goes over to rest her hand on her friend's shoulders. "Ginny will be fine, you'll be fine, everyone will be fine. Please try and enjoy this, yeah? You're about to get everything you want from life and I won't have you too stressed to enjoy it."

He nodded and took his glasses off, wiping them on the corner of his robes. "Yeah,"

She kisses his cheek and turns to grab her bag from the table. "We'll speak over lunch tomorrow. Just remember it's supposed to be the best day of your life, if you have a heart attack it will be anything but!"

With one final smile, Hermione heads to the lift and down to the atrium. The queue for the Floo is busy as usual and Hermione's frustration has her huffing in the line. When it's her turn, she calls out Burton House and is immediately engulfed in green flames, arriving in Burton House a second later. Pippet appears the second she steps foot out of the fireplace and takes Hermione's cloak and bag.

"Thank you, Pippet, is Mr Draco home yet?"

Pippet shakes her head. “No Miss Hermione, he should be another five minutes if he sticks to his schedule. Everything is ready for dinner, the cake and his favourite drinks are chilling,”

“Perfect, thank you,”

Pippet vanishes and Hermione races up the stairs to the bedroom, she rips off her work dress, slips into the dress Draco has told her over and over is his favourite and spritzes some perfume onto her skin seconds before Draco calls up from downstairs.

“Hermione?”

“Just coming!” She calls back, fluffing her hair a little before she heads down to see Draco.

As she gets to the bottom of the stairs, the man himself is there, grinning up at her with the most gorgeous smile her feet falter for a second. How on earth did she ever get so lucky as to win the heart, love and affection of this man? When she thinks about the time they’ve spent together, it feels like they’ve always been together, Hermione struggles to remember a time when Draco wasn’t in her life and her heart.

“You look gorgeous,” he tells her, lifting her off the last step and kissing her.

“As do you,” she tells him. “I don’t remember when white became one of your colours but I’m so glad it is,”

He chuckles and kisses her again. “I’m starving, are we having dinner soon?”

She wriggles out of his arms and nods. “Come along, birthday boy. Your request to keep it just the two of us has been followed.”

She sees his shoulders relax. “Thank you,”

“It goes against everything to not have everyone we love here, but you decided you just wanted me for some odd reason,” she laughs as she walks him towards their dining room.

He stops her, holding her by the waist and looking down at her. “If you really don’t know the reason after everything, I really am doing something wrong,”

“Draco—” she laughs embarrassedly. “I’m joking.”

He keeps looking at her, hands on her waist until he sees whatever it is he’s searching for. As Hermione pushes open the doors to the dining room and Draco steps in, a shower of silver stars erupts over him. His eyes go wide and he smiles a soft, almost shy smile as a silver banner with emerald writing announces; *Happy birthday, Draco. My love, my everything*.

“Happy birthday, Draco,” she says again, leaning close to him and resting her head against his arm.

Draco reaches and turns her around so she’s facing him. His eyes are so bright and alive and he looks so happy, everything he should be on today of all days.

“Thank you, my love. I feel like the luckiest man in the world to have your love,”

She kisses him and then moves him towards the table to sit down. When he’s seated she flicks her wand and the silly birthday hat she made for him appears. She grins and he lets her place it on his head, rolling his eyes as she does so. She fills their glasses with champagne and hands one to him.

“To my Slytherin prince and the man who holds my heart,”

He chinks his glass with hers and takes a sip. A second later the table is filled with all Draco’s favourite food and Pippet arrives carrying the lemon cake with candles all over it. In the most uncoordinated fashion, Hermione and Pippet sing happy birthday to a blushing Draco before Pippet lets them know the *Floo* is locked and if they need anything, to call, before she leaves them to it.

As it’s Draco’s birthday, he dives straight in with a piece of cake, groaning as the lemony buttercream hits his tongue. When he dips one finger into the icing and holds it out for her, she leans closer and licks his finger clean before sitting back admiring the darkness of his eyes and the flush that remains on his cheeks.

“Did you double check you can have next week off?” She asks him.

“I did, strangely enough, Potter had already put the request in for me,” he arches an eyebrow at her and she shrugs.

“Auror Potter does what he wants,”

“And how is Potter? Still stressed about the wedding?”

Hermione nods. “Yes, I have tried to calm him more times than I can count, I think Ginny being pregnant is not helping.”

Draco laughed. “No, I don’t imagine it is. But that will teach them not to listen to the Healer’s advice to use protection.”

“Ginny says in the Prewitt jeans. That they did use the charm but perhaps should have also used the potion. But you know how she feels about the potion after getting pregnant on it before.”

There was a time when talk of the failing contraceptive potion would have caused Hermione to begin to sob uncontrollably, but time had healed and she felt sad but not devastated any more.

“Are you going to tell me where we’re going next week now?” Draco asked, taking another mouthful of champagne followed by cake.

“No, I told you, it’s a surprise,”

He moved, coming to lean over her. “I could always force you to tell me?”

Hermione's breath hitched. "No, you couldn't,"

He dropped his mouth to her neck and sucked. "Are you sure?"

Hermione groaned and squeezed her legs together. "Yes,"

"Pity,"

Draco sat back down and they feasted on the many delicious things Pippet had prepared for them. When they were both full, Hermione led Draco out of the dining room, into the lounge and out into the garden where the gazebo was decked out with fairy lights and cushions. It was one of their favourite places to sit, whatever the weather. Being outside and together, protected by charms to keep out any unwanted extremes of weather. Once they were settled on the cushions and looking out at the setting sun, Draco took her hand, bringing it to his lips and pressing a kiss to her fingers.

"Remember when you asked me last month what I wanted for my birthday?"

"And you said you didn't want anything? If you've changed your mind now I've had to organise something I hope you'll like without knowing what you actually want, I will be mad at you,"

Draco threw his head back and laughed. "Well, I know what I want now,"

Hermione's jaw dropped. "Draco Lucius Malfoy—"

"I want you,"

"You have me," she scoffed.

He shifted. "No. I. Want. You."

Again she repeated her words. "You. Have. Me."

He shook his head.

She was getting a little frustrated now. "Draco, I'm here, see?" She patted his cheek. "I live here most of the time, I spend every night in bed with you, either here or at mine. I wear your heart in diamond form around my neck," she took his hand in hers and placed it against the necklace he'd given her. "What more do you want?"

He twisted his hand and nestled in his palm was a black box holding a beautiful emerald and diamond ring.

"What more do I want? I want you to marry me, to have my name, to live here with me and to make a family," he held her left hand and looked at her. "You asked me what I want and I couldn't tell you because this is all I'll ever want from life. You. This. Us,"

"*Draco*—" Hermione's voice cracked. "Today is your birthday, it's supposed to be about you,"

He leaned down and kissed her. “This is about me, very much about me. I’m selfish and I know exactly what I want, so what do you say? Will you marry me, Hermione? Will you be my wife?”

Hermione leapt into his arms and kissed him. “Of course I will! Yes! Yes, Draco!”

He kissed her deeply and pulled back to sit up. He held out the ring and she held out her shaking hand to him. With a deep breath and a nod, he slid the ring past her knuckles and kissed its place on her finger.

“I love you,” he said. “I’ll always love you.” Draco leans closer, resting his forehead to hers. “My soul recognises yours. We’re the same and whatever happens when our life on this earth ends, I’ll find you again and again,” he kisses her with so much passion. “Wait for me, don’t lose hope. I’ll find you.”

Two Years Later

Hermione was looking at herself in the mirror when Draco appeared behind her. Meeting her eyes in the mirror while he wrapped a hand around her hip and rested his chin on top of her head.

“What?” She asked.

“Why does there have to be anything?”

“You just—you look like there is something, what is it?”

He smiled and she felt her stomach flip. “Are you ready?”

“I don’t know. I feel—I feel gross and I think I’d rather send them all home and just be with you today,”

Draco dropped his eyes to the floor and let his grey eyes slowly travel the length of her. When he met her eyes again in the mirror they were wide, bright yet dark, all at the same time.

“Gross is the furthest thing you are, love.”

“But I—” A hand came up and stopped me, his fingers brushing her jaw softly.

“You’re beautiful and all our friends are waiting for us. We can’t let them down anyway,” he turns her to face him. “They’re in the garden, if we don’t go down, they’ll just come up

here,”

“I just—”

“Come on Little Lion, where’s that Gryffindor bravery now?”

Hermione nodded and smoothed down her dress, taking Draco left hand in hers and still feeling a flutter in her stomach when they’re wedding rings clinked together. Following him downstairs and outside where everyone sat waiting for her. The garden was decorated with lights and lanterns and a table groaning with food. There was a chocolate fountain and a massive cake sitting in the centre decorated with buttercream and strawberries, her favourite.

“Here she is!” Theo called, rushing over to scoop her up, making her laugh. “Happy birthday! You are beautiful, this colour is perfect for you!”

When she was placed on her feet again, Pansy waddled over, pressed her swollen stomach against Hermione’s and grasped her hands. “You really do look beautiful!” Pansy told her. “And look at us!”

Hermione glanced down at both their swollen stomachs and felt her eyes grow wet. “Who would have thought—” she began but then had to stop to take a breath. “Who’d have thought we’d be pregnant together?” She laughed.

“I know!” Pansy laughed loudly, rubbing her stomach. “Do you think they planned it?” They both look over at Draco and Neville who are watching them carefully. “Made some kind of chart of when they fuck us so they could have some support going through this?”

“That’s disgusting!” Hermione shuddered.

“Synchronized fucking?”

Hermione swatted Pansy away and went to greet everyone else. Even now, Hermione cannot get over how close she is to Pansy, or how soft her friend suddenly became when she met Neville and fell in love.

Unlike the Slytherin’s, everyone else waited a second before ambushing Hermione. Narcissa comes over to wrap her arms around Hermione and kisses her cheek. One of the best things about being with Draco is her relationship with Narcissa. They’ve grown closer and closer and even though Hermione wishes with everything she is that her own mother was here with her through this, Narcissa’s love and support is something Hermione treasures.

“How is my beautiful daughter doing?” Narcissa asks, holding her at arm’s length. “And my grandbaby?”

“I feel gross,” she admitted. “I wish I could be in my pyjamas in bed.”

Narcissa presses another kiss to her cheek and squeezes her fingers. “I remember the feeling, just know you look glowing and the most beautiful I have ever seen you,”

The whole day, everyone makes Hermione feel beautiful, telling her she's glowing and just treating her like she's the most precious thing in the world. As she sits next to Harry, laughing at his story of Ginny and James baking a cake for today, she can't help but think back to the time she felt like no one saw her. Now everyone sees her and loves her. Hermione doesn't know what changed, if anything, but she can't remember ever feeling this happy before.

"So," Theo says, coming to sit next to her. "Are you busy on Christmas Eve?"

Hermione turns to look at him. "Well yes, seeing as it's Christmas eve, Theo. Why?"

"Well, I wondered if you wanted to be my bridesmaid?"

Hermione snaps her eyes to his and gasps. "What?"

"My bridesmaid? Or is it a Groomsmaid?" He looks over to Charlie who is sitting a couple of spaces over and whispers loudly. "Are we calling it a Groomsmaid, babe?"

Charlie groans and puts a finger to his mouth trying to shush his boyfriend. Theo just shakes his head.

"You and Charlie are getting married?"

"Yeah," Theo says casually. "We thought it was time and everyone is around at Christmas so,"

Hermione throws her arms around her friend and kisses him. "We will be there, of course we will!"

"And the littlest Malfoy?"

"They'll be a couple of weeks old by then, so they'll be there too if you want them to be,"

"Of course we do. I was also thinking that I'm asking you and Pansy to give me away,"

Hermione started crying.

"Because I have King Dick as my Best Man along with Blaise. But you two," he looks at her and she can see emotion shining in his eyes. "You and Pans are like my sisters and I can't get married without you right there, okay?"

Hermione leaned closer, kissed his cheek then rested her head in his neck while she cried. Draco came over and rubbed her back and glared at Theo.

"Why is it you always seem to be close by when she's crying? What did you do?" Draco sneers at his friend.

"I just asked her to give me away when I marry my dragon tamer," Theo rolls his eyes. "Don't be so dramatic. Oh, and will you be my Best Man, please?"

Draco splutters. "What?"

“Will you be my Best Man?”

“What on earth is a Best Man, Theo? You realise I’m not gay?”

Hermione and Theo burst into laughter then and Hermione is crying for a totally different reason.

“It’s a Muggle thing, you do a speech and stand with me and *be nice* ,”

“Well,” Draco said, sitting down. “I would have said yes until that last point,”

“Draco!” Hermione scolded him.

“Yes, Theo, I’ll be your Best Man,” Draco almost huffed.

“Great,” Theo said standing up. “You also have to throw me a Stag Party, but we can discuss that later!”

Draco groaned and pulled Hermione into his arms. “He’s a pain in my arse,”

“And you wouldn’t have him any other way,” she grinned.

“No, I suppose I wouldn’t,”

Everyone sings out of tune and throws variations of her name around when the candles are lit. Hermione closes her eyes and the only wish she makes is that life stays like this, because honestly, she has everything she’s ever wanted.

After demolishing her cake, Hermione kicked off her shoes and laid down for just a minute. With the soft voices of everyone around her, Hermione placed her hand on her ever growing stomach, feeling a soft kick when she did and closed her eyes for just a second.

Hermione woke to a cold bed and the light from the fire casting shadows around the room. A sense of panic filled her chest until she heard them. Keeping very still, she opened her eyes and took in the sight before her. Draco was standing by the window with their son nestled to his bare chest. He was speaking to him softly and swaying from side to side.

“And one day, when you’re older, Daddy will tell you all about the stars and how we’re both named after them and how Mummy is the most important part of our world,”

Scorpius Hyperion Malfoy.

The spitting image of his father down to the little birthmark on his left shoulder that looks like a blob of ink.

When their son came into the world, Hermione felt a tug on her soul and a missing piece click into place. Draco had looked down at her sweaty, tired face, announced she had never been more beautiful to him and Hermiopne watched as he let tears fall freely down his face as he reached for his son and held him for the first time,

Hermione couldn't tear her eyes away from her husband and son. The image one she wanted to burn into her memory for when she was old and Scorpius was a grown man.

"And one day when you're older Scorpius, I'll teach you how to be a man, a good, strong, kind man who protects the ones he loves and never allows himself to follow the wrong path. I'll show you everything I've learned so you don't make my mistakes,"

Draco swayed a little more then turned and caught her watching them. He smiled and walked over to her, sitting on the bed and resting one hand on her cheek.

"You should be asleep,"

"I just woke up,"

"He's content, you can go back to sleep,"

"I can't without you next to me," she shook her head.

Draco climbed into bed beside her, Scorpius in his arms and Hermione pulled to his side while she wrapped an arm around them both.

"One day," she cooed as she rubbed her tiny son's back. "I'm going to tell you all about how your Daddy saved me and how he's the best man and we're the luckiest to have him,"

Draco kissed the top of her head and whispered, "I love you,"

"And most important of all, little man, I'm going to teach you to love big and treasure everyone you have around you, because it's the best when you love in the light and not hide in the dark,"

The End of this ... but it's just the begining for them.

That's it!

We did it! □

When I got the idea for this fic, all I wanted to do was write what I saw playing out in my head.

It felt like I knew them from the very first line I wrote.

I knew they were going to be intense and I knew Draco was going to frustrate the hell out of me (and you I imagine) with his insistence that they remain a secret for so long. I knew he was going to be determined to protect Hermione and in doing so, was going to hurt her.

As I wrote the fic, I let them tell me where to go; I didn't direct, I didn't make decisions. I let them lead - as crazy as that sounds.

Quite often I didn't agree with their choices and I wanted to slap them a lot. BUT it's their story and I followed. I know from comments you found it frustrating, which in a way, is exactly what it should be! People ARE frustrating, none more so than these two Idiots in Love.

The subject of miscarriages is something I have rarely seen within the fanfiction world and I don't know why. I was worried it wouldn't be received well, but to not include it would have done them an injustice.

For Draco and Hermione - their loss is what cements their relationship. Without that loss they would not be the couple they ended up being, their relationship wouldn't have survived and their futures would not have had each other in them.

I feel that Draco needed to get a big wake-up call. To learn that his behaviour wasn't healthy or helpful to either of them. And I feel like his feelings of guilt for how he treated Hermione only got more intense with the loss of their babies.

I've loved writing their story, I've loved getting lost in their world and letting them show me the paths they took.

They're very real to me (call me insane, I'm okay with it) and I'll miss them terribly.

So all that's left to say is a MASSIVE thank you to every single person who read this as a WIP - the trust in my storytelling was mind blowing.

And thank you to anyone who picks this up now it's finished - I hope you enjoyed the ride!

Your comments and Kudos and support means the whole world and I cannot and will not stop saying thank you.

IF and it's a big IF, anyone would like to bind this fic - I'm happy for you to bind for personal use and not for sale. Keep fanfiction free so we can read and write it and enjoy it.

I'd love a follow on my socials and you can find me on TikTok and Instagram on @smudgesonapage

I have so many ideas that I'm working on, so who knows ... I might see you again soon!

K

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!