

Good Girl, Granger

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Good Girl, Granger

by [mayanahi](#)

Summary

Seventeen years after the war, Hermione Granger is a single mom who works her arse off at the Ministry fighting for Magical Creatures' rights.

To build a reservation for hippogriffs, she finds herself pitching for donations from her former school bully, Draco Malfoy.

He has no intent on helping hippogriffs, but he wants a sub.

Notes

Prompt:

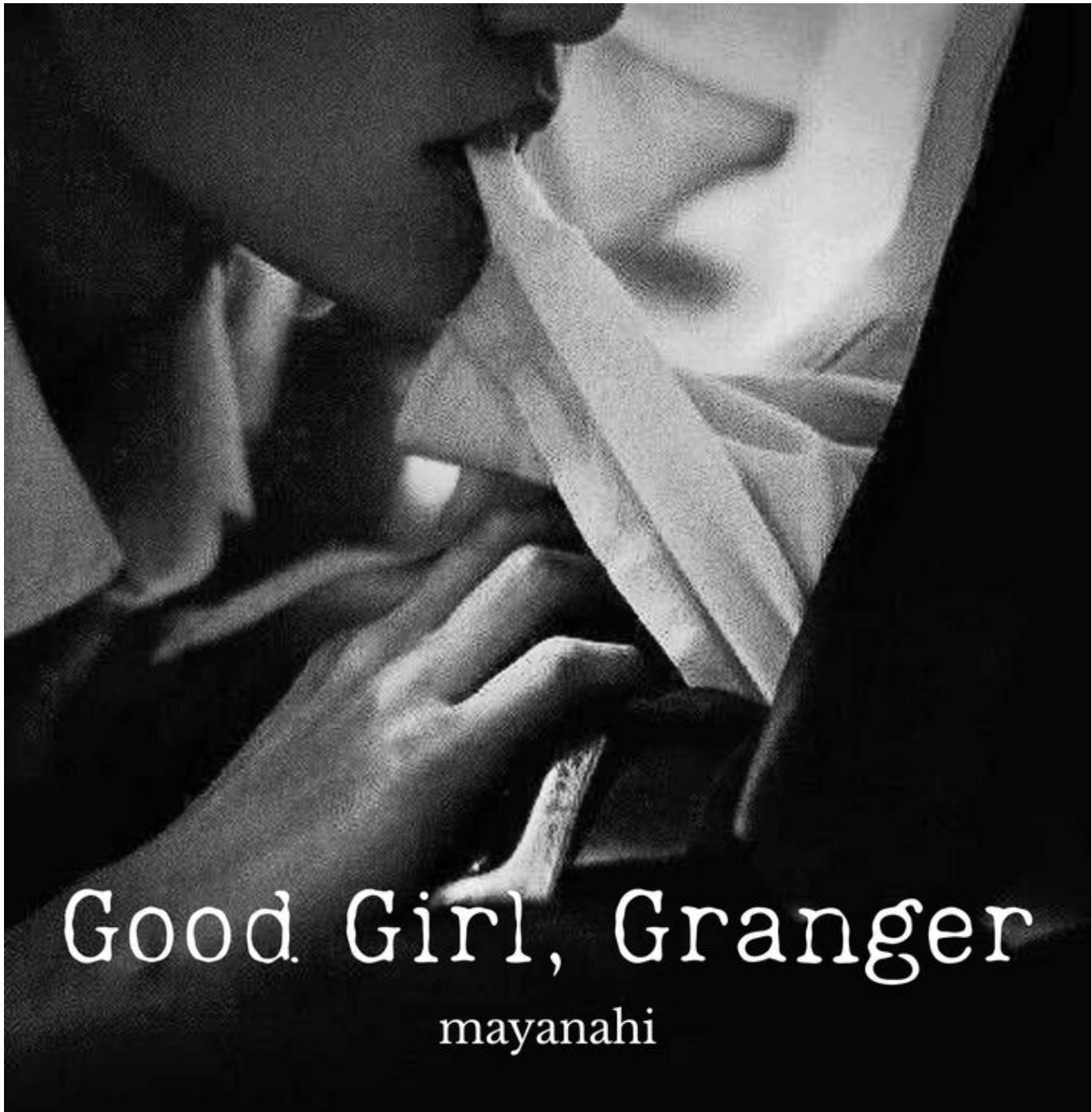
Hermione needs money, daddy Draco needs a sub.

PORN WITH (a bit of) PLOT - > don't stare at it for too long though

TW: this story might have a title/name you don't like, but it was my choice. It is so personal whether you think daddy/sir/dom/master is hot or cringe... DON'T YUCK SOMEBODY'S YUM. If it throws you off and you can't just pretend it is something else, quietly DNF. I don't come from an anglophone country and dom in my language means the same as Sir. I chose to use it. "Oh but we don't use it in the scene where I come from." That's very good, now you are being presented with a different way of doing things, isn't it nice to have the diversity of fiction and international friends? Please don't comment on it. It's very annoying.

See the end of the work for [more notes](#)

Chapter 1: When they meet



Good Girl, Granger

mayanahi

tap tap tap tap tap

Her heel was frantically jumping up and down, making a clunking sound against the wooden floor of Malfoy Manor. She hated being there. It could be five, ten, or fifteen years after the war, and she would always hate being there. She took a huge breath and settled her fidgeting fingers to work on rearranging the stock of papers she had in hand.

“Master will see you now, Missus...”

“Granger.” Hermione smiled at the tiny yellowish house elf. Poor thing. “Thank you, mister...?”

“Blubby is no mister, missus.” The elf laughed at the absurdity of it.

A sigh escaped her lips before she could press them tightly together, and Hermione slid her hand into the pocket of her pencil skirt as she searched for the pamphlet of the house elf liberation league she had helped fund.

The elf held the pamphlet as if she had handed him a toilet paper she had just wiped her arse with until they’d reached the study at the end of the hall. Then, as he closed the door behind her, he promptly incinerated it.

Hermione was in a large room with walls panelled in deep mahogany, and she fought the urge to let her gaze sweep the towering bookcases to read the volume titles. She was here to get a job done.

Only a few wisps of his pale blond hair were visible, as the back of his high-backed black leather chair was facing her and he was facing the window to the grounds behind him, the green velvet curtains opened to their maximum, so the room was showered with sunlight.

A shy cough to try and get his attention only managed to get his wand to wave dismissively, pushing a chair back, and his low, powerful voice to echo a steady “sit”. She felt an elastic band clenching around her stomach. Determined not to let his attitude disturb her resoluteness, she obeyed, resting her paperwork over the enormous black walnut desk polished to a mirror shine. Quills and inkpots were neatly arranged alongside a few open tomes and scrolls. Malfoy’s handwriting was precise and sharp.

“So,” he began as he twirled his chair to face her. “You were rather... persistent to get this meeting, Granger.”

There wasn’t supposed to be such an intense reaction from her at his sight. Frankly, she saw him nearly monthly at fundraising galas, family events at Hogwarts and even Quidditch matches. She knew he was tall, broad-shouldered and ridiculously good-looking. Everyone knew that. Ever since the death of his wife, Astoria Malfoy, he’d been listed as the most eligible widower every year by Witch Weekly.

But still, the air left her lungs, her knees pressed together, and she had to turn her gaze down to her papers just so she could order her thoughts. Which was of little use when his thunder voice hit her again.

“Tell me what you need.”

“Of course — erm, well.” She gathered her papers. “First, thank you, Malfoy, for agreeing to talk to me.”

He only hummed, obviously unwilling to make this conversation more comfortable and friendly.

“Well, hippogriffs are among the most noble and intelligent of magical creatures. Proud, loyal and beautiful, they have too often been misunderstood, mishandled, and even hunted.”

At the sound of his mocking scoff, she followed his grey gaze towards the grand fireplace framed by an ornate silver serpent motif at their left; *there was a massive hippogriff head mounted above it.* The lifeless stare of its glassy eyes warned Hermione that Malfoy did not feel any sympathy for the same creature that had attacked him in third year.

“Er— Yes, so, anyways. Recent studies have shown worrying decreases in its population numbers, and I’ve just recently passed a bill to approve the use of public land in Devon to build a reservation for—”

“When you say public land.” Malfoy had just lit a cigarette with the tip of his wand. She waited for him to finish his sentence, but it took him two slow drags and puffs before that. “Do you mean to say Crabbe’s estate?”

Hermione gulped.

“Yes, well, it was expropriated after the war when they didn’t pay retribution fines for their crimes —”

“Which is interesting because the *criminals* were both killed at the Battle of Hogwarts, so the person who got evicted was only the old widow.”

“Yes, that’s it.” A bead of nervous sweat rolled between her shoulder blades, and she adjusted her posture. She hadn’t been exactly in favour of that expropriation, but she knew Malfoy only saw her as a Ministry pawn, so it didn’t matter. “Hm, well, that land is available, but we’d still need resources to hire capable caretakers, warding specialists for protection, herbologists to replant its native forest, veterinary services, and public education initiatives for visitations that would keep sustaining the initiative—”

His raised palm stopped her as he drew the smoke from his cigar. When had he lit it? No words were said until he had stubbed it down calmly on his crystal ashtray.

“So,” he drawled, smugly joining the points of the fingers from both hands. The veins and muscles from his forearms popped into vision under the rolled-up sleeves of his white shirt “What you actually need is money.”

“Oh...” Her knuckles turned white as she gripped her papers tightly. “Hm, yes — I mean, I am *offering* you the position of patron—”

“Spare me the politics, Granger.” He leaned forward, his eyes shining like a bobcat who had cornered its prey. “We both know I have no interest whatsoever in becoming a *patron defending hippogriffs.*”

It ignited something inside her to see how he was relishing the opportunity to be in a situation of power over her. She didn’t have the choice to hex or punch him, so he was being the most insufferable version of himself he could muster.

“It would be very good for your public image, you know,” she hissed, dropping her papers in her lap and crossing her arms.

It was a foul move to mock the ostracism he had gotten after the war among certain groups. His raised eyebrow indicated that he noticed it, but the smirk that moved his lips illustrated that he didn’t care about it.

“No.”

The chair's leather squeaked when he leaned back, waiting for her response. Her mouth opened and closed. No. That was not an option. She could not come back without his agreement. Malfoy was the richest man in the UK, the only one able to make the kind of donation she needed. She'd need to be in at least a hundred other meetings like that with more slimy pureblood lords, and magically have them all on board, to get the same amount of money that the man in front of her could throw without blinking an eye.

“B-but, wait,” She stuttered, unfolding her arms and running through the data she'd brought. “It would be an investment, we could return with the profits from visitat—”

“No.”

Tears were threatening to escape her as she swallowed the lump in her throat..

“Malfoy,” She pleaded. “I’m sorry, I meant no offence, I just—”

His face remained stoic except for the amusement that danced in his eyes.

“— This is really important for me... I’ve been working on it for six years and—”

“Six years?” Long fingers adorned with silver rings tapped his chin. “Was that before or after you divorced that red-haired useless git?”

Exactly why her marriage failure had to be brought up, Hermione didn’t know. Maybe it was a humiliation tactic, something to show how inefficient she was or to further hurt and destabilise her. But she couldn’t afford biting back, so she simply squared her shoulders and lifted her chin in silent defiance.

“Before. We divorced five years ago.”

Malfoy hummed, and slowly his lips spread in a Cheshire cat grin.

“I’m guessing you were too busy saving the hippogriffs to care for your husband?”

It took a few minutes for the meaning behind his words to hit her.

“I really don’t see how this has anything to do with—”

“It was a rhetorical question, Granger. No need to answer” His impassive mask was back on, and he crossed his arms, touching his opposed elbows over the table. His flexed biceps stretched the shirt.

Several blinks later, she managed to say, “Good. About the donation—”

“I have no interest in donating” The words hit her like a bludger, and he seemingly enjoyed the sight of it. “I do, however, have a business proposal, Granger”

“Business?” She leaned back, pressing the files against her chest as a shield. There was no hope of something good coming from it.

“Yes, Granger. Call it a contract of mutual aid, if you must.”

The tension in the room was palpable; her shoes rubbed against the polar bear fur rug as she dragged her heels to cross her ankles.

“What kind of aid do you need from me?” Her voice was almost a whisper.

“You need money.” He smirked. “I need a sub.”

Chapter 2: When he explains

“A sub?” she whined, the word itself seemed harmless. But his tone... It had been debauched enough to raise her suspicion. “A substitute, you mean?

Deep, low chuckles erupted from his chest as his tongue swiped over his bottom lip.

“No, Granger. I mean, a *submissive*. Someone to *obey* me.”

Submissive. The picture of a stone statue in the Ministry of Magic’s atrium, seventeen years prior, flooded Hermione’s mind, muggles underneath wizards. In their rightful place. Her papers scattered around when she got up, offendedly pointing her finger at Malfoy.

“You’re an absolute prat, Draco Malfoy! If you think I am so desperate that I’ll humiliate myself cleaning your house or preparing your meals—”

“Don’t offend me, Granger. I have enough house elves for that” His tone was low, and his shirt was strained against his chest as it twitched lightly. “Now, sit down.”

The heat that pooled on the bottom of her stomach was probably related to the fireplace and not to how his order made her feel, because being ordered around was definitely something that Hermione didn’t enjoy.

“What do you mean then?” she demanded, not sitting. “Want a mudblood to—”

“You *won’t* use that word to refer to yourself *ever* again.”

“Well, funny you’d be offended since you were the one to teach it to me, remember?”

“And I haven’t used it for seventeen years,” he said in a chipped voice, his gaze slowly drifting from her eyes to her forearms, where she once had the words engraved. “Not once”

Her eyes helplessly followed his lead and also traced down to his forearm. Two children on different sides of a war that didn’t belong to them, forced to be soldiers, tortured and marked forever. Because despite her skin having healed and his tattoo having faded, there would still exist the hurt and resentment after all these years.

“Yes, I’m sorry.”

His eyebrows went a centimetre up after coming back to their expressionless place. “Don’t apologise, Granger. Just sit so I can explain what I want from you. Trust me, you’ll like it”

His tone offered no room for arguments, and her knees trembled with its power, so she allowed her weight to fall over the cushioned seat.

“I see you, Granger.” His eyes poured into her with much intensity. “The golden girl, the brightest witch of her age... Always *in charge* of saving the world, her friends and now the magical creatures... That must be very tiring.”

Her shoulders sank with the velvet tone of his cooing. Tiring it was, indeed.

“For what my son told me,” he continued. “Your pathetic ex-husband left your daughter in your care only?”

A small nod was all she could muster. Rose Granger-Weasley had, to Hermione’s great surprise, become best friends with Scorpius Malfoy during their first semester at Hogwarts. Hermione, too, had heard a lot about Scorpius during Christmas break. Nevertheless, it was unsettling to be stripped bare like that before someone so mysterious and collected.

“Words, Granger.”

“Yes.” It left her before she could think better of it. Why was following his orders becoming so easy for her?

“Tsk tsk...” His lips pursed in disgust. “That won’t do, no. Overloaded with responsibilities and with no one to watch over you.”

It was entrancing, maddeningly so, to hear everything she felt in the words dancing out of his lips.

“I know what you need, Granger,” he purred, leaning his torso on his elbows over the table. “You need someone who’ll take good care of you.”

Hermione took a shuddering breath, scenting the smell of old parchment, smoke, and a sharp, clean note of something metallic, like silver polish. The air felt so heavy that blinking twice and wetting her lips with her tongue was all the answer she mustered, not that Malfoy seemed to need anything else.

“If you submit yourself to me,” he continued. “You won’t need to make any more decisions, won’t worry about anything, won’t have to whore yourself around manors to get donations f—”

The dirty word snapped her back to her senses.

“Whoring? I’m not whoring! I am collecting donations—”

“Semantics, Granger.” He smirked. “When I am responsible for you, you’ll have all the money you want for whatever creature you choose to save that week.”

The prospect was alluring, but the Muggle saying her father used to say kept pestering her mind.

“There is no free lunch, Malfoy.”

“Indeed.”

“What will be expected from me? What do you want in return?”

The excited expression that slowly built itself across his features was, against Hermione’s better judgment, building anticipation in her core.

“You’ll be *mine*,” he growled, as if barely straining himself not to devour her. “And I’ll be making decisions for you”

There was a primal part of Hermione that roared in appreciation when Malfoy said she was to be his. But the swotty voice in her brain took charge, in an offended huff.

“What? You want a pawn inside the ministry? Is that it? Bribing me to get things done for you?”

He chuckled. “No, Granger. I assure you that the things I want you to do for me have *nothing* to do with the ministry.”

Pixies were dancing inside her womb, and it was hard to keep her fingers attached to the arms of the chair instead of rubbing over it. The last resource—more subtle—was pressing her thighs together to get some friction from it.

“What do they have to do with, then?” Her voice came as a barely audible whisper.

“Most subs will follow their dom’s orders in *bed*, Granger.”

There hadn’t been time for her to question the word ‘dom’, because Malfoy smirked and she had to thank Merlin for being sat, because her legs jellified.

“But not you, though.”

“N-no?” she squeaked.

“No, Granger.”

Malfoy’s large hands pushed his chair away enough to allow him to get up. He circled his table slowly, invading her personal space and leaning back to rest against the wooden surface. His long legs crossed at the ankle, and she fought the urge to stare into the bulge inside his tailored black trousers.

“I am not interested in *role play*, I want the real thing. I want you to obey my orders regardless of where you are. I want to own every choice in your life.”

“That’s preposterous! You can’t possibly—”

“*Listen to me.*” His voice was commanding, and her mouth snapped shut immediately. “I won’t use this power against you. I will use it *for you*.”

Malfoy leaned forward and tugged one curl behind her ear, his finger lightly brushing her cheekbone. A strong shiver ran down her spine. He dragged his finger back, running it against her jaw and slightly urging her to look up at him.

“You’re tired. You’re overwhelmed. You’re tense.”

The words were so truthful, she didn’t even bother to deny.

“You’ve done more than enough, Granger, and with no one to take care of you.” His cajoling caressed her ego. “A single mother raising a child alone, fighting for creatures’ rights alone, working her arse off at the ministry and barely managing to pay her bills... No, no... I won’t have that.”

“W-wont?” Mumbling wasn’t really like her, but staring into his stormy eyes, she couldn’t come up with more complete sentences. Not when he was so right about how overloaded she had been, and especially not when he was promising to rectify that.

“I’ll take care of you” His hand cupped her jaw, firm and steady. “I’ll give you all the money you need, and in return, you’ll give yourself to me, in *every aspect* of your life.”

Trying to clear the fog slowly begging her to agree with him, Hermione shook her head and leaned back away from his reach, crossing her arms.

“What exactly does it mean, Malfoy?” She raised an eyebrow. “I am a grown woman, I have a daughter and a job. I can’t just be lying here at your manor, at your beck and call—”

“*Silence.*”

The seconds extended while he waited to see if she would disobey him, and, despite being offended and annoyed by his orders, she too waited to see what he was about to answer her.

“Good girl, Granger,” he purred, and she hated the good feeling that ran across her skin at his praise. “I have no intention of you moving to the manor just yet. I’ll have to see the shack you live in; if it doesn’t meet my standards, I’ll get you somewhere else.”

“My flat is perfectly—”

“Once again, I don’t give a damn about your job at the ministry. You can keep on with whatever it is that you do, and if you are a good girl to me, you’ll have funds for all your projects.” His knuckles clenched the table when he said the next thing, “About our *children*, I don’t plan to involve them in our personal affairs. Considering they’re at school most of the year, I don’t see how it would be a problem. Though I won’t have Rose wearing second-hand clothes or wands like her wanker father did. So evidently I’ll be making choices and payments in that particular area too.”

Relinquishing control and resting on someone else’s care was not something Hermione Granger ever planned to do, but the idea of doing it, especially with a wizard as powerful and smart as Draco Malfoy, certainly seemed tempting. There was also the fact that he was absolutely gorgeous, with a face built for Greek gods’ marble statues, and promising to give whatever she wanted for her projects, from his ridiculously large, filled Gringotts’ vault. It felt unreal, too good to be true.

“But... I don’t see why—why would you want me?” The slightly unconfident tone of her voice made her sick, but it was true. He could do better than a thirty-five-year-old single working mom. “Surely, someone with your...”—she swallowed the urge to say anything about his good looks —“resources could find a young and beautiful girlfriend to—”

“Uh-huh, Granger...” He smirked. “I am not looking for a girlfriend. I am looking for a sub.”

The pixies inside her womb were now probably fighting capoeira, as she felt ready to vomit with that much tingling. Her hand quickly adjusted the length of her skirt, fingers trembling against the soft brown tweed.

“And can’t you find one of those either?”

“I can. But I want you,” he deadpanned. “I want to know that I’m giving orders to the little bossy witch that tells everyone else what to do.”

Hermione squirmed in her seat, suddenly feeling as if the room was, in fact, *too* hot.

"And if I disobey, I won't get my allowance, is that it?" She forced her voice to sound offended, but it came out needy.

"No, Granger. If you misbehave, you'll get spanked."

A smile danced on her lips as she looked up, expecting him to be laughing too. But he was serious, unyielding. It wasn't a joke.

"That's absurd, Malfoy! That's abusive—"

"Don't offend me," he snarled, and she shut her mouth. "It is to be consented, if you ever want it to end, it'll be over in a heartbeat. But something tells me you'll love being disciplined"

Her teeth dragged over her bottom lip, and her eyes ran from him, instead analysing the bookcase at her right.

"But, look at me." Her head whipped back to face him. "But if you ever decide or even threaten to end things, it will be permanent. I can't have you using it as leverage to disobey me."

She nodded.

"Any questions?"

"You s-said — You said you don't want to role play in b-bed— Does that mean that...?" The words escaped her with a lack of courage. Fear of Malfoy not being sexually interested in her started to creep into her mind.

"Oh, Granger," he cooed, leaning forward until he stood centimetres away from her face. "Don't mistake me, I absolutely will be fucking you in every way that *I want.*"

The pixies inside her womb melted with the warmth of his words and dripped towards her knickers. She felt them damp and had to cross her legs to avoid making a mess in Malfoy's chair. She'd never live it down.

"Would you like that?" His purr opened a smirk on his lips as he cupped her face with his hand, the thumb circling her cheek.

Her quick and shaky nod was stopped midway when he pressed his thumb over her lip, using it as a step to enter her mouth. He didn't need to order her; it was spontaneous: she sucked it. His pupils expanded so much that she could barely see the grey anymore.

"Good girl, Granger," He grinned, licking his lips as he pulled his thumb back. "Now, go home. I'll owl you my rules. Take some time to think about it. I'll pick you up for dinner tomorrow, and you'll give me your final answer."

"I— Okay. It's j-just..." She took a huge breath to speak like a grown woman. "I'm not going home just now, I still have some stuff to do—"

"You'll obey my order and go home," he said simply. "If your answer is yes, then you already got the resources that I'm sure you had scheduled your whole week on getting."

"And.. What if I disobey and then decide to say yes?"

“Then my first job as your dom will be disciplining you.”

The grin he had on his face as he said it was tattooed behind her eyelids all the way to the floor.

Chapter 3: When she learns

If there was one thing Hermione hated, that thing was not being the most well-educated person on a subject. Two whole weeks were spent reading her textbooks in advance every year before school; the feeling of being taught about something she had already read about made her feel safe. The control she held once she knew what to expect and what was expected of her brought her peace of mind. However, once she grew accustomed to the Wizarding World, there were fewer and fewer new things to study in advance, and all that built-up energy started to move towards overthinking, overanalysing and, worst of all, overworking.

It was like having an autoimmune disease; her own brain was slowly killing her by stressing itself to death.

Which was precisely why the idea of relinquishing control of her life choices, of her life burdens and, ultimately, of her pleasure was so appealing to her. Especially if those choices lay in the most capable hands of one Draco Malfoy. It would be a lie to say that she hadn't noticed him. He was a hard person to go unnoticed. They'd attended enough public events together for Hermione to secretly memorise every line of his aristocratic face. His name was always on the Daily Prophet; apparently, he had turned the inheritance that made him the richest wizard in Britain into a fortune worthy of the European top three. But that was not the only thing. Rose had told her that Scorpius only had praises for his father: *caring, loving, present*.

And the thought of him wanting her, wanting to *care* for her and make her life easier, was maddening.

Even more so was the idea of going to their meeting the following day without as much previous information as she could gather. Which was precisely why she headed to a bookshop in Muggle London right after Malfoy Manor. Something told her that dom/sub was not something she'd like to be seen researching in Flourish and Botts. She convinced herself that she hadn't gone to the Ministry because Malfoy was right: her day's schedule consisted only of listing other possible donors and preparing for her pitch with them. If the Malfoy vaults were to be available, she didn't need to waste time on that. She didn't need to obey him because he was right. Or maybe that's precisely why she needed to obey him.

"Can I help you?"

The nasal voice of the old book seller startled her as she rummaged through the titles on the hidden shelf full of books on sex.

"Oh! Yes, sure. Erm — Maybe"

"What is it that you're looking for?" The woman resembled Madam Pinch so much that Hermione blushed before answering.

"I was searching for some titles on... Dom and sub relationships? Maybe a *sugar daddy* sort of arrangement?"

Hermione remembered the term she once saw in a Muggle movie: a man who would pay for the woman's expenses in exchange for her company. Something different from sex work, though. She hoped.

The old lady blinked at her, and Hermione cringed. Maybe she should've searched alone or asked someone younger. She had half a mind to confound the woman to avoid further embarrassment when the bookseller spoke.

"Oh dearie, I have just the thing," She said, smirking as she pulled out one enormous book with a very graphic cover for Hermione. "This book here worked wonders for me and hubby when we hit that rough patch around our thirty-fifth anniversary."

Hermione's mouth fell open and stayed that way while she paid for the book.

Heavy raindrops were pounding against her window as Hermione flipped through the pages of her recent purchase. The hot cocoa she had made prior now rested cold at her bedside table, and her socked feet wiggled dangerously close to it. She had a hard time just picturing the things she read, harder even was to try and see such things as pleasurable. If that was what Malfoy was interested in, then Hermione couldn't be his sub. It was clear that being burned with candle wax, being tied up, being choked or degraded were not her cup of tea. Nevertheless, this whole new world, albeit shocking, was incredibly new, and she was reminded of herself learning about magic twenty-four years before.

Tap tap tap tap

Hermione's face was glued by her dried drool to the picture of a woman with a red ball strapped to her mouth when the noise woke her up. The sun's rays made her squeeze her eyes as she raised her head to search for where the sound came from. There was a regal grey owl tapping against her window. Her cocoa mug crashed on the floor when she forced herself up, and she cut her foot on one shard. She swore as she opened the window and picked the thick envelope from its beak.

"Shite, I don't have anything to give you, buddy" She said, but the owl didn't move, waiting.

She didn't have to read the envelope to recognise its sender. She had seen his handwriting at Hogwarts and admired it thoroughly the previous day.

Granger,

Open your house wards for me and my house elves.

I will pick you up at six.

Draco Malfoy

P.S. There is a treat for the owl inside the envelope.

P.P.S. Don't stall, open the wards as soon as you receive this. Something tells me you don't have a decent breakfast waiting for you.

Once she had read it for the first time, Hermione quickly went for the envelope and found a large biscuit to give to the owl. It took it before flying away through the blue sky without waiting for a response, while Hermione read the letter three more times. There was not a single please on it, not one question, just orders to follow. The ease of not having to think of a response slowed her mind into a comfortable pace, as she went up to follow his instructions. She opened her Floo network for Malfoy and reset all the house wards to include him and his elves.

Less than two minutes later, with a loud crack, an elf appeared. It wasn't Blubby, but a much smaller one with soft blue skin and large purple eyes. She was dressed in a fluffy white hand towel and brought a silver tray with a silver cloche over it.

"Breakfast for Missus Granger," Came her high-pitched squeak.

"Thank you... Your name is?" Hermione smiled, resting her hands on her knees to lower herself enough to face the elf.

"Me is Lindy, missus!" The elf beamed. "Me is one of the many Master Draco's kitchen elves. Now me is serving Missus Granger"

"Oh, no!" Her face flushed as she shook it violently. "No, thank you so much, Lindy, but please tell Master Dr— please tell Malfoy that I don't want an elf."

The words were regretted as soon as they landed on the elf's giant ears. Lindy began wailing violently.

"Lindy is a good house elf. Why does Missus not want Lindy? Lindy makes food, Lindy tidies up, Lindy brings presents!" She kept wringing the towel she wore. "Master said Missus Granger is important and good to elves, but Lindy must be very bad if Missus Granger doesn't want her! Lindy is punishing herself"

Her giant eyes searched the room frantically until she found Hermione's giant book on Hippogriffs' Taming and Care, which she took with both hands and smacked her face with. Hermione gasped and lunged to take the book from her.

"No, Lindy! I'm sorry, I'm sorry! Of course, you're good, Lindy. Oh Godric, I'm so sorry! I just don't like to use slave lab—"

"But Lindy is not a slave, Lindy is a house elf!" Lindy was now both offended, sad and determined to punish herself. "Lindy is so bad Missus thinks she is a slave—"

A white translucent borzoi entered her living room, much to Hermione's comfort, because at its sight, Lindy stopped fussing and glared at it with attention, waiting for orders.

"Lindy, come home," came Malfoy's steady drawl. The borzoi turned to face Hermione as the elf disappeared with a loud CRACK. "Granger, stop pestering my elf and eat the damn breakfast, or you'll earn yourself some spanking."

Hermione opened her mouth to argue, but the borzoi hadn't finished.

"If you're wondering how I knew, I assure you that knowing you is precisely how I'm going to take good care of you. Now be a good girl and eat."

And with that, he vanished in a cloud of smoke.

A patronus should not be able to make her feel like she was feeling at that moment. Partly to distract herself from the warmth spreading on her lower abdomen and partly because she was very hungry, Hermione huffed and went to remove the cloche.

For a split second, she just stared at it with her mouth open. It must've been a coincidence. There wasn't any possible explanation for how he would've guessed her favourite breakfast. Especially

since she ate it only once a year, at her birthday with Rose in a Muggle bakery. She didn't have the budget for more than simple toasts and black coffee at home.

But in front of her, maintained fresh by a stasis charm, were avocado toasts, with smoked salmon and cream cheese. And also orange juice and a Brazilian açai bowl topped with chopped mango, banana, strawberries and honey.

Winter was barely over. That meal cost a fortune.

Hermione almost called in sick so she could eat at a leisurely pace, but unfortunately, having missed the previous afternoon, she didn't allow herself such an act of rebellion. There was also the certainty that being home alone would result only in overthinking and worrying about her dinner.

She had decided against attending, after all, if only to refuse his proposal. Despite the exquisite breakfast in front of her, she wasn't willing to bend her morals in acceptance of being someone's sex slave, or worse: having a house elf work for her. The hippogriff's sanctuary would find its funds somewhere else.

That somewhere, however, had not yet been found three hours after she had arrived at her small, poorly funded and cluttered office. There wasn't a more viable option than Malfoy's fortune. That had been precisely why she had visited him first. That was *exactly* why he had been so bold on his proposal. *He knew she needed him.* And like a good Slytherin, he wanted to profit from her need.

Speaking of the devil, a loud CRACK resounded with Lindy's arrival.

"Missus Granger, Lindy brought Missus her lunch and a letter from Master Draco!" the elf squeaked in joy, dangling a stuffed brown paper bag and a large envelope in her tiny hands.

Lindy snapped her long fingers, and the papers and books' mess on top of Hermione's desk flew around, neatly arranging themselves in piles organised by subject. Then, the elf placed the bag and the envelope in front of Hermione, who gasped and opened her mouth to thank Lindy.

"Missus is to forgive Lindy, but Master Draco told Lindy to leave before Missus could complain
___"

CRACK, and she was gone.

Inside the bag, there was a bottle and what looked to be a teriyaki chicken sandwich. Upon the first bite, however, Hermione was greeted with the sweetness of grilled pineapple, too. A loud and unexpected moan came from her mouth at the taste.

There was probably another statement being made by Draco Malfoy with that meal. This was something new, something she hadn't tasted before, something she'd probably scrunch her nose at if suggested to her.

Yet she adored it.

Once half of the sandwich had reached her stomach, washed down by the perfect iced peach tea that came inside the bottle, the parchment inside the envelope finally piqued her interest. Cleaning the points of her fingers on the skirt of her dress, Hermione opened it carefully and unrolled the parchment in the familiar handwriting.

Granger,

Have a nice lunch.

Read the rules carefully and bring the contract signed to our dinner.

Expect me on your floo at 6 pm.

Draco Malfoy

Contract of submission

This document is intended to formalise the full mutual consent of Draco Lucius Malfoy (hereinafter referred to as The Dom) and Hermione Jean Granger (hereinafter referred to as The sub) in regards to the Dominant/submissive relationship, clearly define responsibilities, duties, limits and punishments of each party.

- *The Dom is responsible for providing for each and every one of the sub's financial needs.*
- *The sub is obliged to inform the Dom of each and every one of her financial needs.*
- *The Dom is responsible for every decision and choice in the sub's life.*
- *The sub is obliged to follow the Dom's instructions and orders.*
- *The Dom is responsible for the sub's health, survival, well-being and pleasure.*
- *The sub is obliged to devote herself to the Dom's desires and renounce her rights to her pleasure, insofar as permitted by the Dom.*
- *The Dom is obliged to listen to the sub's concerns, to never punish her for communicating them respectfully, and to solve her problems.*
- *The sub is obliged to inform the Dom of any dangers, concerns and life problems, but also to follow the Dom's decision regarding any issues.*
- *The Dom is responsible for making his decisions based on his judgment of what will be best for the sub.*
- *The sub is obliged at all times to make her body readily available to the Dom for his use, following his clothing and grooming preferences.*
- *The Dom is responsible for furnishing the sub with a token of ownership.*
- *The sub is obliged to wear this symbol at all times, except when the Dom states that doing so would be inappropriate.*
- *The sub is obliged to address the Dom as "Dom" or "Sir", unless otherwise directed, and to speak respectfully to the Dom at all times.*
- *The sub is obliged to answer any and all questions asked by the Dom freely, promptly, and to the best of their knowledge. The sub is also obliged to volunteer any information that the*

Dom should know regarding the sub's physical or emotional state.

- *The Dom is forbidden to use the sub's confidence to harm the sub in any way.*
- *Any infractions of this agreement, or any act the sub commits which displeases the Dom, will result in punishment. The sub will gracefully accept punishment and try to learn from it. The sub agrees to assemble the punishment materials as ordered by the Dom and assume any position needed to accept the punishment. The sub understands that failure to comply with the Dom's orders will result in a more severe punishment. The Dom will explain the reason for the punishment either before, during, or following the punishment. The Dom agrees to discipline only out of a desire to better the sub, and further agrees to never punish out of, or during, feelings of anger.*
- *If at any moment, the sub decides to end this contract, she's to use the safeword RED or produce red sparks with her wand or fingertips. This decision will be final.*

By the time she had reached the end of the text, a mix of feelings flooded Hermione's mind and body. She felt herself blushing, despite being alone. Goosebumps were prickling her skin, pixies lighting thousands of little flames inside her lower abdomen. Without noticing, she had her thighs tightly pressed against each other. Her brows furrowed, and her lip was crushed between her teeth. She couldn't believe Malfoy's audacity to assume that she would submit to that. Not only that, he had invaded her workplace to send her a sex-slavery contract.

A mental list of all the things she was going to scream at him at that night's dinner was quickly forming.

Chapter 4: When they negotiate

The cold January air nipped at the exposed skin of Hermione's back as soon as the waiter took her fur stole and guided her towards the table where he waited for her. The open-air restaurant, dimly lit by thousands of fairies perched in rose vines, was enchanted to be warmer than its freezing outdoors, but Hermione could still feel her nipples' sharp response to the chill. The smirk Malfoy offered her confirmed her suspicions of his planning. She wasn't stupid. When the red silk dress arrived via owl that afternoon in her flat, she knew that the lacy black knickers and rich jewellery accompanying it were the only things he wanted to see her wearing underneath it.

"Granger." He pulled a chair for her to sit on. "You look gorgeous"

"You clean up yourself, alright, too, Malfoy." Her tone was firm enough during that massive understatement. Malfoy was absolutely marvellous in his all black three piece suit with golden cufflinks and tie pins that matched the bracelet and earrings she wore.

"So," he said, unbuttoning his jacket to sit in front of her. "I assume you have lots of questions."

One could always count on Malfoy's straightforwardness. Hermione had planned on pretending to read the menu for a few minutes before jumping to the subject of their meeting, only there was no menu. She was about to ask him about it when a different waiter brought him a glass of Ogden's Old Firewhiskey and sparkling water with lemon for her.

"What? No drink for me?"

"I'd rather have you sober while we talk about the contract." His tone was final. Hermione huffed while sipping her drink. "So, Granger... I am sure a good girl like you has a list of questions and notes on the list I sent you, feel free to bombard me with them"

To her credit, Hermione had indeed made a long list of her objections to each rule, but she decided to keep the parchment inside her beaded bag to avoid giving him the satisfaction of being right about her. Again.

"Look, Malfoy, I'll be honest with you," she said, taking a shuddering breath to gather her Gryffindor courage. Despite wanting to scream at him, she still needed his money. "I don't think I'll be the right match for what you need. If you would, however, allow me to brief you on the importance of the sanctuar—"

She was silenced by a quick raise of his hand.

"I thought we had clarified that I have no interest whatsoever in hippogriffs' welfare, Granger."

"Well, yes, but—"

"Why exactly do you think you won't be the *right match* for what I need when I already told you what I *want*?" Behind the intertwined fingers he held in front of his mouth, she could see that his left eyebrow was raised, challenging her.

Despite feeling burned by the heat in his steel silver eyes, Hermione squared her shoulders and said firmly. "Listen, I have been studying this dom and sub thing, read a bloody book about it and—"

“Of course you have,” he chuckled.

“Well, I don’t feel like doing any of those things! Frankly, I find them not a bit exciting; most of them are disgusting—”

Her upcoming ranting about how there was nothing less appealing to her than being degraded by Malfoy with ropes, leather whips and wax was interrupted by the waiter’s approach with their amuse-bouches.

“Eat,” he said, gesturing to the beautiful plate in front of her.

Hermione ate gingerly, not because she wanted to obey him, but because she was quite intrigued with the delicate shard of lotus root glazed with silvered honey and topped with whipped elderflower mist. It was, however, not a clever move, since Malfoy took her silence as a sign for him to speak.

“Granger, I’m disappointed,” he sighed while elegantly cutting his food and sending a shiver down her body. She couldn’t fathom why disappointing him made her sad. “I thought you were good at following rules.”

She looked up at him with wide eyes.

“Did I tell you to research BDSM?”

“Well, no, but—”

“What did I tell you to do?”

“To go home,” she bit back the ‘*and I did*’ that she wanted to say. “And wait for your owl with the rules for the — er — arrangement.”

“Exactly. Do you know why I told you that?”

“Er—”

“Because I knew you’d panic if you were exposed to a whole universe of kinks on your first day.” He smirked, placing one piece in his mouth and chewing slowly while staring at her and clearly enjoying the anticipation he could build in her. “You see, I want what’s best for you, which means I don’t want to see you overthinking and worrying about these things. All you needed to know was the things written in the letter I sent you.”

Her lips parted, a retort climbing its way out, but Draco gave her no space for it. “So, let’s discuss these rules, alright?”

Her chair screeched quietly as her hips wiggled, adjusting to a better position. She took a huge, calming breath and ate the last portion of her entry before continuing.

“Very well, Malfoy,” she said through gritted teeth. “Would you like me to inform you of my objections to your slavery contract in alphabetical order or —?”

As both of their plates had been cleared, the restaurant magic vanished them, and the waiter brought their starters.

“Gilded beetroot carpaccio,” he announced in a thick accent she couldn’t exactly place. “Layered with glimmers of crystallised basil, enchanted goat cheese mousse, and a drizzle of starvine syrup harvested under a full moon”

“Thank you,” Hermione murmured, blushing a bit at being caught in such a flustered state. At the other side of the table, however, Malfoy seemed amused.

“Why don’t you follow the order I wrote them in? Are you opposed to having me provide each and every one of your financial needs?”

“Er— Hm.” A cough tried to clear her throat. “Not exactly. I don’t need it, obviously, as I do have a job, but what concerns me is the fact that you expect me to inform you of them!”

“Obviously.” His tongue licked a bit of syrup from his bottom lip. “How else would I pay for them?”

“I won’t have you analysing and critiquing my spending, Malfoy!” she huffed. “If you think I’ll ask for your permission before buying a book, you are—”

“Don’t insult me, Granger,” he sneered. “You can buy a fucking island and I won’t object. I simply wish to be informed of your need so I can follow my part of the deal and provide, i.e. pay for it.”

Hermione scoffed. “An island?”

“Choose and it’ll be yours to fill with as many tormented creatures as you wish.”

A quick search between his grey eyes showed her that he was speaking truthfully, which was honestly more scary than the other option. Hermione gulped and took a quick sip of her drink. “I don’t want a bloody island, Malfoy.”

“Pity, shall we move to the next item then?” His empty glass was magically filled with more ice and amber liquid.

“You want to be responsible for every decision and choice in my life. Does that mean you’ll decide the tea I drink and the hairdo I wear every day?”

Draco hummed, his eyes moving all over her, considering her questions. “Earl Grey for the morning and something herbal — mint — for the afternoon. No honey nor sugar, maybe a splash of milk.” He leaned forward, resting his chin on his palm. “But something tells me you’ll indulge with a hot cocoa at night, nauseatingly sweetened.”

Her mouth fell open, and she suddenly felt too nude in front of him. The logical side of her mind kept coming up with dozens of plausible answers to why he would know her drinks of choice so well, maybe Lindy had been observing her, maybe he was just good at guessing... But despite his mouth curving at one side, Malfoy wasn’t done.

“You’ll wear your hair up, in a bun or ponytail, at work. I wish to be the only one seeing it in all its glory.”

Her legs crossed, aiming to scratch the tingling at the point where they met. Hermione always wore her hair up at the Ministry, yet something made her blood boil at his audacity, to think that he could control the way she styled her hair?

"I am wearing it down now." *In the middle of a restaurant, what will you do about it?*

"Yes." He smirked fully now, leaning back in his chair. "I loved it, Granger. Thank you for dressing up so nicely for me."

His compliment echoed inside her mind and sent electric waves throughout her nerves, raising the fine hairs of her arms and legs. She had said it as a challenge; she wasn't a toddler presenting him with a crayon drawing for appraisal. But, stating it now would be petty and just as childish, so she crossed her arms and pressed him.

"I mean it, Malfoy." His eye twitched a bit at her tone. "You can't possibly expect me to obey you in everything."

"I can and I do."

The waiter once again interrupted them, bringing what he presented as dragonfire-seared elk medallion, served with charred moonroot purée, black garlic glaze and a drizzle of phoenix ash oil. She felt victorious with the opportunity to complain about Malfoy's choice when she realised her plate was different.

"For the lady." The waiter smiled. "Starflower gnocchi with roasted sunberries and moonbasil pesto."

Hermione looked between the waiter, her plate and a grinning Malfoy. How did he know she wouldn't like the red game meat? That she'd favour pasta more? This time, her *thank you* came out weak and shy, facing the beautifully plated meal.

"As I was saying," Malfoy continued, amusement clear in his voice. "I do expect you to obey my orders and to trust every choice of your life to me, because I clearly know what's best for you and, as the contract says, will always act with your best interest in mind. The idea is to relieve you of your burden, Granger. I do not wish anything but to make your life easier. I will be responsible for guaranteeing your health, your wellbeing and, most importantly, your *pleasure*."

There was no possible answer for that, for she didn't trust herself enough to say anything but a needy whine at the moment. Hermione ate silently until something came to her mind.

"What if I disagree with a choice? What if I do not wish to obey?" she hissed. "Will you spank me then?"

"I believe rules seven and eight state that you should ask *nicely* for me to reconsider." He smirked, cutting his meat. "I can be very generous, Granger."

"It also says that your word will be final!" Her cry came high-pitched and offended. "And rule sixteen says I will be punished if I disobey!"

"Yes," he said seriously, his eyes piercing her.

Hermione ran an exasperated hand over her hair, looking around and suddenly feeling too warm on that starry night. Realising that she was seated in front of a closer, someone who made deals and won negotiations daily, she decided to move on to the worst aspect of the contract, in her opinion.

"Malfoy, if I am to be fully honest," she sighed, already regretting being that open and vulnerable to him, a shark. "I don't feel comfortable with the sexual aspect of this arrangement."

He took a sip of his whiskey and then placed the glass back on the table, staring intently at her.

"What about it makes you uncomfortable?"

"Well!" She suppressed a nervous giggle threatening to rise from her chest. "For starters, I don't have much experience, I don't feel any appeal to pain, humiliation and the sort of things that submission entails."

"You see," he said, firmly. "That is precisely why I didn't want you reading on BDSM."

Her cheeks and neck burned with an embarrassed blush, and she looked away because his gaze was too intense.

"I didn't want you jumping to conclusions. Sex is supposed to be pleasurable. A good Dom would never have you doing anything that you're not comfortable with. *Granger, look at me.*"

Hermione's head whipped to face him. Obeying him was something she didn't have to think about before doing. Quite freeing not to think for once.

"When I fuck you, Granger, you will love every second of it."

A shiver ran through her spine, forcing her to squirm in place and her lower lip to prevent any sound that might feed the arrogance colouring Malfoy's features at that moment. She squeezed her eyelids, counting the seconds of her inhale and trying to ground herself back to her senses.

"About that *when*..." Her voice was high-pitched and shaky. "I don't like the idea of you basically raping me whenever you want—"

"*Granger,*" he admonished. "I am not a rapist."

"Of course, because signing that magical contract will mean I consent to being a hole for you—"

His glass broke with the impact with which he slammed it against the table. The shards magically vanished, and a new glass appeared. When she glanced up from the place of collision, his expression barely gave away the rage he felt.

"Do you remember what I said in our previous meeting?" he whispered, and Hermione made the mental note that Malfoy's whispers were more dangerous than other men's screams.

"About you fucking me in every way that you want?" Her words were covered in ice in an attempt to hide the fear of that much surrender. "Yes, I do remember."

"One thing about me, Granger,"—his voice was low, dangerous—"is that I like my women begging."

Hermione felt a flaming salamander circling in her lower abdomen.

"I won't touch you until you earn it, with a lot of good behaviour and many, many pleas," he said finally, raising his tumbler back to his lips, eyes intent on hers.

“What if I never ask?”

“Oh, you will.”

“Why? Because you won’t allow me to have sex with anyone else?”

“Not because of that, but logically you will belong only to me,” he said, matter-of-factly. “And I don’t share.”

“I suppose the same doesn’t apply to you? Will you be allowed to—have other girls?”

He thought for a minute before answering, “I won’t have other subs, no.”

“But girlfriends? Regular dates?”

“Would that make you sad?” he asked bluntly.

“What? Of course, no! You can shag whoever you want for all I bloody care, Malfoy!”

Something about his smirk told Hermione that he didn’t believe her words, and she couldn’t blame him for it, because her tone had been rather desperate.

“I am not obliged per contract not to have anyone else, no,” he stated confidently. “But I can consider, if you ask nicely and serve me properly.”

Before she could voice anything, their plates had once again vanished, and the waiter came to present their desserts.

“Spellbound Mille-Feuille,” he explained. “Layers of lavender pastry, whipped vanilla cream, and crystallised rose quartz. Served with a warm trickle of twilight berry elixir.”

It sounded delicious, but Hermione couldn’t possibly think of putting anything into her mouth. She had so many goosebumps that she would probably vomit.

“One thing you said intrigued me, though,” Malfoy said, already feeding himself. “What do you mean by magical contract?”

She dropped the fork she had been using to play with the mille-feuille and glanced up at him. “I imagine the contract will be magically binding? Blood magic, perhaps?”

The laughter that erupted from his chest would be contagious hadn’t she known it was born at her expense. As it was, she only waited with an impatient expression, glancing around at the restaurant she hadn’t had time to fully appreciate due to the reason for her presence.

It looked like a secret garden, with vines winding wrought-iron arches and trellises, their leaves gently rustling in the night breeze. Their table was in the heart of the space, under a charming gazebo, its latticework draped in blossoms and soft fairy lights that cast a golden glow. If it wasn’t for the negotiation of a slavery contract, the scenery would be quite romantic: marble-topped tables on cobbled stone paths, each paired with delicate iron chairs adorned with plush velvet cushions in rich, jewel-toned hues.

“Are you quite done?” she asked as he wiped the tear from his left eye.

"Sorry, Granger," he chuckled. "It's just funny for me that you'd think I would act like your fifteen-year-old version that hexed that Edgecombe girl because she snitched on that little club you had with Potter." She blushed. "No, Granger. The contract will not have blood magic or any other sort of compelling spells or hexing punishments."

"But — I thought th—"

"It wouldn't be submission and trust if it were coerced," he stated firmly, "You need to consent and choose to keep consenting daily."

"About that," she said, grasping for any thread of reason to refuse. "I don't see an end date."

"I don't have one."

"What about if any of us wants to end it?"

"Then it is over."

"And you'll withdraw your financial provisions, I suppose." She raised an eyebrow. "Defund my sanctuary, for example"

"Any money spent will be yours; I would never stoop so low as to request it back." He said, placing the final piece of his dessert at his lips. "It's not like I need money, Granger. I'm not Weasley."

Maybe it was because he mentioned her ex-husband, maybe it was because she was simply curious. "So, were you always a dom, Malfoy? Did you spank Pansy after classes? Did Astoria wear a collar —?"

"Don't speak about her," he hissed in the first display of emotion she saw from him since school.

"You just spoke about Ron—!"

"If you don't like that, then ask nicely, and rule fifteen will guarantee I don't bring him up again. But let's get one thing straight," His nostrils flared, and she could sense how hard he was fighting to remain in control of his ire. "I am not your friend, Granger. I am to be your dom. We won't live by the same rules; on the contrary, you'll live by my rules. And I won't have you speaking about Astoria ever again, do I make myself clear?"

Malfoy's expression was so menacing that Hermione felt scared of him for the first time. "Yes," She murmured, looking down and feeling tears burning her eyes. She mumbled a quick apology, swallowing the lump in her throat. Why would she mention his dead wife? It was out of line.

Silence stretched between the two; she had no courage to look up, and he seemed to need the time to collect himself.

"Now, do you have any other questions?" Malfoy spoke in a smooth and much softer tone.

"There is a token of ownership mentioned in the rules." Her voice came out weak, and she still couldn't face him. "What would it be? I can't just wear a collar to school meetings or the ministry?"

"Look up, Granger."

When her eyes moved from facing her fidgeting fingers over her lap and glanced up, a golden hoop stood in front of her. It was plain, delicate even, nothing like the collar she had pictured. But there was an M pendant on it.

“I can’t use this, Malfoy!” she gasped. “Do you want everyone to know that I am your sex slave?”

“Are you embarrassed to be associated with me, Granger?”

“No!” she said, exasperated, her hands falling to the table. “It’s not *you* — It’s the sub thing — I’d like my personal life private and — Well, you and I are quite famous in the wizarding world — Word would get to our kids and —”

“It’ll be charmed so only you and I can see the pendant,” he said coldly. “I agree with you. I don’t think I want the word to get out just yet. But it’ll be my choice to make eventually. You understand?”

She bit her lip. “Y-yes.”

“Any other questions?”

The meal was over. The list of objections, too. It was time to give him her decision, yet she seemed farther from it now after all the questioning than she was when she arrived there.

“To be clear,” she began, her fingers shaking as she ran them over the cold marble. “This *arrangement* is the only way to get your funding to the Hippogriffs’ Sanctuary…?”

“Yes.”

“I can always end it, at any time, saying the word RED, and you won’t take the money back?”

“Yes.”

“Malfoy, what if I don’t want to do something, but I don’t want to end everything?”

“Ask nicely and I’ll think about it. However, if I sustain my decision and you disobey,” he offered her a debauched smile. “I’ll discipline you.”

She took a shuddering breath, calming herself and reaching the brink of the precipice. She could only hope that Malfoy would catch her if she fell.

“Alright, Malfoy. I agree with it.”

“Let me hear you say it, Granger.” He grinned. “And address me with due respect.”

“I will be your sub, Sir.”

Chapter 5: When he teaches

“Alright there, Ms Granger?”

At the sound of her last name, Hermione jumped from the daydreaming fog she had been immersed in. No one called her by her last name; being a war heroine meant people assumed they knew you enough to use your first name. But that wasn’t the only reason Hermione was surprised. The black paneled Ministry’s lifts, though frequently crammed with employees, were usually empty that early in the morning. Which was precisely why she had begun arriving at that hour, to avoid as much unwanted interaction as possible. People had finally stopped asking about Harry Potter and the war, but questions about Ronald and their divorce were unfortunately still quite frequent.

Standing at her side, only Merlin knew for how long, was a broad-shouldered man in a dark grey suit with a black cowboy hat and matching boots. The wizard was in his mid-fifties, judging by the white strands in his curls, and had a taste for gold: his chains, rings, and watch were shining.

“Oh! Hi — Mr...?”

“Hughes.” The man’s smile was broad and confident. “Albert Hughes. We’ve been corresponding
—”

“Oh, of course!” Hermione gasped, extending her hand to shake his. “Mr Hughes, what a pleasure to finally meet you! I wasn’t expecting you until eight.”

“Well, I have never been to the British ministry, so I wasn’t sure how long it would take for me to reach your office.”

“Oh, surely less than two hours.” Hermione giggled. “But, come with me to my office, we can have our meeting now, and you’ll be free to go back to—” she trailed off, unsure of what exactly Albert Hughes did in his free time, the images of horseback riding and pistol fighting somehow engraved in her brain.

The American wizard had been referred to her by Susan Bones, from the Department of International Magical Cooperation, and that morning’s meeting was a mere formality before granting him the position of Project Manager to the Hippogriff Sanctuary in Devon. His credentials preceded him, having been responsible for similar projects all over the world and having a special talent with magical beasts. Hermione had been responsible for the legal and financial aspects, but - despite loving planning and managing- overseeing its construction would be too much for her plate. She had other creatures’ rights to advocate for, after all. Nonetheless, she planned on working closely with Hughes for the upcoming months to ensure that her dream of six years would come true.

“I think that will be all, Mr Hughes.” She smiled broadly over her coffee mug, thirty minutes later.

“No, please, call me Albert,” he pleaded. “Mr Hughes is eighty years old and has slept with a shotgun below his pillow since Vietnam.”

“Okay, then, Albert. I was already pleased with your professional profile, so this meeting was just to see if we could work well together, and I assume we can, taking on how many giggles you stole

from me.” She rose from her chair, placing the mug on the table and extending her hand to him. “Welcome to the project!”

“Thank you, ma’am!” He shook her hand. “I’m looking forward to being put to work. This is a very noble cause you’ve taken up. And allow me to congratulate you on the great budget you managed to raise, it will be fundamental to...”

What exactly she wouldn’t know just then, for the mention of budget had Hermione’s mind drifting to the previous week, when she arrived at her office and found an official owl from Gringotts informing her of the donation of several hundred galleons from Malfoy’s vaults. Three times more than the amount she had requested, mind you. Once again, she had been impressed with how well Malfoy knew her, because she would never believe that he had actually done it without the formal confirmation from the bank.

But that had been all. Apart from Lindy, who now did laundry, cooking and cleaning for Hermione, Malfoy hadn’t reached out a single time for her in five days. She had tried inquiring the elf about him, but it seemed to have received express orders not to linger around her enough for conversations with Hermione. His silence was maddening. The anticipation was far worse than anything he might have planned, because her mind kept wondering what he would have her do. A small part of her felt almost... wistful. Her weekend had once again been spent lonely, reading the same romance for the seventh time. She had supposed he *wanted* her, and yet he made no sign of it whatsoever. Well, except for the galleons, that is. She was thankful for them, obviously, and it would be perfect if Malfoy forgot about her altogether.

There is no free lunch.

She would be requested to pay for the amount given for the hippogriffs. This was probably just a sick mind game of his, expecting her to come to him first to soothe his pride or something. He would be truly disappointed if he thought she would do such a thing. Now that she had the money she needed, she’d die before knocking at his door again. He had nothing she could be interested in. He was mad in his speech, saying she needed someone to take care of her. Hermione Granger was a free, independent woman, and she didn’t need a man for anything. As Hughes left her alone in her small office, she found herself absent-mindedly rubbing her golden necklace and replaying their last encounter once again.

“I will be your sub, Sir.”

The words surprised Hermione when they left her mouth. Despite being sure that it was the only way to secure the funding necessary for the project she had been working on for years, the project that cost her her marriage and so much more... She still couldn’t wrap her mind around the fact that she had basically just agreed to live under the reigns of her school bully and former Death Eater, current Playboy, Draco Malfoy. Worst of all, the thought that should revulse her only gathered heat and tingling inside her belly: excitement, anticipation, desire.

Malfoy, on the other hand, didn’t seem surprised at all. He simply leaned back, a Cheshire cat grin spreading through his chiselled face and intertwined his fingers, elbows resting on the iron arms of his chair. Pleased, proud.

“Good girl, Granger.”

The purr followed by the snaps of his fingers was all the warning she got before the golden hoop opened and slithered midair towards her like a snake, closing around her neck. A gasp escaped her

lips, and her fingers brushed over the cold metal. It was done; she belonged to Draco Malfoy. He owned her and all of her decisions.

Nothing more than a whisper escaped her lips while she wondered what his first command would be. Would he have her crawl towards him? Sit on his lap? “What now?”

“Now, you go home and wait for my next order. Can you do that, Granger? Can you be patient for me?”

Hermione had been patient. More than a week had passed, and she had been bloody patient. More than that, despite her better judgment, every rule he gave her until that day had been followed. Her hair was up, she didn’t pester Lindy about elves’ rights, and she kept her body *groomed*. Five years after her divorce hadn’t brought many visitors to her bed, but a quick shower with glamouring spells as soon as she arrived that night from the restaurant made sure she was shaved, moisturised and with done nails. Each day, increased how pathetic she felt with that move.

Knock knock

“Come in!” she said, rummaging through the files in the sideboard behind her desk.

“Hmm... Granger, what a nice view you present your Dom with, my good, good girl.” His drawl was sinful and had her turning on her heels like the Pied Piper would.

“M-malfoy!” She gasped at the absurdity of his words in her work office, of all places. “What are you doing here?”

Draco Malfoy was wearing once again his signature all black robes, his pale blond hair styled with smooth waves to the side, a few strands loose in a perfectly dishevelled manner. His large frame made her office seem small, and Hermione herself felt vulnerable to his powerful presence.

“No, now,” he said seriously, striding towards her. “That’s not how you speak to your Dom, is it? You say ‘*good morning, sir.*’”

She waited for five seconds to see if he was joking, but his gaze was firmly indicating the opposite.

“Good morning, sir.”

“Good girl. Now, if you want to know something, ask nicely.”

Any mean retort she could think of answering him with was pushed back by the fear of meeting his promised punishments so early on. She couldn’t be sure if he would attempt to spank her on her own desk, but she wasn’t fond of finding out just at that moment.

“Do you need anything from me now, sir?” The words tasted like vinegar on her tongue, but their implications left a sweet note at the back of her throat.

If his hummed appreciation was anything to guide her on, he too had the same taste in his. “Yes, Granger, I do.”

Several seconds passed with them standing with eyes fixed on one another, the silence heavy around their heads. Hermione cleared her throat and gestured for him to sit on the wooden table in front of her cluttered desk. “Please, sit... Er— Sir.”

The ends of his lips curved in a half smile, but he didn't sit. "I don't think so, Granger."

Confusion filled her brain and flooded her face, furrowing her eyebrows and pressing her lips in a thin line. "How can I help you then, Mr Malfoy?" She couldn't bring herself to call him *sir* frequently; it was just too weird.

"I believe it is time for you to finally begin your learning in submission, Granger."

"Okay..." she said slowly. "*Sir*"

"Lindy!" With a snap of Malfoy's fingers, the little blue elf appeared. "Take whatever files Granger requires to work today and send them to the study in the Manor"

"W-what?"

"You'll be working next to me today, Granger."

Her gaze flickered between the expectant purple eyes and Malfoy's challenging grey ones. A gasp escaped her lips, and she quickly circled the table towards him.

"M-malfoy — Mr Malfoy, you can't be serious —"

"I am, and mind your tone with me, Granger."

"Please, *sir*, please! You promised not to interfere with my work at the ministry. I can't just leave in the middle of the day and—"

She was now closer than she had ever been to him, her chest almost pressed against his toned abdomen. His large hand gently grabbed her wrist, drawing low soothing circles on the inside.

"Granger," he cooed, slowly. "I won't interfere. I believe you had your only in-person meeting of the day, right?"

"Y-yes, but—"

"Use sir when you talk to me."

"Yes, sir. I did, but I still have lots of—"

"Can't you do your work remotely? From home?" He raised his eyebrow.

Before Rose enrolled at Hogwarts, Hermione used to do most of her work remotely, since she had no one to care for her daughter besides Molly Weasley, who wasn't exactly Hermione's favourite person, not even before the divorce.

"Yes —Sir, I suppose I can."

He grinned and lowered his face so his nose would be nearly touching hers before whispering, "Perfect, so tell Lindy exactly what you need to take with you, and I'll wait to escort you to the floo."

When he straightened himself up, Hermione ran both hands to the side of her head and turned on her heels to point to every file she could need. She tried her best not to notice how close her bum

was to the front of his trousers, as he hadn't stepped back an inch.

"This and this too, Lindy, please." As the elf bowed and disappeared, Hermione stood frozen in her spot, afraid of moving and accidentally brushing against Malfoy. "What if I need to talk with someone from my department?"

Malfoy's thumb ran from her earlobe to the neck of her shirt, sending electric waves where it passed, before he whispered against her ear. "Use Lindy for memos or the fireplace for a floo call. Now, be a good girl and tell Blackwood you'll be working from home for the rest of the month."

She took a shuddering breath before waving her wand to cast her silvery otter Patronus with the requested message.

"Good girl," he purred, and she felt her knees weakening. "Come with me"

He gently pulled her wrist and turned her to face him, their faces inches apart.

"Malfoy — Sir, please..." she pleaded. "Please, let me meet you there... If we walk together, people will talk... Please."

Something akin to irritation briefly displayed in his features before he schooled them and smirked, raising an eyebrow. "Are you embarrassed about being seen with me? If anyone asks, you can say I am the sole donor to your hippogriff thing."

"Why would I be leaving with my donor? Isn't it suspicious?"

He searched between her eyes before answering. "You walk in front of me, I want to admire the view." Her stomach tightened. "I'll be five steps behind; the ministry is quite full at this hour, no one will notice it."

"O-okay," she sighed in relief before quickly stepping out of him and towards the door.

Malfoy had been right, they were leaving at the precise moment most of the ministry's employees were arriving, so every lift and corridor was so crammed that it was barely recognisable that he was following her. Lots of people stopped her to talk, as usual. "How is Ron?" "Oh, you're still not back together?" "Poor thing, you two were so great as a couple!" "And little Rose, is she at Hogwarts? Yes, a Gryffindor like her parents, is she?" "Well, good thing your little project worked out, now you'll have time to care for your husband!"

The green flames from the atrium's fireplace were calling her like an oasis, away from the pressure of that crowded place. She shrieked "Malfoy Manor" and was soon spinning into the void. Before she had time to cast a quick *scourgify* to wipe the dust out of her blazer, Malfoy grabbed her wrist and apparated both of them inside his study.

She stumbled from his grip, suddenly shivering with fear and anticipation, and quickly scanned the room. No whips, candles or chains yet, but she did see her files on the dark walnut desk. Malfoy circled away from her and strode towards his black leather chair.

"Let your hair down," he said simply.

Hermione took her shaky fingers to remove the hairpins that held her curls in a bun, and they fell around her like a curtain.

"Good girl," he purred, hands folded in front of him and eyes glistening with something she couldn't yet name. As the silence stretched between them, he lit a cigarette, and one of his hands gestured to her piles. "Go on, then. I won't keep you from your work."

Hermione looked down at her files and then back up at Malfoy again. He had already moved on to scanning his own documents, writing down observations and scratching sections of the texts. She shifted her weight between her feet.

"Should I sit here?"

He glanced up from his documents and took a long drag before answering her, his eyes fixed on her with amusement. "For now, you can sit wherever you like, Granger. Make yourself comfortable, I just want to have the beautiful sight you make while I work."

She looked around her, considering the best option. The fur rug in front of the fireplace seemed rather cosy, but she would die before splaying there and exposing her arse to him. Near the bookshelf, there was a long dark green velvet settle she could see herself lying to read on. On the other side, there was a small coffee table with two armchairs perfect for curling over. She didn't want to be too comfortable in front of Malfoy, though. She wasn't really sure she could. So she opted to sit in front of him, in the same chair she had sat when he offered the position she now occupied.

Would he really let her work? Why was she feeling somehow disappointed if he did?

"Granger," he called after almost three hours of complete silence, broken only once when a third elf named Rex brought them tea and sandwiches for lunch. Hermione made an effort to keep working while eating, avoiding Malfoy's gaze at all costs. He wasn't the one for small talk, and the heavy talk they would eventually have seemed dangerous to her. "My eyes are tired, read these letters for me."

She stiffly rose from her seat and bent to reach the letters he signalled for her. The first one was from his mother, who was currently in France and *had met a very gentle young lady named Bridgitte who had just graduated from Beauxbatons...*

Malfoy growled, and her head whipped up. "Don't need to finish that, move to the next one."

"Dear Mr Malfoy, as heir to one of the most influential wizarding fortunes, we'd be honoured if you'd consider funding our expansion into Eastern European dragon trading..."

"The Parkinson family cordially invites you to an evening of fine wine and wand duels..."

"Our daughter, Felicity, has taken a keen interest in your accomplishments. Might we suggest a meeting over tea at the Manor?"

"As the face of tradition and luxury, we believe your endorsement of our enchanted cologne line would elevate our brand..."

"A routine inspection has been scheduled for Vault 93. Please confirm a representative will be present."

"As a member of a founding magical family, your presence is required for the next hearing regarding post-war reparations..."

“Would the Malfoy family be willing to sponsor the renovation of the Potions classroom?”

For the next hour, Hermione read all of his mail out loud while he made pauses and dictated responses to his Quick-Quotes Quill to write.

“Revise them for me, Granger,” he demanded. “Then you may go back to your ministry work.”

She wanted to argue that she was not his secretary, but then again, that sort of work seemed much easier and more respectable than the things she hoped — *thought* he would have her doing. So, after fifteen minutes, all the letters had been revised, and she found herself once again doing her ministry work.

The sun moved through the sky behind Malfoy’s chair, painting it in orange, pink, purple and finally indigo. The afternoon tea service came and went. Hermione kept herself busy, acutely aware that he had left his work at the table and moved to sit in one of the plush armchairs near the fire, smoking his cigar and possibly drinking a bit of his firewhiskey, from the sounds she had heard. The fear of what would come after work kept her productivity much better than it had ever been, and soon she had nothing left to do. She raised awkwardly and began to gather her things, in an attempt to organise them as Lindy had left them that morning.

“Have dinner with me, Granger.”

Chapter 6: When she spends

Portraits of stern-faced ancestors with white blond hair lined the walls of the corridors, their eyes scrutinising Hermione with disdain as she followed Malfoy through the Manor. Blubby the house-elf waited by the door, ready to serve.

The dining room of Malfoy Manor was exactly what Hermione could have expected to see, yet the stunning sight still took her breath away. A long chamber panelled in dark polished mahogany with gilded mouldings like ivy across the high ceiling. A row of enchanted candles floated overhead, their flames flickering softly, casting shadows on the silk-draped curtains.

A long obsidian dining table, polished like a mirror, stretched down the centre, surrounded by high-backed chairs with serpent motifs carved into the arms, each cushioned in dark green velvet. Malfoy pulled a chair for her at his side, while he sat at the head of the table. As soon as they sat, a bottle made its way, floating towards them.

“Wine?” Malfoy offered. “This one is elf-made, delicious really—”

“No, thanks,” Hermione said quickly. She didn’t trust herself being inebriated near him. Especially not after such a long day, in which she caught herself staring into his strong and elegant hands more than she’d like to admit. Malfoy had freed himself from his outer robes, wearing only a black shirt and black trousers, both perfectly tailored to his fit body.

“What else would you like to have, then?”

“I get to choose now?” Her question was unmistakably bitter.

If he got irritated by her insolence, she couldn’t tell. Instead, he began patiently cutting his entry without answering her for several minutes. “What you *get* is the opportunity to be a good girl and answer your Dom’s question, Granger, unless you’d rather see what bad girls with bad mouths *get*.”

Hermione’s face burned with embarrassment at his chastising tone. She had half a mind to just yell red and run away, but her conscience would never be at peace without repaying Malfoy for his big investment. So, through gritted teeth, she informed Rex that water would be just fine, thank you.

“This is not the first rule you broke today, Granger,” Malfoy said nonchalantly, sipping his wine. “I am disappointed.”

“I did everything you asked!” Hermione gasped.

“Yes,” he hummed. “But *you* haven’t asked *me* for anything, even though the rules state that you do.”

Her mouth opened and closed at a loss for words.

“It’s been more than a week since we started our agreement, and I never received an owl, floo call or patronus informing me of your needs and requests.”

“Malfoy—” A glance at his silvery eyes had her correcting herself. “*Mr* Malfoy, you have your elf serving my every meal, you sent the money for the sanctuary... I really don’t need anything else —”

“Indulge me, Granger.” His words were soft, but there was a hint of irritation as he placed his tumbler down. “You mean to tell me that there are no books you wish to acquire? Couldn’t Rose do with new school robes? Perhaps an owl? Scorpius mentioned she has been borrowing his to write to you.”

“I don’t want my daughter involved in this,” she whispered, eyes locked on her plate.

“Well, I didn’t mean to sign my name on the owl’s bloody collar, Granger,” he grunted, making Hermione jump at the unusual display of emotion. He took a huge breath before continuing. “Listen, I am giving you five hundred galleons to spend tomorrow at Diagon Alley. You can’t come back with a single knut left, okay?”

“Malfoy!” she gasped, and he raised an eyebrow. “*Sir*, I can’t possibly spend it all in one day. I barely spent fifty last July buying Rose’s school supplies, and that’s *including* her telescope and wand! How can I—?

“Buy new books, potions and office supplies for you, Granger. Buy yourself new robes that actually fit your body and showcase your beauty. Buy Rose an owl and send her a few galleons and candies with it,” he sneered. “I don’t bloody care, Granger. You spend it all like a good girl, or I’ll bend you over my knee and spank that pretty arse you got until it turns Gryffindor red.”

“I’ll just donate the whole lot!” she snapped. “*Sir*”

“Great! Then Monday, you’ll find a thousand more at your table!” he snarled. “And if you’re not thankful for the money I am giving you, perhaps I should find other ways to use my position as your Dom.”

Hermione blanched. Was he really threatening to *rape* her or something? With all her willpower and stamina, the witch steadied her breathing and cooled her features. “Oh, I’m sorry, sir. I am most thankful. Would you like to explore your other options now, *Sir*? Or am I allowed to go back home?” Her words were icy.

Malfoy didn’t answer; he simply waved her to leave and lit a cigarette.

True to his word, Malfoy had indeed five hundred galleons placed on her kitchen desk the following morning. Hermione huffed and all but stomped her feet on her way to her floo, groaning Leaky Cauldron’s location. She decided to avoid Lindy’s breakfast, starting her day with a butterbeer at the pub owned by her former classmate, Hannah Abbot.

“Keep the change,” she muttered, tossing a galleon over the counter.

Only 499 to go.

Diagon Alley was not bustling like it would be in the summertime, but there were still many people enjoying the slightly less chilly air on that Saturday. Hermione ran into several acquaintances and even a former classmate or two while she bought as many things as she could come up with. Lindy would pop up every half hour, offering to take her things to her flat so she could have her arms free

for more shopping, and Hermione would accept, looking sideways, scared that someone would snatch a photo of her using an enslaved elf's labour and print it on the next day's Daily Prophet.

Hermione decided to spoil herself with a Fortescue's peppermint ice cream after spending one of the most awkward and uncomfortable hours of her life at Madam Malkin's. There she had been measured and basically pushed into purchasing a dozen new work robes. The shop owner nearly bullied her to also get two dress robes after Hermione confessed to wearing the same ones for the past four years. Despite the headache, she was glad to be almost done with the money Malfoy had given her.

"Hermione!"

She glanced up and almost dropped her ice cream at the sight, walking briskly towards her with a toddler girl on each hip, was Ginny Potter.

"Hermione!" She called again, as if the absence of a smile on Hermione's lips was a sign of not recognising her. "Oh my Godric, I haven't seen you in ages!"

The sour response, reminding Ginny that they hadn't seen each other in ages because the Potters sided with Ron in the divorce and proceeded to shut her out as much as possible, was bit back with Hermione's tongue. Instead, what was left was a pleasant smile, along with a genuine inquiry about Harry and their kids.

"Oh, Harry's just been promoted Head of the DMLE, but sure you've heard about it." Everyone had heard about it; the news had made the front cover of the Daily Prophet for a week straight before the holidays. Ginny went on talking about how much trouble her twins had been giving her and how many howlers she had already sent to James in Hogwarts. "What about Rose? I hear she's a Gryffindor, eh? So nice!"

Hermione's heart clenched. While she could understand being cut out by her former best friends, as Ron had always been closer to Harry and was Ginny's brother, she would never forgive the Weasley clan for emotionally neglecting Rose. Her daughter had never quite fitted with her cousins, being too bookish and a rule-follower. Once she finally left Hermione's lap in family gatherings, it was to crawl under the table and read alone while the rest of the kids ran around firing the jokes' shop products and flying brooms. Rose was simply too Hermione's to really be Ron's. Perhaps that was why she was so easily packed together with her after the divorce, and he never really bothered to reach out. Nevertheless, her daughter was only a child, and - with Hermione's parents gone after the war - she had been deprived of her only family because no one cared enough for her presence.

"Yes... And little Albus—?"

It was easy, as it had always been, to simply allow Ginny to talk. The red-haired woman vented on how much of a surprise it had been for her youngest son to be sorted into Slytherin, but how he had been quite excited once he got into the Quidditch team. "A beater, unfortunately, unlike his mum or dad," She chuckled, while Hermione nodded and smiled.

She had been mentally preparing to say her goodbyes, seeing as the sun was almost setting and she had yet a couple of dozen galleons to spend, when Ginny said something unexpected.

"Oh! Harry tells me you got the funding for your hippogriff project!" Ginny said excitedly. "But I must admit I couldn't believe it when he told me who the major donor was!"

Later that evening, when overthinking and microanalyzing every instant of the present interaction, Hermione would curse at herself for allowing her subconscious to guide her movements. The hand free from the ice cream moved to touch her golden necklace, and her eyes flickered for a millisecond over the several shop bags around her that Lindy, bless her, had not appeared to retrieve yet. Ginny's brown eyes followed her movement, and both her eyebrows shot to her hairline.

"This was fun — *GottagoGinnylet'scatchupsoon !*" Hermione blurted out, jumping to her feet and walking fast enough to never be reached by someone with two children in her arms, even if that someone was a professional Quidditch player.

Sunday found Hermione once again curled on her sofa, a book in her hands and a bottle of wine at her bedside. The afternoon sun was casting through the windows and warming her living room to the point that she had to push her blanket away. If Rose had been home, they would probably be going out to a concert, a museum, an art gallery or even just a walk through a Muggle park. Mother and daughter could talk for hours, complementing each other on facts about whatever they had in front of them. Even before the divorce, Ron rarely accompanied them — usually opting to go to The Burrow for lunch.

The previous encounter with Ginny had her spiralling down the memory lane, something she had promised herself not to do. So, when Lindy appeared with her lunch, Hermione gave her thirty galleons and asked her to buy two owls. One for her and one for Rose. She spent the last hours of her day writing to her daughter and carefully arranging a gift basket with sweets, new robes, books, quills, ink and the rest of the galleons Malfoy had given her.

You are the most important thing in my life, but I am just a little part of yours. I do not need to tell you to love wisdom, knowledge and organisation. But I will ask you to have courage and be kind.

The world is yours, my little rose.

P.S.: I got the brother to your owl and named him Cambridge, perhaps you'd like to call yours Oxford.

She smiled lazily, opening the third bottle of wine of that day, while the auburn owl flew through the horizon to send her package to a little curly-haired witch in the Gryffindor Table inside a hidden magical castle in Scotland. Books forgotten, Hermione proceeded to drink until she passed out on her bed, still wearing the same pyjamas from Saturday night.

Which was precisely why she found herself standing in front of Malfoy Monday morning with a hammering headache and nausea, arms folded at her back and high heels threatening to let her down.

"Granger," He purred over his Daily Prophet with an eyebrow arched towards her. Despite the new clothes and potions she bought to tame her hair, Hermione was sure she looked hideous. Or at least, very sick and tired. "You don't look well. What happened?"

"I drank a bit too much wine yesterday, sir." Having already decided that she was too hungover to fight Malfoy in whatever game he was playing with her, Hermione allowed her primal brain to take over.

Malfoy hummed, carefully folding his newspaper and placing it on the table. He took one finger to his lips, considering. "Did you spend everything I gave you on Saturday?"

“Yes, sir.”

“What did you buy?”

She squeezed her eyes, wincing at the pain of recalling everything she bought, but carefully listed every item down to its quantities.

“Did you run out of money?”

“No, sir. I even had twenty galleons left and sent them to Rose at Hogwarts.”

“Good girl.”

With a snap of his fingers, Lindy was summoned.

“Lindy, bring me a hangover potion.”

“Yes, master.”

“Granger, Granger...” His chair screeched against the floor as he pushed it to stand and circle his table, stepping into her personal space. “Tell me, did you ask to drink wine yesterday?”

She couldn’t tell if the shivers through her body were caused by his words, his proximity or the possibility of the outcome from that particular moment. “No, sir... I didn’t think I’d have t—“

He clicked his tongue when the house elf appeared, handing him a small vial with fluorescent green liquid inside. “Granger, you are not supposed to think anymore. Didn’t our contract explicitly say that I owned all of your decisions?”

“Yes, sir.” It was hard for her to think straight through the pounding in her skull, so she simply permitted herself to speak without any reflection about the humiliation or offensiveness of their current situation. Just like she did in Hogwarts, she provided the correct answers to questions asked of her.

“Did I send you the wine through Lindy?”

“N-no, sir.”

“Then, if you wanted to drink, what should you have done?”

“Asked you n-nicely, sir?” The shivers now concentrated on her lower abdomen, exacerbating her nausea to a sickening level. She was thankful not to have any breakfast in her stomach.

“That’s it, Granger. See how smart you are?” he praised, uncorking the vial. “You’re feeling so bad right now, and all because you didn’t ask your Dom. If you had, I would have taken care of you. Now, open your mouth. Yes, good girl”

Her eyes locked on his as she slowly parted her lips, gasping as his firm yet gentle hand held her jaw. Drawing slow circles on her cheek with his thumb, Malfoy used the other hand to down the potion inside her mouth. Hermione never looked away as she swallowed. The relief was instantaneous.

“Oh, thank Merlin!” she sighed, a bit more awkwardly now that she was fully back to her senses.

"See how I take care of you, Granger?" He smirked, circling one of her curls around his finger. For a single moment, she thought he was about to kiss her, but as soon as it came, he moved away, back to his chair. "Get on with your work then, I have some things I want you to do after you're finished with ministry duty..."

But as Hermione pulled her chair to sit in front of him, he snapped his fingers, and it vanished.
"No, Granger. I think today you'll work on the floor."

"Wait, what? Why?"

"Well, you didn't really think disobeying your Dom would go unpunished, right?" Malfoy smirked.
"The rug is comfortable enough, and I'll have Lindy see that you're well adjusted."

As if hearing his summons, the elf appeared with several cushions that she carefully placed over the polar bear fur rug in front of the fireplace. Malfoy stared at Hermione with amusement, as if daring her to challenge him. She wouldn't take his bait. Jaw clenched and knuckles white with the strength she was using to grip her folders, Hermione slowly lowered herself to the floor. Her robes were at her knees, so she had to be very careful not to display too much fun for Malfoy, a difficult job when one had high heels and her arms full. He made no effort to help her; on the contrary, he sat and watched, taking a drag from his cigarette. Once she was properly seated, she pulled her legs to the side and began reading, deciding to ignore him for the rest of the day.

Chapter 7: When they practice

The fireplace was crackling and its warmth spread over Hermione, gathering sweat in her spine, which was beginning to twingle. The punishment Malfoy had given her was being successful in displaying her poor physical condition, earned with motherhood and years of office work without dark wizards to fight. She had the wrong robes for it, too, because she couldn't just sit cross-legged without exposing her knickers to Malfoy and sitting with her legs to the side was hurting her not-so-young-anymore knees. Extending her legs in front of her wouldn't do, for she wasn't flexible enough. In fact, there wasn't a single position comfortable enough for her to endure more than ten minutes in it.

But her discomfort, aligned with the sharp senses after the hangover potion, only fueled her stubbornness. She wouldn't give him the satisfaction of seeing her pout or beg for a *bloody* chair. Something inside her told Malfoy would just love to see her humiliated in front of him. A huff escaped her lips, blowing a few curls that insisted on falling in front of her face, obstructing her view of the field report on a case of unauthorised domestication of chimaeras in the Lake District.

Because, of course, she wasn't allowed to tie her hair back. *Malfoy liked it down.*

"Bullocks," she muttered quietly, pushing the file on Chimaeras' eggs she had been reading.

"What is it, Granger?" His signature drawl came from over his table. "Are you not comfortable?"

"Oh, no, *sir*," She hissed, poorly concealing her sarcasm. His clear attempt to tease her ignited some lost Gryffindor bravery inside the witch, and Hermione decided she would do the teasing that day. "This rug is indeed so comfy and cosy... I just feel like—"

She didn't so much say it as show him her intent, tossing her heels aside and lying flat on her front, legs bent at the knees, ankles playfully crossed in the air as she read. Her backside was quite evident like that. If Malfoy had any meaningful reaction, she couldn't tell as her eyes never dared to meet his, but she supposed his silence was as good a reaction as she could want.

When Rex brought their lunch at noon, Malfoy told him to place the tray at the coffee table near Hermione and moved to sit at one of the armchairs. The top button of his grey shirt was open, revealing a hint of his alabaster chest, and his sleeves were rolled up, drawing her gaze to his strong forearms. Overall, it seemed to be the most casual she had ever seen Malfoy in, and the feeling was weird, almost as if she was intruding.

A blush gathered on her cheeks when his groin caught her attention as Malfoy crossed his leg, placing one ankle over the knee. She tried to distract herself from this fluster by sitting up to join him, perhaps in the other armchair.

"Uh-huh..." Malfoy smirked. "I think you should crawl here, Granger."

If she had blushed before, she was positively beet-red at the moment. "C-crawl?" she whined. "Why?"

Her insolence didn't annoy him as much as it amused him. "Because."

"Malfoy! You said you wouldn't use your dominance to degrade me! It was supposed to be in my best interest—"

"You need to practice your submission. Following my orders should become natural, without me having to explain my reasons or repeat myself," he drawled with patience. "If you don't relax into your role, your overthinking will keep you from enjoying it."

The mention of enjoyment, despite the poor timing, made her stomach tighten. She glared at him, and he held her stare with equal intensity. A small part of her was afraid he'd use this power over her as a form of humiliation, maybe a remembrance of school-time bullying. Would he then share with his former housemates how the Muggle-born golden girl *crawled* when he ordered? She had two options: either trust that his intentions were, if not pure, then aimed at — how had he phrased it? — *mutual interest* or end this sick contract and go back to her normal life

But her normal life was not alluring enough to make the decision easy. Quite the contrary.

Hermione crawled towards the coffee table on all fours.

"Good girl," He cooed. "Now, I am starving. Serve me some tea."

"How do you like it—Sir?" She gritted out.

A smirk. "No milk, three spoons of sugar."

Hermione did it and handed it to him, having to look up as she stood on her knees. "Anything else?"

"A sandwich."

After she handed it to him, Malfoy said she could eat too.

"Uh-uh." He said. "Stay there, at my feet. I quite like seeing you there."

Her face burned with humiliation, but she didn't dare show him any sign of weakness. With as much dignity as the position allowed, Hermione ate her lunch at his feet, chin up and shoulders squared.

Even after the food had vanished, Malfoy stayed in the armchair for the remainder of the afternoon, summoning whatever document he needed from his desk. Hermione sprawled on the rug beneath him. When she finished her Ministry work, he had her reading letters for him again while he dictated replies to his Quick Quotes Quill. She had finished revising them and was gathering her courage to ask her *Dom* if she could go home when he surprised her.

"Have dinner with me, Granger."

"On the floor?" she asked and didn't intend to sound as bitter as she did, but Malfoy didn't take offence.

"No. In the dining room." He stubbed out his cigarette in his floating crystal ashtray. "I think you've learned not to drink without asking for my permission, right?"

After a quick nod from her and an extended hand from him to help her up, Hermione was on her feet. Malfoy guided her towards the corridors to the familiar luxurious dining room.

“So, what have you been working on?” was his first question, a few minutes after his entries, not looking up at her. “Besides the hippogriff thing?”

Hermione gulped, taken aback by the strange feeling of a *normal* conversation between her and Draco Malfoy. “Uh, I —Er, the reservation is my biggest project at the moment, but I’m also helping the Magical Creatures’ Trade Monitoring Division.”

“And what does that help consist of?” He asked with genuine interest.

“Oh, er — We basically keep an eye on any signs of trafficking of magical creatures or parts of them, such as unicorn hairs, dragon eggs, acromantula tears...”

“What signs do you usually find?”

“Well, we have a few informants on the black market, also some DMLE raids end up finding more than just dark wizards in their hideouts and—” A chuckle erupted from her at the thought, followed by a blush when she realised Malfoy was looking intently at her. “Well, it’s not that funny, but we often have the best results from monitoring Muggle police for neighbour complaints. We once found a Diricawl breeding just because of how bad the odour of their faeces was.”

“Let me guess, they usually think that it is a good idea to hide magical creatures in Muggle neighbourhoods?”

“Yes!” She snorted. “Can you believe that last month I picked a muggle Medical Journal for a bit of light reading and there was this very interesting article on how the mental illnesses’ rates in Tottenham had skyrocketed in the previous year, so I decided to investigate, and it turned out to be one of the warehouses belonging to a Fwooper feather smuggling ring?”

A pleasant curve on his lips and a flicker in his grey eyes. “Yes, Granger. I can believe that *you* would pick something like that for a *distraction* reading, then get that much *invested* to research deeper and end up *saving* a lot of innocent creatures.”

Hermione didn’t know how to answer that, so she cleared her throat and made herself busy with her coq au vin.

Malfoy gave her all of three minutes of respite before asking more questions.

“So, do most of the cases involve financial profit?”

“Oh, no!” Hermione said quickly, “I was working on a report on attempts at domesticating chimaeras today.”

“That sounds laborious.”

“Yes. Well, there’s always monetary compensation for the dealer, but some families just want to have exotic creatures as pets.”

“I understand.” He chuckled.

Something in his tone prickled the fine hairs on her nape. “How?”

“Well, my father did own white peacocks, after all, Granger.”

She snorted. "What about you? No peacocks?"

"No... But recently I've been endeavouring in the taming of another wild magical creature. A pleasant pet." His eyes darkened, and he grinned mischievously.

She didn't see it coming. "Really? What creature?"

"A fine specimen of Granger, actually," he deadpanned, sipping from his firewhiskey.

"Malfoy!" she gasped.

"It's a joke, Granger. Well, sort of, at least," he said, placing his tumbler back and chuckling slowly. "And don't forget the respect when addressing me, *pet* "

She tossed her cloth napkin over the table. "*Mr Malfoy*, I am feeling *very* tired. Can I *please* go home?"

He hummed. "You did ask very nicely, Granger, so I am inclined to allow. But could I perhaps convince you to stay until the end of this meal if I promise not to make jokes at your expense?"

Hermione faltered, and he seized the opening.

"Or maybe, if I inform you of the delicious chocolate mousse we have for dessert?"

A smile escaped her before she could think better of it.

"And don't get me started on how the elves would suffer knowing their hard work in providing you a meal would go to waste." A smug smirk, he knew he had her there.

"Very well." Hermione hid her smile behind her glass. "I shall stay, *for the elves*."

Malfoy's smirk turned into a smile, but he quickly placed his fork in his lips, trying to disguise it while he chewed elegantly on his food. His long fingers held his cutlery with refinement and precision, and his table manners were spectacular. Hermione found her gaze lingering a bit too long at his wavy hair, carefully parted in the middle and falling gracefully around his temples towards the sides of his head. She blinked the sight away and asked him about *his* work.

Malfoy indulged her, giving enough information about several investments not to sound shady, but also keeping any sensible information private. He was vague or mysterious at the same time that he showed himself as highly skilled and intelligent. She made a point of commenting on what he said as if to show how smart she was, too. Conversation flowed easily, under the flickering flames of the silver chandelier. Its teardrop crystals caught the light, scattering it in soft glints across the dining table like tiny dancing stars. It could've been the wine, Malfoy's charm or Hermione's loneliness, but it seemed like the air around them glowed with a golden haze, warm and hushed like a secret.

When he escorted her to the black marble fireplace in the parlour later, it seemed very natural for her to simply kiss him goodbye, as if that had been a lovely date. But reason caught her before it was too late, and she simply mumbled a quick goodbye and hurried inside the green flames. Sleep fled her that evening, while glimpses of Malfoy — Both the boy she knew and the man she had begun to know — spun around her mind.

As things often did in life, even that wicked arrangement between Hermione and Malfoy fell into a routine within those first three weeks. She'd wake up and find a delicious breakfast laid out for her

at her kitchen table by Lindy. A quick shower later, she would put on one of her new robes and not even waste the usual half hour trying to tame her wild curls into a presentable updo — Malfoy wanted them loose. She'd flop into his parlour, walk the long luxurious corridors until his study and sit across from him, working on her DRCMC assignments until lunchtime. Then, Malfoy usually monopolised her afternoon, asking her to do the most random things.

She read him his mail and went over some commercial proposals he had received. When asked if he didn't have any solicitor, Malfoy snorted affirmatively and added that he wanted to know *her* opinion. In fact, he seemed to want to know her opinions and thoughts on several subjects, asking her questions frequently on both his and her work. He didn't always agree with her, and eventually, things were done his way in his affairs. He didn't meddle with her ministry work, but Hermione found it refreshing to have ethical, theoretical and practical discussions on different matters. More than that, it was stimulating.

His opinion was something she had begun to know very well, too, in both deep and shallow matters. She knew what he thought about the Minister, about the MACUSA, about the economy, Hogwarts' curriculum and philosophy. But she also knew that he would move from his desk to the armchair because the sunsetting rays reflected over his desk and his grey eyes were sensitive to the bright light. She knew he lit his cigarette to think and drank his whiskey to buy himself time. He liked being obeyed, but his subconscious found amusement in her subtle defiance at simple things. She'd memorised how he liked his tea, where to scratch his back, and the pace of reading he preferred. She knew he preferred her in bold colours rather than pastels—her hair wild and free. And whenever she wore high heels or makeup, he'd become just a touch more flustered than usual. Which was not something really detectable by a normal eye, but it was a hint one noticed after a few weeks.

Malfoy had a thing for her curves, especially her backside, since more often than not, he asked her to pick something for him on the other side of the room. One day, he even asked her to rearrange his bookshelves in her own classifying system, which served him very well because from then on, he'd always ask her to get the books he needed, claiming not to know where they were. Obviously, there was apparently an anti-summon ward inside the Manor, because she had to do it the Muggle way every time.

And there were *lots* of times, as Malfoy had her read several pages of random books to him every afternoon when he thought the number of letters wasn't enough. She had a vague suspicion that he did it for the simple act of controlling her, which was confirmed when he asked *her* to *pick* the book she would read to him. She obviously picked one of the titles that had gathered her attention before, trying to make the best of the situation.

Making the best of the given situation was the excuse Hermione gave herself several times those days. She liked the tingling feeling on her stomach whenever he called her a *good girl*, so she kept obeying his commands without thinking twice. She liked the feeling of his warm pulse in her hands, so she enjoyed it whenever he asked her to adjust his cufflinks, even though there were spells for that. Dining at her home was a lonely affair, and her restless mind needed stimulation, so she always accepted his dinner invitations, or rather orders, and indulged in deep conversations with him through the many elaborate courses the elves prepared over the obsidian table.

Which was precisely where they found themselves at her fourth Friday night dinner at the Manor. Hermione wondered a few times where Malfoy's friends would be if he seemed to spend every waking hour with her.

"You assume I go to bed every night at eight?" he chuckled when she asked him that.

"Oh, no." Hermione blushed because she had done just that. A bath, a tea and a book were her only friends at night after she left Malfoy, but it didn't mean that he had it the same way. "So, are you in contact with any of our classmates, then?"

"Yeah," He lazily drawled, running a hand over his head, and Hermione appreciated how perfectly his layered waves fell back into place. "I mean, Theo, Greg and Blaise come for a tumbler every other night."

Hermione waited until she had finished chewing her lamb cutlet before she asked the daring question. "Do they know?"

"Know what?" Draco raised his eyebrows, resting his chin on his knuckles. He knew what she was talking about, but wanted her to ask it properly. It was a frequent habit of his. One she hated.

"Do they know I—Er—Do they know I come here often?"

"I might have mentioned."

Her cheeks burned. "Do they know about our—contract?"

"No, Granger." He chuckled. "Would you like me to tell them?"

"No. I mean, you decide, of course. *Sir*. I just—I just think that maybe it would upset some people..."

"Like Potter and Weasley, you mean?"

"No!" she answered too quickly and tried to come up with something to stir the conversation towards another focus. "Perhaps Pansy could be jealous? She used to like you at school, right?"

To that, Draco gave her one of his genuine laughs. The rare sort. "Merlin, Granger. I see Pansy perhaps twice a year. She lives in Germany with her second husband—or would it be the third?—I don't know."

"Oh, yes. That's true. Er—Hm.. She has a son in Durmstrang, right?" Hermione felt her blush flowing all the way to her chest, unable to understand why her ability to speak was failing her.

"Two. One in fourth and one in sixth year."

"Oh." Hermione nodded. "How is Scorpius, by the way?"

They never talked about their children, but the sense that discussing their personal lives or friendships was treacherous territory had her opting for the safer subject instead.

"Honestly, I could give you a better report on Potter's kid and your daughter based on his bloody letters," Draco muttered. "Always whining about one or mooning over the other."

"Oh, like father, like son, then?" Hermione giggled. "I'm sure your letters to your father also had a lot to say about Harry and me—"

The fond smile that appeared on his mouth was an unusual sight, and it almost distracted Hermione from the fact that she had somehow made the mistake of bringing Harry back into the subject.

Malfoy reminded her of it. “So, you talk about me, but what about you? You didn’t ask me to meet any of your friends these last two weeks. Have *you* been a good girl and gone straight to bed? Or have you been sneaking out to meet the Potters?”

It was one of his biggest abilities to completely change the atmosphere in a room with a few words. The room suddenly seemed dimly lit, hot and small. She felt under the spotlight of his grey eyes and, despite how flustered they made her feel, she just couldn’t look away. Like a moth and a light, she was attracted to him, and the words he used made her belly flutter.

“I don’t talk to them anymore, no.” She whispered weakly. Thinking about it still stung. Because they were her friends too, her only friends. And they left her, all because she was not as easy to coexist with as Ron was. She wasn’t funny, cheerful or spontaneous. So, despite their promises that the divorce wouldn’t change a thing, over time, Hermione started to fit less and less in their Quidditch-friendly matches, pub meetings and family gatherings. “I think Ronald got Harry and Ginny in the divorce settlement.”

She attempted to make it sound like a joke, but her voice was thick with emotion, and it came out depressing instead of sarcastic. Malfoy sensed it and placed a warm, grounding hand over hers. “Granger—”

“I’m sort of tired.” A fake yawn. “Can I go home now, sir? Please?” She asked, forcing her tears to wait at least until she was at the floo.

Malfoy seemed to consider. Eventually, he sighed and nodded, taking his hand from hers.

After crying herself to sleep on Friday, Hermione woke on Saturday in a mood firmly set on avoiding deep thoughts. She had no desire to work on the rug on Monday for having drunk without asking or even for leaving her house without his approval. Therefore, an otter Patronus was sent to Malfoy Manor, asking if he was alone, because she would die before people in a random pureblood elite event heard her voice asking Malfoy for permission to go out.

When silver borzoi appeared with an affirmative, she made her sweetest voice into asking, instead of communicating, if she could go out for an outing in Muggle London.

“Since you asked so nicely, yes. How much do you need?” Draco’s borzoi drawled.

“I have enough Muggle money with me, sir.” She sent it back.

With a loud CRACK, Lindy appeared with a thousand pounds in cash.

“Hi, Missus! Good morning, was breakfast alright? Master tells Lindy to tell Missus Granger that she doesn’t use her money; she uses his money. Master is making a queredit card for Missus, but he hopes this will be enough for today. If it isn’t Missus is to contact him”

A *credit* card?

A big part of her wanted to fight it, but her mood of avoiding deeper thoughts won the seconds-long battle inside her mind, and she simply nodded.

Her day began at a tucked-away café with tall windows and illustrated saucers adorning its walls, slightly reminding her of Umbridge's office despite no cats in sight. There she ordered sourdough toast with soft cheese and figs, and a flat white in a heavy ceramic cup. With a novel splayed open beside her plate, she read between bites in the low hum of Miles Davis from the speakers.

Then, she wandered through the city, visiting an exhibition, where one watercolour reminded her of a poem from Byron, and she scribbled down a phrase for the letter she would send Rose that evening. From there, she browsed a second-hand bookshop with dust and binding glue in the air and indulged in several volumes using Malfoy's money.

As the sun dipped, she strolled through the park with a takeaway tea, the pages of one of her new books already creased from reading. She arrived home afterwards in the hush of twilight, tired in the most satisfying way, a bag heavy with books and a letter to her daughter ready in her mind.

When Sunday came, however, the contemplation on how pathetic her mid-life scenario was kept hovering around her reading. She was utterly alone: no family, no friends, no partners. Not a single hobby outside work to keep her mind busy, and the most exciting thing that happened since her daughter went to school was a bloody submission contract with the world's biggest prat. But, of course, even this was *dull*.

Malfoy had donated a fortune to her cause and kept giving her money to do whatever she wanted, and all he wanted in exchange was for someone to pour him tea and read out loud to him? Have mild conversations and strained dinners? When he first proposed the deal, she imagined a weird and possibly crazy scenario in which Draco Malfoy harboured a sexual desire for her. He wanted to dominate her in bed, make mind-blowing sex with her until she was a sore mess. But, all she had done until now was... Not sexual at all.

Maybe he didn't see her that way.

"Don't mistake me, I absolutely will be fucking you in every way that I want."

Hermione nervously tapped the golden hoop around her neck, thinking hard.

How could it be that the most exciting part of her life over the past months had been rearranging his bookshelf? Was she to aim for higher goals? Like rearranging the whole Malfoy Library? Was she wasting his time? He had said he wouldn't force himself on her, maybe he had expected her to straddle him the first day, and now he just didn't know how to dismiss her.

That thought was quickly tossed away. Draco Malfoy *wasn't* afraid of telling her anything.

So the reality was that, as vexing as it was, she would probably need to take the lead on this. She would have to *ask him nicely*, as he said. The concept itself made her skin curl. How would she do it? Would she just ask him to kiss her? To please *fuck* her? No, she could never do that. It was completely out of her character. Even after ten years of marriage with Ron, she had only managed to awkwardly initiate sex twice, and it had been by simply looking at him a certain way. Would that tactic work on Malfoy? It didn't seem so. He was always composed, collected and in control.

But that was her best option. She needed to get some action, even if it was only for him to reject her and free her of that brain-bending predicament they found themselves in. On their first meeting, almost a month before, he had her knickers dampened with only the suggestion and not a single day went by that she wouldn't feel goosebumps, butterflies in her stomach and prickling in her skin. Just at the smallest of his words or actions. His power over her had nothing to do with asking her to

fetch something across the room. It was possible, and also quite easy, for him to break her with a snap of his fingers. And he seemed to know that.

Thinking rationally, a couple of explanations for that reality came to her mind. Firstly, had only ever had sex with Ron, and their last time had been years before. Secondly, Malfoy was not only the most handsome man she knew, but he also exuded power, competence and brilliance. She needed to confirm her theory that he would be able to make her see stars.

And she would do it in the only way she knew how: through strategy, careful planning, and preparation.

Monday morning, Malfoy lowered his Daily Prophet to find Hermione in a muggle office attire: a deep green sheath dress, black high heels and a perfectly subtle makeup that she had spent hours testing the night before to master the '*appropriate for a work day, but also showing I am a sexual being*' look she went for.

"Good morning, Mr Malfoy," she purred with a smile. "I have to ask you something today, sir."

His eyebrows had been high on his forehead, but one of them came down as his lips curved into a smug smirk. "Yes, Granger?"

"I want to know why you want me as your sub, sir"

A frown showed that this wasn't the question he had been expecting. Yet. "Granger, I told you I'd like to tell you what to do."

"Would that be limited to having dinners, conversations and reading your letters, sir?"

"No, that was *practice* ."

"Well, did I do good?"

He proceeded carefully, speaking slowly and testing the waters. "You did, you've been a good girl, and you rarely question me anymore."

"Great." She smiled. "I would like to proceed with the next phase of our—arrangement. *Please, sir.*"

"Next phase?"

She didn't allow herself to sigh and show any sign of doubt, discomfort or fear. "Yes. You can ask more things of me."

"For the sake of clarity and consent, do you mean more intellectual things?" Malfoy asked her with an amused smile that showed her he knew exactly what she was talking about, but that she'd need to say it clearly.

"No." Her smile tightened because she was trying her best not to shout at him. "I mean physical."

The leather chair creaked as he leaned back with a triumphant smile, the sound sharp in the quiet room. His eyes wandered, unhurried and intent, from her face to the fall of her hair around her hips and to the tips of her shoes. She waited for him to smirk and say *I knew you'd crawl and beg me to fuck you.*

But he didn't.

"Oh, Granger. Aren't you a *good, good girl*? Asking me for what you want?" he cooed.

Chapter 8: When she begs

Chapter Notes

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

“Come here,” he said, his voice low and commanding.

Hermione nearly whimpered, but she bit her lip not to sound too desperate. Her steps towards him were slow and steady as she circled his desk and stopped between his legs. It took all of her courage to meet his intense gaze. Malfoy didn’t smirk: his face was set and full of promises.

“Sit.”

Hermione sat at his desk, in front of him, crossing her legs at the ankle because her dress *was* quite short. His long fingers reached for her feet, and with a gentle yet firm grip, he took the front leg and pulled it towards him until her heel touched his shirt. His eyes never left hers, and Hermione’s breath hitched as he unfastened her shoe. One of his fingers traced a line towards her knee and back down, holding her ankle as he removed the shoe and tossed it to his side.

“Of course you’d have lovely feet as well.”

She didn’t dare answer him, afraid to break the lustful bubble they found themselves in, eyes locked in each other. Draco placed her foot on his knee and brought the other one to his chest, so he could free it of her shoe as well. Once she had both legs on his knees, he ran a ghost of his fingers over her calves, making the fine hairs all over her stand on end.

“Do you remember rule seventeen?” he murmured.

“Y-yes,” she breathed out and, as he raised his eyebrow, urging her to continue, she did, “If I want it to end, I just have to say the word RED and it will all be over.”

His touch became heavier, grounding her as his hands moved from her knees to her ankles.

“Yes, you’re such a good know-it-all girl, aren’t you, Granger?” he hummed, and the words spread warmth around her body. “This rule is related to our Sub/Dom contract, but during intimacy, I’d like to expand that.”

It was hard for Hermione to focus because his seductive tone combined with his touch made the heat in her core flare up, which was concerning, seeing that she had her legs almost parted for him and her dress had ridden up towards her mid-thighs. If he saw how the desire pooled there with just a trace of touch and a few words, what would he think of her?

“I want you to use the words *pause* and *stop* during intimacy, Granger.” If her mind had been a bit clearer of the lust fog, she would perhaps find it a good idea, but at that precise moment, Hermione doubted she would say something that wasn’t *yes*, *go* or *more, please*. “You’ll use *pause* when you need to *readjust*, and you’ll use *stop* when you want it to *end* at that minute. Do you understand?”

She nodded. “Yes, sir.”

“Good girl.” He smirked, his hands stopping just above her knees and giving her a gentle squeeze.
“Now, come down and sit on my lap.”

It took her a few seconds to fully understand his words, at which point her heart raced. The idea of riding him made her nervous, both with excitement and fear. She didn’t suppose she would be good at that and was afraid that their little tryst would end shortly once he saw how inept she was. Besides, was she supposed to just take her knickers off and... As awkwardly as one could, Hermione slipped off the table and brought her trembling hands to the side of her knees, raising her dress to reach for her underwear.

“Stop,” he commanded, and Hermione froze on the spot, her hands midway through her thighs.
“Did I tell you to undress?”

She faltered. “N-no, sir.”

“And what did I tell you to do?”

“To sit on your l-lap?” Her cheeks flared just as when Snape had called her out for speaking out of turn.

“Exactly, now be a good girl and obey your *Dom*.¹”

The word made Hermione’s stomach give a little tumble. She turned her back on Malfoy, still burning in embarrassment, and sat gingerly on the middle of his left thigh. With a low chuckle, he pulled her flush against him, so that her arse pressed against his groin — making her feel just how *big* he was. She hitched a breath and gulped, waiting for instructions. But Malfoy kept quiet, one of his hands possessive over her hip and the other splayed against her thigh.

“A-and now?” she asked. “What do I do, sir?”

“Now, you’ll work, Granger,” he said, and she could just sense the smirk on his lips. “I promised not to interfere with your work, didn’t I?”

“Y-yes, sir”

“Mhmm...” His minty breath caressed her neck. “And I keep my promises, Granger. Now, *work*.²“

The slap in her thigh had her yelping as Malfoy dragged their chair closer to the table and Hermione fumbled with her papers. She had several interdepartmental memos to address, a few reports to review and an owl from Hughes to answer regarding some details of the Sanctuary’s construction, but it was hard to focus when—when Malfoy was so hard.

Except for that, Malfoy seemed unbothered by her presence on his lap, one hand splayed over her thigh while the other held the document he was reading at the time, his quill hovering over it and writing his remarks in an impressive display of wordless and wandless magic. Hermione tried to get some reaction, jiggling slightly against him every time she had to reach for something on the table, but — apart from a firmer grip on her thigh — she didn’t get much more action. And there was a strange, proud feeling inside her mind, telling her that she had done enough begging for that day.

At least that was what she thought.

When Rex appeared with lunch, Malfoy once again told him to place it at the coffee table and guided Hermione towards one of the armchairs. He sat in it and, embarrassed by the lack of action of the morning, she moved to sit in the other one. A low chuckle, a slight shake of his head and an obscene curl of his long fingers meant she was supposed to sit somewhere else. She bit back a smirk and asked him if he wanted her to eat from the floor again, *sir*?

“It’s too soon to be a brat, Granger. Be a good girl and sit on my lap,” he said, his eyes flashing at her.

Her feet dragged her towards him, and, even more awkward than before, she sat at his thigh. Once again, wrapped one arm around her waist and pulled her closer; this time she was seated at his left side, so they had their fronts almost towards each other, faces a breath apart. Malfoy leaned forward and brought a crostini towards her mouth.

“Open,” he ordered.

Her eyes widened, and her mind went blank as she searched for a way of eating from his hand elegantly, not making a fool of herself. There wasn’t enough time to come up with one, however, so she simply obeyed, opening her mouth so he could carefully place it inside. Her taste buds revelled in the explosion of fig’s sweetness mixed with the tangy sharpness of blue cheese. The crostini was the perfect size so she could eat it in one bite without filling her mouth too much, and a glance at the lunch tray showed her that the usual sandwiches had been replaced by several different finger foods. Had Rex known that Malfoy would be hand-feeding her that day? Had Malfoy? He seemed to always be two steps before her, and it drove Hermione mad, her controlling side fighting against surrendering to his care.

Struggling to perhaps get the upper hand, she turned to him.

“Can I feed you too, *Sir*?”

His grip on her waist tightened. “First, I think I want you to thank me properly, Granger. I did give you something very delicious. And I didn’t receive the proper gratitude. In fact, it seems like you never thank me for all the care I give you.”

She flushed, turning to glare at him. “I —”

“You always thank the elves and workers in restaurants or the Ministry, so I know *you can* say thank you,” he said, reaching for gougeres at the coffee table and popping them inside his mouth.

“Malfoy, I—”

“Tsk tsk,” he sighed. “Here I thought we were making progress in the submission... And I *was* ready to go to our next phase — the physical phase you were so *keen* to reach.”

She burned, squirming in her place, feeling embarrassed to have even asked him anything. Clenching her jaw, she turned back as far away from him as possible and said, through gritted teeth.

“It was delicious, sir, thank you.”

The hand he had wrapped around her waist splayed his fingers over her stomach appreciatively, sending electric waves across her body. “Good girl,” he purred, taking a croquette towards her lips. “Open.”

Hermione obeyed, and once again her mouth was met with the bittersweet flavours of duck and cherry confit. “Thank you, sir. It is very good.”

Once again, his grip on her tensed before he used his thumb to draw lazy circles just next to her navel. It was overwhelming, feeling his breath hot and minty against her neck, his hold around her torso, his strong thigh under her backside and the delicious foods he fed her under an intense glare. After years of surviving with only her daughter’s hugs as physical touch, she now squirmed to be so engulfed by Malfoy’s body. Her mind was spiralling, she wanted it to be less and wanted so much more.

“Can I please feed you now, sir?” she asked in a high-pitched whimper when his thumb, in the middle of a large circle over her dress, came dangerously close to the elastic band of her knickers.

“No,” he said, clearly enjoying his power.

Hermione had promised herself she wouldn’t beg him, and — despite having already sort of broken that promise by asking to feed him — she would stay true to her word. Malfoy had told her he liked his women begging, and she just didn’t want to give him that taste. Hence, she needed to seduce him. Exactly how she would seduce someone who seemed so sexually experienced and controlled, not to mention being in a position of power over her, was the main question. But no one could ever say that Hermione Granger backed away from a challenge.

That is why, by the end of lunch, when he was feeding her a macaron, Hermione closed her eyes to fight any jitters and dared to close her lips around the tips of his index and thumb. Malfoy seemed to waver, and she seized this moment to glance up at him with her lips still around his fingers, the small macaron quickly melting inside her mouth. Just before he could take it all, she used the tip of her tongue to lick the powdered sugar from his thumb before moving away from his hand with a coy smile.

Malfoy’s hand snapped to hold her chin in a firm yet gentle grip. “You little minx...” He whispered, brushing his lips against her earlobe. “Tell me, Granger. What do you want me to do with you?”

The opportunity was right in front of her; she just needed to ask him to please shag her right there on that rug, and he probably would. It was clear in the way he looked at her, how wide his pupils had gotten. But something bubbled in her stomach. She had gotten some effect on him, hadn’t she? And, after spending most of the morning on edge because of him, she thought perhaps it would be fun to have *him* yearning a bit.

So Hermione feigned an innocent smile. “I don’t know, sir. I thought this was about *you* doing what you want.”

Something flashed across his features. Disappointment, understanding, challenge. He squeezed her before removing his arms completely and asking if she was done with her ministry work. She wasn’t, as she had spent most mornings trying not to assault him, so both of them went back to the table, where she sat on his lap — this time pressing herself consciously against his volume.

It was a battle of wills. They were both trying to rile each other up, Hermione wriggling and bouncing over him more than was necessary to reach for stuff around the table, and Malfoy running his hands over her thighs or squeezing her hips. She could only hope she was having as much effect on him as he had on her, because she was close to breaking and asking him to bend her over the table.

Surprisingly enough, this was her most productive day of the week. Malfoy didn't ask her to fetch any book; on the contrary, he didn't even talk to her most of the afternoon. She managed to finish revising three reports, sent several memos to coworkers via Lindy and, as the sun was setting, she began writing her letter to Hughes.

Dear Hughes...

The hand on her hip squeezed her, and the one on her thigh went up to hold the front of her neck. He didn't squeeze, just positioned it there. The surprise of his action, mixed with the fact that it felt like the most intimate touch they had ever shared, had Hermione yelping.

"Rewrite that, Granger. He's not your dear," he growled against her ear.

She bit her lip, butterflies fluttering on her belly at his possessive behaviour. It felt so good to have someone *jealous* of her.

"Y-you said you weren't going to interfere with my work, sir," she said, her breath hitching with the sharp change in atmosphere around her. The room felt heavy.

The hand on her thigh disappeared, and suddenly, Malfoy was waving his wand at the paper in front of her. It burned to ashes. "I'm certain calling people 'dear' isn't part of your professional remit."

"Malfoy!"

Smack!

His palm slapped her thigh, stronger than ever before, then he soothed the sting with a circle of his large hand over the sensitive skin.

"I-I'm sorry, sir," she cried quickly and suddenly, the realisation that she was at Malfoy's lap, serving him as his sub hit her again.

He was in control of her.

The previous three weeks might have consisted of shared meals, reading and picking things for him, but she should make no mistake. That contract was sexual; she was supposed to obey him, and he had told her he'd spank her if she didn't. It should disgust her, offend her and make her scream RED before running away. Hermione had never been spanked before, not sexually and not disciplinary. How dare this man think he had any right to do it with her? Yet, the worst part of it all was how, despite the embarrassment, her blood boiled in lust, and heat dripped between her legs. Hoping that he wouldn't be able to feel the warm moisture, Hermione pressed her thighs together, searching for friction, but Malfoy noticed that and she could just sense his smirk behind her.

"Do you know why I did this, Granger?" he asked, his voice smooth like velvet against the nape of her neck.

"Because I disobeyed?"

"And disrespected me, against rule thirteen."

"Yes, sir. I'm sorry, sir."

"I accept your apologies," he cooed, his hand smoothing the side of her neck. "You are a good girl, Granger. I know you don't like breaking rules."

Hermione gulped, staring at the floor in shame of being disciplined and praised like a dog—but principally because she liked it so much. He won, and she was almost begging him to shag her. "I—I finished the ministry work today, sir."

"Did you, now? But there's still this letter you have to write..."

"I can write it tomorrow."

Malfoy hummed, and his hands snaked up and down her thighs. "Have dinner with me, Granger."

"Y-yes, sir."

She walked in front of him, her face on the floor, and her hands grasping each other. When they arrived at the dining room, she expected him to tell her to sit on his lap, but Malfoy pulled a chair at his side for her.

"So, what did you do on your weekend? You said you went to Muggle London?" he asked over the entry.

Her gaze darted from the plate in front of her towards his grey eyes. Had her behaviour disappointed him so much that he wanted nothing more of her? Would he be polite until the end of the dinner only to explain to her then that he had no interest in an unsubmitive woman and that she should go back to her boring life with her cluttered office and small flat?

"I-I just went for brunch in a café and then wandered around," she said, looking back down to her plate. "I bought some books too, thank you for the money, by the way. *Sir*."

"You're welcome, Granger," he said, cutting his salad with elegant precision.

After a few other polite questions from him and curt yet respectful answers from her, the entry plates vanished and the main plate appeared: a steak to Malfoy and salmon to her. She nearly cried; she would miss that expensive food. It would be hard to go back to frozen pizza.

"Why are you sad, Granger?"

Her head whipped up. "I—I am not, sir."

"Don't lie to me," he said firmly, and she blushed again. "Something made you sad, was it the spanking?"

Her fork pushed a potato to the side of her plate as she thought about it. "Y-yes, sir"

"You're not a slave, Granger. You're here on your own free will. If you ever want it to end, you just need to say the word *red*."

Tears swam in her eyes, and she glanced at the chandelier to keep them from falling. "I d-don't want to, sir. I'm sorry—"

"What are you sorry for? For being sad?" Malfoy placed his hand over hers. "Look at me, you need to tell me about your feelings, especially the bad ones, it's listed on rule eight, remember?"

She looked at him and nodded. “Yes, sir. I’m not sorry for being sad...” she trailed off.

“Then what are you sorry for?”

Biting her salmon bought her some time as she carefully chose her words. Malfoy looked at her intensely and patiently.

“I am sorry that I disobeyed and disrespected you. Mr Malfoy, I know you want a good sub, and I wasn’t one.”

She expected him to smirk and say that she was right, that she wasn’t good enough for him or that she should do better. Instead, a smile — a real one — greeted her. Ever since Hogwarts, Hermione couldn’t recall seeing a smile so broad and true on Draco Malfoy’s face; it was always something nasty, mean or suggestive. Now, what she saw in his lips was... fond.

“Granger,” he said slowly, and it was quite tender. “You have already been punished. It is over now. Don’t beat yourself up over it.”

“W-what?”

A huge breath and a raised hand to brush her cheek with his knuckles, “I *see* you, Granger,” he said. “You overthink, you’re too hard on yourself, and the self-expectations you carry are impossibly high.”

There had never been more correct words to describe Hermione Granger.

“Being a sub will help you with that,” He explained, his touch against her cheek firmer now. “You don’t need to think, just obey. You don’t need to worry about your expectations, only mine and they’re quite reasonable — Much more than yours, I guarantee. And, lastly, you don’t have to keep punishing yourself for a long time because of some mistake you made. Once I’ve spanked you, you’re good to go. It’s enough, no more thinking about it or emotionally flagellating yourself over it.”

Hermione’s lips fell open.

“I want to take all this pent-up tension from your big, brilliant brain and allow you to release it through your delicious body,” he purred, and Hermione melted over her chair, pressing against his hand. “And I will have the power to do so as long as you *give* it to me.”

Something snapped inside her, some tension she had been building for a long time. Words were fleeing from her before she could hold them back:

“Do you *want* me, sir?” she asked in a high-pitched plea, fitted to a kitten, placing her hand over the one he had on her cheeks.

“I think there are three hundred hippogriffs soon to be housed that would affirm you, I do,” he smirked now, eyes flashing to her.

The fact that he apparently had indeed read the document with information about the sanctuary she had given him the previous month was barely acknowledged by her as she gathered up the courage to counter his argument.

“I mean, *physically*,” she whined, almost pouting.

"You know I do." His gaze darkened at her, and the implication of his words had her stomach tightening, her cunt clenching around nothing.

Her head turned slightly, so her lips were pressed against his palm when she whispered. "I want you too, *please, sir.*"

His thumb slid over her mouth, caressing, and Hermione circled it with her lips, sucking gently. His tongue darted forward to wet his lower lip as his hand snaked down towards her throat, squeezing the sides of her neck so she could still breathe despite feeling lighter and lighter.

"You'll go home now, Granger," he said, his voice low and raspy. "There's been a lot of emotions today and—"

"No!" She protested softly and, at his raised eyebrows, she quickly lowered her gaze, demurely, submissive. "Please, sir... I want to, please, please. You said you'd be responsible for my pleasure — Please, I need—"

Maybe she would regret throwing her pride out the window, but her cunt was throbbing painfully for something — anything — and he was the only one who could give it to her. It had been so long since someone looked at her like he did, so long since she felt cared for... She *needed* him.

"Granger." Her eyes jumped to his. "Are you sure?"

"Yes, I am. Please, sir, please."

"Very well, then." Malfoy removed his hand from her neck and brought his torso back to his chair, pushing it further away from the table. "On your knees."

A gasp left her chest. The schoolgirl days were long gone, yet somehow she had imagined that a kiss would be the start of it. But, then again, Malfoy didn't care about social rules or expectations; he only cared about power and control over her. Fight or flight response flared over her body, or maybe it was arousal. Anyway, her heart was hammering against her ribcage, and she was sure he could hear.

Because, as if he had, he said, "Just say the word and you'll be able to go back to your flat, no explanations needed."

Fight or flight. She could go away, she could tell him to treat her better. That she didn't like being treated as lesser. That he was supposed to make her feel better. Fight or flight. But there was nowhere Hermione would rather be than there with him. And the fight seemed to have left her — she just wanted to surrender. So she brought herself to her knees, between his legs, looking up at him.

"Hands on your back," he said, his hands lying on his thighs, fists clenched as if fighting not to touch her.

Hermione complied, hands grabbing her elbows.

Malfoy used one hand to deftly unbutton his trousers as he drank his whiskey with the other, *buying himself time*, his eyes never leaving hers. His lips twitched as he pulled his cock from inside the elastic band of his underwear. It slammed, hard as stone, against his stomach. It was huge, beautiful

bulging veins around its alabaster shaft and precum already beading from the pinkish head. Hermione was licking her lips without realising it.

“Good girl,” he groaned, stroking himself. “Come, take what you want.”

Hermione’s face burned. She wasn’t expecting this. On the contrary, as several pages of the book she used as research mentioned face fucking, she imagined he would want her to hold her mouth open as he searched for his release using her as a prop. She wasn’t sure what he meant by ‘take what you want’. Was she supposed to want to suck him off? She had never *wanted* it with Ron; it was usually a tactic she would use if she needed something from him or to make him stop complaining that she didn’t give him enough attention after a long day at the ministry.

But she *had* begged Malfoy, and this is what he was giving her.

Perhaps it was a sort of test?

Maybe he wanted to see if she was good at it, to decide if she was worth keeping. If that was the case, she was doomed. She had only had *one* partner in her whole life, and she had a weird feeling that, had she been very good at blowjobs, she would probably still be married. Ron was *that* simple.

She started to get nervous.

“Do you want to stop?” he asked, one hand moving to splay his fingers between the locks in her scalp, kneading the tension away.

“No!!” she said quickly. “I just — I’m not sure if I am going to be good at this.”

He chuckled slowly, and it was a lewd act, as he stroked his cock and stared hotly at her. “Can’t bear being bad at something, can you, Granger?”

Her face flushed, but she only nodded with her jaw clenched.

“Why don’t you let me worry about that and just do your best?” He removed his hand from her head, making her feel too loose.

“Can’t you give me instructions?” she asked impatiently, pinching the skin around her elbows.

“No,” he said curtly. “Not now.”

Her lips pursed, and she moved forward, stretching her tongue to slide it from the base to the top. She struggled to grasp it without her hands, her tongue dancing around the head as if she were trying to retrieve a lost straw. When she had finally engulfed it, a glance up showed Malfoy’s eyes locked on her, his breathing growing heavier. The intensity of it encouraged Hermione, and she moved down, down, down. She hadn’t fit it all before she had to move back up, but she made up for this mistake by twirling her tongue over the tip of it. Malfoy gasped silently, and she began bobbing her head up and down.

“Good girl...” The praise left him in a shuddering breath, the most unravelled Hermione could ever recall hearing Malfoy sound. She imagined he would have his eyes shut, but when she searched for it, she met his stare intensely at her through his lashes. “I knew you’d look beautiful with my cock in your mouth, Granger,”

Maybe it was the way he said the word, the fact that she wasn't used to being complimented on her looks or even because it was so absolutely alluring to see Draco Malfoy randy... Whatever it was, Hermione moaned. And the vibrations it sent around his cockhad Malfoy growling and shooting his hands up to the sides of her head. He gripped her hair tightly, but didn't move her head.

"Place your hands on my thighs." His command was so husky and feverish, she moved before she could rationalise. "If it becomes too much, you tap me to stop it. Okay?"

She tried to nod with her mouth full of him, which made him wheeze. It began shallow and gentle; he pulled her head down so his cock slid over the flat of her tongue. This was so much better than when she was doing the work, no pressure, no chance of doing anything wrong. She focused on relaxing her jaw, as he dove himself deeper with each thrust, and swallowing once he hit the end of her mouth. It made him fist her hair.

"Good girl" His words made her melt all over her knickers, her head felt dizzy, and her muscles relaxed. Hermione closed her eyes. It was the wrong thing to do. "Look at me."

She found pink blurring from his cheekbones all the way to his neck and got entranced by the view of his chest strongly rising and falling. He thrusted three more times, slowly and carefully. Hermione breathed through her nose and tried not to blink, scared she would miss any of the beautiful sight Malfoy made coming undone inside her mouth. It had her feeling powerful, to have that effect on him — the one always so collected and in control.

"Suck." It was a whisper, a plea.

Hermione's cheeks hollowed, and her tongue curled under him, which made his lips part and a moan escape as he dragged her head lower than it had been before. Her hands clenched on his thighs, her thumb circling over his pants. She wanted him to know how good she was feeling to give that to him; she wanted to tell him how much of a good girl she could be for him. But the look shared between them seemed enough for this and any other communication needed.

His breath grew erratic, and she saw the muscles in his abdomen tense, his hips bucking out of control. She knew the signs, he was going to—

Before her mind could comprehend it, Malfoy had grabbed her upper arms to yank her upwards and then tossed the plate in front of them to the floor. He turned Hermione so she would have her rear faced him and pushed her firmly towards the table. There was only enough time for her to turn her head so her cheek would land on the wooden surface instead of her nose. Then, with a snap, her dress was up, and she felt the cool air biting the skin of her backside. Hermione whimpered as he pressed her to the table with his large hand on the end of her spine. The other hand made her yelp when he slid his finger over her drenched knickers.

"Such a good girl, Granger. Look how wet you get from sucking me—"

It was obscene, it was bawdy and even filthy. But it made her whole body convulse in need, her cunt pulsing under his touch.

"Used to dream about you begging for my cock—" he said, his finger moving hard against her, pushing her closer and closer to the edge. "Do you want to come, Granger?"

"Y-yes!" she moaned, her mind short-circuiting with his ministrations and the sound that he made as he stroked himself behind her, panting hard.

"Beg for it." A light slap against her cunt.

"P-please, sir!" She was way past being shy. "Please, let me come, *Dom*, please!"

"Fuck, Granger," he moaned.

She felt his finger hooking her knickers and pushing them to the side. He blew a cold breath over her wet folds, making her whole body wriggle. Then his lips landed on her clit, and she jerked involuntarily, crying out. The sound of her screams echoed around the marbled dining room as he lapped over her cunt, sucking at her clit and plunging his tongue inside her. His face was buried in her arse, but she didn't have the mind to be self-conscious about it. She came into his mouth, and the words left her easily, without a thought spent calling him Dom and thanking him, thanking him several times.

Hermione realised then that she had never had an orgasm before. Because for the first time in her life her whole body was convulsing, as her cunt pulsated and she saw black spots in her visions. Her toes curled painfully while her womb clenched, tearing screams and giggles from her mouth.

"So fucking beautiful," he growled, and with a sharp groan, his come hit her cheeks, splashing hot and cooling in the dining room air as he panted and dropped his forehead to rest between her shoulder blades.

"Thank you, Dom," she breathed out airily, riding the afterwaves of her orgasm. As her breathing evened and she slowly became more aware of her surroundings, the table's edge began to bite her hips, and her body felt cold. The knowledge that she had her back on full display, dripping from her and his arousal, and that she had just called Draco Malfoy 'Dom' made her groan.

His huge hands squeezed her hips as she did it. "Good girl," he purred, licking the juncture of her neck and shoulder and making her shiver.

"Are you on the potion?"

"Yes."

He raised himself, still holding her pressed against the table, and collected his cum around her cheeks with his index, using it to push the hot liquid inside her cunt. It stole a gasp from Hermione. Then he pulled her to meet him, hugging her waist and pressing her chest against his stomach.

"I want you to sleep with my seed inside you, branding you mine from the inside out until tomorrow. Do you understand?" His gaze poured into hers.

"Y-yes," she squeaked, and then his lips were on hers.

She fumbled, trying to kiss him back, but he was aggressive, kissing her fiercely and demanding control. She had nothing else to do but to relax and allow herself to mould around him, her tongue gently stroking his impaling one back. She could taste herself on his lips, slightly tangy. When he pulled back, he searched between her eyes for regret, but found only lust through her lashes.

Hermione wanted *more*.

"Go home and rest," he said. "If you need anything, call me. Do you understand?"

"Y-yes," she said, "Yes, sir."

“No more Dom, then?” He smirked.

Hermione blushed even more, if it was possible. With an annoyed tone, she began defending herself, “The contract said I could use both—”

Another violent kiss was his weapon to silence her. “You’ll call me sir whenever you want, but only call me Dom when I am making you come — or when you want me to.”

It sounded like a good plan to her. She couldn’t imagine calling him *Dom* over tea as she read her reports on goblins, dragons and pygmy puffs. But if she were to call him that whenever she wanted him to make her burst like she had just done… It would happen more often than not.

“Yes, Dom,”

“Minx,” he chuckled. “Go home, now. You’ll have more tomorrow.”

“Yes, sir,” she sighed, feeling like her legs were too wobbly for her to walk to the fireplace.

Once again, Malfoy seemed to read her mind, as he summoned Lindy to apparate her directly into her bed at her flat. Hermione didn’t feel judgment in the elf’s eyes, and she was far too drained to overthink her walk of shame. Maybe Malfoy was right about shagging her stress out.

Chapter End Notes

So guys, some of you have asked about how kinky this is going to get and well, Hermione (though older) has had a very vanilla sexual life until now, so Draco (as a good Dom) will take his time so she can acclimatise.

BTW, the smut in this chapter was inspired by chapter 01 of Good by Lovesbitca8 (my favourite smut fic of all time)

Chapter 9: When he edges her

Hermione hadn't slept so well since before the war.

She woke up with the sound of Lindy's apparition in her kitchen. As usual, the elf didn't linger, under Draco's strict instructions not to be bombarded with a speech on house elves' rights by Hermione. The only thing was — she didn't really feel like giving one today.

There was a note and a red rose near her food. Hermione's belly fluttered.

Last night was delightful.

Her breakfast was eaten leisurely, in her flat's tiny balcony, admiring the scarlet red of the rising sun over the grey and beige Muggle London buildings instead of in a hush while reading the Daily Prophet.

Following this pattern, her weekdays' sensible and quick shower was replaced by a bath with several scented potions that filled her cast-iron clawfoot tub with bubbles and got her muscles relaxed in the best way possible. She didn't remember buying them, which reminded her of her Dom and made the bath even more pleasurable.

Once the bath was finished, Hermione took her time shaving, moisturising and caring for her hair. Overdoing her makeup would be a bit over the top, since she never wore it, and she didn't want Malfoy feeling too smug about his sexual power, so she went with the same subtle thing she had done the previous day. When picking her underwear, however, she was faced with a problem.

Except for the black lace knickers Malfoy had given her, which were in the washing machine, there was nothing sexy in there, all cotton and too large. The last time Hermione had worn lacy underwear was probably on her honeymoon. The thought that it had been one of these she wore the previous night, with her arse on display for him, made her cringe, and Hermione made a mental note of going after something less motherly and more womanly. Merlin, she still had breastfeeding bras, and her daughter was almost twelve years old.

Thinking about Rose was a dangerous pathway, because it reminded her that someday she'd have to face Draco Malfoy in front of their kids, during a Hogwarts event or—

Hermione shook her head. She wouldn't think about it now or ever; she trusted he would tell her exactly what to do on those occasions. And it would be a good idea. Malfoy was a reasonable man.

With more than reasonable fingers, tongue and shaft...

Her mind was made, she forsook the underwear and decided to be bold — a Gryffindor — that day.

Since she wasn't going to the Ministry anymore, at least not until the following week when the month Malfoy requested would end, Hermione decided to wear office Muggle attire as they were not only more comfortable but also much sexier.

Which was why she was now facing a burgundy pencil skirt and a black button-up shirt in the mirror. Hermione had never put so much effort into looking *good*; she had always been so sure that her brain was her best asset that she didn't bother. Maternity had given her broader hips and heavier

breasts... Not quite as perky as they once were, but a prideful reminder of the nights she spent awake caring for baby Rose. With a wife of her wand, she shrunk her clothes a bit so they hugged her curves better, her shirt stretching against her chest. It was clear she wasn't wearing a bra, but it didn't look bad in her opinion.

What would Malfoy think?

With the prickling anticipation that she was about to find out, Hermione stepped her high heels inside the fireplace, calling for Malfoy Manor.

A gasp couldn't be held back once she realised that before her, it wasn't the parlour, but precisely the bookshelves in Malfoy's office. And he rested against them, his hands were comfortably inside his pockets, and his legs were crossed at the ankles.

"Granger," he greeted her with a smirk. His eyes were flashing, but apart from it, there was no sign of the same hunger burning inside Hermione.

"Oh, I — Why did I appear here?" she asked, cleaning the dust from her curls. Usually, she had the walk to his office to pull her looks together. "I didn't call differently than—"

"So I see you've forgotten your manners along with the time."

She faltered. "What? I'm not late. It's not even nine yet." Two white, blond eyebrows raised. "Sir."

"You've arrived daily at eight, Granger." Malfoy wasn't irritated; he sounded mostly amused. Like a child playing with his food.

"Yes, but my workday begins at nine. I just usually wake up early, so—" Her ranting was cut midway, because that was not how she had envisioned their meeting beginning. Why were they arguing? He hadn't even noticed her lack of underwear. But then again, she hadn't acted very sensually and submissively like she planned. "I'm sorry, sir. What time would you like me to arrive?"

The smirk that formed on his lips was devilishly delicious. "Good girl," he praised. "I'll think about it and answer you until the end of the day."

A full minute stretched between them while Malfoy stared at her, and she bit her lip.

"Good morning, Granger. Did you sleep well?"

A blush insisted on making an appearance. "Y-yes, very well, sir, thank you." And as if to escape his grin, she said something else, "What about you?"

"Perfectly."

Hermione shifted her weight between her feet, suddenly feeling naive and insecure to have waited for compliments on her appearance, yet she did spend a reasonable amount of time on it. "Er — Hm, I noticed the floo brought me straight here—"

"Yes."

He was going to make her work hard today, then? "Can I ask why, sir?"

“You can.”

It took all of her not to roll her eyes. “Why is that, sir?”

“I want you to come only to me,” he said, and both of them knew he meant the innuendo. “Straight to me.”

“Oh.”

“Perhaps, tomorrow I’ll have you coming only in your underwear… Would you like that, Granger?”

The shift in the atmosphere was so abrupt that Hermione felt dizzy, and her breath caught in her throat. She gripped her bag tightly and gulped before answering. “I-if you want it, sir—”

“Uh-uh,” he said. “I asked you a question, and I know you remember rule 14.”

A swoop in her stomach, and her whole body felt like a drawn bowstring — tense and ready to snap.

“I, I think I *might* like it, sir,” she said, truthfully. “I don’t think I c-could do it, though—”

“*I* think you *can* do whatever I tell you to, Granger.” He smirked. “You’re just that swotty.”

Heat pooled lower and lower, her thighs feeling silky against each other as she pressed them together, wondering why she hadn’t worn knickers. But in for a knut, in for a galleon, she thought to herself.

“What do you want me to do, sir?” Her voice dropped an octave, becoming nearly a purr.

Something flashed in his eyes, and his ever stoic face almost looked triumphant. He curled his fingers toward her. “Come here.”

Hermione took her steps carefully, fighting the urge to run, her heart hammering inside her. He was so tall that she needed to look up to meet his gaze. The familiar tug in her stomach and lack of air when she came close to his gorgeous face.

“You look absolutely delicious today, Granger,” he whispered against her forehead; the feel of it had her nipples peaking.

It didn’t go unnoticed by him.

His finger traced a barely-there line from her hips towards the sides of her breasts, and he kept it going until he reached her nipple, so light it made the fine hairs of her body stand. Involuntarily, her back arched to push her chest closer to his. She needed more friction, needed him to take her. But he was taking his sweet time, dragging his finger towards her chin and then splaying his hand on the nape of her neck, tangling in her hair.

“What do you want me to do to you, Granger?”

Her eyelids fluttered. “Anything, Dom” It was a breath out of her lips, as she dropped her bag to the floor.

“What are your safe words?”

“Pause and stop.”

His breath was heavy, dense. He pulled her lips to meet his, devouring her. In a swift movement, she had her back against the bookshelf, and he was pressing himself on her, his knee fighting hers so his thigh could reach her core. One of his hands was fisted in her hair, and the other grabbed her hip. Her hands were in the front of his shirt, crumpling the fabric, pulling him close.

“I want to fuck you against the books, Granger,” he growled against her lips. “Been thinking about it for quite some time now.”

“Have you?” She sighed, her eyes closed as she pulled his lower lip between her teeth. Her mind was unable to decipher his words and make coherent thoughts other than *please, please, shag me*.

When one of his hands snaked down her thigh and yanked her skirt up—Malfoy gasped, pushing the bookshelf so he could have more room to look at her. “Granger?”

“Yes, Dom?” she whined, missing the pressure and warmth of his body against hers.

“You don’t have knickers on—”

If there was any room for her face to become more flushed, then she would’ve done so. “Yes?”

He grinned, calling her a minx while he lowered himself to his knees, pushing her skirt all the way to her hips as he did so. And then he had his face right in front of her intimacy. Hermione bit her lip, trying hard to relax and not feel self-conscious because she was quite sure the last man to really look at it had been the healer who helped her deliver Rose. *Ron certainly didn’t*.

Malfoy seemed to notice her nervousness because he squeezed his hold on her hips and circled his thumbs on them. “You’re gorgeous,” he said against her skin. And then he sniffed it.

She whimpered, “Oh, no—”

“And you smell like heaven,” he said, kissing her upper thighs. Slowly drawing on her skin something with his lips, she couldn’t quite decipher.

He was close to where she wanted him, but then he moved to the other side. Hermione couldn’t close her eyes — completely entranced by the view of him beneath her. The man in control — her Dom — on his knees for her. She hadn’t seen his face the previous night, when he ate her up over the table. Now, she decided she wouldn’t miss a second of it — he seemed to be exactly where he wanted to be. He seemed to adore kissing her like that.

Slowly, without Hermione even noticing, his hands slid to the middle of her legs, hugging the back of her thighs to open space for his head. She jumped when she noticed he wanted to put both of them on his shoulders.

“I — I’m heavy,” she cried.

And then she screamed, a sharp pain biting into the skin between her thighs. She looked down, and now Malfoy was kissing the double crescent-shaped red mark there. “I can take you, Granger. Don’t disobey me.”

She leaned her back heavily against the shelf, using the wood as a grip for her hands, and he wrapped her legs around his neck. His face was now nuzzled against her core, his pointy nose giving her shivers that electrified her whole body. She relaxed her weight on him, and he swept her whole cunt with the flat of his tongue before saying, “There’s a good girl.”

As if on cue, Hermione arched her back and let out a loud moan. His praises did something to her, something wicked and sinful. Malfoy took the opportunity to hook his arms on her backside, reaching for her hips to steady her. Her cunt was pressed so hard against his face, he barely had to do anything.

Yet he did. He kissed her down there like it was her mouth, lips brushing fervorously against her folds, tongue dancing around her clit, and then going back down to her entrance. He kept repeating the movement, and she was spiralling towards her climax. But he kept repeating the same movement, and it looked — It felt — It was like an ancient rune.

“Dom, is this a rune?”

Malfoy ignored the question, making her mewl incoherently as he lapped on her. Still drawing the same shape. It was an ancient rune, she couldn’t absolutely remember the name, and yet she wanted to know—

“Dom?” she tried again after some time. “Is that an ingwaz?”

This time, he sounded annoyed. One of his hands shot up to yank her shirt open, and he groped her breast, twirling her nipple between his two fingers.

Hermione cried out loud. His eyes darkened, and he sucked her clit. She didn’t think about ancient runes anymore.

Instead, she broke in a loud and high-pitched howl as her vision blurred and her second-ever orgasm crashed into her like a giant wave. Her body weakened, and Malfoy held her tightly in his hands, lapping through her pleasure.

When it became too much for her oversensitive cunt she cried and he stopped, smirking smugly at his work — She was completely undone for him. Then he deftly manoeuvred her legs on his arms so that they were wrapped against his torso, instead, and he was holding her underside as he got to his feet.

When the button of his trousers rubbed against her core, she noticed he was still perfectly dressed and — apart from the glistening chin — still controlled, collected. He kissed her hard then, so much that she even imagined if he was punishing her.

Her suspicion was confirmed when he growled against her mouth, “Do. Not. Interrupt. Me. Again.”

“Oh —Ah—” she gasped, because he had thrust one finger inside her slippery entrance. It was still so sensitive that she unintentionally clenched around him. “S-sorry—Ah!” He added a second finger. And then a third.

It was too much. She felt the struggle he had to move them up and down inside her, her walls fighting him off. All of her moans were swallowed by his ravenous kiss, and it was too much; it was hurting. She hadn’t done it in so long—

“Relax,” he whispered, stopping the movement and gently stroking inside her, scissoring his fingers to stretch her tense muscles. “Breathe and relax.”

She obeyed him, her panting increasing as the elastic band in her womb began to stretch once again, reading itself for release. Malfoy resumed his piercing kiss, now around her neck, sucking, biting and licking wherever. “Gonna paint you a pretty little necklace to match your collar—” he growled against her skin, and it made her whole body convulse.

She was so close. His fingers resumed their pace, thrusting in and out — the cold and sharp feeling of his rings against her walls. His other hand was squeezing her bum hard enough to feel bruises, and his mouth feasting on the skin of her neck.

“Y-yes, Dom!” She was out of her mind. “Y-yes, please—”

She was about to come.

And then he stopped, removing his fingers from her and holding her pressed against the wall — watching her. Hermione took a second to understand, and then she whined. “N-no? Dom, please, I didn’t finish—”

“I know you didn’t.” He smirked.

And then the realisation that Draco Malfoy wanted her to beg him hit her. Hermione was far too close to be proud, so she did, she begged and cried and whimpered. But he kept saying no.

“Why?”

His hand closed around her neck, slightly painful. “You don’t interrupt me again. Understood?”

“I — *What?*”

“I was busy doing something I enjoy, and you interrupted me to talk about runes,” he said simply.

“I — I —” She tried to think, her mind still dazed with the need for release. “I’m sorry, please—”

“Later.” He kissed her forehead and allowed her feet back on the floor.

Hermione felt heavy and weak to carry her own weight. “Oh,” she cried.

“I know… But you need to learn to let go during sex, Granger,” he cooed, tugging one of her curls behind her ear and dragging her chin up so he could kiss her gently.

Then he stepped back and gestured to the desk to his side, where Lindy had neatly organised her working folders. “To work then? The creatures won’t save themselves.”

Her feet reluctantly carried her towards the guest chair, as she pushed her skirt back down, her head fallen in a pout. But Hermione didn’t dare to complain, because he had said there *would* be a later. Once she reached the chair, she glanced back, waiting for instructions. Malfoy had his arms crossed, and he smiled when he noticed what she’d done.

“I think I’d like to look at you while we work today.” He said, walking towards her, sending shivers down her spine.

It would be colder and lonelier to be away from him, especially with all the built-up tension of being denied her release. Malfoy sat in his place, and as her hands reached to button her shirt, she realised there were no buttons left. She went for her wand, but he raised his hand, just as he placed a lit cigarette to his mouth.

“No. I said I want to look at you.”

And that was the reason why she worked the whole day with her breasts exposed to him. The idea that perhaps it would trigger him into moving towards her before the end of the day, however, was violently squashed. Aside from staring at her with a lewd gaze from time to time, Malfoy didn’t seem to remember she was there. Not once did he ask for a book; instead, summoning them with magic (she knew he was lying about the anti-summoning wards) and read his own mail. Yet her nipples kept hard the entire day, her body on edge, waiting for his command, lusting for any scraps of attention.

Luckily for her, or by Malfoy’s orders, Rex sent them their lunch without appearing to see her with her blouse open — much like the plates used to appear at Hogwarts. They ate silently until she asked.

“Well, sir, was it ingwaz?”

It took him so long to answer that she thought he wouldn’t. “Yes.”

“W-why?”

“You know the meaning, Granger.” He smirked. “And, well, now you know the feeling of it too.”

“Divine masculine nature — provision, protection, generosity and quiet strength.” She cited, as if straight out of her syllabus. But there was something else she couldn’t remember properly.

“Quite fitting, don’t you think?” he said, while sipping his tea.

Quite presumptions, she thought. “Yes, I suppose it is.”

She thought he would help her get off when lunch was over, but he didn’t. She bitterly wrote her letter to Hughes, addressing him with a *dear* as her poor attempt at revenge. It was futile since Malfoy didn’t even ask to read it before she sent it with his owl. By the time she had finished her ministry work, Hermione raised to stand at his side — her nerve endings tingling. He allowed her to sit in his lap and read to him, while he played with her nipples between his fingers.

Hermione tried rolling her hips against his groin and moaning, but it only made him stop and chuckle a “Don’t stop reading, Granger.” Once dinner time came, she was already so pent up with desire that she actually moaned her *yes* at Malfoy’s invitation to dinner with her. Unfortunately, he waved his wand to button her blouse and spent the whole evening *talking* to her about *several things* over the five-course meal, under the dim light of the candles.

After dessert, he held her hand and pulled her to sit across his lap, legs joined to one side. He wrapped one arm around her back and the other rested over her thighs. He kissed her slowly, and it was painfully sweet. His lips were plump and careful, her eyelids felt heavy, and her heart, warm.

“Good night, Granger,” he said, finishing the kiss with a peck. “I expect you here tomorrow at eight.”

“W-what?”

The idea of not getting her release that night was maddening.

“You go home, take a shower and go to bed like a good girl,” he ordered, gently tugging her off his lap. “And, don’t you dare get yourself off — I’ll know if you do.”

“B-but—” There wasn’t a single chance of her getting herself off; Hermione had never masturbated. She tried a few times after her divorce, but she wasn’t good at it. So if he sent her home, it really meant she would spend the whole night aching for his touch. Malfoy seemed to know so much about her, yet this he was oblivious to, and she wouldn’t be the one to tell him. “Y-yes, *Dom* .”

The last word was added as if a last resort, a plea for mercy. It had a noticeable effect on him, his pupils dilating and his breath going ragged, yet he still didn’t give in. Hermione dragged herself slowly towards the floo.

A shower, almost a whole bottle of wine, half a tub of ice cream and two Jane Austen adaptation movies later, she still couldn’t sleep. So she went towards her syllabus and searched for the Ingwaz rune there.

A gasp left her mouth once she reached the last line of its definition:

“Ingwaz was the fire in the seed, the heartbeat before the kiss, the stillness before surrender. It meant to be claimed by someone not through force, but because the bond had always been there, quiet and waiting.”

Chapter 10: When he rewards her

“Good morning, Granger.” His low, smooth voice had her stomach churning even before she was completely off the floo.

Hermione had spent most of her night awake, wondering about the meaning of what he had done the previous day and desperately attempting to get off. She rubbed her hand on her clit, pinched her nipples and went as far as pressing her fingers inside her cunt — trying to mimic what Malfoy had done with no success. By the fourth hour, she gave up completely, showered and dressed for the day.

“Morning, sir.” She was in a bad mood, jumpy and sensitive. The whole rune ordeal only made it worse.

Why would Malfoy lick a rune on her? Was it part of a ritual or only a message he wanted to send? The answer was obvious; it would be silly to think Malfoy would go as far as to perform a ritual to claim her — he already owned her. But what would that message be?

The first part was clear enough. Divine masculine energy was the epitome of the role Malfoy had assumed in her life. Providing for her every need: financial, sexual and even emotional — he was the only person she talked to, not a friend or a lover but *something* important to her. He protected her by preventing her from having to humiliate herself to gather donations for her projects, but mostly protected her from herself, as he had put it himself: helping her overcome her anxiety and overthinking. He was generous, annoyingly so. And very strong — physically and mentally.

But the other part was not that clear to her. Was he trying to communicate that she was his not only as a sub, not only because of their contract, but perhaps because of a bond already existent? He wouldn’t have proposed a submissive relationship if he hadn’t had any interest in her prior; he said himself that he had been watching her and desiring to dominate her. Was that all? A need to prove he was superior and dominant over his school nemesis? Or maybe a need to fulfil a fantasy with the former Golden Girl?

She was being delusional, of course. It was born out of her own lack and need of affection. Her love life was a miserable collection of failure and abstinence; thus, she was incredibly desperate for any crumbs of attention. Besides, Malfoy had said himself he wasn’t looking for a girlfriend; he wanted a sub. And if he ever did want a girlfriend, she could be younger, prettier and with purer blood.

“Granger, I can hear you burning your beautiful brain up,” he drawled, still hidden behind his Daily Prophet.

“Sorry, sir.”

He closed the pages and stared at her, his eyes like a stormy sea. “Come here.”

Hermione walked until she was standing between his knees, looking down at his handsome face.

“You’re tense.” He wasn’t asking. “Did you get off yesterday?”

She looked away, face burning hot as she took a deep breath before answering. “No, sir.”

He nodded. "Would you be able to work on your Ministry's tasks in the afternoon without compromising your duties?"

A blink of her eyes. "I think so, yes."

"Good. I have an important appointment today and I'd like you to accompany me." His answer came with him already on his feet.

Hermione had to take a step back so they wouldn't bump into each other, but Malfoy held the small of her back, pressing her body to his as he apparated them away. The sun momentarily blinded her, so she placed one hand over her eyes to see the classic white façade of a luxurious hotel in Muggle London.

With his hand still on her back, Malfoy guided Hermione towards the entrance stairs, where they were greeted by a doorman with deference. A look around had her thanking herself for choosing one of her nicest dresses — black and red, made of wool crepe. They went into an opulent dining room, naturally illuminated through the grand, vaulted glass ceiling. As its exterior, the interior design was classically inspired with white columns and ornate plaster around the walls.

"Is this the Lanesborough?" Hermione gasped; she had read about it in Muggle celebrities' magazines during her teenage summers in the waiting room of her parents' practice.

"Yes," Malfoy drawled, pulling one of the upholstered chairs with wood frames for her to sit.

"Are you meeting a Muggle?" She dared ask, as she took one of the napkins from the neatly set table to her lap.

"Manners, Granger." He smirked, unbuttoning his jacket so he could sit in front of her. "And, no. I'm meeting a *muggleborn*."

She glanced around, as if hoping to find said Muggleborn between the potted palms and plush sofas in the surrounding lounge. Then, as Malfoy chuckled at her display, reality dawned on her. "Me?"

"Manners, Granger," he insisted, his tone more severe at that moment.

"Sorry, sir." Her eyes fell to her plate. "Thank you for bringing me here, sir. It is exquisite."

He smirked, eyes on her, his chin on his knuckles. "Indeed."

It shouldn't have been a surprise when the waiter came that Malfoy had requested exactly the menu of a perfect breakfast for her: orange juice, avocado toasts, with smoked salmon and cream cheese. That was probably her favourite part about their arrangement: how well he knew her. It made it easy for a feminist to obey a man when all his orders were exactly what she wanted or deep down needed. Merlin knew how she needed that break from overthinking and attempting to have control over everything. It was so comfortable to rest on Malfoy's authority; she figured she could do that forever. Of course, the denied orgasm hadn't been ideal, but she had a feeling he would make up for it. Hopefully.

"Why are we here, sir? If I may ask, that is." The question came when she had almost finished her meal.

Draco sipped his coffee before answering seriously, all business. “I didn’t lie when I said I had an important appointment today.” He waited, looking intensely into her eyes, before continuing, “Tell me, Granger, how long has it been since you last had sex?”

The orange juice nearly choked her, and it was all she could do not to splutter it out through her nostrils. “W-what?”

“It’s been five weeks since the beginning of our arrangement, so if you have been a good girl following the rules—”

“I have, sir!” Hermione gasped and, at his raised eyebrows, she added, hoping he wouldn’t punish her by denying orgasms for another day, “Sorry for interrupting, sir.”

“So it has been at least five weeks of no sex?”

More like five years. “Hm, er — Something like that, sir.”

“Granger, you’re supposed to answer me truthfully. Give me the exact number.”

She sighed, looking up at the crystal chandelier above them, willing her tears not to fall. Her face burned in embarrassment, as she was sure he would discard her when he knew the truth. A warm, large hand placed over hers on the table. “It’s okay, Granger. Tell me.”

“I haven’t had a-anyone. Not since Ron,” she mumbled, unable to meet his gaze. A squeeze on her hand, and then his thumb was caressing her wrist.

He inhaled sharply. “Have you had anyone before him?”

Hermione couldn’t fight the tear that escaped her eyes. “N-no, just him.”

After two heartbeats of silence, Malfoy rose to his feet, his hand still on hers. It was now that he would say she was far too inexperienced for his liking. With a gentle tug, he pulled her to stand too and dragged her hand to rest on his shoulder, while he wrapped his arms around her waist and kissed her sweetly. “Thank you for trusting me to be in your life,” he murmured against her lips, making her heart swell and pound violently.

It was almost endearing, that tender moment.

“I want to fuck you today, Granger.”

And just like that, the whole atmosphere shifted, giving Hermione the impression that the surrounding air had been sucked out of existence and that they were inside a warm and stilled void. It was good that he had his arms around her, because if it wasn’t for his hold, she would have fallen due to the weakness of her knees. His low growl warmed her belly and dropped into her knickers.

“Would you like that?”

She nodded, almost frantically, eyes shyly closed. “Yes, Dom.” It needed to be a whisper, because if she said it out loud, her words were bound to come in a broken moan. When her eyes fluttered open, they were met by his — the pupils dilated to the point she could barely see the silver.

It would’ve been quicker at the Manor, perhaps he’d bend her over the table like the first time or merely apparate them to a bed. But they were inside a Muggle hotel, so Malfoy had to guide her

with his hand on her back through tables, lifts and corridors until they reached their destination. None of them spoke anything, so anticipation hung in the silence as Malfoy deftly opened the door and welcomed her into their ensuite.

“Safe words?”

“Pause and stop, sir.”

Hermione was absolutely sure that her surroundings were those of an obnoxiously expensive room. Yet, she couldn’t bring herself to notice anything but every flick of expression and minor movement from Draco Malfoy. Every cell in her body was aware of him, expecting him, waiting for him.

He was standing in front of her, eyes hot on hers, as he removed his cufflinks and tossed them on the floor, rolling his sleeves up until his elbows, exposing the bulging muscles of his forearms. Then he took a gentle finger and traced the line of her collarbones, sending shivers through her whole body.

“Undress.” His lips brushed against her forehead.

Enjoying the freedom of submission, not being forced to self-doubt and second-guess her movement, Hermione could just obey. Her shaking fingers went to her back, unzipping her dress and letting it pool at her feet. He smirked when he saw she was wearing the black knickers he had gifted her, but soon enough, they followed her dress to the floor. Her nipples hardened not from the chilly air of the last week of February, but from the hunger she saw in Malfoy’s face at her. His hands flexed at his side, and he told her to go to bed.

Hermione slowly climbed and crawled, blood rushing in her ears and her heart stammering in her chest. “How do you want me, Dom?” She asked, her voice as a kitten’s.

“On your back,” he said, voice thick, from behind her.

Once she had turned to lie awkwardly on her elbows and face him, Malfoy gripped her ankles and pushed them towards her bum. A yelp escaped her lips as her knees fell to the sides and he dived face-first on her cunt. He opened his mouth and swallowed it all, trailing open-mouthed kisses on her folds. Hermione mewled, head falling back as her hands grabbed the duvet beneath her.

“Eyes on me,” he growled against her core, and his minty breath over the wetness of it made her toes curl.

Looking down through her nearly closed eyelids, she saw Malfoy feasting on her, arms wrapped around her thighs, squeezing her bruised flesh. He lapped, circled and thrusted inside. The *Ingwaz* was drawn over and over as Hermione howled uncontrollably over the precipice. She came on his mouth, and he continued to lick it as if he didn’t want to waste a drop of her, humming in appreciation of her taste.

His lips then began a journey towards her mouth, kissing every inch of her in the way. When he kissed one of her belly rolls, where the skin had once stretched to house a baby, she whined, trying to pull him up — it was uncomfortable. Annoyed, Malfoy leaned back and smacked the inside of her thighs. A yelp escaped her, eyes wide at him.

“Don’t you *dare* deny me parts of you.” He was glaring at her.

"I don't like my belly, Malfoy." She pouted.

"I am the one who has to like it," He licked a straight line from her clit to her navel, proceeding to her breasts, where he twirled his tongue around, alternating between stimulating her nipples with it and attempting to fit as much of her breast as he could in his mouth. "And I adore everything about you, Granger."

"Thank you, Dom," she cried as his fingers plumped inside her cunt, scisoring to stretch her walls.

When he finally reached her lips, they kissed messily and slowly, while he fucked her with his fingers. Hermione kept moaning into his mouth, and the elastic band inside her womb was almost snapping for the second time, when Malfoy pushed himself back, pulling his shirt above his head.

Her lips fell; she had never seen him shirtless, and it felt like an injustice. He was painfully beautiful, more and more similar to a marble statue of a Greek god with his pale, muscular abdomen and chest carved with white scars zigzagging — a reminder of the spell Harry used on him two decades before. She wanted to lick them.

On his knees and oblivious to her ogling, Malfoy pulled his wand from a pocket, waving it to vanish his trousers and then pointing it at her navel to cast the contraceptive spell. It brought her the certainty of what was about to happen, and Hermione suddenly felt nervous, biting her lip. Tossing his wand to the side, Malfoy reassured her by squeezing her thigh gently.

"Remember, you can ask me to stop or pause at any time," he said, stroking himself as he looked lewdly at her body. Only after Hermione nodded, he continued, "Hands on your knees, open for me."

Hermione grabbed her knees and pulled them to the sides, so she was completely open and exposed to him. The sight of her evoked a groan from Malfoy that made her stomach tighten. Still holding the base, he guided his cock over the length of her cunt, coating himself with her juices before he placed the tip at her entrance.

Her eyes shut, afraid of the pain.

"Look at me," he growled, pushing just the head inside before he braced himself with an elbow at each side of her head. "That's it. My good, beautiful girl."

His nose was brushing against hers, and his hands were fistng her curls. He told her to take a huge breath, and when she exhaled, he entered her in one long and slow thrust. The overstretch, the fullness, the weight of his body over hers — She felt complete and grounded. A white noise she had come to ignore, like a constant buzzing inside her head, was silenced. Everything aligned and made sense. Their bodies were made to be connected like this. She wondered if Malfoy knew.

A quick inspection of his face found his eyes heavy on her, his bottom lip caught between his teeth as the air left his nostrils slowly.

Then he pulled back and rolled his hips again, slamming his front against hers. The angle had the blonde curls in his pelvis rubbing her clit and making her whole body convulse in the rhythm of his thrusts. The air escaped her lips in high-pitched little "ah's" every single time he hit her cervix. His pace increased, and so did the strength of his movement.

"My — Good — Fuck — My *good* girl"

His face hovered just above her so that every time he moved, their lips brushed lightly, and every breath between the two was shared. It was too intimate, their eyes locked into one another, every inch of their bodies connected. Hermione felt like her gravity centre had shifted towards him.

“Nghmm,” she said, her eyebrows frowning in that innocent, pained-pleasure expression. “Yes, please, Dom!”

Her reactions seemed to fuel an animalistic side of the ever-so collected Draco Malfoy, and he began to growl incoherently, the words “mine”, “fuck”, and “good” popping up several times while he shoved inside her.

And he did it, pounding and pounding inside her — fistng her curls and kissing her face, wherever he could reach in each thrust.

“D-Dom,” she whined, her breasts bouncing with the movement and a desperate need inspiring her to pull his lower lip inside hers. It was like she couldn’t bear the idea of having a single inch of her away from him.

Malfoy’s eyes poured over hers with so much intensity she felt dizzy, and as his own moans began to grow more and more vulnerable and raw, Hermione found herself spiralling into blissfulness.

“Fucking delicious,” he panted, “Gonna keep you all to myself.”

How she wanted it to be true. Too quickly, Hermione reached the precipice and fell over, her walls clenching around him and her hands leaving her knees so she could dig her nails into his firm bum, trying to pull him as close as she could.

She had never felt like that before.

He kept pistonning his hips against her, her oversensitized cunt making her see stars. Her eyes rolled back, eyelids fluttering and lips parting in incoherent bliss.

“You like that, Granger?” He pounded violently inside her; she was mewling through the waves of her orgasm and was barely aware of the beads of sweat falling from his fringe towards her face.
“You were made for me — To fuck — To own — You’re mine! Fuck—”

With a shout, he came, hot jets of sperm filling her womb. Malfoy’s mouth was on hers in no time, kissing her desperately as she panted, her vision slowly coming back to focus. It could’ve been ages of kissing when he eventually backed away, searching between her eyes.

“Are you alright, Granger?”

“Yes,” she breathed. “T-Thank you, Dom.” She smiled feebly, her voice hoarse from the screaming and weak from the fucking.

Malfoy chuckled, but it wasn’t mocking — it was raw, honest, vulnerable. He was shaking when his cock slid off of her, making a wet sound. The emptiness, the chilly air that scratched her sweaty body when he moved slightly back or the downfall from her roughest orgasm ever—whatever it was—made Hermione cry. And suddenly she was sobbing.

Chapter 11: When they enjoy themselves

It only got worse because she was embarrassed to be doing it—certain that no one had ever humiliated themselves like that in front of him after such a mindblowing session of sex. It was so horrible to imagine that she would just get that taste of what it could be like, to lose it over her own messed-up emotions and hormones.

“Granger.” She couldn’t look at him, but felt as he pulled her up, cradling her against his chest.
“Granger, what’s wrong?”

Nothing was wrong despite her horrible display, so she merely laughed, crying against his skin.

“Did I hurt you?”

“No,” she sobbed.

“Then why are you crying?”

“I am sorry, sir,” she whined, hiding her face in him. “I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry,”

Her apologies were directed to the scene she was creating, positively ruining every amazing thing they had. Thankfully, he didn’t force her to face him — she was so embarrassed about what he would possibly find there. He just squeezed her tighter, caressing her back and kissing the top of her head, as he sat on his haunches.

“It was too soon, you weren’t ready,” he said after some time. “It’s okay, we can wait more—”

“No, sir, please—”

“You just have to tell me when it doesn’t feel good—”

She grabbed his jaw, forcing him to face her, not caring this time about the tear-smudged look on her. “No, Sir. Please.” Her tone was almost like an order, and it surprised him. “I don’t know why I am crying, this is so embarrassing—”

“No, it isn’t,” he promised. “Your feelings are valid, Granger.”

Surprisingly enough, that hurt. Hermione had always been pushed aside; people told her she was an overreactive, whiny, anxious woman. Ron would often push aside her complaints, throwing his own back at her. *Nobody cares about these creatures, this is not really a problem, you work too much, you don’t get involved with my family, you won’t give me more children, of course, I was looking at her arse at least she looks interested in me.* A bird twitted outside the window, and she noticed the dust dancing in the sunrays behind him, as she stared over his shoulders.

Malfoy hugged her. “It is normal to have an emotional outburst like this. It is expected. And good. You’re releasing trapped feelings.” His reassurance came between soft kisses on the side of her neck. “I will take care of you. And we’ll wait a bit more before next time—”

“I don’t want to wait,” she said, hating her voice for breaking. “Please, sir, don’t make me wait again—I swear, it felt so, so good.”

He smirked at her. “Did it now?”

Malfoy didn’t find her odd, at least he didn’t act like it. He made her feel seen and heard. He made her feel like she was interesting and that her opinions, often shushed or ignored by her former friends, were important to him. He made her feel desirable, and that was overwhelming. She felt like drifting afloat in the sea, ready to drown at any moment. Because what would happen when he got tired of her? She wouldn’t recover from this. He had become too important for her. She needed him. Her divorce had been painful, mostly because it involved a child and lost family, but whenever Malfoy decided to cast her aside—she knew it would be maiming.

Hermione nodded, swallowing the insecurity clawing at her throat. Malfoy seemed to sense it, because his hands snaked from her side to sprawl over her cheeks. “You’re my good girl, Granger,” he whispered before kissing her thoroughly.

She ended up not getting back to her ministry work that day, as Malfoy said that, considering her emotional state, he would feel better spending the whole afternoon worshipping her. And that he did, taking a rose petal bath with her while he kissed her lazily and played with her nipples. Then, he ate her cunt over the bed while the water droplets in her body naturally dried. She begged, and he fucked her three times before walking her towards the apparition point. Every time he did it the same way: eyes locked on hers, his hands fisted in her hair, body pressed close together while he kissed wildly. It was grounding to feel so connected and exposed at the same time.

“Do you want — Er, —To go home with me?” she asked gingerly because she really didn’t want to get away from him.

Cars were moving around them, but it looked like the world had stopped when she saw the look in his eyes; they were flashing intensely. “I think it is nice for you to have somewhere free from the dynamic, Granger.”

“Oh.”

“If you don’t feel comfortable being alone, we can spend the night here—”

“No!” She shook her head, smiling tightly. “No, sir. I’m fine, I just— Well, I’ll see you tomorrow.”

He opened his mouth, but she spun into apparition before he could say anything.

...

Thursday, she woke to her kitchen table hidden underneath hundreds of deep red roses and a tiny note.

Yesterday was perfect.

I cannot wait for today.

Feeling butterflies in her stomach, Hermione smiled silly the whole time while bathing, combing her hair and getting dressed. She felt like a woman. It was a good feeling.

“Granger,” he greeted her when she stepped out of the floo. He wore his usual black robes, standing tall over the white fur rug as he smoked his cigar. The room looked somewhat different, but she couldn’t quite place what it was.

“Sir, good morning.” She smiled at him.

“I have one complaint,” he said, and her face fell. “Yesterday, you left without clearly explaining your thoughts and feelings to me.”

Two steps and the distance between them was closed.

“You are supposed to tell me everything, Granger.” He brushed one of her curls and used his index finger to pull her chin upwards. “I like knowing it all about my little know-it-all. Not knowing drives... me... mad.”

The last three words were whispered as he exhaled his smoke around her. She was surprised to notice that it didn’t smell bad like tobacco usually did, but herbal with a touch of floral. It felt somewhat hypnotising. Hermione sighed.

“Why did you want me to accompany you?”

She answered truthfully, because she wanted to please him and because his proximity was enebriating as always. “I wanted to spend more time with you.”

His pupils dilated. “All you need to do is ask, Granger. I’m a good Dom, am I not?”

“Yes, sir.”

“So tell me, what do you want from me right now?”

The answer to that question had been dancing in her mind ever since she opened her eyes that morning, after years of celibacy and even more years of a dull sexual life in her marriage... Hermione wanted to explore all the possibilities Malfoy had to offer her.

“I want you to fuck me, sir,” she said, her voice reaching a high note with the desire bubbling inside her. “In various ways.”

Now, the black had almost replaced the silver in his iris. The finger on her chin twitched. “Do you?”

“Yes, please.”

“How do you feel? After yesterday? Any pain or soreness?”

“No, sir.”

Malfoy vanished his cigarette.

“Are you ready to test something different?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Any idea in that beautiful brain of yours?”

“Whatever pleases you, sir.” *Surprise me, sir; I’m sure I’m going to like it.*

“What are your—”

“Stop and pause, sir.”

The hand on her chin splayed so his fingers were hugging her neck. Not harsh, but firm. “Don’t interrupt me, Granger.”

“Sorry, sir.”

She had barely reached the end of her sentence, and he had crashed his lips on her, still holding her by the neck. He kissed her hungrily, tongue stroking against hers and lips desperate to suck her in. Hermione tried to meet him, but he was not in the mood to share — he wanted to take. She felt him walking them both towards the armchair, and she was tugged to sit down in front of him.

He fell to his knees, pushing her robes’ skirt up and exposing her bare cunt. “Good girl.. Ready for me, are you?”

The affirmative was replaced by a yelp when he forced her legs apart, so they would rest on the arms of the chair, leaving her in total display for him. It was awkwardly similar to a gynaecologist, but Hermione didn’t have much time to dwell on that fact because Malfoy started to lap on her.

“Nghhh,” she moaned, her hand falling to his hair. She wanted to show him how good it felt, caressing him and scratching the nape of his neck.

The sight below her was maddening. Malfoy had his face buried between her legs, his silver eyes burning her without blinking. He easily slipped one finger inside her, and then she felt the cold metal on her walls, dragging against the nerve endings that connected to the very button he was sucking on. With a loud and obscene cry of his name, Hermione came in Malfoy’s mouth.

He continued to lap until she squirmed due to the oversensitiveness. Then, he moved back, appreciating her form with a lewd expression, palming the bulge in his trousers while erupting goosebumps all over her, tracing fine lines with his finger on her inner thighs.

“You are my perfect girl, Granger. Do you know that?”

Hermione felt her stomach give a little jump at his words, and she slid down from the armchair to join him on the rug. He welcomed her with a bruising kiss, splaying his fingers on the back of her scalp and pulling her impossibly closer. She heard a movement at their side: Malfoy had pulled one of the cushions from the armchair and thrown it behind her.

For a moment, she thought he would lie her head there, but as he gently moved their entangled bodies down, she realised the cushion was placed under her hips. Malfoy raised his torso, so he wans back on his knees, and she lay under him. His wand was drawn out of his robes, and he whipped it, slicing her blouse and bra in the middle. A gasp escaped her lips, and her hands flew to cover her breasts instinctively.

He swatted her hand away. “Don’t. That’s mine to see.”

His giant hand cupped her breast, squeezing lightly.

Hermione breathed heavily as she allowed her hands to rest at the side of her head, over the halo of curls her mane formed. Malfoy inhaled sharply, eyes shooting her with something wild. His wand twirled and she felt the cushion beneath her doubling, tripling in size... Until her hips were much

higher than the rest of her body, handing access to her cunt on a silver platter to her Dom. Malfoy made the scene of licking his lips, as he cast the contraceptive charm and pocketed his wand back.

Her skirt pooled around her waist, her breasts were in his hands, and Malfoy was still completely dressed, not a strand of hair out of place from the perfect waves he had going on. She could see the veins popping on the exposed forearms underneath the rolled-up sleeves, one hand working deftly to unbutton his trousers until his cock jumped to hit his belly, rock hard.

The hand in her breast snaked towards her neck to hold her there as he hissed. “Granger, you better say your safe words if you don’t like something I do, because I want to fuck you a little harder than yesterday.”

She nodded, feeling her whole body tingling in anticipation.

“Would you want that?”

She thought about the gags, whips and chains. She didn’t want *that*. She didn’t want him to slap her or call her bad names. “Yes! Just don’t hurt me, *please*, Dom.”

Something melted in his eyes, and he leaned forward to kiss her, the length of his cock sliding over her swollen and wet cunt. “Never. You are my good, good girl.”

And then he moved back, holding her hips with his hands and sliding inside her in one powerful thrust. Hermione moaned loudly as the stretching and filling made her exhale. Soon, his hips were rolling, fucking her at a steady pace.

“Oh fuck, you feel amazing, Granger...” he hissed.

That was different from the previous day. His promise had been honest. He was fucking her hard, like he wanted to reach something deeper than her womb, like he wanted to leave a mark, like he was trying for them to become one thing. His hands made sure she wouldn’t be thrown away with the impact.

“So — fucking — good,” he said, pounding hard into her.

Hermione loved hearing the dirty nonsense he said as he fucked her. She didn’t know what to say back because all she managed to let out were incoherent soft cries as her whole body was thrown back and forth with his thrusts.

“You like that, don’t you? Like getting fucked by your Dom... My sweet, good girl.”

It was a new position. His body wasn’t on hers, and their faces weren’t close together. Now he towered over her, on his haunches as he fucked her, watching her breasts bounce with his potency. And she watched him, still almost fully clothed, lips parted and eyes hot, burning hot with desire. Looking at her as he fucked her, looking like there was nothing as important or beautiful in the world.

“Fuck!” he groaned. “My perfect girl!”

They hadn’t had much time together yet, but she noticed when he was close. His rhythm grew erratic, more desperate, his thighs shaking as they met her arse. Hermione wanted to join him, so she brought one hand to pinch a nipple and the other to rub her digit over the already sensitive clit.

It was his undoing, Malfoy groaned and buried himself inside as his cock twitched, spilling himself inside her. She moaned loudly, her body convulsing around his cock and clenching hard as if to milk him dry.

Only then did he allow his torso to fall heavy over her, kissing her throat and praising her as he caressed her cheek, twirling a curl around his finger. "Mine. My sweet, fucking perfect girl, Granger." Hermione ran her hands over his back, unable to do much more.

Eventually, she whispered. "I need to work, Malfoy—"

He bit her skin. "Mind your manners."

"I need to work, sir." She rolled her eyes.

With a long sigh, he brought himself up and extended his hand to pull her to her feet. His trousers were closed in seconds after he scourgified his cock. She looked expectantly at him, but he shook his head. "You'll stay like that today, with my seed running down your thighs."

A shiver ran down her spine. "Yes, sir."

But when she moved to grab her wand and mend her blouse, he stopped her again. "No. I want you to work naked." And, with a wave of his wand, her clothes vanished. Hermione gulped, but didn't dare complain. She was rather liking the idea of being ready should he want to begin something...

"I really need to work," she said. "I already didn't get much done yesterday and —"

"You will work," he said, already walking towards his seat behind the table. "You will work naked."

She gulped and then scratched her arm uncomfortably. *No*, she told herself, *that was supposed to be exciting*. So she took a fortifying breath and sauntered towards him, waiting for him to give her the space to sit on his lap.

Malfoy didn't act like he acknowledged her standing there. "Sir?"

"Yes?" Was his drawl, still reading his papers without looking up.

"Would you want me to sit in your lap?"

His eyes devoured her unabashedly, amusement clear in his smirk. "No. You can sit wherever you want."

Hermione glanced around, searching for where she was supposed to sit. She could lie on her back over the rug, exposing her arse to him. She could curl up in the armchair near the fire; it seemed cosy enough. She could sit in the chair directly opposite this, so her tits would be in his eyesight the whole day.

Her feet ended up dragging her towards the green velvet settee, where she lay comfortably, her legs crossed at the ankles and her head resting on her arm. With a flick of her wand, all the papers with budget planning, reports and case studies for her sanctuarium were floating above her so she could read.

Once in a while, she would glance towards Malfoy, check if he was looking at her. Not a single time did she meet his eyes, but he did go towards the bookcase a few times to search for a book. Every time he would fondle her nipples — which stayed pebbled in anticipation all day — but then too quickly move back to his seat.

At lunch, he had her sit in his lap as he hand-fed her all kinds of delicacies, allowing her to do the same for him. Then he fucked her over the coffee table, cumming inside her once again.

Dinner, however, was his sacred time. He conjured a dress for her, golden silk that slid around her curves as he guided her towards the dining room. “Gold for my good, golden girl.” He had smirked as he admired her.

“Scorpius tells me Rose has joined the Gryffindor Quidditch Team,” he drawled, cutting his steak.

“What?” She almost choked on her red wine, “No, Rose doesn’t care for flying.”

“Then the lions must be desperate, because apparently their seeker is in St. Mungos and Rose got the position,” he continued, unbothered.

“No.” She shook her head. “Rose doesn’t like flying! She doesn’t even own a broom. I —”

“Granger, it’s alright,” he said a bit too late; Hermione was hyperventilating.

“Why wouldn’t she tell me?”

Rose had answered her letters in the same way she always did; excitedly commenting on her class work and current reads, thanking her mum for the owl, books and candies. Nothing about Quidditch. The thought of her daughter, her only family, having secrets from her was —

But then again, Hermione also had a secret.

A heavy hand placed over hers, grounding, soothing. Her mind was silenced pleasantly. “Why don’t you write to her tomorrow? Give her a chance to tell you herself. Merlin knows Scorpius is an anxious gossip; perhaps he beat her to communicate the news.”

Hermione nodded.

Chapter 12: When she is a good girl

The following morning, however, Hermione didn't write Rose a letter. Instead, she arrived in Malfoy's office fidgeting with her fingers, the skin around the nails already bloody with her biting anxiety. Malfoy watched as she greeted him, walking towards his chair and placing a kiss on his lips. It was a quick peck, somehow more intimate than the devouring kisses because it was so ordinary and simple.

She overthought that too, as she moved towards her chair again.

Then a letter from Hughes described problems with the Hippogriffs' transportation.

Followed by a quill that snapped in her trembling hands, smearing all her parchment with ink and forcing her to begin again.

"Granger," he drawled, and she jumped.

"Yes, sir?"

"You are anxious."

She didn't answer, but felt her face growing warmer.

"Do you have anything urgent in your work today?"

"N-no, not today, sir."

"Come here."

He pushed his chair back, opening space for her. Hermione walked briskly until she stood between his legs. She was trembling with anxiety, mindlessly touching each of her digits with her thumbs in rhythm. Malfoy gently caressed the bag of her thighs. His fingers light enough to make her shiver.

"Your mind is too heavy, too stuffed," he said, his tone cajoling.

"Yes, sir."

"I want to clear it."

"Okay," she sighed.

His chair creaked lightly when he pushed his back to it, distancing himself from her and allowing his gaze to drift down her body. "Take off your clothes."

"Sir... I really have a lot of work—"

An eyebrow raised and a small twitch of his cheek. "I said to take them off."

Hermione's mind began reeling as she fumbled to remove her pencil skirt and her blouse. Malfoy made no effort to help her; instead, he kept watching with an inscrutable expression. It made her

heart race, and the fine hairs on her body stood on end. When she was free of everything, standing fully naked in front of him, Malfoy placed a gentle kiss on her mons.

“I’d like for you to leave a little more here,” he said, drawing an inverted triangle there.

“Don’t you like it as it is, sir?” she squeaked, her fingers clenching at her side. Overthinking and anxiety were close to suffocating her.

“No, I like it very much,” Malfoy chuckled, licking the whole length of her cunt before placing another peck on her mons. “But you are a woman, Granger. I don’t want you to look like a prepubescent girl”

“Okay,” she breathed out, on the verge of tears. Couldn’t she do anything right?

“Granger, what is troubling you?” he asked, holding the backs of her thighs tightly.

“N-nothing, sir.”

He hummed in disagreement. “You must tell me.”

“Sir, I—” she sighed. “I’m feeling a bit anxious today. And — I don’t like getting things wrong.”

He squeezed her. “What did you get wrong?”

“T-the quill and the waxing.”

“The quill was an accident.” He started to kiss her hips, dragging his teeth lightly. “And you didn’t know about the wax, I just told you.”

She blinked her tears away. “B-but I don’t want to be wrong, I— You did so much and I — I like this. I should be able to — Get one bloody thing right! *Oh Godric*—”

The ending of her phrase was engulfed by a loud moan as Malfoy nuzzled against her fold to reach her clit and suck it.

“I am not mad at you,” he said, and it relaxed her shoulders a bit. “You shouldn’t be either. You are allowed to be wrong, Granger.”

“I — I am not,” she cried. “If I get things wrong, lives can be damaged—the creatures and—” she sobbed, unable to finish. *My daughter*.

Malfoy analysed her for a whole minute before grabbing her hips with strong gentleness.
“Granger.”

Her eyes darted to him.

“What are your safe words?”

“P-pause and stop, sir.”

“I want you to turn around and sit on my cock,” he declared plainly, not a sign of nervousness or eagerness. It was like he had asked her to pass a book or sign a paper. Hermione faltered. She was a

mess, crying and sobbing — And he was thinking about that? She wanted to be offended, but she felt her cunt betraying her, slick sliding through her folds. Perhaps he just wanted her to be quiet—

“Now, Granger.” His hands were already unbuckling his belt.

She jumped at his interruption to her mental babbling and quickly obeyed, turning around to sit gingerly on his lap. It was a surprisingly difficult task, as Malfoy rested his hands on the arms of his chair, and she had her back to him, not quite knowing how to proceed. Hermione ended up having to blindly search with her hand underneath for his shaft and guide it towards her slick entrance. She kept worrying that she would be terrible at it, and he would tell her to please go back

“Nghhh,” A hard bite on her lips as she felt the full stretch of him inside her. All the words constantly floating around her mind silenced, and she rolled her hips unconsciously. Her eyes fluttered with the sensation of his cock against her front wall. “*Ohh, Dom.*”

Malfoy hissed, but when his hands gripped her hips, it wasn’t to move her up and down his cock as she might have wanted. Instead, he stilled her movement and then snaked one hand to gather her hair out of the way so he could whisper sinfully against her ear. “Don’t move, Granger. I want you to keep my cock warm as you work.”

Her eyes widened, and she couldn’t help but sob. “B-but, Dom, please. *I need —*”

“Who knows what you need?” he growled.

“Y-you, sir.”

“Exactly. Now get on with your work.” A kiss on her crown, and Malfoy leaned, summoning the contract he had been reading so he could hold it behind Hermione.

She breathed deeply and stretched her arm to reach the file she had been working on, and moaned as the movement made her feel the tip of him reaching her cervix. His fingers dug into her hips, a signal that she wouldn’t wiggle any longer.

And then time stretched.

There were no signs of any effect she might be having on Malfoy with her presence on his lap. Yet Hermione couldn’t think of anything other than the feeling of him inside her. Any deeper breath intake would have electric waves flowing from her walls towards her womb, making it clench almost painfully. Her skin was hypersensitive, so that every time Malfoy exhaled, she shivered a bit.

No one could ever say she wasn’t committed to her work, because she tried her hardest to read through the files. There had been an incident of sorts, something about tourists and dragons. But she couldn’t focus. Malfoy had her impaled, and every cell of her body was attuned to him. Every one of her scents focused on Malfoy: she could see his long fingers casually splayed over her thigh, she could sense his cock twitching now and then inside her, she could hear his absent-minded humming behind her, she could even scent him — sweaty, herbal and earthy.

All that was left to do was taste him.

The rest of the morning dragged slowly with Hermione warming him in the most deliciously torturous way possible. Her lower lip was captured by her teeth; her mind was now too full of Malfoy to think of anything else. Hermione's body slowly relaxed on top of him, her back resting against his front and her legs softening so her whole weight would rest on him. His thumb began circling on her thigh, approvingly.

Yet he didn't say anything.

The desire to taste him began on the tip of her tongue and slowly crawled all over her head, body and soul. It suddenly became the most important thing for her to do. As if reading her mind, Malfoy's hand, that had been resting on her thigh, snaked upwards to massage her jaw. She hadn't noticed it was clenched.

"You're fighting against relaxation, Granger," he murmured, "Is there a reason for it?"

Finally, she could ask. "I—I want to taste you, Dom. Please."

Malfoy groaned at her neck, and it made his cock spasm inside her walls, which in return had Hermione moaning softly while her eyes fluttered with pleasure.

"You will, Granger," he promised, caressing the side of her neck and eliciting shivers all over her. "But, first, I need you to tell me what has bothered you today?"

But Hermione couldn't think straight; her brain seemed to be foggy and lazy. She just wanted to get off; she couldn't stand waiting any longer. There was no space for feeling prideful, awkward or shy anymore. She had been a good girl; she had waited. Now, the time for desperation had come.

"Oh, no, please, please," she said, jerking on top of him. Her vision tunnelled to the immediate relief she felt from the friction of the movement. "Dom, please, you promised you'd take care of me, please, please—"

His hands gripped her hips, but it wasn't enough to stop her. Hermione was already bouncing, her head lolling to the side and her hands steadyng her balance on the table in front of her. Some time later, she would perhaps feel guilty about disobeying him or for begging so pathetically. But not at that point, at that point her sole focus was to take what she needed from her Dom.

She kept rebounding, slamming her arse against his thighs with violent strength and a desperate pace. He was huge inside her, and it made her feel slightly dizzy every time she got all the way up until his tip. But nothing compared to the jolt of pleasure she felt when she sat down. Lewd howls of rapture erupted from her chest, mixing with the wet sounds of their hips meeting. Her mind was blank in her chase for her pleasure, using his body, oblivious to the person around his member.

The explosion was just around the corner when Malfoy's firm grip on her hip stopped her brusquely.

Hermione wailed, "No, please, Dom."

"Granger!" His voice sounded strained for the first time, but she wasn't paying attention, trying to roll her hips and return to her quest for friction. He squeezed her painfully. "I am telling you to stop."

"Spank me later then," she cried nonsensically, "I need to come, please!"

As if something had snapped inside him, Malfoy used his grip to jolt her up and down on him violently. Her eyes rolled back, and her toes curled. Hermione felt her whole body clenching around him as her orgasm hit her like a tornado, making her mind spin and her body feel feather-light.

Malfoy kept bouncing her like a rag doll, her back pressed against him, head fallen on his shoulder, as he fucked her through her ecstasy.

Suddenly, he pulled her upwards, her knees buckling, threatened to let her fall, but he pushed every paper from the table and turned Hermione to lie on her back over the table. With her head dangling from the edge of it, Hermione thought Malfoy would fuck her like that. Instead, he walked around it, keeping a hand on her belly to ground her, and came to stand near her mouth.

A light tap against her cheek. “Open.”

Hermione was still blissfully sleepy and did as he asked. His burning hot shaft slowly pressed its way past her lips and into her mouth, all the way until it hit the back of her throat. A hiss from Malfoy reverberated through her head and neck pleasantly. Hermione could taste them both combined in his cock and swirled her tongue under it, in delight.

“Suck,” he said, his voice thick.

When Hermione obeyed, she was presented with spurts of a salty-sweet hot liquid going straight inside her. He told her to swallow it, but it wasn’t like she could do anything else.

Then his hands were caressing her sternum, as he popped his softening member out of her mouth. She still had her eyes closed while listening to a movement near her head, and suddenly, Malfoy’s breath was brushing against her temple as he said.

“How are you feeling right now, Granger?

She opened her eyes and met his grey ones staring deeply into her. “Calm.”

He gently tugged her head to help her sit upright, then hugged her form behind with both hands, running up and down her middle. “That’s good. Do you want to tell me why you disobeyed your Dom?”

Hermione’s body tensed. “I — I-I’m sorry, sir. I wasn’t thinking—”

“I won’t punish you, so you’re forbidden from punishing yourself either,” he said firmly, nibbling the juncture of her neck and shoulder.

As if he had pressed a button, her body melted into relaxation again. “Thank you, sir.”

“But you still need to tell me.”

A shuddering breath. “ I don’t like getting things wrong or being the last to know something. I think I was feeling too uptight, anxious...When I released it by—”

She blushed. It was embarrassing to say it out loud.

“Warming my cock?” He did it for her.

She nodded, biting her lip. “I think my mind went so blank I couldn’t think straight.”

He hummed against her back. “Good. I wanted you to relax.” Then a hand snaked towards her neck, warningly. “This is the last time you’ll go without punishment if you disobey me, Granger. Do you understand?”

Her whole body shook. “Y-yes, sir”

“Good.”

When he helped her up, Malfoy kissed her passionately for a few minutes before allowing her space to dress herself again. Hermione asked if she could lie in the settee, feeling too sore after nearly two hours warming his cock and then violently riding him. He allowed her to, and there she went with her files and reports to check.

A gasp escaped her mouth.

At approximately 11:42 local time on February 28th 2016, an unauthorised Portkey was activated within restricted airspace above the Romanian Dragon Sanctuary, resulting in the unexpected arrival of three British magical tourists directly into Feeding Zone C. The individuals in question—a wizarding couple and their teenage son—materialised within twenty feet of an adult male Longhorn during an active feeding cycle.

Immediate distress was noted from both the dragons and the tourists. One Longhorn emitted a defensive flame burst in response to the sudden intrusion, resulting in the complete liquefaction of a Muggle camera carried by the teenage boy and minor singeing to the robe sleeve and hair—

That was an international catastrophe waiting to happen.

Chapter 13: When he is a good dom

Chapter Notes

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

Hermione was suddenly hyper aware of how chilly the room was, with a brisk breeze entering through a small opening in the windows near the bookshelves. She needed to contact the Dragon Sanctuary and find a solution to that problem.

“Malfoy, can I use your floo?”

“Excuse me?” His tone was sharp.

“S-sorry, sir,” she corrected herself, not looking up at him. “I need to make a work floo call, may I please use your fireplace?”

“Yes, Granger,” he drawled.

Hermione immediately skimmed over the report a third time, committing important information to her memory and then stood towards the fireplace. She really wished wizards would come around to using Muggle communication devices such as phones and computers, because standing in all fours in Malfoy’s expensive polar bear rug to stick her head in his fireplace was not something she was pleased about.

What are you saying? You just rode his dick like a madwoman.

Hermione sighed, collecting herself back to her working persona and tossing the floo powder into the flames, calling for the Romanian Dragon Sanctuary. Her face was suddenly two thousand kilometres away, seeing the inside of what she knew to be Charlie Weasley’s office.

“Hermione!” Her former brother-in-law greeted her. “I haven’t seen you in ages... How are you? Merlin, you look beautiful!”

“Hi, Charlie!” She smiled. “Oh, I’m fine, thank you! You look very handsome, too!”

While Percy and Bill were somewhat more compatible with her in their personalities, Hermione had always liked the dragon-tamer Weasley the better. He was warm, gentle and very caring. She assumed it had something to do with dealing with dangerous wild beasts, because he reminded her a bit of Hagrid: strong and soft.

“So, to what do I owe the pleasure? Are you and Rose finally coming to visit me?”

“Oh, no...” Hermione giggled. “Rose is in Hogwarts, and I am—”

In a submissive contract with my former school bully.

“— Too busy. But I’ll see if I can—” Her words were cut by a startling yelp that escaped her; she felt two hands pushing her skirt up her arse.

“Hermione... Is everything alright?”

"J-just a *second*, Charlie," she nearly shrieked, because the hands were now yanking her knickers down. Hermione's head whipped back just in time to see Malfoy's hair behind her as he trailed open-mouthed kisses against her thighs.

She jerked, biting her lip to keep from moaning, because Charlie was listening. Then Malfoy popped into her vision, making a silencing sign with his index finger and gesturing for her to return to her call. She mouthed "No, please", and he merely raised his eyebrows, silently reminding her that she could not disobey him again. Gulping, Hermione returned to her call.

"So — Er, I—" she tried, but she was feeling too nervous to let anything coherent out of her lips. Malfoy bit the place where her arse met her thigh. "Oh! I'm sorry, I'm working from home and my — Crookshanks—"

"I thought Crookshanks had died." Charlie frowned. "Didn't you and Rose have a funeral for him at The Burrow some years ago?"

"Urgh — Yes," Hermione cried, because at that exact time, Malfoy ran his tongue over the place he had just bitten. "I got another one! Crookshanks II. He's still a kitten and— Oh, he's biting!"

Malfoy was not a kitten, but he *was* biting.

"Alright, so tell me why you called? I have to go for the mid-day feed soon..."

"Ah, yes — I just read the report on the incident with—" She felt two giant hands cupping her cheeks and spreading them open. "With the English tourists!"

"Oh," Charlie chuckled soundly, "Yes, that's right. Well, it all happened pretty fast, a portkey, you know—"

But she couldn't listen anymore, because she felt Malfoy press his tongue directly to her centre. She tried her best, but as he lapped her, she couldn't help but allow a pained moan to escape.

"Everything alright, Mione?"

"Yes," she said, but it came out as if she was saying more to Malfoy than to Charlie. She felt a pinch near her hip and shook her head. "Sorry, Charlie, I am alright, please continue—"

Hermione bit her lip, strung tight, and it took everything in her not to scream. Her Dom had his face pressed against her backside, nuzzling inside her cunt and kissing it like it was her mouth, engulfing it all and then twirling his tongue around her clit.

Ingwaz.

Ingwaz.

Ingwaz.

Hermione's eyes rolled back, and she let out a soft groan.

"Are you sure you're alright, Mione?" Charlie asked, "You look like you're in pain."

"I am — Yes — I — Oh Godric," she cried, bucking her hips.

A loud smack echoed as his palm connected to her arse, a painful, acute sting vibrating against her skin just before she found, once again, her core being deliciously stimulated by Malfoy's lips and tongue.

"Fuck!" she howled. "Sorry, Charlie. I have some—period cramps! Please, continue!"

Charlie looked at Hermione like she was crazy — a mist of shock and pity.

"Well, ok." He scratched the back of his head, "So as I was saying, I had to tell the tourists that—"

But who would think about tourists when teeth scraped against her core gently, making her whole body convulse, then a tongue swirled over soothingly.

"— and the dragon had to be sedated, of course, which is really expensive and damaging to their nervous system—"

Hermione couldn't care less about the dragons, because there were lips latched around her bundle of nerves and they were sucking with firm motions, dragging her orgasm out of her. *That* was damaging to her nervous system.

Her knees and elbows were threatening to give out, and she felt herself getting incredibly hotter, like she was burning and melting at the same time. Malfoy only pushed her cheeks wider, so he could deepen his attack on her, pushing his tongue inside, then circling her clit and coming back inside.

"—But enough about that!" Charlie dismissed.

"Oh, no!" Hermione whined because Malfoy had been torturing her deliciously with his tongue when he pressed two fingers into her. Her arms and legs had begun shaking violently. She clutched at the marble of the fireplace, as if trying to keep herself from falling over the edge.

"Do you have any doubts?"

"No, no... It's perfect—perfect!" Hermione nearly shouted. Then she bit her lip in despair, because she was about to cum in front of her former brother-in-law in the middle of a work meeting.

"Hermione, you seriously don't look well..." Charlie took a huge breath before continuing. "I've been meaning to talk to you for a long time, but living so far, I never had the chance to—"

The ending of his sentence was lost because something shattered inside Hermione, sending the shards through her body that tingled everywhere they reached, her whole body spasming with the electrical, pained euphoria. Malfoy kept guiding her through it as her head fell forward. She was unable to comprehend the words coming out of Charlie's mouth as she blissfully suffered the afterwaves of her pleasure.

"—Ron was a complete arse about everything, I hope you know not everyone of us condones it—"

The mention of her ex-husband's name seemed to yank Hermione back to reality. She had just orgasmed during a work meeting with her brother-in-law because Draco Malfoy had been performing cunnilingus on her. The whole situation was so absurd and wrong that she couldn't bring herself to do much more than cringe.

"Charlie, I'm sorry.. I must go. Thank you for the report and the kind words." Malfoy was caressing her arse with gentleness.

"Oh, okay, Mione!" He seemed disappointed. "Even with Rose at Hogwarts, you should come here, check out the Sanctuary — Perhaps help us gather funds and—"

It was like a light bulb had been turned on in her brain. "You know, Charlie, this is a great idea. I'll do just that. Expect my owl soon. We'll arrange a visit and talk about that."

And then she turned back to glare at Malfoy. "Malfoy, how dare you?"

His smug expression gave way to widened eyes in shock, which he quickly disguised in a scowl. He was a menacing, powerful man, but it was difficult to feel afraid of him while he had his lips and chin glistening with her arousal.

"Manners, Granger—"

She, in turn, realised he'd have a hard time taking her seriously with her skirt riding up her hips. It was quickly readjusted. "You promised you wouldn't jeopardise my ministry work! How dare you interrupt a work meeting like that?"

"*Don't talk to me like that.*" His tone was murderous, but Hermione's Gryffindor courage somehow flared up.

"Not that *you* followed your side of our contract," she hissed, "but I remember its text mentions I should communicate with you about every problem I have—"

"Yes—"

"Right now, *Malfoy*, my biggest problem is how disrespectful you were to my job and—"

"Manners, Granger, I won't warn you again," he growled.

She was appalled at the power dynamics of that situation. "I am *sorry*, sir. But I am no longer comfortable here. Can I please go home to finish my work?"

Something flickered in his face, almost like hurt, but he quickly masked it back down. "No."

"Excuse me?" she shrieked. "I just asked *nicely*."

"And your Dom says no." He said, getting to his feet and offering her his hand. "Will you disobey me?"

Several things crossed her mind. She should go away, screaming *red* and burning a hole in his wall for good measure. How could he have been so disrespectful of her boundaries? But then again, what would she go back to? An empty flat, a beige workaholic life and celibacy. Hermione felt torn.

Her hand prickled when she placed it over his strong one. Malfoy effortlessly pulled her up and wrapped his arms around her waist, yanking her in for a hot kiss. Her mind was empty when the kiss finished, blood rushing against her ears. This was the reason why she had to ask him to repeat whatever he said, brushing his thumbs against her cheek.

"I am not going to apologise for something I don't regret, Granger," he said. "But I do wish you to know that had you used your safe words, I would've stopped immediately. As you didn't, I thought you were enjoying it. I promise not to interrupt your work meetings next time."

The urge to hex someone quickly changed its target from Malfoy to Hermione. How could she have forgotten? Her anger turned inwards. "Oh."

Tears started to gather in her eyes, and Malfoy seemed to notice, because he took her towards the armchair where he sat her on his lap, caressing her back as she apologised profusely. She had almost ruined it all because she forgot to follow the rules. Would he punish her for it?

"I'm not going to punish you for establishing boundaries and asking me to respect them. I just want you to be respectful to your Dom when you do it. Understood?"

"Y-yes, sir," she sobbed. "I'm so sorry—"

"Stop apologising." He pulled her to a kiss, passionate and full of tenderness. When they were finished, their lunch had appeared on the coffee table in front of them. "Tell me who was in that meeting that you were calling *handsome* ."

This was said in a nonchalant tone, while he buttered a scone, but something tingled in the nape of her neck. *Draco Malfoy was jealous of her.* It made her feel valuable. Something worth keeping. Something he didn't want to share.

But... With Charlie Weasley of all people? She had half a mind to make him work for his answers, but then again, she had already been chastised a few times that day, and she could tell he would be more sensitive about this.

"Charlie Weasley," she answered in equal nonchalance, sipping her tea.

Malfoy snorted. "Is this the one who works at Gringotts?"

"No, this one is a dragon tamer in Romania."

"Oh," Malfoy said, "Is Romania where you were planning on visiting him?"

Hermione blushed. "Perhaps."

His hand snaked over her neck, squeezing it lightly and forcing her to meet his steely gaze. "Depending on my authorisation, I assume."

She couldn't help but be daring at this queue. "I don't need to request permission for a work travel, Mr Malfoy."

His eyes flashed at her. "You do if it is to stay in a hut in the mountains with another Weasel."

"Charlie Weasley is gay." Hermione pecked his lips. "And I am faithful."

It had been a weird choice of words, almost like she meant they were in a romantic relationship. Which was not the case, perhaps she should've used a word regarding possession, submission or simply exclusivity.

Yet, there was no denying that the grin on Malfoy's face seemed to indicate he was pleased with it. However, he didn't answer her because an owl flew into the room towards them, dropping her letter on Hermione's lap.

As she was herself on his lap, Hermione assumed the mail was for him and handed Malfoy the envelope without thinking too much about it.

Apparently, he had more urgent matters to attend to, as he began kissing her neck while playing with her nipples over her blouse. "Read it to me."

Sighing, she flipped the envelope and found her name written on it, in her daughter's handwriting. She jumped. "It's from Rose."

He finished his ministrations on her skin with a quick peck and then sat back, arms wrapped around her midsection, but otherwise giving her total freedom and personal space to read her letter. Which she did right away.

Dear Mum,

I want to begin this letter apologising that I have been keeping a secret from you.

A week ago, I decided to try out for the position of seeker for the Gryffindor team. The position became available recently because Josh Andrews had a nasty accident with the mandrakes and was sent to St. Mungos.

You must understand I was afraid of telling you sooner, because I know how much you fear flying, heights and dangerous sports. So first, I told myself there was no need to tell you before the tryouts, because there was a chance I might not even get the position. Then, I thought about only telling you after the first game. I thought perhaps a safe victory would make you less worried and happier.

I sure wasn't counting on the fact that you are friends with my Head of House, Professor Longbottom. Or perhaps, that Headmistress McGonagall might have sent you a letter.

Anyway, I was thoroughly surprised and chastened to see that while I feared you would reprimand me and try to talk me out of my decision, you were my biggest supporter, buying me the most expensive broom in the market. (By the way, shouldn't we send it back? It is clearly too expensive. Unless dad helped you? Did he? Please tell me so I can thank him too.)

Once again, you show me you are the best mother in the world.

I love you!!

Rose GRANGER-Weasley.

P.S.: Parents are allowed in the final game of the Inter-House Quidditch Cup. If we somehow manage to classify, I would love for you to come support me and see how your money is worth it.

The thick parchment was already getting smeared with the tears falling from her eyes, and she noticed that Malfoy had been rubbing circles around her back. She turned to him.

"Did you give her a broom?"

His smile was almost guilty, like a child caught with their hand in the cookie jar. “She needed it; the ones provided by the school are appalling.”

“M-Malfoy, this is so—so thoughtful!” she cried, “How can I thank you, sir?”

“Don’t go back to the ministry on Monday,” he said, intensely staring into her eyes. “Keep working from here.

Her answer was a bruising kiss. Then she moved back, wiping the tears and handing him the letter.

“She’s so happy — She didn’t want to tell me because — Oh! I am such a fool!” she sobbed cheerfully.

“Granger,” he growled after he finished reading. “I only have one rule. You are going to tell her this gift was all yours. Don’t let that worthless ex-husband of yours get any credit.”

Chapter End Notes

This was obviously inspired by the scene of the prince at the ball from Meet me at Dreamland.
Hehe :)

Chapter 14: When she is a brat

The setting sun was invading her bedroom window, reflecting against the golden frame of the full-body mirror Hermione stood in front of. Her anxiety was fighting the giddiness that threatened to burst out of her chest.

They had found a pleasurable routine in their dynamic, in which Malfoy didn't bother her meetings ever again and even donated a hundred thousand galleons to Charlie's sanctuary upon Hermione's request.

After two weeks flooring every day to his study to work and serve her Dom, while also enjoying multiple orgasms a day, Malfoy invited her to accompany him for the first time to a public event.

She had been reticent, but he reassured her that it would be a private gathering, in Muggle London, with a few *hundred* of his most important investors, employees and clients: no photographers, no wizards or witches, no one who knew her.

It was the Yule Ball all over again—*her Cinderella night*.

The emerald green silk dress Malfoy had sent her had a structured bodice, highlighting her waist, and a mermaid skirt that hugged her wide hips and thick thighs but fell loose from her knees. She was breathing hard in excitement, her chest rising and falling, covered with draped silk in an off-shoulder neckline. It was objectively beautiful.

And the idea of being on Malfoy's arm all night was dizzying to say the least, threatening to take her down from her high heels.

He was always the most handsome guest at all the events they had attended for the previous seventeen years.

Not only that but from what she had understood, he was the host, the most important person in that night's gala.

All eyes would be on them, and he had chosen her to go with him. She hadn't felt like that since Viktor picked her as his date.

But something was bubbling in her stomach, threatening to fizzle out through her throat and her eyes. Both her index fingers began scratching the skin around her thumbnails, nervously, almost drawing blood — Just like the one she was beginning to feel inside her mouth as she bit her tongue to keep herself from sobbing.

She wasn't fifteen getting ready for a school dance anymore, she was a thirty-five-year-old woman.

Who was she trying to fool? Playing dress up?

If anything she looked like a joke, her round arms and large breasts spilling out of the dress. Her painted face was ruined by the wrinkles adorning the corners of her eyes and mouth.

It was pathetic. She would do nothing but embarrass her Dom.

She reached for her wand and sent a Patronus apologising to Malfoy because she wasn't feeling well enough to accompany him.

Squirming anxiously, she raised her arms trying to unclasp the dress at her back, feeling the diamond jewellery he had given her heavy on her ears and neck. Panting so hard that she didn't even hear the fire roaring in her living room.

"Granger?"

Her head whipped towards the corridor door, where Malfoy stood; perfect. His expensive three-piece suit, green so dark it almost looked black, but his bow tie and pocket square were matching her dress — just as his cufflinks that were diamond too.

He looked so gorgeous, his wavy white blond hair falling flawlessly at the sides of his head, and his silver eyes glistening towards her. It wasn't fair. Why did he have to look so beautiful?

She wanted to cry.

"Sir?" The word left her as a sob. "I'm s-sorry. I can't go—"

She had half a mind of pretending to cough so her excuse could be somewhat convincing.

"What do you mean?" He closed the distance between the two, holding her elbows with his large hands. "What are you feeling?"

A glance upwards revealed his face examining her, concern carved in his features. His lips were pressed tightly and his eyes roamed her hungrily under his furrowed brows.

"I j-just don't feel well." Her voice was small. "I'm so sorry, sir. I'm so sorry—"

"*What* are you feeling? What are your symptoms?"

She knew better than to attempt to lie to him in person, so she breathed deeply. "I don't think I should go. I am sure there's still time to find another date—"

"I don't want another date," he cut her off, concern giving space to the faintest trace of annoyance. Her heart clenched at the sight. She hated displeasing him. "I want you. You look perfect. Let's go."

Her eyes looked at the ceiling, trying to keep the tears from falling. "Sir, I am really sorry I am letting you down. I understand you'll have to punish me—"

"Punish you?"

"But I can't go." She tried to pull her arms from his, with no success. His grip wasn't painful, but Malfoy was too strong. "You should get someone else— You look so good—"

A huge sigh out of his nose. Hermione was looking anywhere but at him.

"Granger, eyes on me."

She obeyed.

“Are you feeling insecure? Is that it?”

Hermione didn’t trust her voice, so she merely nodded, biting her lip.

His jaw was set. “No.”

“What?”

“I won’t allow you to stay home. You are coming with me.”

“I’m sorry,” she whined. “I am ready to be punished—”

“No, I won’t punish you, because you are coming with me.”

And, before she could open her mouth to answer him, Hermione was manoeuvred so that she had her back to his front as he turned them both to face the mirror.

He was so much taller than her, even in her heels, that she had no trouble seeing his face behind her. His hands on her elbows were now caressing her arms up and down.

“Look at you,” he purred against her ear. “You are ravishing, Granger...”

One of his hands snaked to rest on her bodice, pulling her closer so she could feel his bulge.

“And all mine,” he continued. “I’m going to flaunt you off on my arm tonight.”

“I—I look too old and fat to be wearing something like this,” she whispered, her whole body shivering under his hot gaze and his burning touch. “You should have a model or—“

“Hush,” he silenced her, the other hand going towards her neck. “Your opinion doesn’t matter. I am your Dom. I have the final word.”

Her knees buckled at his growl and she felt her weight resting more and more on him, her eyes locked on his across the mirror.

“*Malfoy, please...*”

She didn’t want to go, she felt like a clown.

“No.” He dragged his teeth on the skin beneath her ear, eliciting goosebumps, the hand on her neck squeezing borderline painfully. “You don’t get to take this from me. I’ve waited twenty years to escort you to a ball.”

“You have what—?” Her words were cut abruptly when he shoved his hand inside the slit of her dress, aiming directly for her black lace knickers.

“Do you know why I picked a dress with one of those?” he asked, ignoring her question as he cupped her sex over the fabric.

“W-why?”

“Easy access...” His hand slid inside. “And you’re ready for me, as always. My good, gorgeous girl.”

He gathered moisture from between her folds so he could come back and circle her clit with two digits. She couldn't do anything but watch his face as he did it, because his hand was still holding her neck firmly in place.

"Hmmm." He inhaled her curls, as her breathing picked up pace. "Why are you wearing your hair like that?"

Her long and wild mane had been wrapped in a big, neat bun on the top of her head in her bash of being sophisticated.

Had he not been pushing her towards an orgasm, she might have felt self-conscious about his comment, but she was floating too much for it.

"You told me to wear it up when we were in public—"

"Yes," he hissed, his hand leaving her clit to enter her core in approval. Hermione let out a loud moan, and her head dropped on his shoulder. "You like being a good girl for me, don't you, Granger?"

"Yes, sir," she breathed out.

"I love knowing I'm the only one who can see your curls—"

His hand left her, both from her neck and from her knickers, so that he pulled both sides of her skirt open, revealing her legs fully to him. With one, he gathered all the fabric and held it at her side, with the other, he pulled the black lace until it ripped.

Her cunt, where she had allowed a bit of pubic hair to grow per his request, was exposed and he slapped it hard, making Hermione gasp in surprise.

"Love even more knowing I am the only one seeing *these* beautiful curls. You have a marvellous cunt, you know that, don't you, Granger?"

"*Dom* —"

Malfoy used a wandless sticking charm to hold her skirt in place, as both of his hands went to pull her neckline down so that her breasts jumped free and bounced in the cold air.

And then he was grabbing them in his hands, while lewdly staring at her through the mirror, kneading them and brushing her nipples in turn.

"And those breasts — I'm the only one who gets to touch them — Fuck, I can't even hold them — They're so big — You're so hot, Granger — So *mine* ."

Nonsensical mewling was leaving her mouth, her eyes stuck on his. Something was flashing when he looked at her, making her almost believe his words.

He pinched both of them. "*Say it. Say you're mine.*"

"I am yours, Dom. I am!" she cried in pained pleasure.

"Damn right you are," he growled, letting go of her breasts and reaching for the skin behind her knees to lift her as if she weighed nothing.

Then he was walking backwards, sitting on her bed and pulling her to sit on his lap.

She hadn't noticed he had taken his cock off of his trousers, but there it was springing long, thick and firm underneath her dripping cunt.

He adjusted her so she would be on top of it and then slowly let go of her weight, so he was impaling her.

"My good girl, *my Granger*,—" he was groaning as he pulled her heels to rest on the edge of the bed, her knees falling to the sides, so that her legs formed an M on top of him. "Look at you."

Hermione could see everything in the mirror.

Her cunt was wide open to accommodate his large cock.

Her breasts were moving with her breathing, his hands were holding her bodice, and his head rested on her shoulder, smirking obscenely at her.

"Taking my cock so well." He licked the side of her neck. "Look at your beautiful cunt. Watch how I fit so perfectly inside you."

Hermione obeyed, and she glanced at where their bodies met.

Malfoy held her a few inches above him, so he could use the resistance of the floor to push his hips upward to meet her arse as he slammed inside her at an increasing speed.

"You know what this means, right? Means you were *made* for me."

She watched as his pink shaft disappeared and reappeared from inside her cunt, coated with their combined juices, she could see how tight it was, how her folds were hugging him.

To watch it at the same time as she felt her legs trembling, her walls clenching, and the band on her lower abdomen stretching painfully towards her release, was *something else*.

"That's it. Taking me so well. My gorgeous girl," he panted as his thrusts became more and more aggressive each time.

Her eyes moved up, finding her breasts bouncing violently, her brown nipples hard and pointed enough to cut.

She was howling then, feeling his volume stretching, filling and hitting her inside.

"Watch how your face looks when I fuck you, Granger."

She gazed at her face, her mouth was wide open as she wailed, her brows furrowed in pleasure, and her eyes half-lidded.

She was the picture of ecstasy.

It was obscene.

Up until recently, she had only ever had sex inside her dimly lit room.

To have her body on display to Malfoy was already unsettling enough.

But to watch herself as he fucked her hard was...

Addicting .

“Look how marvellous you look taking my cock, Granger.” Malfoy was sounding rougher like he too was getting close to shattering, “I never want to stop fucking you. Can you blame me? I want to fuck you every day, forever. Look at this.”

Her sight found his face in the mirror behind her.

She didn’t want to stop seeing that either: his lips parted as he panted, features scrunched in strain, and eyes lustful.

She too wanted to see that every day, forever.

“Fucking mine— My beautiful girl—” His words became more and more incoherent as he kept pounding relentlessly inside her.

Hermione was being thrown up and down.

The hands on her hips squeezed her painfully, pushing her towards her release. “Fuck, Dom, I’m coming!”

But she hadn’t finished speaking when her climax ran through her overwhelmingly, so that her cunt spasmed around his cock, and tears escaped her eyes while she rode the afterwaves of her orgasm.

Malfoy kept fucking her hard, holding her hips as his cock thrust inside her in a maddening speed.

“Look at you while you cum around on my cock!” he growled, and Hermione watched her face in the mirror, blissfully spent and given to the situation, to her Dom, as he tossed her up and down to slam against his hips like a doll.

He came inside her with a shout, his fingers pressing on her skin hard enough to bruise, and his mouth biting her neck painfully.

“Ouch,” she cried.

He chuckled, like he sometimes did after a particularly intense orgasm; as if he felt light and giddy. And then he was kissing her neck and her shoulders, his hands holding her breasts and kneading them gently. “Fuck, Granger. You’re gorgeous. Can’t you see it?”

“I —” she breathed out, still a bit dazed by his ministrations. “Malfoy, *sir*; I— I know I’m not a young witch anymore—”

“I am not a young wizard, either.”

“But you’re fit—”

“And you’re hot.”

"I—" she sighed, because her nipples were already pebbling again due to his ministrations, and the heat was gathering at her sacrum once more. "I would embarrass you—"

"I chose you to be my sub," he continued, one of his hands snaking back towards her clit. He was still half hard inside her. "Why would I do that if I weren't attracted to you? If I didn't feel proud of calling you mine?"

Ingwaz.

Ingwaz.

"Oh, you're going to be late," she keened.

He circled it twice before tapping it lightly, her whole body shuddered.

"We will arrive soon enough," he said. "As soon as I can rip that nonsense out of your head."

She was so swollen and sensitive that it didn't take long for her to reach her second orgasm, Malfoy having gotten hard again inside her, chased his second release as well — this time at a slower pace, whispering sweet words against her ear.

He told her so many times she was beautiful that, by the time it ended, she believed it.

"Oh!" The giggles danced out of her mouth as she attempted to step out of Malfoy's lap, her legs—shaky and weak on top of those high heels—were nearly giving out under her weight.

Malfoy steadied her with his large hands on her waist.

"How long do we have, sir? I have to redo my hair—"

Several curls were escaping her updo, falling randomly over her face, her neck and her ears. She glanced around for her wand, but the movement of her face was stopped by him — he cupped her face and turned her to look at him.

"Wear it like that. I want to look at you and know you're freshly fucked."

She nodded, sucking her bottom lip inside her mouth.

It was at that moment, while he adjusted the skirt of her dress and helped her yank the bodice upwards to cover her breasts, kissing them several times before coming back to his height... that Hermione realised she had fallen in love with Draco Malfoy.

She was utterly doomed.

Because he didn't want a girlfriend, he had said as much; he wanted a sub.

...

As the event was Muggle, Malfoy had a limousine pick them up at Hermione's flat. Inside, he gave her a flute of champagne and toasted to their night. He vaguely explained to her how that was supposed to be an important event for the Muggle branch of his investments.

“So your job is to be the gorgeous, brilliant woman at my side and not allow me to break the Statute of Secrecy.”

“Yes, sir.” She sipped on her champagne, her legs crossed primly at his side. “Wait, how are you introducing me?”

He had his legs spread comfortably, one hand resting on her hips and the other holding his own flute over his knee. “As Hermione Granger?”

“I know, but...” She absentmindedly touched her collar. “I mean, should I call you sir?”

“Absolutely.”

“Oh... Okay, sir.”

...

When their chauffeur opened the door to the limousine, Hermione’s feet were greeted by a red carpet extending from the sidewalk towards the entryway of a historical building.

There was a line of well-dressed and good-looking people, but Malfoy gave her his arm and strolled directly towards the door, where they were both welcomed inside.

Muggles had certain limitations in regards to decorating their galas; they couldn’t use fairies to light the ambient, nor could they have enchanted ceilings mimicking a starry night.

Yet, they came very close to that feeling when using hundreds of thousands of Christmas lights as they had on that occasion. The ballroom had several red silk drapings hanging across the walls, with flower arrangements in every column and a quartet of strings playing soft music.

It was packed with people dressed in luxurious black tie, and Hermione soon realised that walking around with Malfoy meant almost the same as it had once meant walking with Harry and Ron at a wizarding gala.

No one knew her this time, but everyone was watching her all the same.

Malfoy fulfilled his word; parading her like a prize, introducing her to executives, socialites, CEOs, celebrities, politicians and artists. But she was surprised to find that she had lots of subjects to talk about with all of those people and was engrossed in several conversations, learning a bit about Malfoy’s mysterious double life.

Apparently, part of the reason for his rapid increase of the inherited fortune was due to broad and variable investing in dozens of Muggle businesses: fashion, technology, cosmetics, drugs, food and whatever else her mind could contemplate... Malfoy had money on it.

And people all around were *eager* for him to put more of his money into their business. They were shamelessly pitching at any opportunity they got, and Hermione would be lying if she said it didn’t make her stomach give a little tumble to realise how much power her Dom had on the world around them.

Unfortunately, she found out *some* people were *eager* for something else from him. Women batting their lashes and talking with their hands at his arm were getting on her nerves.

He was hers as much as she was his.

The real world, with real people looking at them, had never been the venue for their interaction, which made the experience so much more exciting. It was exhilarating to have such a dazzling and important man at her side. She had been a good sub for most of the night, always addressing him with due respect and staying quietly at his side when needed or engaging in polite discussions when he prompted her to.

It was a sort of foreplay for her: his subtle and lingering touch, the glances' exchange, small innuendos here and there. She kept feeding herself more and more champagne, trying to fight off the butterflies fluttering inside her stomach with anticipation for what their night promised: they would sleep together for the first time.

Then, after a quick trip to the bathroom, she saw it: a tall, lean and young, beautiful blonde woman had thrown her arms around his neck, whispering something in his ear.

Hermione dropped her flute to the floor, not bothering to look down towards the mess. Blood rushed in her ears as she walked through the corners of the room, approaching the couple without making her presence known.

Malfoy had chuckled at something the girl said, his hands on her narrow hips, pushing or pulling? She couldn't quite tell.

The blonde leaned back and smiled broadly.

Hermione's heart broke: she was beautiful. A long, elegant neck and a fit body with not a single excess of skin or fat in sight.

She looked like a doll.

Perfect to be at Malfoy's side.

"And who is the one you brought?" Her voice had a thick American accent.

Whatever it was that Malfoy answered her, Hermione hadn't heard, because she turned towards the bar.

From the counter, she stood watching the scene unfolding in the middle of the dance floor.

The woman caressed Malfoy's chest, pulling him closer by the lapels of his jacket and *touching* his hair.

He smiled at her, saying something over his glass of whiskey, and glancing around the room.

So far, he hadn't seen Hermione yet, and she was just downing her third shot of... *Something*.

Then, another man appeared, being introduced to Malfoy by the blonde. He was much older, with grey curly hair and a grey beard, but in his arms, there was a brunette girl, probably younger than the blonde next to Malfoy.

The two men were talking animatedly, and while the brunette seemed oblivious to the conversation, the blonde kept offering her opinion with a hand on Malfoy's back.

Had it been Ron in one of the Ministry Galas they used to attend, with her usual temperament, Hermione would have felt insecure and sad in a corner, possibly even flooing home to cry if she didn't have any commitments that evening.

But that wasn't Ron. That was Malfoy.

He had made a point of how much he wanted her—not a young model but *her*—there. Only to then drop her as the first piece of arse appeared? Finishing her fifth glass of *something*, Hermione decided she wouldn't act on her *usual temperament*.

Anger was clawing its way out of her chest. A catfight with the girl, or at least a drink thrown in Malfoy's face, was being seriously considered when someone spoke to her.

"Hm?" A shake of her head to force herself to focus back on the tall, muscular guy at her side.

His skin was dark, which made his green eyes shine otherworldly. He was beautiful. "I said I hate these events, don't you?"

"My first time in one."

"Hm... And what brought you here tonight, hm?"

"My date." A shrug.

He made the scene of glancing around. "Where is the fool?"

"Fool?"

"To leave a woman like you is a foolish act." He smirked, gesturing for the bartender to bring them another round. "One I would never make."

Realising he was flirting with her made heat gather at her cheeks, neck and cleavage. Which reminded her of how low her neckline was. He was staring at her and she simply hummed noncommittally at his words.

"Jack Ferguson." He extended his hand.

"Hermione Granger."

He frowned and for a second she feared he would recognize her from the Wizarding World.

But then he smiled, shaking his head. "Funny name, I think my dentist was called Dr Granger. But that was like thirty years ago or so—"

With relief and excitement, a cackle erupted from her mouth. It wasn't a cute or elegant laugh, but rather a guffaw.

He raised his eyebrow.

"Sorry." She covered her mouth bashfully, "My father *was* a dentist."

"You don't say?"

And then they were talking, and laughing, and drinking.

Sharing stories about Paul Granger, growing up in the Hampsteads and Jack's work: a technology startup.

When he asked her what she worked with, she replied that she was in a non-governmental organisation for animal rights. "And we're about to launch a Sanctuary for an endangered species!"

Thinking about the sanctuary reminded her of her Dom, which, surprisingly, made her infuriated instead of concerned with the idea of accepting Jack's invitation to dance.

Then she was twirling around under his guidance while he told jokes in her ear that had giggles bubbling their way up.

"Hermione, you must tell me the name of your Sanctuary, I'd love to donate to it—"

"I think you'll find she has all the money she needs, Ferguson."

"Malfoy?" Without releasing Hermione, Jack turned them to face Malfoy and flashed him a grin.
"You know Hermione?"

It could only be the alcohol in her system to blame for Hermione's complete lack of sense at that moment. She continued with her arms on Jack's shoulders and Malfoy was, though seemingly collected on the surface, clearly fuming.

"Obviously," he sneered. "Considering that she is *my* date."

"Oh, so you are the bloke who left her alone in the bar?" Jack chuckled, his hands on her waist, and his afro bounced around his head.

"I *didn't* leave her, I was merely waiting for her to exit the bathroom so I could introduce her to some friends."

"Oh, Jack is a friend, and he introduced himself," Hermione said humorously because frankly, she was enjoying giving her Dom a taste of his own medicine. "Can you believe he was my father's patient?"

"Lovely," Malfoy answered with no humour at all, taking her arm. "Now, say your goodbyes and let's go."

"Sorry, pal, but finder's keepers." Jack stood tall.

"Had she been one object of mine to find or keep, Ferguson, I assure you that I do *not* share." Malfoy extricated her from Jack's hold. "But she's not one. She is the brightest w—"

Even through the drinking haze, Hermione knew it wouldn't be a good idea to let Malfoy expose the Wizarding World, so she placed a placating hand on his forearm. "You said you wanted to introduce me to someone? Why don't we all go?"

"*Because I am only taking you.*" Malfoy's tone was so low and dangerous that it made her gulp. He lowered himself enough to whisper against her ear. "And you watch your mouth with me, little witch. You are already in trouble. I am not pleased with your behaviour."

The implication of his words made her blood boil because he had been in another woman's arms just minutes before, and if anyone should be displeased, it ought to be Hermione.

Oblivious to the change in the atmosphere, however, Jack barked playfully. "Bah, stop being such a grumpy one, Malfoy."

Whatever terrible thing the wizard was about to say back to the man, when he leveled his eyes at him, was interrupted by a loud and annoying shriek. "Draco! There you are!"

It was the American blonde, again. The old man and the brunette followed suit.

Hermione groaned.

"Oh, is that her?" She placed her hand on Malfoy's arm and smiled at Hermione, "Pleasure to meet you. I am Cara Dawson."

"Hermione Granger."

"Draco here told me you also advocate for animal rights. I am one of the ambassadors of PETA—"

Being pretty was apparently not enough, she had to be nice too.

It made anger bloom exponentially inside Hermione. "I wasn't aware they had a high school program."

Cara giggled in delight. "Oh, she's funny!"

A grimace took hold of Hermione's features, as the blonde continued to make polite conversation, deftly including everyone present with several subjects.

Jack seemed particularly interested in whatever it was that the old man made for a living.

Whenever Cara directed herself to Hermione, Malfoy would pinch her hip painfully to force her to answer.

So he wasn't satisfied with only having her watch him with a slut on his arms, he also had to compel Hermione to *interact* with her.

"Who are you calling a slut? Certainly not my daughter," the old man with the grey beard barked.

Had she said it out loud?

"I apologise, Mr. Dawson, Cara," Malfoy said, his grip bruising Hermione. "My date obviously had too much to drink. I will take her home and we can continue our conversation another time."

He then grabbed both of Hermione's arms and turned her to face him. "But first, *you* will apologise to Cara."

There was something nasty simmering inside her: it was too humiliating to be chastised like a child in front of all those people.

A pout started to form on her lips but she disguised it in a scowl. "No."

His eyes widened in disbelief and he brought her very close to speak next to her ear. “*Granger*, Cara is the daughter of a *very* important—“

“I thought *you* were rich and powerful enough not to need to *whore yourself* for investments,” she spat the same words he had used on her in their first meeting, yanking herself free of his hold and swinging over her heels.

Malfoy’s eyes darkened and shivers ran down her spine, almost sobering her up but not quite.

A fearful gulp of what her punishment might entail downed her throat and she turned to find an escape.

Her skin was prickling with heat, sweat and anxiety.

“I—I need to use the ladies’ room.”

Stumbling her way through the crowd, Hermione reached the loo in less than a minute, heading straight to hug the toilet and empty all her doses of *something* inside the ceramic.

A few minutes later, she was wiping her mouth with the back of her hand and coming to watch her wobbling reflection in the mirror.

“Missus!”

With a gasp, her head whipped back to find a house elf standing behind her, her little arms raised in front of her as if reaching for Hermione. “Lindy?”

“Lindy is to take Missus!”

Before Hermione could protest, the leathery hands gripped her knees and, with the sickening feeling of being pulled by her navel inside a stiff straw through space and time, she was disapparated into the interior of the limousine that had brought them to that night’s event.

As soon as she landed, the engine started, and they were moving somewhere.

“What the—”

In front of her, the silver rings glittered reflecting the city lights that invaded through the smoked glass. Five of them were wrapped around a bottle, so tightly his knuckles were white, and the other five were tapping against his knee. She looked up to see his face, but he was hidden beneath the shadows that danced with the car’s movement.

“Drink.” He handed her the bottle.

Shaky fingers reached for it, and as Hermione felt the scent of sobering-up potion, she glowered at the black suit before her. “I am completely fine and you—”

“Drink.”

“You invited me to humiliate me with a—”

“Drink.”

Huffing, she uncorked it and downed it in one gulp. Where she had been feeling warm, a refreshing sensation started to spread from her stomach towards her whole body, finally reaching her head.

And then she realised herself.

She had just embarrassed her Dom in front of important people at an important event that he had insisted he wanted her to accompany him to.

And for what? A teenage girl's jealous display.

She was stupid.

He was scarily calm.

"Good," he said, "You are sober now, aren't you?"

"Malfoy, I'm sorry—" She cried.

"Apparently, sober but not yet remembering your place."

"Sir—" His hand raised to silence her.

"I don't want to talk until tomorrow."

A sob. "Sir?"

He sighed and looked through the window.

"My silence is not a punishment, Granger. I am very angry and disappointed."

Another sob pulled a tear from her eye.

"I just don't want to say or do things I might regret later, alright?" He leaned forward to brush her tears.

"But I want to talk—"

"Granger, this is me asking for *pause*. We will solve this tomorrow. You'll have a nice night of sleep and be served like a princess until then."

She crossed her arms and clenched her jaw, tears falling down her cheeks as she watched the landscape for the next two hours it took for them to drive from London to Wiltshire.

Her face burned with shame and regret. It would have been a perfect night, had she not ruined it all.

She was in love with Malfoy, that much was clear to her now, but she didn't have any claim on him.

A few times, she considered kneeling in front of him and pleading for forgiveness, but she also felt like she deserved to be punished for the horrible show she put on that evening.

It seemed like there would never be a Cinderella night for her that didn't end with her crying before the clock struck midnight.

Chapter 15: When he punishes her

Chapter Notes

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

When Hermione woke up that morning, her head was pounding and her stomach felt sick.

But nothing was worse than the emotional and moral hangover.

For that, unfortunately, the potion Lindy had hovering above her head would be useless.

She took it nonetheless, the physical discomfort leaving her body immediately.

With a groan, Hermione sat up straighter, throwing her legs to the side of the bed and stepping into the slippers Malfoy had given her.

It was so *sad*.

The previous night, when they arrived in front of his Manor, her Dom had opened the door of the limousine and gestured for her towards the Entrance Hall, where she was met by the house elf that accompanied her to a guest room. Lindy had given her a silver silk nightgown that went down to her ankles and a matching robe.

Malfoy had been expecting her to sleep there that night; that much was clear.

With a sigh, her eyes roamed around the room where she had been placed to sleep. Luxurious was a weak word for it. The walls were lined with exquisite tapestries in red, blue and gold. The huge windows opened for a balcony with a great view of the gardens and, as was her four-poster bed, adorned by heavy red velvet curtains. All the furniture was intricately engraved chestnut wood and topped with flowers. Red roses.

She wanted to cry. He had made sure everything would be perfect for her.

He was *still* taking care of her, for there was a silver tray with avocado toasts, smoked salmon and cream cheese. And, of course, also orange juice and a Brazilian açai bowl topped with chopped mango, banana, strawberries and honey.

It was a pity she couldn't eat anything, as guilt ate her insides.

Instead, Hermione went towards the ensuite, where she was met by a bathroom entirely made of white marble and gold. She ignored the bathtub, opting for a cold shower. She wanted to punish herself; she thought of it as she slammed her head against the wall under the spray.

Why would she do something like that to her Dom? To herself?

This wasn't her.

She was calm, collected.

Ron had left her, and she hadn't even said things as nasty to him as she had said to Malfoy, especially not in front of other people.

As time passed, she grew more and more anxious. Something was whispering against her ear that he would dismiss her, but was just too much of a gentleman to do it in the middle of the night.

And with that notion came anger.

Her life had been sad and beige, but it was entirely hers and she was perfectly content with it. Malfoy had no right to force himself into her life only to leave a hole in his place.

How was she supposed to get back to her previous normal without all the new things he had presented to her?

Being so obnoxiously rich and handsome gave him several options, but Hermione only had *him*.

Should she be punished and dismissed because of her feelings?

"I am not obliged per contract not to have anyone else, no. But I can consider, if you ask nicely and serve me properly."

Hadn't his jealousy of Charlie also compelled him into action?

Granted that *his response* had been giving her an orgasm and not humiliating her publicly in a work event—

A CRACK startled Hermione, and her head whipped back to find Lindy behind her, hands to her back.

“Master will see you now.”

The witch nodded, biting her lip, and followed the tiny creature through the corridors.

Just as the previous night, she found herself in an unknown and unexplored wing of the Manor, and when Lindy opened a door, it wasn't in Malfoy's study that she found herself.

It was a smaller room, its cream walls somewhat warmer and less intimidating than the dark green of his office, cramped with bookshelves all over.

There was a huge fireplace and a floor-to-ceiling window across the room, with cosy indirect light coming in filtered by the leaves of the grove outside.

She walked past a sofa cushioned with soft, floral fabric to stand in the middle of the room, next to an ottoman and in front of two matching mahogany armchairs.

The whole atmosphere was so cosy and light that it didn't seem like he was about to punish her, which was frankly somehow more terrifying to Hermione, since it could only mean he was going to dismiss her as his Sub.

Sitting in one of the armchairs, one leg folded so his ankle rested on his knee, was Malfoy. He hadn't looked up from his book since she arrived at the room, and when he did, it was simply to light his cigarette.

“Granger.”

Her feet felt cold inside the slipper as she rubbed her toes together, both hands at her back, pulling the skin from her thumbnail.

When she answered, her voice was shimmering with fear and rage — like a cat on the street that was ready to attack in self-defence. “Yes, Sir?”

Malfoy closed his book and puffed his smoke, his grey eyes piercing her very soul.

“I won’t apologise for asking for space, but I would like to say that I am sorry for perhaps making you feel anxious and uncomfortable on your first night here at the Manor.”

Whatever words she might have expected Malfoy to say, those weren’t them.

“Our dynamic, or relationship if you might call it that way, depends on open communication and transparency. I ask this of you and must give you the same.”

Her lips parted.

“I was very angry and disappointed yesterday,” he exhaled the words with the smoke. “But, thinking about it, I suppose I am the one to blame, because you *had* told me you were uncomfortable and somehow I failed in taking care of you enough to avoid everything.”

The boiling feeling inside her chest started to create large bubbles that were threatening to burst at any moment. This was his way of dismissing her, and he was trying to be *nice* about it? The dissolution would hurt anyway, so he might as well be a man about it and rip the band-aid off without acting so high and superior with his idea of *communication* and *transparency*.

To hell with that, really.

“Oh, sod off!” Her anger exploded, and it made him falter, eyebrows flying towards his hairline. “I was drunk and jealous!”

“I understood that, Granger. Manners, or—”

“What? You’ll have to punish me? But you can’t do that if you dismiss me, can you?”

A frown. “*Dismiss you?*”

“Yes! I know you are allowed to have other women, while I should be a good girl, belonging to you and waiting for you to finish whatever you had with that blonde model! But perhaps I can’t! So I am sorry I embarrassed you in front of her slimy father—”

“Carl James Donaldson is a software engineer who has the patent to a very specific and efficient technology I want to use to revolutionise the communication system,” he said, looking intensely at her, though his expression was still stoic. “I’ve been wanting to acquire it for two years, with no success.”

No word dared to leave her, and Hermione focused on the biting pain as she pulled the skin of her thumbnail too hard, sure to have drawn blood.

“His daughter, Cara Johnson, the young woman you called a slut”— his tongue clicked at the T—“last night, is a model for one of my fashion brands and, upon hearing my interest in her father’s work, was kind enough to offer to make a bridge for us to meet each other.”

She didn't speak, appalled by the weight of her actions.

"Of course, he's a playboy used to being begged, bribed and flattered for his work, so the *girl* who is *young enough to be my daughter*"— his lips curled in disgust—"suggested I had a party thrown for him. So we could be presented in a way that seemed spontaneous and inconspicuous. The whole ball had been just so I could *talk* to him."

There was a knot in her throat, and despite gulping as many times as she could, it wouldn't untie itself. A bit of sweat rode between her shoulder blades, and she was gnawing on the insides of her cheeks.

"Ferguson, he's an old friend," Malfoy drawled, stubbing out his cigarette on the crystal ashtray hovering at his side. "But he's also a business competitor, who would be most thrilled to be handed an acquaintance like Dawson on a silver platter. Well, like you did."

Hermione was clawing up the depths of her shame, desperate to reach for air.

"You didn't like it when I called Charlie handsome. Why would you let that woman wrap herself around you?"

"I didn't *let* her!" His eyes went wide. "I pushed her away!"

Then he must've realised himself and visibly shook the shock off, returning to his high and mighty stance, broad shoulders pushing his shirt to stretch over his chest. "And you and I don't go by the same rules—"

I am not obliged per contract not to have anyone else, no. But I can consider, if you ask nicely and serve me properly.

"Of course!" she spat, her chin trembling with ire. "I am nothing but a doormat for you to step on —"

"Is that how I have made you feel?" His expression was horrified.

"No , " she sobbed. "You have me feeling like a queen! Seen! Cared for! Worshipped!"

There it was, out in the open. Her vulnerability, her insecurity, her despairing clinginess. But she was not done.

"I don't want to see you touching other women!" Her arms flew from her back to hug her front, holding herself upright. "I want to be the only one for you—"

"You are—"

"Even if you need a fancy technology to make more money—"

"Though I must say that I was indeed seeking something from him, saying it was *whoring* —"

"Semantics, Malfoy." Words were escaping her without her consent.

"*Watch your tone.* "

"Malfoy, I—"

"The fact that you believe I would get involved with a minor is highly disgusting, and I can only imagine what I have done to give you such a horrid image of me" His voice was crisp.

Well, she was already falling, might as well go down shooting. "I didn't know she was a minor! Her makeup and dress didn't give it away!"

"You should have asked me. When you have trouble, whether it is financial, emotional or anything else, you are supposed to come to me. I make the decisions. Remember? This is not the first time you drank your feelings, Granger, and that is not healthy—"

The feelings inside her heart were so many, so entangled, and so big that she felt the painful pressure threatening to crack her chest and escaping in a mocking laughter. "Now I am an alcoholic? Frankly, Malfoy, you get mean when you have your ego hurt—"

"My ego?" He got to his feet. "Granger, the worst part of it all was not the deal you lost me or how you embarrassed me in public, but the evening you *stole* from me."

A tear rolled out of her eyes, sliding cold against her burning cheek.

"I had plans for our first night out, and for the first time you slept in my house. It included a few orgasms on the limo, an after-party drink in my outer chambers and a delectable night for us on my bed."

More tears followed the first. She couldn't meet his eyes anymore, staring at the rug beneath her feet. The idea of their night together made her stomach do a big tumble, but her own shame stained it. *Why had she acted like that?*

"Right now," he continued. "I wanted to be in that bathtub in your room, with my cock inside your cunt, hand feeding you strawberries and playing with your huge breasts."

Her thighs pressed together without any conscious command.

"Alas..." he sighed, readjusting himself so he would sit at the edge of the chair, both feet on the floor and knees spread. "We are here."

Merlin, she hated herself. "I am going to leave then—"

"What?"

At his appalled tone, her eyes darted to him.

"Why would you leave?"

"Aren't you dismissing me?"

He shook his head quickly, his hair escaping the careful waves and brushing his cheeks. "Granger, I said I wanted to fuck you forever, didn't I?"

Hope bloomed inside her. "Y-yes, sir."

"Did you really think you could scare me away with a bit of acting out?"

The certainty of it had been cemented in her chest for a few hours, but was now slowly melting towards the junction of her legs. “I-I am sorry, s—”

A raised palm silenced her.

“Don’t forget I own your choices, your pleasure and your discipline, Granger.” His tone was steady, deep and delicious, even if his words were frightening. “I am the one supposed to punish you for this, not yourself.”

She closed her mouth.

“Come here.”

Her feet followed his command so that she stood next to his right leg.

“On your knees.”

Hermione knelt at his side, her chest levelled with his right thigh. Her eyes were glued to the rings on his fingers. Then Malfoy gently raised his hand to her face, thumb on her chin and index caressing her jaw as he pulled her to face him. His expression was set, but his eyes were warm.

“You are entitled to having feelings, and I am very interested in knowing them at all times. If you had come to me last night and complained about Cara, I would have done everything in my power to reassure you that you are my priority. Do you understand that?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Who is my priority?”

A shaky breath out. She couldn’t say it.

“Who, Granger?”

“I am, s-sir.”

“Good girl,” he praised. “Now, you did a few things wrong. Do you know what they were?”

“I embarrassed y—”

“Uh-uh,” he tutted. “Before that.”

“I didn’t share my feelings,” she tried and at his nod, continued, “I drank them, talked to another man, disrespected you in public and didn’t apologise when you told me to.”

“Yes. Such bad behaviour.” His lips twitched.

“Sir, I am—”

“I know you regret it,” he said, his voice gentle and confident. “I know you want to be a good girl.”

She blinked more tears. “I do, sir.”

“Yes, you do,” he purred, still massaging her face. “But you weren’t a good girl yesterday, or this morning. Were you?”

"N-no, sir." Her voice cracked.

"You were a little *brat*."

Hermione grimaced at his words. Even if true, they were not the way she wanted to be called. She adjusted her stance, the floor starting to bite her knees.

"And brats need to get punished so they can go back to being good." He pushed a curl behind her ear. "But then it is over. Okay? No chewing and brooding over it. Can you do that for me?"

She nodded frantically, even if she didn't believe it.

If Malfoy noticed her thoughts, he didn't comment on them. Instead, his index drew a line from her jaw to the strap of her gown, raising the fine hairs of her neck in its way.

Humming, he took his hand back up to cup her neck with a featherlight touch. Her breath caught.

"Granger, this is punishment for your disobedience. It is part of our dynamic, do you understand?" As she nodded, he continued. "You are absolutely safe with me and free to end it at any time. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"What are your safe words?"

"Stop and pause, sir."

"I want you to say it if you feel overwhelmed or uncomfortable."

"Sir, I can take my punishment." Her shoulder blades were pushed together, opening her chest, and her chin raised slightly.

"I know you can." He smiled. "I just wanted you to understand why and how this is happening. Are you ready?"

"Yes, Sir."

Without letting go of his hold on her, Malfoy waved his wand to summon the ottoman to his left side. Then, he placed both his hands on her elbows and raised her enough so that her hips would be over his right thigh. Understanding dawned on Hermione as he helped her lie her chest on his left thigh and rest her head and arms on the ottoman.

"No sticking charms, but you are not allowed to move," he informed her, gently caressing her back.

"Yes, sir."

"Now, normally, I would prefer to use my paddle," he said, sending shivers through her whole body. She could feel the metal buckle against her ribcage. "But as this is your first time, I will be more gentle. Hopefully, there won't be another time; however, if there is, you should expect the paddle."

She waited, her whole body attuned to the sensation of his hand on her.

"I will spank you eight times for the eight billion dollars your little stunt cost me last night," he said, making Hermione's body jerk in fear.

He shushed her, soothing while running his large hand up and down her back. "And another eight for the night you stole from me."

Oh Merlin.

"Y-yes, sir." She bit her lip nervously. His hand was enormous, and she knew it would hurt a lot. "I am sorry, sir."

"I know," he cooed, pulling the hem of her gown in a maddeningly slow pace up her legs, until her bum was exposed. The air was warm due to the fire burning, but Hermione got goosebumps, nonetheless. "You will count each time I spank you. And then you'll thank your Dom, because he's disciplining you. Understood?"

"Yes, s—" The end of her sentence was cut by a yelp she let out when his hand came down on one of her cheeks.

She knew it would hurt; she hadn't expected it to be *that much*. The pain was acute at first, but then a ghostly burning spread where his hand had connected with her skin.

"Granger?"

"One, sir. Thank you, sir," she whined, eyes squeezing shut just in time for another one to hit her in a sharp burst in the opposite cheek. "Two, thank you, sir."

As the third and fourth slaps landed on her thighs, tears started escaping her eyes, and her jaw was clenched to keep her from sobbing like a child.

Her whole body was tense, her breathing constricted. Her hands dug into the cushion, trying to transfer some of the discomfort.

She counted and thanked him, her voice strained.

After the fifth smack, Malfoy waited a bit.

His hand gently rubbed her bum, as if to soothe.

And the act was Hermione's undoing.

She cried out.

"You're doing very well, Granger," he cooed. "You're such a good girl for me."

"It hurts!" she sobbed.

"I know," he said. "It will be over soon."

Another slap.

And another.

Now the burning was constant, and the stinging was starting to bite even more.

“Oh, Dom. I’m sorry. Please *pause* !”

He stopped.

His thighs tensed underneath her, but she felt his torso moving, and suddenly his head appeared in her line of sight: eyebrows knit together.

“Talk to me, what do you need?”

She tried to think. “It hurts.”

Malfoy flipped her with a surprising gentleness so that she would be resting her face on his chest, his arms holding her back and thighs. “Do you think I want to hurt you?”

The position and his tone had her feeling like a baby, so Hermione only shook her head.

“I don’t. The idea of the punishment is merely to help you release emotions through your body and free your mind. Before we started this, how would you deal with a big mistake like last night’s?”

Hermione bit her lip. “I would spend a few days chastising myself and then cringe every time I remembered it.”

“Precisely. Now, you can get spanked and then forget about it.” He pushed a curl behind her ear. “If it is too much for you, though, we can stop—”

Hermione didn’t like the sound of it. *Too much for her* .

She was a big girl. She could deal with anything. She had fought a war, raised her daughter alone and worked her arse off at the Ministry—

“You have the power here. If you don’t want to be my sub anymore, just say the word red and—”

Saying *red* would end things, and she didn’t want that.

It wasn’t hurting *that much* .

The pain was just something *new* .

Something *uncomfortable*. Something that snatched the control from her.

But she wanted *him* .

Malfoy would stop if she asked him to. And the certainty of it made her feel even safer and tempted to continue, to test her limits, to discover new horizons and show him how much of a good, strong girl she could be.

So instead of saying stop or red, she shook her head against his shirt, feeling it damp with her tears and saliva.

Pushing herself to go back to her previous position, she said in a firm tone. ”Six and seven, thank you, sir.”

“Good girl, Granger.” She could hear the shaky smile in his voice, and it brought her attention to a certain volume against her lower abdomen.

Was spanking her getting him hard?

Even though the idea should’ve revolted her, it ended up piquing her curiosity. He had never spanked her for the pleasure of it; every time it was either to call her attention or to punish her for something.

But he liked it. She imagined how her arse must have been looking at that moment, from the feeling of it, she was sure it would be reddened and swollen. *Did he like that view?*

Smack. Right cheek. *Smack.* Left cheek.

This time, she screamed.

“Eight and nine, sir! Thank you!”

He had said it was a punishment, and she was so embarrassed by her behaviour that she didn’t allow herself to view it as anything other than that. Her body was tense with fear, and she was dreading it. In fact, she had told herself several times that she would never enjoy it... *Could she even?*

Smack. Left thigh.

Inhaling deeply, Hermione attempted to relax her muscles and focus on the feeling of his body around and underneath her. His strong thighs, his large groin, and his torso moving with his breathing at her side. She exhaled just in time for the eleventh slap to land.

Smack. Right thigh.

Instantly, there was the acuteness of the contact; only when the heat spread through her skin, it wasn’t just painful, but exciting.

“Ten and eleven, sir. Thank you.” Her cry was moany, and it didn’t go unnoticed by Malfoy; his cock twitched near her hip.

His hand caressed her sex over her knickers, which brought her attention to how damp they had gotten. *Was she enjoying it too? But it had hurt. How was it possible to be hurtful and good at the same time?*

He didn’t give her time to think about it, raising his arm to descend it against the apex of her thighs. Electric waves shot from her clit towards her body, and Hermione found her walls clenching around nothing. It was clear that Malfoy felt it too, his panting growing heavier and his cock throbbing next to her.

“Twelve, sir, thank you,” she breathed out, her whole body relaxing over him.

The thirteenth slap was the hardest yet. Hermione howled wantonly. Crying, she said, “thirteen, sir.”

“Didn’t you forget something?”

“Thank you, sir,” she sobbed.

“That’s it,” he purred. “Good girl, taking your punishment so well.”

She was in another plane of existence, his voice sounding muffled and her mind blank. Her whole body was reacting to him without her consciousness. Her walls fluttering, her mouth screaming, and her tears pouring out. *Smack. Smack.*

“F-fourteen. Fifteen.” Her voice was coming out weak between hard panting, and her entire backside was prickling and burning from his touch. She was feeling soft, compliant, and available. “Thank you, sir”

“Such a good girl,” he praised, “Last one.”

“Please, Dom.”

He shuddered underneath her before his palm connected to her bruised skin once again.

This time, it was so painful that she shouted, and her whole body jerked in response.

“Fuck!” she whined, body convulsing.

“Hush.” He pressed his palm over the abused spot, grounding. “Language, Granger. You’ve been good until now.”

“Sorry, sir,” she mewled. “Sixteen, thank you, sir!”

Hermione’s body was limp, but Malfoy manoeuvred her with impressive strength so that she would be straddling him, her whole torso resting against his chest to prevent her backside from touching the chair or his thighs.

And then, he was running his palms all over her, one on her hair and the other on her back. Caressing.

Comforting.

He waved his hand, and a glass of water appeared for him to hand her. She gulped it, not realising how she’d gotten so thirsty.

“You did it so well, Granger. I am so proud.” He pampered kisses all over her face.

The gentleness of it snapped something inside her that had been stretching ever since the previous night, and Hermione began to howl against his neck, her crying ugly, snotty and hoarse.

She had feared she would humiliate him by her appearance, but in the end, it had been her immaturity and insecurity that did it. She had cost him a fortune, and he would never want her in public again.

“I’m so sorry, sir — so sorry, please forgive me!”

“Shhh... It’s alright. What did I tell you about punishing yourself?”

“Not to do it, sir. I am sorry.”

“Stop apologising, Granger.” He chuckled. “You’ve already been punished. I forgive you. You are my good girl. I am so proud of you.”

“You shouldn’t be—” Her crying got more hysterical. “I ruined your business and embarrassed you —”

“Granger.” He cupped her face with both palms so that she would face him.

Sure that her face must’ve been disgusting with her ugly crying, she squeezed her eyes shut.

“Granger, look at me.”

She obeyed.

“I didn’t tell you about Dawson’s business for you to be guilty,” he explained, wiping her face with a smooth handkerchief. “I am already a billionaire, I don’t need more money.”

She searched between his eyes to catch the lie.

“I told you about it so you would know that there was no need for you to act like that,” he continued. “I would never bring you to a ball only to be with another woman in front of you. I chose you. I want you.”

She couldn’t believe it. She couldn’t understand why he would do it.

Yet, when she opened her mouth, it wasn’t either of those facts that came out; it was a desperate and pathetic whine. “I’m sorry, Dom. I got so sad and frustrated.”

“You must tell me what you’re feeling, Granger.” He kissed her nose. “I can’t allow you to feel bad.”

Breathing deeply, she prepared herself to be vulnerable and open to him.

“I don’t want to see you with other women.”

Something flashed in his silver eyes. “You won’t. I promise.”

Deciding on testing her luck, she pressed on. “Not just in front of me... I would prefer it if you were exclusive with me, too.”

A grin stretched his features. It was beautiful. “Yes, Granger. Since we started this, I have been only yours and will gladly continue this way. You are more than enough for him. Does that make you happy?”

“Yes.” She nodded, feeling bold enough to nuzzle against his neck. “Yes, Dom.”

They spent quite some time just like that, hugging. Her face pressed against his skin, his pulse drumming against her cheek. His large arms pressed her tight, allowing her body to release all that oxytocin. It was almost inebriating. She felt safe, cared for. Held. She felt important, she wasn’t guilty anymore, she felt light and nice.

And then, her hips were rocking back and forth over him.

Her lips started to draw her own runes on his skin, with open-mouthed kisses on his neck.

She was so wet that there would be a mess on his pants, but he didn't stop her.

His hands slid to her waist, his thumbs digging into her pillow belly.

"Granger, let me take care of your arse first," he said, but it wasn't as strong and commanding — more like a plea.

A weak one.

"Please, Dom." A moan, dragging her teeth on his skin. "I want your cock."

"This was not about sex—"

"Let me be a good girl, please."

"You are—"

"Then fuck me," she cried. "Now."

He breathed out a curse, and then his hands were on his belt, deftly freeing his hard and pulsating cock.

A glance down revealed that it was already glistening with precum, which made Hermione lick her lips. "My mouth?"

"Fuck, no." He chuckled, pushing her damp knickers to the side. "I want to bury myself in you."

And, marvellously stretching her, he slowly entered entirely.

"That's it. Good girl."

"Oh, Dom," she cried, her head falling back so that her curls rasped against her abused bum, sending shivers through her entire body.

The movement elicited a shuddering breath from Malfoy, and he used his grip on her waist to guide her up and down.

"You are hot. And so *wet*," he groaned. "Did you enjoy getting spanked, Granger?"

Hermione was using her knees to push herself up and down, chasing the release of all that built-up desire.

Even so, she managed to blush.

"I think so, sir."

"Fuck," he growled, pistolling harder into her. "Such a good girl for me."

Her breasts were bouncing freely, as the straps of her gown fell from her shoulders, and Malfoy was quick to close his mouth on one of her nipples.

He bit it, yanking a wail from her.

“Don’t go being a brat just to get punished, Granger.”

“N-no, sir. I promise.” She was moaning and sitting on him, meeting his every thrust with her own momentum. “I’ll be a good girl.”

“Fffuck.”

He smacked her arse again, lighter than before, and it actually felt so good that her walls clenched, milking him.

He *moaned*.

“That’s it, Granger, you’re so good at this—.”

“Yes, Dom!” she cried, jumping frantically over him. “Please.”

“What do you want?” His voice rasped out, one hand fisting the hair at the nape of her neck and the other squeezing her hip bruisingly to force her up and down.

“I *need* to come, Dom, please.”

“You can, you earned it, so good to me.” He let go of her head and went to brush her clit.

Her orgasm exploded in a scream, her entire being convulsing in the waves of white-hot pleasure, while Malfoy kept thrusting until he filled her with his seed.

Then she was panting, face buried on his shoulder, and he was playing with the curls at her back.

Eventually, Malfoy apparated them towards her room, carrying her in his arms, one hand holding her while the other turned the faucets to run them a bath in the gigantic claw-footed bathtub.

“I won’t heal you with magic,” he whispered as she hissed in contact with the warm water. “I want you to remember to be a good girl.”

She nodded, far too gone to care or think about anything.

She trusted her Dom.

The steam was giving the bathroom a dreamy ambience, with a floral and minty aroma flooding her senses and making her feel sleepy.

Something in the water made her feel better.

“But I’ll have you take herb baths and apply salve in the bruises to speed the process,” he declared, positioning himself behind her.

“I don’t have a bathtub,” she breathed out in a relieved whine, eyes closed, unbothered, lying between his legs.

“You’ll be staying here this week.”

That snapped her out of the post-orgasmic haze. Opening her eyes, she glanced back to find him with his arms resting on the edges of the bath behind her.

“Excuse me?”

“I told you that if I didn’t like your flat, I would get you a better place,” he said matter-of-factly. “It was shite.”

Heat crept up her back and neck.

So while she was crying in insecurity, he had been judging her living conditions?

“My flat is great, I live alone. I don’t need much—”

Her words died out as she saw the mere hint of annoyance in him, eyebrow raising.

“Yes, sir. Thank you for taking care of me.”

He hummed in approval, closing his eyes again to relax in the water.

Hermione followed his initiative, resting her head against his chest and allowing the herbs in the bath to soothe the abused skin on her backside.

“So, was your breakfast to your liking?” Malfoy asked.

She sighed, not thinking too much about anything. “I didn’t eat, I was too anxious—”

“What?”

His tone dragged her from the relaxation. “I –er—”

“Granger, I am supposed to keep you nourished and hydrated.”

Hermione felt him stretching behind her to reach his wand and send an order to the elves. A few minutes later, a silver tray appeared hovering around them, with tea service, small sandwiches and fruits. Malfoy kept caressing her belly and her thighs while she ate, humming in pleasure like there was nothing else he’d like to do but to be with her in a bathtub while she ate.

Eventually, after what seemed like hours but could’ve been only minutes, Malfoy asked something in a whisper against her hair.

“Granger?”

“Hm?”

“What did you think about the spanking? Did I scare you?”

She considered it before answering. “No... You didn’t scare me. I wish I hadn’t earned it, I didn’t like being bad.”

He hugged her tightly. “I know. You are a good girl.”

“But,” she continued. “I think that — I think I enjoyed it too... Which was surprising for me.”

“For me as well.” There was a smile in his voice.

“Dom,” she began tentatively after a few minutes of silence. “Do you — hm... Do you enjoy these kinds of things?”

“Spanking?”

“Er — Yes.” She was glad not to be looking at him; his touch on her arms was encouraging enough. “I mean, do you prefer the sex to be... rougher? With — hm — ropes and whips and—”

“Hush.” He kissed her hair. “You don’t have to worry about it, Granger. I want to please *you*. And that will make me pleased too.”

Her lips pursed. “Thank you, sir.”

Malfoy had been fucking her dearly, carefully, lovingly.

Because he thought that was what she wanted.

And by all means, it was.

But she had just learned something new, and different could feel good.

There was a fear inside her telling her to keep quiet and enjoy things as they were, how *incredible* they already were.

And... Almost.

She *almost* let the subject drop, but something stirred her into motion. “Perhaps I could get pleased with different things. Hm... I think I would be open to trying new things... with you, Dom.”

“Fuck,” he breathed out, his voice shaky with his entire body shivering. “Good girl, Granger.”

Chapter End Notes

I'd like to thank Pixeout and Lala_dyo for helping me with this chapter. It was a challenge for me to write it while being realistic with someone new to the scene receiving her first punishment, keeping it hot and also being responsible with her own feelings and insecurities.

Chapter 16: When they share aftercare

The first night Hermione slept with Draco Malfoy, however, involved no whips, chains or gags. In fact, he told her they would not be engaging in anything new for a while. Especially while her new flat wasn't ready.

"You were in the subspace when you asked me for it," he explained, washing her hair in the tub. "I want you to think about it with time and space."

And she nodded, because if she had learned something in those six weeks of their contract, it was that her Dom knew what was best for her and she could relax into his authority.

She would have hoped for *some* sex, though, seeing that they had already wasted the night before.

Well, *she* had wasted it with her bratty attitude.

Even so, he said she needed an extended time of aftercare.

"I need it too," he clarified, massaging her body with healing salve. "The punishment is demanding for both of us; it's intense and very emotionally loaded. We need to breathe together after it. I need to feel like I am properly tending to your recovery."

"But I want—" She pouted, and he cupped her cheeks, squeezing so her lip popped.

"I know you do, Granger." A peck on her lips, another in her nose. "*And* you'll have to obey me, still."

She was dressed in fluffy merino wool pyjamas before he took her to his library, where he kept his hand on the small of her back as she perused the aisles and picked a title for her night reading. Then, the night was spent in his bed, both reading their own books, sometimes stopping to comment or read entire passages out loud if only to praise the beauty of the prose.

They ate dinner in comfortable armchairs in front of the fire. It was a creamy soup, so neither of them could feed the other, but they made up for it by spending almost an hour slowly kissing afterwards. Hermione could swear that the basil flavour was a hundred per cent better when tasted from Malfoy's lips.

He avoided holding her sore bum as she straddled him, but slid his hands under her shirt to rest on her bare back and elicit goosebumps nonetheless.

"Granger?"

"Yes, sir?"

"Ever since you came to work with me," he began, his fingers drawing random patterns on her hip bones. "I have never seen you take any call that wasn't work-related—"

"Yes, sir." She had no idea of where that conversation was going.

"You said Potter and Weaselette sided with the Weasel after the divorce?"

She shifted uncomfortably. "Nothing conscious, I think. It just happened—"

"I think you should make new friends."

A nervous chuckle burst out of her. "I think so, too."

"I mean it," he insisted. "Especially with our dynamic... it is not healthy for me to be the only person in your life."

Was that the beginning of the end?

Was he pitying her?

Scared of leaving the poor, divorced, single mother without friends—

A kiss on her temple silenced the overthinking. "The book you were reading... I know the author —"

"You know Sarah Cauklin?" she gasped.

He nodded, smiling at her reaction. "I do. She holds these biweekly meetings with other academics, authors, researchers — all women." It was funny; he felt the need to specify that. "I think you would have a good time there. Of course, they're Muggles, but you—"

Her lips crashed on his, swallowing the rest of his words.

She hadn't stopped to consider how it would be to sleep with her Dom.

If anything, she imagined the experience would be extremely sexual, with both of them naked and sweaty from the last session. Instead, Malfoy charmed their books to hover above their heads while she rested her cheek on his chest and he toyed with one of her curls.

Hermione fell asleep first and woke up with him entangled in her, his thigh between hers, both arms wrapped under her breasts, and his face snoring softly on her neck.

Perspective was a funny thing.

Context too.

She hated Ron's snoring.

But Malfoy doing it was cute.

She sighed in contempt, snuggling closer to him.

Deep in sleep, he shifted behind her, and his leg went higher, pressing just the right button to send a tingling warm sensation up her spine. Hermione rolled her hips, already feeling her knickers damp. His arms squeezed her, but his breathing was still deep and unconscious.

Hermione tried pressing herself further against him, thinking that if he woke up already hard, he wouldn't deny her sex another time. Pain bloomed in her backside with the movement. Thinking it was the spanking, she decided to push through.

Only...

It wasn't really in her arse.

But in her lower back.

His palm had only slammed against her bum cheeks and her thighs.

He hadn't slapped her back.

So why was it sore?

Her eyes widened in terror, and she lifted the luxurious white comforter of Malfoy's king-size bed.

"Fuck!" she muttered, "Shit! Fuck!"

There was a red stain spreading down her thighs, on the sheets, in Malfoy's light green trousers, everywhere.

Her period had come.

On her first night sleeping in Malfoy's house.

Really, what game was Fortune playing with her?

Was it revenge for mocking Trelawney two decades before?

A huge breath in, steadyng herself, and Hermione squirmed herself out of his embrace. Every inch she managed to get between them was quickly lost when he pulled her tauter, tutting in his sleep.

Hermione closed her eyes and prayed.

Her wand was close, in the nightstand, maybe she could *scourgify*—

"Granger," he groaned in her ear, pinching her belly, as she stretched her arm towards it. "It's too early. Come back here."

"I need to use the bathroom," she squeaked, hoping he wouldn't open his eyes. "Please?"

"No." His grip tightened. "You're warm."

"Malfoy, *please*." It came as a sob, and his arms relaxed immediately.

Hermione reached for her wand and quickly whispered the *scourgify*, sighing in relief when she noticed it had worked. Then, she just needed to scoop herself out and gingerly step on the ground

—
She froze.

The flow of blood that left her when she went vertical was practically hearable; it fell heavy and warm in her knickers, spilling towards her thighs.

"Granger?"

“Hm?” Her head turned slowly back.

“Aren’t you going to the bathroom?” Malfoy had both his hands behind his head on the wooden headboard. His biceps flexed deliciously, and his muscular chest rose above the comforter.

When had he taken his shirt off?

His face frowned in concern at her silence. “Are you alright?”

“Yes!” The answer came too quickly and in an unconvincing tone. She was pressing her thighs together, trying to keep the red waterfall from reaching his polished floor. “I just — er... Where did your elves take my things? From my flat?”

Malfoy’s eyes narrowed in suspicion. “What do you need? I have clothes picked for—”

“Ladies’ things. From my bathroom.”

He relaxed. “Oh, I have everything you need inside. Shampoo, conditioner, body oils, perfumes...”

She had seen it in his glass open shelves. There was neither a tampon nor a pad.

“My things, Malfoy. Where are they?” Her tone grew frantic, maniacal.

His brows united. “I know you liked the spanking, but we agreed on behaving—”

“Sorry, *sir*. I need my bathroom things, please. *Now*, please.”

Her Dom was concerned with giving exactly what she needed, which is why he then did the precise opposite: getting up and approaching her.

“You’re flushed, and your legs are trembling. Are you in pain?”

Physical from the cramps. Emotional from the embarrassment. Mental from the effort of finding a way out of her situation.

“No, sir. It’s fine.”

“Let me—”

“No!” A guttural shout left her throat, and she flinched away from the hand he tried to use to grab her thighs bridal style.

Malfoy’s eyes widened because, when Hermione moved, a blood cloth fell on the floor near her feet. The first day of her cycle was always the heaviest.

“Granger?” All the colour had left his face. “What the fuck—?”

“Oh shit!” She ran as fast as she could towards the bathroom, leaving a trail of blood behind her.

Malfoy’s legs were longer, so he caught up with her in no time, taking her in his arms and crossing the bathroom threshold.

“Put me down!”

“What is wrong? Is it an allergic reaction?”

“What?” she whined, mortified.

“Is it the salve? I hadn’t drawn blood! I — fuck!” He seemed to be in harsher distress than she. “I would never — I swear. My wand— Should I call an elf? Blubby has healing—”

“NO!” she screeched. “Malfoy, sir, this is not coming from my arse!”

He looked at her, and his mouth fell. “Was it my cock?”

A laugh bubbled from her chest, then she couldn’t hold it in. It was too ridiculous. “No. Your enormous cock didn’t mutilate my vagina—”

“Why are you laughing?” Annoyance brushed his features.

“Put me down, please?”

When her feet met the ground, his hands remained on her waist, unsure of her capability to stand up. Hermione took a shuddering breath, trying to calm herself before speaking.

“This is not blood from a wound; it is coming from my uterus. I am menstruating—”

His lips pursed in a small O, as if at the beginning of asking what that was.

“Menstruation is the process where a uterus sheds its lining through the vagina as a bloody discharge.”

Awe, horror and distrust expressions took turns in Malfoy’s chivelled face. “Is this *normal*?”

“Of course, it happens every month.” He didn’t seem to believe her, and Hermione couldn’t believe a thirty-five-year-old man, who had been married and had a child, didn’t know about a woman’s cycle. “Malfoy, haven’t you ever heard of menses? Periods? Monthlies?”

Hermione shook her head, laughing, and turned her back to him, unbuttoning her pyjamas. Malfoy’s hand wrapped around her arm and turned her to face him, tugging her fingers aside so he could do the work with the buttons. “What is it? Tell me. You *must* tell me everything.”

“I can’t believe you don’t know about it. I mean, didn’t Narcissa and As—” Her voice stopped abruptly because she wasn’t supposed to mention his dead wife.

“We can solve this *unbelievable* situation in seconds if you decide to start fucking talking,” he hissed, annoyed, pushing her shirt over her shoulders to expose her breasts.

“Every month, my body prepares itself to receive a baby, so it forms sort of a little house inside my womb.” Hermione used the same words she had told Rose before going to Hogwarts. “If there isn’t any, it just throws it away. Like trash.”

Malfoy had his hands on the waistband of her trousers, pushing them down to her ankles. He looked horrified at the trail of blood all over the inside of her legs. “The house is made of *blood*?”

“Yes.” She giggled, stepping out of the trousers.

“You go through this every month?”

“Yes. Unfortunately.”

She used his arm as support to get into the claw-footed tub. With a wave of Malfoy’s wand, it was full of hot water.

“And does it hurt?”

“Not really,” she said, sinking into the warmth, feeling the relief. “I have cramps—”

“Muscular?”

“Yes, the muscles of my womb contort to push the blood down. Warm water is a great relief—” The ending of her sentence was cut by yelp when she felt a weird feeling on her arse, almost like a lick.

She glared at Malfoy.

He conjured a stool to sit at her side and then pocketed his wand.

“What was that?”

“I healed your marks.” His hand grabbed a loofah, and he began to rub soap in her legs, so gently she almost couldn’t feel it.

“Why? I thought you wouldn’t—”

“Granger, if you already have to endure this pain, I don’t want to add to the count.”

She smiled at him. “You are very good to me, sir. Thank you.”

Then, with a blush, she added, “I should have known that my period was close, I was stupid not to have been prepared—”

“No.” He silenced her. “I should have known. I can’t believe I never heard about this. Are you sure every woman goes through one?”

“Several,” she chuckled. “One every month from twelve to fifty.”

His eyes widened. “Girls were bleeding at *Hogwarts*?”

She nodded.

“But my mother and Astoria never talked about this.” He seemed deep in thought, distracted as his hand moved on her skin.

Dangerously high.

Lightly wiping the apex of her thighs.

Hermione sighed, eyes fluttering. “It is intimate.”

Malfoy hummed. “Were you trying to hide it from me? Earlier?”

“Yes. It’s embarrassing—”

“But it is natural, you say?”

“Yes...” Hermione was having a hard time concentrating; her period made her more sensitive to his touch, and Malfoy seemed oblivious, moving from one thigh to the other and then over her cunt as he thought about it. “Some men find it disgusting—”

His hand stopped. Her eyes opened, and she let out a disappointed whine.

“*Disgusting?* It is the only blood I have *ever* heard that comes without violence.” His eyes were intense. “If anything, it is... powerful.”

Her lips parted.

“I mean, it is a sign that your body is ready to receive a child, isn’t it?” At Hermione’s nod, he continued, “So it is a sign of fertility... Of life itself! People should be praising it, not hiding—”

She giggled. “Okay, I think you’re overreacting—”

“If blood magic is powerful, can you imagine using *the blood of life* to fuel it?”

Hermione gasped. “*Blood of life?*”

Malfoy’s eyes were in the infinite, inspired, full of intensity.

He shook himself out of it and then cupped her face, serious.

“What do you need? I will be with you during this entire period. Taking care of you. Tell me what you need.”

She was too lucky.

Not even helping Harry defeat the Dark Lord had been enough karma to give her that man. She wanted him forever. Hermione tried her best not to compare him with the father of her daughter, but it was hard not to. Ron would make a face when her period came, telling how he hated the metallic smell and even complaining when she wanted to rest. *My mother never stopped for menses, and she had seven kids!*

Malfoy thought of it as sacred. He thought of her as something to care for.

“Chocolats help,” she began. “Warm compress for the colic. Resting. And I *really* need pads so the blood doesn’t stain all of my clothes— oh, sir, I got your floor all dirty—”

A wave of his hand, dismissing her. “The elves have cleaned it. Breakfast is on the table... Unless you need a special diet for this period? Chocolates, you said?”

“It is good, yes. But I can eat anything.”

“Good.” He nodded before getting to his feet. “I’ll get you the warm compresses and the pads. Anything else?”

"Uh," She considered. "Maybe comfy clothes? Like sweatpants and a jumper... I just want to curl into a ball and sleep for four days, usually."

"I can make that happen." He smirked.

Hermione spent almost forty minutes in the pinky warm bath, only to be welcomed by chocolate porridge with raspberry jam to eat in her bed. Lindy had appeared to dress her in a comfortable set of cotton knickers, a cloth pad, and a cosy sweat suit.

Malfoy was ecstatic at her side. "I had never known! But Lindy tells me it *is* normal and that she knows exactly what to do! Apparently, my mother enjoyed foot rubs while in her period. Would you like it too?"

She practically moaned her affirmative.

The rest of her week was spent reading in bed while her Dom tended to her every need, kissing her softly, massaging her body and enjoying long pleasurable conversations by the fire. He tried to forbid her from working, but her contract protected her from it, so he ended up just demanding she'd do it lying on a comfortable sofa near the fire with a warm blanket over her belly as he kneaded her feet.

And not once gave her a sexual command. She did try to initiate sex a few times, but he was scared of hurting her, and nothing could convince him that having a bleeding womb wasn't painful. When she whined that he was feeling unattracted to her because of her blood, he offered to bring her to orgasm with his mouth, but she wasn't *that* forward.

A couple of days after her period ended, Hermione went to see her new flat.

Malfoy's eyes followed her while she walked in awe through every room. Her favourite was, by far, the library, full to the brim with books she loved or had not read yet. The living room had a stylish fireplace and a large L-shaped, soft, cream sofa that stretched along the walls, under the modern watercolour paintings that decorated the walls. Her kitchen was almost all white and gold, aesthetically clean, with modern appliances and a vase of red roses on the counter. In fact, there were red roses everywhere. It was a nice earthly touch since the lightness and openness of the entire thing, with floor-to-ceiling windows in every room, topped with the altitude of the penthouse, made Hermione feel like she was about to live in the sky.

Nothing made her cry, though, as much as Rose's room did. It was classic, with empty shelves the girl would probably fill with books and a stand for her new broom. It was naked of decoration, unlike the rest of the house, but it was so careful and thoughtful.

"I thought it would be best for her to pick what she wanted to decorate it with." Malfoy hugged her from behind. "When she comes home for the summer, you'll have the money to buy whatever she wants."

She turned to face him. "Thank you, sir, for taking such good care of me. I've never — no one has ever — I just—" *love you*.

"So you like it?" he genuinely needed to know, as if it wasn't obvious.

"I love it."

And then he took her to her bedroom, where the king-size bed was covered in rose petals, and pressed her against the window, so she could see all of Muggle London in front of her, as he pounded at her back in a steady, strong and low rhythm.

“You are everything I ever wanted, Granger,” he whispered against her neck, biting her flesh.

Doing it while standing had his cock dragging across a very sensitive spot in her front walls, and despite it being still early, Hermione was seeing stars in her eyes.

She had to bite her own hand, which was bracing on the glass, not to say how much she loved him and wanted him too.

And he was fucking her, his hands firm on her hips.

She was mewling, throwing her arse back to meet his thrusts.

Malfoy’s breath grew ragged, his pistolling was frantic.

“I *need* to give you everything you need. Tell me what you need.”

“You, Dom,” she moaned, just as her release came.

They showered together in her luxurious bathroom of pinkish marble, and Hermione got dressed for her first night out since... *ever*?

Sarah Cauklin had a penthouse not far away from hers, where she received twenty or so brilliant women to drink wine, discuss arts and politics, while encouraging and inspiring each other’s endeavours. Hermione was so engrossed in the deep and interesting conversations that she got inebriated from that alone, barely sipping her wine.

Her walk home was accompanied by Faye Beavers, a History teacher at the University of London who had attended the *soirée* and lived in the same building as Hermione. They both agreed to meet the following morning at the communal sauna to continue their conversation.

Her flat was perfect, but she wanted to sleep with her Dom. So she tossed the green powder in her fireplace and called for his Manor as she stepped into the flames.

Malfoy was sitting in front of the fire, knees wide and a tumbler of Ogden dangling in his long fingers. He didn’t seem surprised to see her.

She practically jumped to sit at his side, making him chuckle as he wrapped his arm around her waist and pulled her to his lap.

“You look positively radiant, so I assume that it was good?”

“Perfect!”

“And to what do I owe the pleasure of your company tonight?”

“I wanted to be with you, sir.”

His hands splayed over her arse, fingers digging in her flesh, possessively. “And why is that?”

She couldn't say it just yet, so she rolled her hips and pulled her lower lip between her teeth. Her hands caressed his toned chest up and down.

"Do you need something, Granger? Because if so, you have to be a good girl and ask for it."

"I want to suck you off, sir."

He had not been expecting it; his lips parted before he took a shuddering breath and nodded.

"Take off your clothes."

Hermione climbed off him and went to obey, before getting down to her knees between his open legs. She ran her hands up and down his thighs while he worked himself out of his belt.

When his cock finally sprang free, already hard and bouncing up to hit his covered stomach, Hermione's mouth watered, and she couldn't help but wet her lips.

"You want it, Granger? You want to suck my cock like a good girl?"

"Yes, sir."

"Beg for it."

Her eyes left a particular vein she was admiring and slid back to meet his half-lidded ones. "Please, sir, let me suck your cock."

His hand went to her cheek, thumb brushing her lips while the other fingers splayed to massage her scalp. "I have one condition."

She waited for him to continue.

"You have to make yourself come with my cock on your mouth," he said, his voice thick with lust.

"Put your hand on your clit and rub it while you suck me off."

Hermione's lips parted. She *hated* failing. "Sir, I don't know how—I've never—"

"Hush," he tutted, eyebrows twitching. "Be a good girl and obey, or I'll have to punish you."

Biting her lip, she nodded and spread her knees wide while sitting on her haunches, so she would be able to fit her hand there.

She was already wet.

Only by *seeing* his cock.

With the digits of three fingers, she tentatively brushed over the bud, sending a jolt of electricity up her spine.

Oh.

Smiling at the feeling, Hermione couldn't help but steal a glance at Malfoy, who was watching her, biting his lower lip.

She wrapped her other hand around the base of his shaft and squeezed, revelling in how his thigh muscles tensed at the action.

Rubbing her clit, she leaned forward and licked all the way from her hand to the underside of his head.

He groaned, and she felt him twitching in her grip.

Warmth was spreading in her core.

She flicked her tongue on the tip of his cock, before closing her lips around it and sucking like a straw.

“Good girl.”

The praise had her fingers curling over her clit, and she moaned, vibrating with his cock inside her mouth.

And then she bobbed her head up and down.

Shallow thrusts, cheeks hollowing.

Pressure was building on the base of her spine, and her hand sped up.

She was gaining depth in her actions, covering more of him each time.

Malfoy began panting, his hand on her head soft and trembling.

Hermione was moaning, eyes fluttering with the pleasure she was bolstering.

His flesh inside her mouth was hardening to an impossible degree, quivering against the flat of her tongue.

Eyes closed, her wrist beginning to bite with the effort of rubbing herself, and her head moving up and down his cock.

She could already taste the salty tang of him on the back of her throat.

But he had told her to come first.

Her release was almost there; she could feel it, just beyond the reach of her fingertips.

A thick sound rasped out of his throat, and Hermione opened her eyes.

The sight above her was her undoing.

Her Dom had his lips parted, panting slightly, crinkles around his eyes as he watched her.

Open and totally given to her.

The buildup pressure inside her burst like an elastic band, and she cried out her explosion, her entire body shivering as she tried to gulp before catching her breath.

It was good that she did it, because at the same time, hot ropes of his cum hit the back of her throat and she swallowed them.

Malfoy pulled her on top of him in seconds, like she weighed nothing, and held her tight.

Her breath was still coming back to normal after her release when she decided to say it. "Sir?"

"Hm?" He was rubbing his hand up and down her back, while pressing several pecks on her crown.

"You told me to share all of my feelings."

It caught his attention, so he leaned back to meet her eyes while pulling her hand to nuzzle against the inner part of his wrist. "Yes, I did."

"I think I am falling in love with you."

Chapter 17: When he apologises

Regret washed over her as soon as she saw his eyes widening and his mouth falling slack; the grip in her wrist froze, keeping her palm at the side of his face.

“Oh, shoot.” Her hands flew to her mouth, “Sorry, Malf—I mean. Sorry, sir.”

Her mind was reeling, and she practically wheezed out her apology, yanking her arm from him, and wobbling out of his lap to fold around herself on the sofa. Even in front of the fire, being naked suddenly felt too cold. Her eyes burned with the lack of blinks as she stared into the flames.

She heard shuffling at her side, the weight on the sofa shifting, and the sound of his belt clicking. He was about to leave.

A sigh. “Granger...”

She tried to cover her face. “I’m sorry—”

She ruined it all; he didn’t want a girlfriend. He told her that. He only wanted a sub, and she had made a terrible mistake—

He dropped to the floor in front of her, his large hands gripped her forearms and exposed her again. “Stop apologising. If anything, I should be the one to apologise.”

Oh, Merlin, he was pitying her.

Poor Granger, such a needy single mother that she falls in love with the first man she sleeps with after her divorce.

“I—” It was the first time she saw her Dom lost for words. He wasn’t looking at her, but at his side, gnawing on his lower lip with apprehension. “We need to talk. Dressed.”

Her eyes widened in terror.

Would he dismiss her now?

“I take it back — I am so sorry, I don’t want to—”

“No.” He silenced her with a kiss. “No taking back. We will talk dressed.”

And then he was helping her get up, gathering her clothes from the floor and placing them in her hands. Hermione’s fingers were shaking so much that it took her an embarrassingly long amount of time to get dressed.

Malfoy stood as a statue, his face unreadable and his shoulders tense. He was staring at the starry night sky through the window with a torn expression. Rain began to pound against the glass.

She walked closer to him, placing her palms on his jaw to force him to look at her.

And then she kissed him

He kissed her back, so it meant it was fine.

Right?

It had to be fine.

She needed it to be fine.

Because... this was everything she had. She couldn't lose this, too. The need to keep him in his life was swirling inside her and leaving her desperate and dizzy.

But then he got up, his hand running through his blonde waves, and walked to the other side of the room. The prospect of having ruined the most significant human connection she'd had in years was staggering, and Hermione was doing her best not to hyperventilate while waiting for him to say *something*.

She knew he lit his cigarette to think and drank his whiskey to buy himself time.

At that moment, he was doing both.

“Sir?” she tried.

“Just one moment, please.”

She bit her lip, shifting her weight between her feet.

Please?

He had never used that word before.

Did that mean their dynamic was over?

She obeyed. “Yes, Sir.”

There was pain in his eyes when he cursed, desperately dragging the smoke from his cigarette.

Anxiety was eating her brain away, so she needed to close the distance and fill the short silence that found its way between her and the man who had become her everything as of late. “I am so sorry, Sir. I shouldn't have said anything—”

He blanched. “What? No!” His voice came croaky, so unnatural for his usual controlled self. “Granger, you are absolutely right in communicating your feelings; that is part of our contract—”

“I shouldn't have!” she cried. “Because you didn't want a girlfriend, you wanted a *sub*—”

His hands flew to hold hers, forcing her to stop picking at the skin near her nails. “Granger, I only wanted you!”

His confession was so raw, emotional and full of intention that she had nothing in her to reply with but awe. “What?”

“I wanted *you*.” He kissed the inside of her palms. “I wanted you, and I have been a bloody idiot.”

He looked so vulnerable, so young despite the wrinkles around his eyes, and so utterly handsome that Hermione couldn't help but curl her fingers at his jaw, scratching lightly his stubble. "Why?"

"You were vulnerable. You were so alone, so broken, so distant from the powerhouse you used to be..." His eyes were glistening at her. "I thought — I *didn't* think—"

It was something completely new for her to watch him struggle with his speech, so she waited.

Eventually, he took a shuddering breath and pushed himself away to pace the room. "I made a mistake. I think we should pause our dynamic for a—"

It was her time to get on her knees. "What?! No! Sir, please! Please! Please! I am so sorry—"

Her words might as well have been bullets because it was pain that marked his features when he pulled her to her feet. "Granger, I can't lie and say I don't — *have feelings* for you."

Her heart fluttered, but his tone and wording were too strange for her to be hopeful.

"And it breaks my heart"— his voice faltered, and it made her sad—"not to be able to fully bask in the glory that must be to be loved by Hermione Granger."

Her face fell.

It was driving too close to a break-up; her mouth felt too dry to say anything, though.

"But I can't take advantage of your vulnerability." Then he snorted bitterly. "I mean more than I already have—"

To see him attacking himself made a defensive side of her ignite. "You haven't taken advantage of me. Malf — Sir."

"Malfoy is fine."

"Sir," she insisted. He was not taking that, *himself*, away from her. "I have never felt so cherished, so appreciated, cared for—"

He gave her a sad smile, and a single tear left his eye. "I did it for me."

It didn't make sense.

"I wanted to spoil you," he pressed on. "I forced myself upon you—"

"I consented."

" — I didn't explain it correctly. I didn't allow you to study. I didn't follow the contract rules or respect your boundaries," he said. "I was a terrible Dom. And all because I couldn't bear the idea of giving you the power to refuse or leave me."

She pulled on his elbows to press her chest against his. "I *don't* want to refuse or leave you. I said I am *in love* with you—"

"You're not!" he groaned. "Or at least, you're not in the right position to fall in love with anyone in the first place."

This made her cock her head.

Hermione hated being told she was in the wrong. “What do you mean?”

He bit his lip. ““You are lonely, overwhelmed, burnt out. That sodding ex-husband of yours left you struggling alone.””

“But I have you now!” she insisted, fingers caressing the exposed skin of his forearms.

His pupils dilated and his eyes squinted slightly, fondly.

“You have me,” he reassured her. “The problem is you *only* have me.”

Oh.

“I was so focused on bringing you out of your shell, on indulging you with whatever I saw fit, helping you see the beautiful woman that you are, and of course, selfishly, revelling in your amazing company and delicious body as much as I could—”

Heat spread through her cheeks, neck and chest, boiling her blood in lust.

She wanted his cock inside her so much that it was hard to even bring herself to pay attention to his words.

“— made your whole life revolve around me, because I simply want you all for myself.”

“You have me!”

He exhaled sharply, sorrowful. “I know. But it is not a healthy start for a relationship.”

Oh.

The heat was replaced by cold, her heart turning into ice and shattering into a million pieces.

“So... you want to end things?”

“Pause,” he corrected her. “You have a new flat. You have new friends. Your sanctuary will be launched in a few weeks—”

“Thanks to you!”

“Thanks to six years of *your* hard work.” His hands were running up and down her sides now. “The success of it is bound to reverberate in your career.”

Those were incredible things, so why was she feeling like a knot was forming in her throat?

“You won’t have financial worries, I will make sure of that. You are now ready to experience the pinnacle of success after years of dedication. And hopefully you will also engage in a healthy social life.”

It was sounding a lot like a goodbye instead of a pause, and Hermione wasn’t liking it one bit.

A single tear escaped her eye and slid towards her chin.

The knot in her throat fell heavy towards her chest.

“Please, Draco, don’t leave me. I want none of it. I want you.”

Maybe it was her words, or maybe it was the sound of his first name on her lips. But something made him close his eyes and breathe deeply a couple of times before opening them again, its silver glowing towards her.

“You *have* me,” he repeated. “And I want it all with you. I just need you to take some time to think about your decision with enough space and—”

“I don’t want space!” she whined.

He was already having a hard time dismissing her, and she was getting through to him; she could see it.

“Draco, except for my daughter, you are everything I have!”

This made him stare at her in horror, and then he grabbed her face in his hands.

“Granger, you are a brilliant and desirable woman. I am not your only option. I want to be the only one for you, but I need you to *choose* me from a place of—”

“Then why would you make this mess?” she sobbed. “Why didn’t you just ask me out when I came for donations? Why didn’t you make things start from this right and healthy place you talk so much about?”

He avoided her gaze, and when he spoke, his voice came small and sorrowful. “Would you have accepted it?”

No. She wouldn’t. Never in a million years would she have thought that Draco Malfoy had grown to be that incredible man in front of her. Hadn’t it been for the hippogriffs, she would never have spent more than five minutes conversing with him.

But now she had.

And to go back was not something she was willing to do. Hermione had always had to struggle too much. She had tried to prove herself with her grades, fought a war, given birth to a daughter and been forced to raise said daughter alone for years. There were months in which she had to choose between bills to pay and take her work home so that neither the magical creatures nor Rose would be left behind.

If Draco wanted to *pause* things, he was in for a good fight.

“Pushing me away won’t solve anything,” she pressed on. “If we did something wrong, let’s correct it.”

“You didn’t do anything wrong, it was me—”

She tugged his wrists and guided them to sit side to side at the settee. “Begin adjusting it now. What do you mean you wanted *me*? ”

A big breath in, and his shoulders slumped. “I like watching you.”

“So you brought me to work in front of you?”

“So I started sitting in the back of the classroom.” His chin was trembling, and he almost pouted.
“Because I’d get a good view of you every time you answered questions.”

Air left her lungs.

“But it wasn’t enough. I needed you to look at me, too.” He fisted his hand. “I liked watching you get mad, your nose does this funny thing—” He huffed a laugh. “I liked watching you at the Yule Ball, even if it made my stomach burn.”

I’ve waited twenty years to escort you to a ball.

Apparently, the truth was slowly coming through to her, and Hermione regretted asking him to tell her, because she wasn’t sure she’d be able to deal with the aftermath of it. “Weren’t you mad?”

“No.” His head shook, and he smiled. “You deserve the spotlight. I am content in watching.”

The warmth of the flames was licking the back of her neck, but it was her face that felt hot.

“There was only one time I regretted staying back to watch you.”

Somehow, he needed to utter the words regardless of her knowing exactly what he was referring to. “In my drawing room, being tortured because I was too weak to say or do anything.” His nostrils flared, and his eyes were locked in the past.

“Draco, you couldn’t—”

“Please, don’t make excuses for me.” He turned seriously to her, holding her hand over her knee.

Silence stretched, both of them contemplating their lives.

“I think the war made me who I am. Desperate for control. It was what got me in the scene, after Astoria died.”

Hermione sucked her lips between her teeth, preventing her from asking about his wife.

He noticed it.

“Funny enough, she was the one who saw how I looked at you.” He smiled at the memory. “She would get *so* jealous after galas.”

Hermione turned her palm up and intertwined her fingers with his.

“I liked watching you receive your awards, give your speeches and shine,” he explained. “But my dying wife deserved more than a husband who didn’t love her. I made her life miserable and—”

She squeezed his hand encouragingly when his voice failed.

“I feel so guilty about it. It hurts to speak about her.” A deep breath in, his shoulders relaxed more, and he leaned back on the screeching leather, running a hand over his hair. “I kept watching you. Seeing how the bastard who got the most brilliant and beautiful witch in the world... just... let her *wither*.”

It was as harsh as it was true, she supposed.

“We divorced years ago,” she said, still trying to make sense of it all.

It would be easier if he told her he’d just started having feelings for her, because then it wouldn’t mean they had lost six years, or even more, of time they could’ve spent together. Resentment built inside her: she wanted that time back. He owed her that much. If Malfoy thought she’d waste a second more, he was very much wrong about her. It would be a first for her Dom.

“Would you have given me a chance?” He asked, amused, already knowing the answer.

No.

“So you went after BDSM?” A raised eyebrow, playfully accusing him.

“The witches are usually scared of a former Death Eater.” Like Hermione had been. “Or only interested in my name and money. I went to the Muggle world, and the BDSM scene allowed me to exercise some… interests.”

“Interests you wouldn’t have been able to enjoy in the Wizarding world.” She nodded.

“Then you appeared, and you were so desperate.” He looked at her with hunger. “I just had to be selfish and take the opportunity. I knew you’d deny me if it were about you and your pleasure. But if it was about bloody hippogriffs… then I had a chance.”

Hermione giggled, unable to hold herself.

“I thought you would bolt after the first meeting,” he confessed, smiling too.

“Really? You sounded so confident.”

“I am a good actor.”

“So you told me not to research?”

“I was terrified of scaring you.”

“You scared me a lot.” She nudged him. “And surprised me too. How do you know so much about me?”

“I liked watching you.” His thumb caressed the back of her hand.

There was a lump in her throat. “Is this all?”

“No,” he continued. “I should’ve discussed the rules of the contract with you. Allowed you to debate them, add or refuse some—”

“Why didn’t you?”

“I was afraid you’d find a way of self-sabotage. Add limits to my gifts, deny telling me your problems… Things like that.”

Once again, he was correct.

She would've definitely argued a lot, trying to reduce his power of spoiling and caring for her.

"If I gave you the power, you'd fight me every step of the way and wouldn't allow yourself to relax. I knew you'd be a *perfect* sub – I knew you'd flourish under strict rules, without the opportunity to let your brain get in the way of itself."

His words were like a smooth breeze, brushing her body and waking goosebumps all over her. "Sir..." She pressed her legs closer to his. "I love it. I *want* to be good."

A shudder ran through him. "Fuck, Granger..."

His hands went to her thigh, and he rubbed it with gusto.

"I want you to want me. But it needs to be genuine."

"It is."

"Then it will still be there a month from now."

Her heart sank. "A *month*?"

"Yes, I want you to think well about it and then if you still want it, we can try it again... Perhaps go on a date—"

"No."

It took him three heartbeats to answer her. "Excuse me?"

"I want it to continue like this," she insisted, pushing his arms away so she'd have space to straddle him. "I like what we have. I like giving up control. I like it when you take care of me, and I don't have to think."

He groaned in pleasure. "Granger... You don't know—"

"Are you saying I am not a know-it-all?" Lowered eyebrows and a roll of her hips.

His hands immediately went to her arse, splaying his fingers to dig into her flesh. "No."

"I want this. How can we make it work, Sir?"

He was having a hard time thinking with her grinding herself against him, but he tried nevertheless. "You'll research BDSM, the 24/7 dynamic, and we'll draw a new — fuck — a new contract." He dropped his head back, allowing her to rile him up. "You'll have to find at least 2 hobbies, like a pottery class or book club... and—"

"My hobby is this."

"And I think you should go back to the Ministry, so you can see other people besides me— have lunch with your *female* coworkers and—"

A raised eyebrow. "No male, then?"

His grip turned bruising on her arse. "No male. And you meet me for dinner any night you want—"

"I'll want every night." She started unbuttoning him. "And then we can have sex?"

He breathed out as she kissed his neck. "Fuck, yeah."

"What about the new things I want to try?" Her nails scratched his naked chest. "Ropes and—?"

He growled, head snapping back, "I'll send you a list and you make annotations on what you want or not to try. We discuss them."

"Yes, sir. Can you fuck me now, please, Sir?"

The poor thing, he really tried. "The dynamic is paused, Granger. I am not your Dom—"

"In this case, Malfoy. I want you to fuck me. I *demand* it." She proved her point, raising her hips slightly and allowing her arse to slam back on his groin.

A sound that was at the same time a groan and a chuckle erupted from his chest, and Malfoy shut his eyes — hands flexing at his sides. "I can't resist you, Granger."

"So don't!" Rolling to rub her core against him.

He sighed and let his head fall back to the settée, the muscles on his neck moving as he swallowed nothing. And then, before she could even fully comprehend what he was doing, Malfoy flipped them so she would be on the sofa and he was above her.

She was wearing jeans, so he took his time unbuttoning and pushing them past her thighs.

Hermione wet her lips, one hand coming to rest above her on the back of the settée, while the other went to play with his golden locks.

From that angle, Malfoy between her legs, she could see the muscles in his back flexing, bulging and stretching as he pulled her knickers and licked the entire length of her cunt.

The sound that left her throat was guttural; she hadn't noticed how sensitive and swollen she was. Her third orgasm of the day seemed to be closer than she could have thought.

He glanced up at her. "Do you know how much I love watching you come, Granger? It is my favourite thing."

And then he closed his lips around her clit, sucking it lightly while flicking his tongue on the underside.

Her fingers curled around his hair to push him while she undulated her hips, and he hummed, sending vibrations up her spine so her mind was too blank to listen to his words.

With one arm, he held her thigh while resting his palm on her lower abdomen.

With the other, he brought two fingers to her entrance.

She was dripping; he found no resistance, yet he took his time to fully enter without stopping his ministrations.

He opened his fingers, like scissors, while making circular motions with the flat of his tongue on her clit.

Hermione wanted to watch his silver eyes, flashing at her with the reflection of the fire, but she was having a hard time keeping her own open.

“Oh, yes! Fuck, yes!” The howls were leaving her without care.

Malfoy had this power over her; she had come to notice—

Having spent most of her life worrying too much, overthinking and spiralling over tiny things with her anxiety—

He curled his fingers, and her entire body jerked.

Malfoy made her mind enter a blissful state of silence and calm, so that she could simply be—

He lapped at her cunt, eyes fixed on her, and whispered how delicious she tasted.

Hermione didn’t want to be afraid of occupying spaces: he brought her back to life—

His fingers began thrusting, slightly curved to drag against her front wall.

With him, she felt young, unapologetic, alive, brave enough to break rules to get the release she needed, willing to let things go and forgive herself—

“*Oh, Draco!*” she shouted with the blinding eruption that poured from her entire being.

Time shifted; she didn’t know if seconds or minutes had passed when she came back from the waves of her never-ending pleasure.

She expected him to get up and fuck her like a doll, chasing his own orgasm, but instead, he grinned, unmoving while he looked at her cunt.

It horrified her.

Malfoy’s face, neck and chest were covered in some translucent liquid.

Had she?

“That was the hottest and most delicious thing I have ever seen, Granger.”

And then he licked her clean.

Chapter 18: When she finds herself

Abiding by the rules and being praised for it was the best environment for Hermione Granger to thrive in. She liked being a good girl.

Especially when logic, reason, and experience endorsed these rules.

Or better yet, the ruler.

Draco Malfoy was the perfect Dom for her, all the more in his imperfection.

He knew what would be best for her, even when it initially looked like a leap outside her comfort zone – Hermione just needed to relax in her submission to his choices and enjoy the ride.

That's what she kept telling herself, seeing if it would sound convincing, as she pushed the pink-tinted glass door to the pottery class studio in Muggle London that afternoon. Her shoes clunked against the linoleum floor, and Hermione had to squint her eyes against the patchouli-scented fog in front of her. The source, as she glanced around, seemed to be an incense burning near the reception counter.

"Hya," her lips pressed in that sort of greeting smile that is nothing more than good manners. "I am Hermione Granger, my—"

"Oh, dear!" The woman on the other side stood up to *hug* her from over the counter. "Your husband called, yes. He has paid for your classes for the entire month, so let's jump right into it, huh?"

Apparently, her Dom was capable of making mistakes. Because Hermione was sure that would be her last time in that place. Maybe he thought it was a joke, or a test, like when he told her to work from the rug at the beginning of their relationship.

April had arrived, and the previous weeks had been like the edging experience all over again. She had gone back to working at the Ministry, seizing the opportunity to fully dive into the details of the Hippogriff Sanctuary, which would launch in two weeks, while the nights were spent in a plethora of ways.

On Mondays and Wednesdays, she had Hot Yoga classes with Faye. They were fun, especially since they always shared an açai bowl at the Brazilian café across the street from the studio afterwards.

Were they gobbling all the calories they had just spent? Yes.

But the classes were only a requirement of her Dom; she had no interest in losing weight. Hermione had grown to love her body, just like he did. But the stretching had made her quite flexible, and it was a waste that she couldn't use it with him yet.

Tuesdays, she met Sarah Cauklin for her book club, where they read debut authors and classics on the most varied genres of literature. The only rules were that someone had to recommend it, and no nonfiction was allowed. After years of reading mostly work-related items, she was finding it quite refreshing.

Also mentally stimulating were the biweekly soirées that Sarah held in her penthouse. Hermione had attended only three, but it had been enough to prove her Dom's point: she'd needed them.

On Thursdays, Hermione found out, her female coworkers, with whom she had begun eating lunch together, held a happy hour drink in Diagon Alley, to which she had never been invited before, because they simply didn't think she would want to join them. She had been joining them every week since, even though she was avoiding alcohol per her Dom's request.

Not that he had requested, in fact, he didn't even want her calling him her Dom anymore. The dynamic was paused.

They saw each other every Saturday night, always in a new Muggle luxurious restaurant, where he would encourage her to share how her week had been and offer his input on things she had been dealing with. Every time he'd take her to her flat, and every time he'd fuck her until they both fell asleep completely spent.

Sunday mornings, he had his elves prepare a brunch, and then they would spend the day lazily enjoying each other's company.

Sex had been... great as always. But they hadn't engaged in the power exchange again, nor advanced in experimenting with new things.

Hermione was hungry for him. The more time passed, the more she realised that she missed their dynamic, missed spending more time with him, missed feeling owned by him.

His floo was open to her, but she hadn't gone to the Manor because, according to him, it would be better that way. Eager to show how willing she was to submit to him, she respected that boundary.

While the teacher guided her to mould the clay, Hermione found herself remembering his firm touch, the several orgasms he elicited from her and how beautiful his body was. His overall presence was missed in every waking hour of her day.

She told him that every time they met, how much she liked and missed him. He would say it back, telling her she was everything to him, that he wanted to keep her forever. In the hours before the sun rose, he would trail his fingers on the curve of her waist and mention all the places he wanted to take her to. But, just as their dynamic was paused, so was the conversation regarding their relationship.

He said she needed time to be sure of it, of the decision to be with him.

It could have been a seed for anxiety in her, with intrusive thoughts claiming that he didn't want her as a sub *nor* as a girlfriend, but Draco was always making sure she knew of his affections and the importance she had in his life. He made her *know* he wanted her and that it was only about her being in the right place to want him back.

"I can't be your other half," he'd said, kissing the place between her shoulder blades.

"You're my everything," she'd replied, still dazed post her most recent orgasm.

A low, deep chuckle from the depths of his chest. "I can't be that either; you need to be whole to love me."

All he wanted was for her to *have* a life apart from him.

Pottery turned out to be nicer than she thought when the teacher stopped talking, even though she turned on a traditional Celtic song. Pushing her fingers on the clay, having to use her force to mould it, and the need to start over when something went wrong were doing wonders for Hermione's mental health. It had been the first time, outside of subspace and sex, that she felt her mind quieting.

She had just been telling that to her Dom during their dinner, when he opened a grin and pushed a tiny velvet box to her at the table they were sharing in that expensive Japanese restaurant in Muggle London.

"It's not an engagement band," he reassured her when her stomach dropped at the sight, as well as her jaw. "Not yet, at least."

Precisely how she was supposed to breathe and act after that 'yet', Hermione wasn't sure. But, putting her hashi down, she managed to use trembling fingers to reach for the box and open it. There was a golden band with a ruby gem in it.

"Draco," she gasped. "This is *too* big."

"It is not big enough," he complained. "But I know you don't like flashing."

She glanced up from the box to the man in front of her; he had crinkles around his eyes with the way his broad and shiny smile pushed his cheeks. He was beautiful, so different from who she had seen in all those public events and even from who she had met in his office all those months before. He seemed younger, more alive. Was that *her* effect on him?

"If this is not an engagement ring, then what is it?"

"It has been a long time," he began, using his long fingers to adjust the cloth napkin in front of him. Draco wasn't one to fidget, which showed how nervous he was with that subject. "I see you are once again thriving in your professional career, but most importantly, getting out of your shell, expanding your social circle, engaging in life..."

Hermione nodded frantically. *Would he take her as his sub again? Was this her new collar?*

"And I would love to be a part of that life, if you will have me." His words came out smoothly, but much quicker than his usual speech. "I want to be your boyfriend."

A burst of giggles escaped from her throat, which wasn't the appropriate response and made his eyes widen in terror.

But she couldn't help it.

Happiness, giddiness and utmost bliss were taking over her.

"Yes!" She pushed herself from the low cushioned seats they were sitting in, with folded legs, and crawled to wrap her arms around his neck, falling on his lap. "Oh, Dom, I missed you!"

They shared a deep, passionate kiss before he gently leaned back and murmured against her lips. "But you'll have to call me Draco, love."

“What?”

He sighed, drawing circles in her arms with his thumbs. “We are not ready for the dynamic yet.”

“What do you mean? I am!”

“Well, then I am not.”

The bubble of excitement burst. “*Why?*”

He smiled sadly and pressed his lips on hers once more. “We have to start over, remember? Take the correct steps and decide on how we want to proceed. Have you been researching—”

“Yes!” she interrupted him and, at his raised brows, apologised.

“We can talk about it next week, alright? When we visit that Italian place Faye recommended to you,” he said. “Now, being my girlfriend, I would love to see you more times this week. Could I steal you from lunch with your coworkers once or twice?”

“Every day,” she answered before kissing him.

Dessert was dismissed so they could quickly hide in a nearby alley and apparate to Hermione’s building’s door, where they began making out like teenagers in the lift and had almost all their clothes off before getting to her sofa. The bed had been *too* far.

That following week, Hermione was thankful to see her Dom– no, her *boyfriend*– every single day.

He went to visit her office on Monday and took her out for lunch through the Ministry’s Atrium, but, to her dismay, no one asked anything about it, seeing that he was the Department’s biggest donor. She really wanted the opportunity to boast that he was her boyfriend.

Tuesday, he picked her up from Sarah’s penthouse and walked her home, where Hermione had the opportunity to show off her recently acquired flexibility as he feasted on her cunt with her lying open-legged on the kitchen island because, once again, the bed had been too far. Then, they watched a movie and fell asleep on the sofa, which was terrible for their backs the following morning.

“What were we thinking?” he groaned, rubbing his lumbar. “We aren’t young anymore to be doing these wild things.”

She’d laughed and offered to rub salve on him after the shower.

They made love with her bent over the sink, and she watched his face as he panted on her back. It was the first time she said the *exact* three words, but he hadn’t heard them.

She wasn’t sure what held her back, but there was a big difference between what she had already done, admitting to being *in love*, and to blurt out *I love you* during sex.

What if he put her in the freezer for another month?

She wanted the dynamic back. In that moment, loving him, while enjoying him, with the security of their relationship and his devotion to her, was enough.

Wednesday morning, she woke him up with his cock in her mouth, to which he didn't complain, and she bounced on top of him while scratching his chest.

Thursday afternoon, once again, they had lunch together, and it was in that moment that he took a huge breath and pushed a bundle of papers into her hands.

"Before you worry, it has been charmed not to be read by anyone else but you," he reassured her, and it was good that he did so because the words that popped into her view as soon as she glanced at them were not safe for public environments at all. "You have been a good girl, Granger."

The praise she hadn't heard in such a long time stirred something inside Hermione and made her entire body prickle with anticipation. He noticed, obviously, and smiled wildly at her. That dashing smile, that got light reflecting against his perfect, white teeth—

"Will you read it?" he interrupted her line of thought, and she quickly obeyed. "The first pages are our dynamic contract, the rest are a list of sexual things I want you to go over and mark whichever you might be interested in."

Quickly scanning the dynamic contract, Hermione lowered the paper on the table and folded her hands in front of her, opening a confident smirk. She *loved* negotiating and had prepared for that moment. The amused expression on his face showed her he already expected her to do it.

"My main question, Dom—"

"Draco, for now," he corrected her.

"My main question, Draco," she continued. "Is that I have, as you already know, fallen in love with you—"

A sweet and young wave of fondness washed over his features, showing just how important it was for him.

"Which means, this is not only sexual for me."

"Neither for me," he nodded, his lips on the rim of his glass. "As you, too, already know."

"I want to understand how it will affect our contract..."

He lowered his glass back to the table and stared openly at her. "How do you want it to affect?"

"I want things to continue like they were before," she said. "I want to answer to you, to rely on you and to give all the control to you."

Already expecting his reaction did not make it less enjoyable; his cheeks twitched, and his tongue darted forward to wet his lips. "Aren't you *perfect* for me?"

"Yes, sir," she smiled, glancing down at the contract. "I want to continue with our safe words *pause* and *stop*, but I think that the word *red* would not make sense in a relationship. I mean, if we want to end things, we would talk about it, right? Not just use the word..."

"The word works for the dynamic," he explained. "For example, let's say I tell you to wear a blue dress for your launch, but you want to wear the green... If you say the word *red*, we will step out of the Dom and Sub dynamic, to talk in equal terms."

She hummed. "Makes sense, but how to guarantee I won't just use it any time I don't feel like following your orders?"

He chuckled. "Well, I guess you'll have the power to do it, but you are a good girl and—"

"No," she interrupted him and, at his raised eyebrows, added, "Sorry, sir. I mean, I don't want that much freedom, I'll end up messing things up with my insecurity, anxiety and overthinking. If I want the green dress, I prefer to just ask nicely."

He nodded. "It's your call."

"We can keep the word *red*, but it would end the dynamic for good, just like it was before."

"What about our relationship?"

She pursed her lips. "Then we would talk and decide on its future, despite the end of the dynamic. Is it good enough for you?"

"Yes, perfect."

"Good," she smiled, signing the contract and handing it over to him.

"Granger, you forgot to read the list of—"

"I didn't," she replied quickly. "I studied a lot these past weeks, and I already know what I want."

He curved his lips, impressed and gestured for her to continue.

"I have no interest in pain," she began. "I can do with a little spanking and gripping with your hands, but I want the paddle to be only used in punishment. And I don't care for clamps, candles' wax, degradation, and toys that inflict pain."

Every inch of him was laser-focused on her, listening intently and signalling that he understood.

"What interests me the most, sir," she continued. "Is the idea of giving up control, of being under your domain. So I am tempted to try shibari, other forms of restriction, forced orgasms, and—"

Fire crept up her neck and face, and words failed her.

Thankfully, her Dom sensed where she was going and said, "Free use?"

Lips pressed in a tight line, she nodded frantically. "I know it might sound weird, but reading about it—"

His hand found hers. "It isn't weird, I'd love to give you everything you need."

"I know and I trust you so much, Draco," she said. "That I just know you will listen to me if I say my safewords—"

"Absolutely."

"And I am hereby consenting to trying anything you like and to be used whenever you like, as long as it isn't painful or humiliating to me. I'd love to be surprised with new things, as you've surprised

me so deliciously until now. Provided that they don't interfere with my work or my relationship with Rose, of course."

"Certainly." His eyes flashed at hers, with something warm and intimate. "Thank you for trusting me." He squeezed her hand. "I just have one concern, Granger..."

Embarrassment flooded her system. "Yes?"

"I would like for you to make it excruciatingly clear what you mean by not interfering with your work and our kids. Because I would like to introduce you to Scorpius as my girlfriend when he comes back from Hogwarts."

Heat bloomed in her cheeks and snaked all the way to warm her heart. Draco had this ability to make her feel wanted, important and special.

"I would love that," her voice trembled with her effort not to cry. "I would love to meet him officially, as well as have Rose thank you for the broom and the—"

He waved her off. "Please, don't have her do it. You thank me enough."

A nod and a blush as she glanced down. Her tear splashed against the silver plate, and to disguise it, she spoke. "I also think I shouldn't call you Sir in front of them."

"Alright."

"But I would like to still have to obey," she continued. "Perhaps we could—"

"Disguise it?"

"Yes. Like our little secret."

"Perfect."

They shared an amused smile, and then the food arrived, so they spent a few minutes busying themselves with it until Hermione eventually broke the silence.

"When we had that incident with Charlie Weasley, I was angry because that was supposed to be a work meeting, and I couldn't focus. I would not like for it to happen again."

"Of course, I am sorry—"

"But it was also incredibly hot," she interrupted him. "The possibility of getting caught was *fun*. I think that if we took a step back, like, I don't know... Just don't compromise my career, while still... I don't know—"

He smirked and helped her out, "You mean, I could drop by and visit you in your office, fucking you on your work table, as long as I didn't interrupt any meetings?"

"Yes," she breathed out, eyelids fluttering with the mere suggestion. "And locked and silenced the room."

He chuckled and extended his hand to hold hers. "Good, I will be doing that very soon."

Prickling electricity licked up her spine and Hermione had to readjust her sit, pressing her thighs together before nodding.

“Thank you, Dom.”

Her words were like a magic stamp sealing their contract; the atmosphere between them shifted and got thicker, filled with lust and promise of so much more.

Yet, Draco just asked her a question about the Sanctuary Launch, and they engaged in light conversation about their work until after dessert, when Hermione excused herself to go to the bathroom.

She splashed her face after washing her hands, drying them in the fluffy towel that hung in a massive golden rack, and pondering how much she loved those expensive places Draco took her and how easy it was to get accustomed to a comfortable lifestyle.

But then, just as she turned to leave, the lock opened and he walked in, pocketing his wand.

“Draco!” she gasped, as he closed the door behind him.

“Being a brat so early on?” he asked, hands already on her hips. “Will I have to train you all over again?”

“No, sir,” she whispered, big eyes looking up at him. “I am sorry.”

“Turn around,” he said, and she obeyed immediately.

Through the mirror, she could see him slowly pushing his black leather belt through the hoops and then testing its weight in his hands while looking at her with nothing but raw desire in his silver eyes.

“We are going to test something new, alright?”

She nodded frantically.

“Words, Granger.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Put your hands together in front of you – like that, good girl, you are so good at following instructions, aren’t you?” His hands caressed her wrists as he wrapped his belt around them. “Did you miss me giving orders?”

“Yes, sir. I missed it very much.”

He grinned while buckling until the grip was tight but not painful. “Tell me if you feel any lack of circulation, alright?”

“Yes, sir.”

Hermione knew it wouldn’t be the case; she could still move her arms and hands, but just couldn’t remove them from the restriction.

Using the belt, he tugged her gently until the towel rack and gave a knot with the leather, so Hermione was tied to it. The object was roughly at her eye level, so it wasn't hard on her shoulders to stay like that, but her chest had to push a little forward to reach it since the sink was stopping her hips.

Accessible to him.

Just like she wanted.

Hermione could practically feel her brain melting as she entered subspace and delivered herself fully to that blissful moment.

Behind her, Draco was caressing her shoulders, neck, chest, belly... until he reached the waistline of her tailored trousers and dragged the zipper down.

With a swift motion, her trousers were pooling at her feet, which he promptly kicked open.

"What a beautiful arse you have, Granger," he murmured, kneading her flesh with both hands. "I wanted to kneel and feast on you from behind. Just like our first time. But you have a meeting soon, don't you?"

"Yes, Dom," she moaned, because one of his hands pushed her back down until her chest felt the cold metal of the faucet, and the other dragged his thumb over her centre.

"How long do we have?"

"I have no idea, sir," she breathed the truth out. Hermione was far gone from the real world.

He chuckled darkly, lowering her knickers painfully slowly, while eliciting goosebumps all over her body. "You need your Dom to take care of that, too? Make sure you arrive on time?"

"Yes, sir." The end of her sentence became high-pitched because he brushed his knuckle between her folds.

"But you are so wet, I bet you also need me to get you off, don't you?"

"Yes, Dom, please. I need it so much—"

"Hush," he tutted. "I didn't cast silence charms here, Granger. As it isn't your office, I took the liberty. You can say your safe words if you need them."

"No, Sir. I can be quiet."

He hummed, continuing to run his knuckles up and down her cunt, now in a swirling motion she knew so well.

Ingwaz.

Ingwaz.

Ingwaz.

"Yes, you can. Such a good girl, aren't you, Granger? The perfect girl for me."

Her chest was moving violently with her panting, and she turned her face to bite her arm and keep herself from making noises.

“I mean, look how wet you get for me. Just so I can enter you easily...right?”

“Yes, Dom. All for you.”

Pressure was building between her hips, gathering a coiling need for release.

“We only have ten minutes. And I want you to come *before* I enter you,” he continued his movements, saying his intent with the movement of his fingers. “Can you be a good girl and come on my fingers?”

“Yes, Dom!” she cried because it was the truth, and it wasn’t going to take long.

He circled her clit with the base of the Ingwaz two more times before her release snapped out of her, with a muffled scream against the soft flash of her inner arm.

And then, without warning, he thrust inside her, hands gripping her waist and pushing so hard her hips slammed against the marble of the sink.

“Oh yes,” she whined. “Sir, please!”

“What do you need, Granger?”

“Please, cast a silencing charm, I need to scream—” she tried to keep it down, her voice strained with the effort of it, but it was bloody hard.

Whenever he was fully inside her, the jolt of white-pleasure was so hard she couldn’t help but let out a tiny yelp.

“Then scream, Granger,” he grunted, still fucking her hard. “Let the entire restaurant hear, I’ll pay our way out of any problem they might have.”

“Oh, Dom,” she mewled, because his hand went down to her already swollen and sensitive clit, and another orgasm was coming.

There was no space or time to feel self-conscious.

Draco kept pounding inside her.

No strength for Hermione to hold back.

Lewd howls were leaving her as he fucked her hard.

Calling her his good girl, saying she was the perfect, perfect sub for him.

But it wasn’t *Dom* she screamed when her orgasm hit her like a truck, it was “*Dracooo!*”

When he came inside her, his chest falling to hug her and kiss the back of her neck messily, the embarrassment flooded in, and she began to dread coming out of the bathroom.

Draco noticed her expression as he removed the belt and kneaded her wrists.

"It's alright, Granger, I cast the silencing charms before coming in," he reassured her. "I just love seeing you lose control."

She beamed at him and stood on her toes to kiss his lips.

Chapter 19: When they launch a Sanctuary

After six years of hard work, the morning of her Sanctuary launch began with Hermione's body convulsing on her expensive Egyptian cotton sheets, while her Dom dragged out her seventh orgasm in a row, her arms tied above her head and knees spread wide at her side, with his large hands forcing her thighs down. Thank Merlin for Hot Yoga and her recently acquired flexibility.

"Nghhh... Please, I can't take another one!" She squirmed in her restraints.

"I think you can," he hummed against her folds, pressing a peck on her enlarged and oversensitive, practically abused, clit. "You are so good, you can do whatever I tell you to... Isn't that right?"

He flicked his tongue again, and her body jerked, white dots filling her vision and a blazing pressure threatening to rip her core open.

"Yes, sir!"

He lapped at her, bringing two fingers inside to curl at the other end of her bundle of nerves, until she exploded once more, howling indecently and arching her back, thighs clamping around his head with the need for it to stop. Too much, too good, overwhelmingly powerful and borderline painful.

"Fuck," he groaned, pushing her knees open and trailing open-mouthed kisses all over her thighs. "You are *perfect*, Granger, do you know that? I want to make you come in my mouth for the rest of my life, every waking hour of our days—"

Lost in sensation, she merely hummed, completely spent and empty of any coherent thought.

"Alas, I will have to *share* you today," he said, getting up without disconnecting his palm from her belly and getting his wand to free her binds. His tone had the strange ability to sound both excited and dreadful. "My brilliant girlfriend with her big, incredible Sanctuary."

Draco was kneading her sore wrists and kissing them as he spoke, but Hermione was in another space altogether, barely registering his words as he took her bridal style to her bathtub and washed her clean, treating her hair with attention and devotion.

Some logic and consciousness slowly made their way through her mind, and Hermione started to feel anxious about the day ahead. Draco had picked her dress, a cocktail red velvet one with an A-line skirt and heart-shaped neckline, and she started practising her speech for the hundredth time in front of the mirror, while putting on the heavy tear-shaped ruby earrings he had brought from his family vaults.

"... with all the special—no," she groaned. "*Exuberant*. Oh, Merlin, I can't get this wrong, and I keep saying the stupid word instead of the clever one I wrote—"

His hands landed softly on her shoulders, and she visibly dropped them, the tension easing as he massaged her, placing a slow kiss on her temple.

"There's no need to be nervous, Granger," he said. "You don't have anything to prove or earn with your speech. You have already done all the hard work, and this event is merely for everyone to

honour it.”

“I know,” she breathed out, resting the weight of her head on his chest. “But, I want everything to run smoothly and perfectly because there are so many other endangered species, and the event will be full of potential sponsors for new sanctuaries—”

The hands on her shoulders slid to close around her neck, tugging her chin upwards.

“I will pay for any project you have,” he whispered, his lips brushing on hers. “And I am already in love with you. No need to impress anyone else.”

Hermione melted into his embrace, allowing him to kiss her worries away. Things were starting to get a little too hot when he stopped, asking her to turn around so he could put the matching necklace on her. Once fully dressed, Hermione moved on to doing her makeup, more elegant than her usual day-to-day, but still simple enough.

“Granger, we need to talk about something important,” he began, while tying his cravat. “This is your event. I want the news in the Daily Prophet tomorrow to be about you and your work only. Despite wanting *very much* to tell the entire world that you belong to me, I think it would be wiser for us not to announce our relationship today.”

He was glancing at her from the corner of his eyes, his neck stiff, and she realised, by the care he had displayed with his choice of words, that he didn’t want her to feel that he was ashamed of her. Had it been earlier, perhaps she might have, but at that moment in their relationship, Hermione was confident of his feelings for her.

“Yes,” she agreed, getting on her tiptoes to kiss his cheek. “I also don’t want Rose and Scorpius to find out from the papers.” She wiped the lipstick from his skin with her thumb. “But I would like for you to be by my side… as the main donor and patron.”

He smirked. “Despite not having any interest in becoming a patron defending hippogriffs, I don’t suppose I would be able to watch you from afar. Not anymore.”

“Lipstick!” she giggled, raising both palms to her mouth when he leaned towards her.

“I’ll cast a *scourgify* later,” he murmured, going for it anyway.

Half an hour and quite some snogging later, Hermione and Draco floo’d separately towards the main building in the former Crabbe Estate. He glanced around wistfully, with a heavy sigh, and she moved to caress his arm.

“I spent so many summer days here,” he explained, voice thick. “When I was eight, I was experimenting with my magic and managed to turn those into a slide.” He pointed to the main marble stairs. “We were all having a great laugh – Greg and Theo were here too – but then Vince’s father came down, reading a letter and tripped, sliding until he landed on his arse – I swear my Father never scolded me so much as that day.”

Her hand slid to intertwine fingers with him, and she squeezed it lightly. “I am sorry for your loss, Draco. I know it must be hard seeing this Manor turning into something different—”

“It’s fine,” he replied, pulling her hand to kiss her knuckles. “Vince is gone, and all his father used this home for was to abuse his wife and son.”

"I do wish she hadn't lost her home, though," Hermione replied.

"I bought her a townhouse in Mayfair," he dismissed. "Shall we go? Will the event be here or...?"

"It's outside." She gestured to the front doors, already adorned with silk drappings and flower arrangements.

They walked down the patio towards the grounds, where several tables had been set with drinks, finger foods, and pamphlets on the importance of hippogriffs' protections and how to help the initiative.

Except for the sanctuary employees and catering staff members, the courtyard was still empty, and Hermione began making rounds to greet every worker, thanking them for their presence and giving one or two last-minute instructions. Once finished, she went back to Albert, who was talking animatedly to a stoic Draco.

"Ah, there she is!" Albert exclaimed when she approached them. "The woman of the hour. Miss Granger, I have just been telling our donor, Mr Malfoy, what great use you are making of his money."

Draco smirked over the rim of his glass. "Incredible use, really."

Hermione blushed feverishly, too much for someone who *didn't* have unprofessional relations with her donor. "Oh, but this wouldn't have been as effective without you, Mr Hughes—"

"Ha! And she is humble, besides it all," Albert chuckled. "Well, I must go check with the magizoologists for the demonstration—"

"Demonstration?" One pale blond eyebrow jumped up.

"Why, of course," Albert insisted. "We are bringing one or two hippogriffs for the visitors to appreciate the magnificence of those creatures. Perhaps we could even have someone riding them. You would be a great candidate—"

"No."

Albert, who was very intelligent and competent but apparently couldn't read a room, cocked his head. "Oh, Mr Malfoy, it will be quite safe, I assure you. We have chosen the most docile—"

"I am not afraid," Draco sneered. "Merely not interested."

"Surely, if you gave it a go, you might think that—"

"Albert," Hermione shrieked. "Why don't you go check with the magizoologists? I believe the guests are already coming."

And indeed, from the patio of Crabbe Manor, several people dressed expensively were walking towards them in a neat line, getting their names checked by the staff, and then spreading in several directions, forming small groups or reading into the hovering boards with information. They were already so close that Hermione didn't dare touch Draco anymore, instead placing a professional smile on her face and waiting to be greeted.

Everyone who was someone in the Wizarding World had come: Minister Shacklebolt, Wizengamot chairmen, her entire Department and the heads of all the others in the Ministry, celebrities, Quidditch players, Hogwarts professors, photographers and journalists. They all came to talk to her, asked interested questions and complimented her work.

Her Dom stood just a little step behind her, not talking to anyone who didn't address him first, intent on making her the centre of attention that day. The only time he took a step forward was when his three friends approached them, and she saw a weird, uncommon expression in his features...

Was it *nervousness*?

"Ah, Ms Granger," Nott drawled with a low bow. "What a pleasure to be reacquainted with you. And on such a fine day, for such an important *cause*."

"A noble *cause* indeed." Zabini moved to get her hand and kiss her knuckles. "And you have done such a great job with it."

"Thank you, gentlemen," she replied, a bit flustered, unused to the sight of polite Slytherins. "It is all due to Dra- Malfoy's financial support—"

"Ah, yes!" Goyle said. "We all know about Draco's deep commitment to the cause."

"He wouldn't stop talking about the hippogriffs." Theo nodded.

Blaise chuckled. "Ever since a *certain* hippogriff hurt him in third year—"

"Alright," Draco scowled. "Why don't the three of you find something else to do than pester me like a bunch of teenagers?"

His friends erupted in laughter before excusing themselves. Hermione turned to him, an amused smile fighting very hard to make an appearance.

"So, I am guessing they know about us?"

Draco pinched the bridge of his nose. "I am sorry for that. I told them *not* to come, but they were insistent and—"

"Draco, this is not a problem. I am not embarrassed by you—"

He looked at her, horrified. "I didn't think you were."

"Good."

"I just didn't want them to shift the focus of your day into their silly jokes."

"It's alright," she smiled broadly, fighting very hard the urge to just kiss his lips right then.

The sun was already high, the blue spring sky dotted with hippogriffs flying in different directions, and a smooth wind rustled the leaves from tree branches around the event, the light tweeting of birds mixing with the chatter between the crowd. It was a beautiful day, of a beautiful life, now in a beautiful company.

Hermione dared to take his hand in hers. “I am looking forward to formally meeting your friends as your girlfriend, sir.”

“Mione!” said a feminine voice from a short distance, and Hermione let go of Draco to turn and find Ginny and Harry Potter making their way towards them, two toddlers between their legs.

The whiplash from seeing them there triggered a defence mechanism that got her heart beating loudly and the tip of her tongue prickling. “Ginny, Harry!”

The couple approached her and she awkwardly shook their hands.

“Wow,” Ginny exclaimed, glancing around. “Incredible work that you have done here! This was Crabbe’s Estate, wasn’t it?”

“Yes,” Hermione answered. “It was expropriated after the war when they didn’t pay retribution fines for their crimes.”

“Housing hippogriffs is definitely a better use for the land than housing Death Eaters,” Harry said, placing his hands on his pockets, his gaze fixed somewhere over Hermione’s shoulder. *Draco*.

While protectiveness bloomed in her chest, Hermione was also flabbergasted by the entire situation, so she merely stuttered, “Harry, *please*—”

“What? It’s the truth. I reckon they all should rot in Azkaban for their war crimes, but unfortunately, one or two managed to pay their way out of it.”

All blood drained from her face, but a glance to her side showed a very calm and controlled Draco, looking down his nose at Harry with a smug curl to his lips of someone who knows a secret. At least he wouldn’t engage in that nonsensical brawl.

Ginny, too, seemed not to want fights that morning, because she grabbed the hands of the twins and pushed them on her husband’s arms, instructing him to go find a family bathroom. She then turned back to Hermione, with a wide grin, and pushed her fiery locks behind her shoulder.

“So... Now it is over, right?”

“I beg your pardon?”

“The Sanctuary, this entire ordeal of the last ten years—”

“Six.”

“Which means, you can go back to Ron!”

Hermione splurted the mimosa on her hand and could practically feel the anger radiating from the man at her side.

“Ginny, I don’t think—”

“I *know* what you are going to say, but Romilda is just a fun time for him.” Ginny waved dismissively. “You are the mother of his daughter! He has to prioritise you two!”

Hermione huffed in disbelief. “Ginny, you *know* he doesn’t care about us. He has barely—”

"Ah, Mione, he's a pathetic wanker, my brother," Ginny said, earning a sharp inhale of agreement from Draco. "I bet he'll be at your feet if you tell him that now you'll have more time for—"

"More time?"

"Yes," she said. "Less work, more time—"

"Ginny, I love my work, and it is not over just because I accomplished one thing—"

"I know, Mione," she insisted. "I love my work, too. But we all know how needy men are; they just have to *think* they're the most important thing in your life."

Not all men. Not *her* man. Quite the opposite, Hermione's man wanted her to have a complete and important life apart from him. He had made sure of it. And in that exact moment, she could sense how annoyed and offended he was at her side, but remained quiet to respect her workplace and the privacy of their relationship.

"Ginny," Hermione said seriously. "I don't want to go back to Ron. Ever."

The redhead frowned. "What?"

"He was not a good husband, nor a good father."

"Every family has issues, Mione—"

"And I have a boyfriend." Her words were chosen carefully, not to give too much away to Ginny, but also to make sure Draco knew his worth to her. "I am happy and have no wishes to get back with—"

"How can you be so selfish?" Ginny snapped. "Rose needs her family—"

It was her last straw. "Yes, she does. She has needed *her* family for a *long* time. But none of you made any effort to be in her life once Ron and I got divorced. I was the only one who stood by her side when she cried because none of her cousins had attended her birthday party. I was the one who had to buy dozens of presents with my single income to tag your names and make her believe you hadn't forgotten about her on Christmas. So don't you dare for a *fucking* second try to guilt me into *anything*, least of all returning to *your* bloody family."

Ginny, who had gotten redder and redder with each one of her words, simply clenched her jaw and sneered, "So, what? Is *he* your new man?" She gestured to Draco with her chin. "Is that how you got the funding? You whored yourself to a former Death Eater? Godric, you really are desperate about your job if you're willing to just open your legs to anyone and—"

"That's enough."

The first words Draco had said in the entire time since the Potters arrived opened no room for arguments. He hadn't moved; for the photographers might catch sight of him placing a hand on the small of Hermione's back, and it would be all over the place the following day. He wasn't even looking at Ginny, and his tone was low.

Always the brave and feisty Griffindor, the redhead simply chuckled. "This is so *predictable*. You were always too good for us, weren't you, Mione? Too sophisticated, too smart, too cultured... I guess now you've found someone for your calibre."

"I guess so, too." Hermione stood straighter.

Ginny scowled and spun on her heels, no doubt to find her husband. The news might not reach the papers, but they would surely find Ron's ears, and who knew what he would do with them.

"I'll have to tell Rose," Hermione sighed, looking back at him. "Just in case Ron decides to write to her. I don't want her to find out from someone else."

He pressed his lips in a thin line and nodded. "Are you nervous about it?"

Hermione investigated her feelings. She was still high on adrenaline from the last exchange, pines and needles across her limbs and heart beating fast. But when considering the prospect of telling Rose about Draco, all she felt was excitement. "No, I can't wait to tell her about the good man I have found and how sweet he is to me."

Something warm and tender flashed in his eyes.

"I want to kiss you so much," he murmured.

She might have let him do it, so much was the affection that buzzed inside her chest, but Albert came quickly, ushering her towards the stage so she could deliver her carefully written and extensively rehearsed speech. When it was finished, claps echoed around the crowd, and toasts were made. Hermione didn't see the Potters anymore, but a circle formed around her, with people offering to sponsor other sanctuaries, asking questions and shooting congratulations in her direction. The magizoologists arrived half an hour later with three hippogriffs, which the attendants could try to pet and feed should they want to.

In that moment, when the focus of the party had finally left her, Draco approached with an intense look that made the fine hairs of her body stand on end.

"Great speech, darling," he said, his tone smooth and quiet.

"Thank you, sir."

He hummed. "Would you say you have fulfilled your professional duties with the party?"

Anticipation started to fizzle inside her stomach. "I think so, yes."

"Which means you are free to leave, should you wish to?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then I want you to walk in that direction." He pointed to the nearby grove. "About five hundred metres is enough."

"What if anyone asks about me?" she asked airily.

"Blaise and Theo have been instructed to say you are dealing with the paperwork inside the Manor," he reassured her. "Now, be a good girl and do what I said, unless you want me to punish you when I get there."

She nodded primly and started walking, her entire face burning as if she had a sign on her back announcing she was going to be shagged good and proper by her Dom in the middle of the woods.

Blood was rushing in her ears, and she was forcing her mind to concentrate on the metres walked. Once she assumed it had been enough, Hermione stopped and glanced around. The light there was filtered by trees that stood tall and close to one another, making the entire place gleam greenish. She let out a high-pitched cry when, right at her back, Draco cracked into existence.

“Sir!” she gasped. “You scared me!”

“Take off your clothes,” he ordered, straight to business. “Keep the heels and the jewellery.”

Quickly, Hermione obeyed, making a small bundle with her dress and her underwear near a root. Draco walked around her, appraising her body.

“You are perfect,” he commented. “And mine.”

“Yes, sir. All yours.”

His lips curled in approval at her words. “On your knees. Hands behind your back.”

She did as she was told, quickly realising he had transfigured the ground underneath her to be cushioned and free of dirt. “Thank you, sir.”

His only reply was to flick his wand, conjuring ropes and sending them to wrap her forearms close to one another, so that she held her fingers to her elbows.

“What are your safe words, Granger?”

“Pause and stop, sir.”

“Yes, good girl,” he said, just as he started to unbuckle his belt and unbutton his trousers. “Open up.”

Hermione complied, sticking her tongue out and looking up at him with doe eyes.

“So gorgeous...” His thumb brushed her chin. “I want to fuck your face, Granger. It was all I could think about while you gave your speech.” He pushed the thumb over her tongue, holding it down. “How fuckable your pretty mouth is.”

Hermione wasn’t surprised he hadn’t paid attention to the words she’d said. He had read her speech beforehand, offering his opinion and suggestions. Had watched her rehearse it several times. Despite his lewd words, she did not doubt his academic and professional respect for her. She sucked his thumb, twirling her tongue around it.

Draco tsked, shaking his head and forcing her jaw open again. “Did I tell you to suck, Granger?”

“No, sir. I am sorry,” she replied, her voice a bit mumbled as his thumb held her movements.

“Today you won’t be doing anything,” he explained. “You have done enough. Now you’ll just be a good girl and stay still for me to use you, okay?”

She nodded.

“How many times did I make you come this morning?”

“Seven, sir.”

“Yes,” he hummed. “I was very generous. Now it is time for my pleasure.”

Hermione was so ready for it that she used the secret word. “Yes, *Dom*.”

Draco visibly shuddered, but kept his posture. “You don’t have your hands to tap me, nor your voice. How will you let me know if you’re reaching your limits, hm?”

He started moving his thumb over her tongue, and Hermione tried to think of a solution. Perhaps she could blink twice or—

“Will you allow me inside your mind?” he asked. “Then I’ll be able to know if I have to pause or stop.”

His words were weighed in her brain. Though legilimency was a highly controlled and invasive practice, she supposed she’d have no other way of signalling her need to stop, and if there was anyone she trusted enough with her thoughts, it was Draco.

“Yes, Dom, of course.”

“Good girl,” he praised, sliding his hand to the side of her head, where he fisted her hair, and using the other to get his already hard cock, stroking it slightly as he aligned it with her mouth. “Open wider for me.”

Hermione obeyed, and then he pushed until the entire head was inside. And also until his magic was inside her head. It wasn’t painful, like people would often describe, more like a slow and steady wave dragging itself over the beach sand.

“Are you okay, Granger?”

Yes, she thought.

“Good girl.”

He moved his hips back and forth again. Shallow thrusts, gaining more and more depth each time.

Good, you taste so good.

Hermione kept looking up at him, humming in appreciation of the feeling and taste of him against her tongue, flat under his cock.

I love this.

His eyes were hot on hers, his thumbs brushing circles around her jaw so they would relax and take him deeper.

I love this cock.

One of the thrusts made him hit the back of her throat, and he hissed a curse.

I love being yours.

She was mentalising it all for him. So he'd know exactly how happy she was to be there, how special it was to belong to him and have him all for herself as well.

The twitch of his eyes showed he was listening, his pants gained rhythm, and she could feel him growing thicker inside her, throbbing for release.

“So good,” he praised.

Her eyelids fluttered, heat gathering down her spine and a heartbeat in her cunt, wet and hot against the cold forest air. She glanced up at him; her boyfriend, her Dom, so handsome, manly and even while fucking her mouth, so entirely given to her.

Every bit of skin she could see beneath his black robes was tinted with a pink blush; his lips parted, and his eyes remained intense on hers.

“My good girl,” he grunted, thrusting harder and faster.

Hermione moaned, and the hands gripping the sides of her head shook.

Can I suck, Dom? Please, let me suck your cock.

“Yes, suck,” he grunted, and she obeyed, hollowing her cheeks and slithering his tongue under him.

He was so deep inside her mouth that while breathing through her nose, she could smell the nice, minty soap he used on the hairs in the base of his cock.

Malfoy pumped more, and she could feel him growing larger, twitching and leaking the salty precum into the back of her mouth.

Just when she thought he would come, he pulled out. The sudden emptiness made her dizzy and disappointed. He waved his wand, and then ropes appeared, wrapping around a branch above them and twirling all the way down to the ground. He grabbed her by the waist and pulled her up, slamming his lips on hers for a feral kiss, tasting himself on her.

“I want to wrap you in a pretty present for me,” he announced just as he conjured more ropes and began working. Despite wanting to trust her Dom, Hermione was worried they would be taking too long to be back, and people might wonder where they were.

But her attention was soon drawn somewhere else: Malfoy had his cock bouncing in front of him while he created an intricate pattern of knots and lines that circled her breasts, moved down to her hips, passing on both sides of her core before reaching her knees. It was constricting; she could feel the roughness of the rope and the tightness of the grip around her, making breathing a tad harder and moving completely impossible. Her skin bulged against the rows, pebbling with the feeling of his fingers lightly caressing her.

“Such a beautiful sight you make, my perfect girl. The only present I need.”

He then used his magic to connect the ropes on the tree with the ones on her body, so Hermione was lifted to the perfect height, her arms on her back, her knees tightly constricted at her side, wide open for him. He ran his hand roughly over her already swollen and dripping cunt.

"Look how wet you get just from sucking your Dom's cock, Granger," he said, his voice thick with lust, as he rubbed his knuckles between her folds, making her see stars "Merlin, you are perfect for me."

"Y-yes, Dom."

"I want you to come in my hands before I fuck you."

"S-sir," she whined, already close. "B-but the party?"

His hand left her and came down in a split second, the whooshing of the movement reaching her ears before the sound of the contact. Hermione groaned, her cunt pulsing with the burning ache.

"I'll keep you here for as long as I want," he said. "You belong to me. To use as I see fit."

"Y-yes, sir," she howled, because his thumb had found her clit, while two fingers slipped inside her, and truly she was at his mercy, all tied up and open, and it made her feel so *good*.

His movements grew faster, Hermione was feeling lighter and lighter, a tight band inside her womb pulling taut until it snapped, and she convulsed, clenching around his fingers while shouting his name. It was rough, violent and explosive.

He didn't give her a single second to reestablish her consciousness, both hands flying to her hips, as he lined up and pistonned himself inside her.

"Ohhh yes, Dom," she screamed.

He was fucking her hard. Harder than ever before, the slapping of his hips against her thighs was so loud she could hear it echoing around the trees.

It didn't take him long to get her through another orgasm, but something might have gone wrong with this one, perhaps after she had eight on a single day, because it stretched in time and space. Her body was shaking violently, and she contorted in her restraints, a loud, continuous wail escaping until she grew hoarse and out of breath.

But Draco kept fucking her, and she kept convulsing in an overwhelmingly intense orgasm, her vision went black, and her mouth kept open in a silent scream as her voice broke.

As soon as he came, with a feral growl, and a squeeze of his fingers on the flesh of her hips, his hot seed burning against her walls, Draco pulled her free of the ropes and into his arms.

"Good," he grunted. "So fucking perfect."

But Hermione hadn't come down from her orgasm yet, her body still trembling in his arms, as he caressed her back and kneaded the muscles that had been tightly wrapped.

Food and water appeared and were given to her. His words passed her ears but did not register in her brain. Hermione's mind was like a cloud; high, fluffy and offering no resistance to whatever her Dom said.

"Granger," he said after some time, and Hermione realised she had been cleaned, dressed and fed. "How are you, darling?"

“Good.”

He chuckled at her airy voice and pulled her in for a kiss. “Are you back? Or do you need an extra minute?”

She wrapped her arms around his middle and nuzzled against his chest. “Not a minute, an hour, please. With cuddles.”

He hugged her back tighter, but said, “The lads only guaranteed me forty minutes. We should be going back. At least for you to say your goodbyes... then we can go home and cuddle, what do you say?”

“Perfect, sir,” she breathed out because, truly, it was.

Chapter 20: When they visit Hogwarts

Dear Father,

School has been quite eventless this week. I have successfully turned my button into a beetle and earned Slytherin fifteen points, which is always fun, or at least was until Potter squeezed it with his book after the bell rang. He feels entitled to all this glory just because his father is famous, and then he can not stand when someone is better than him at something, which is not that difficult since he is an idiot.

I would like some new dragon leather gloves for Herbology because I ended up getting mine corroded by Bulbober's pus. ~~Don't ask about it.~~ Never mind, I will tell you. It was Potter. He pushed me when I was replanning it, and the thing exploded on me. I have taken at least five baths since, and the smell lingers. I think it has infiltrated my hair. Rose says I am exaggerating, but she is always saying that.

*Talking about Rose... I am really happy for you, sir. I am. You have never had someone since Mother, and I am sure she would want you to find love again. But does it have to be my best friend's mother? I mean, she is not even a widow; she is **divorced**.*

I don't know many divorced couples, but Rose says it is just something where a couple lives apart for a while until they figure things out to get back together. Wouldn't it mean that you are in the middle of their relationship? Mr Weasley is a nice guy; he owns that joke shop in Diagon Alley. Rose is very sad about it. She told me it was fine, and when I said we would be siblings, and that we could share the same wing in the Manor, she pretended to be excited, but... she always has puffy eyes now, and Miranda Thompson said she was crying in Moaning Myrtle's bathroom, and the thing is... she is much better than me at transfiguration and her button didn't even shimmer.

I want you to be happy, I do. I am sure Mrs Granger is an amazing person, but seeing as this affects us all, shouldn't you two have talked to us before? I think Rose would prefer her mum with her dad. And I prefer Rose to be happy.

Anyway, could you send me another box of my favourites from Sugarplum's?

With love,

A round, fat tear smeared the ink in his signature as Hermione's trembling hand tried to push it carefully back to its place. A sob tore up her throat, and she shook her head violently as if she wanted to deny herself to cry. She wasn't even supposed to be reading that. It was Draco's personal mail. Not that he kept secrets, she was used to reading everything out loud for him, usually warming his cock while he pressed hot kisses against her neck.

But that one he had hid, and the reason for it was obvious.

Rose had lied to her. A week before, the very morning following her Sanctuary launch, they both wrote similar letters to their children, informing them about their relationship. They had told them that the hippogrif project made them reacquainted, the forced proximity allowed new feelings to bloom, and they had started a relationship. They said they were really happy, but would explain things in more detail once the classes ended.

She had been gleeful when doing it.

And Rose's response had been positive. In a short letter, she told her mother she was happy she had found love again, that Mr Malfoy was a very polite man whose son always praised her and that she looked forward to meeting him. But those had been lies. Rose was not well; she had been crying, and her academic performance had been affected. Or perhaps, she was happy for Hermione's sake, but not for herself. And she didn't trust her mother enough to tell her that.

The notion that her daughter would lie and suppress her own feelings to protect hers made her heart ache in despair.

The door behind her creaked open. "Granger, do you—"

"I am sorry, sir!" she sobbed, whipping back and supporting herself on his study table. "I went through your letters—I know I shouldn't— I am so sorry—"

His face fell at her state, and he frowned in confusion, while closing the distance between them in three or four long strides. "What do you mean? You can read anything, I don't have any secret—"

His large hands held her arms to tug her into his chest, wrapping her in a comforting embrace, and she could *feel* the moment his eyes landed on the letter she had just read. His muscles tensed around her, and he sighed. "Granger, darling, don't cry..."

"She is sad! I made her sad! I am so selfish," she whined against his shirt. "I only thought about myself, and didn't consider how she would feel about it—"

"Granger, you are *allowed* to make decisions thinking about yourself," he crooned. "You dedicated your entire life to the creatures and to your daughter, it is about time you think—"

"But she is the most important thing in my life—"

"I know, darling," he whispered, caressing the back of her head. "I didn't mean to hide this letter from you. I just know that Scorpius is a little dramatic, and didn't want to get you anxious without

having the full story. Rose could be sad about something else—”

“But—”

He gently lifted her chin with his thumb so she could look up at him. “Would you feel better if you got the chance to talk to her? In person?”

“H-how would I—she is at Hogwarts—I won’t see her until the end of the year—”

He tutted. “Yes or no, Granger?”

“Yes, sir,” she breathed out.

“Good girl,” he said, placing a kiss on her lips. “I will arrange for us to go there tomorrow. Then you can talk to her and see what this is really about. If she is in fact sad about our relationship, then we start to worry about how to make her feel better—”

“I don’t want to break up with you!” she shrieked.

He smiled fondly at her. “Likewise, darling. It’s going to be alright. I will help you take care of Rose, but it’s no good getting nervous about something we don’t know for certain yet, is it?”

She shook her head and allowed his words to slide down her ears and run over her body, relaxing every muscle on their passage. She had Draco and didn’t have to worry about anything because he was taking care of things. It was good to have someone to hand her problems to. All she had to do was trust his better judgment and competence.

Satisfied with her change in demeanour, he gave her a long, unhurried kiss. “Now, why don’t you go get ready? You have that meeting with Sarah in an hour.”

Hermione nodded and followed him into his bathroom, where he removed any residual tension she could have left while slowly fucking her against the tiled wall. Once they were finished, while he washed her hair with the luxurious shampoo that smelled like mangoes, a funny thought appeared to her. How she and Scorpius seemed to be alike in their tendency towards anxiety, drama and babbling, while Draco, blessed by fortune to have them both to love and tend to, did his job with patience and diligence. He knew how to deal with them, and he wasn’t affected by their antics.

The following morning, Hermione and Draco apparated in front of the iron gates to the castle, where Hagrid waited for them.

“Mione!” he greeted, with a wide smile partially hidden in his thick beard. A sad nostalgia stung in her heart upon noticing how speckled with white it had become. “How long! You barely visit me anymore! I know I am nothing but a thick oaf, but you and Ron should come more often for tea!”

“Hagrid—”

Her bones cracked with his tight hug, and she felt the woosh of wind as he gestured for Malfoy to approach behind her and quickly shoved him inside the same embrace.

“You two are great parents,” he continued, ignoring her. “Little Rose is such a nice girl, so sweet and polite—”

"Hagrid!" she shrieked, and it prompted him to finally release her. Hermione glared at him, realising for the first time how milky his eyes had gotten. "Are you losing eyesight?"

"What?" he barked. "Nonsense! You and McGonagall with the same talk, eh? I see just fine!"

Glancing back at Draco, who was still righting his robes after the abrupt group hug, she asked slowly, "Who is at my side, Hagrid?"

"Who is at your side?" the giant echoed mockingly. "Your husband, of course, Ronald Weasley. As if I would forget someone I—"

"Hagrid!" she gasped. "This is not Ron!"

The gamekeeper squinted in Draco's direction, his mouth pursing, and then he shook his head, belly bouncing with laughter, "Alright, alright!" Hermione exhaled in relief. He had noticed his mistake. "So he put off a little weight, yes, yes, Ron, you are a whole different person!"

"I am not Weasley," Draco sneered, voice dripping with distaste, and then he muttered something under his breath that sounded a lot like 'stupid oaf'.

"Draco!" Hermione gasped. "Don't say that!"

Hagrid frowned, probably connecting the voice, the rudeness and the name Hermione had just mentioned. He cocked his head to the man and said, "Malfoy? What are you doing here?"

Taking a fortifying breath, Draco drawled, "I have an appointment with the Headmistress."

"Nonsense, McGonagall told me only about Rose's parents coming for a visit."

Rolling her lips against one another, Hermione groaned, "Yes, Hagrid. I am her mother, coming for a visit, and Draco is accompanying me."

"Why?"

"Aren't you supposed to just open the gate and let us in?" Draco said tediously.

"I'm not one for letting Death Eaters inside Hogwarts, Malfoy, that was your task—"

"Well, clearly you can't be trusted with much more than cleaning manure—"

"Enough!" Hermione yelled, startling both. "Hagrid, I divorced Ron six years ago! This is my new boyfriend. He is not a Death Eater; he is a good man. Please let us in. I want to speak with my daughter."

Her tone gave no space for argument, and the giant nodded, ushering them in, but not without interrogating her on the entire way, how on Earth had she gotten divorced from Ron? Where was Ron? What was Ron doing? Was Ron angry that she was with Malfoy? Why would she be with a man who had bullied her?

Only when they were nearly reaching the stairs did he finally address Draco, barking, "You better not hurt Mione, Malfoy, or I don't care the money you have, I am visiting the Manor, and I am bringing my brother."

Hermione cringed, expecting Draco to retort nastily and disappoint her even more, but he merely nodded to the nearly blind game-keeper. Grunting with himself about how absurd it was for Hermione Granger to be in a relationship with Draco Malfoy, Hagrid made his way back to his home.

Torn between spitting everything she had in her mind at him, or respecting his authority as her Dom, Hermione merely raised her nose, huffing silently, and turned on her heels so she could walk up to the Entrance Hall.

“I don’t want you telling me to shut up like that again, do you understand?” he asked, taking two steps at a time and reaching her quickly. As she ignored him, he added, “Granger, answer me.”

She turned to glare at him and saw his tense shoulders. They were in an empty corridor, so she stepped closer to hiss, “*Pause.*”

Something washed over his features, and his eyes were desperate when he reached for her hand. “Please, speak freely.”

“Hagrid is my *friend*,” she said, her tone low and dangerous, simmering with rage. “The way you talked to him just now made me remember the worst side of you; the entitled bully.”

He looked like she had slapped him. “I am sorry! I just—I got angry and behaved poorly. Forgive me. It was completely immature.”

She crossed her arms. Their first relationship fight hadn’t begun, and he had already recognised his mistake and apologised? That was anticlimactic.

“I’ll make sure to apologise to him too on our way out,” he continued at her silence, and she could sense the fear he felt of her still being offended. “I am truly sorry. I know today is important to you, and I didn’t mean to—

The anger she had been building up for the confrontation fizzled out, and she melted into his chest, hugging his torso tightly. “Thank you, Draco.”

He listened to her, cared about her feelings and acted in response to them. She loved him.

“Let’s go,” he murmured against her crown.

The rest of their walk to the Headmistress’s room was made holding hands, and she greeted them in front of the gargoyle, “Mrs Granger, Mr Malfoy, good morning.”

“Headmistress,” Hermione replied. “Thank you for having us. I know this is an uncommon request, but I really needed to speak with Rose, it’s urgent—”

“I assumed it was, seeing that it couldn’t be dealt with over a letter,” McGonagall said sternly.

“Well, I—”

“Headmistress, I have been meaning to go over some details of the last meeting of the board of governors. Would this be a good time? Perhaps while Mrs Granger and her daughter talk.”

The witch pursed her lips. “Very well, Mr Malfoy.” Turning to Hermione, she said, “Miss Granger-Weasley is in my office, Mrs Granger. You might go now.”

"Thanks," she muttered, already stepping past the headmistress, just in time for the gargoyle to jump sideways, granting her access to the spiral staircase.

Hermione hadn't been in that room many times, but instead of paying attention to the book-lined shelves or the portraits of old headmasters along the walls, all she had eyes for was her little girl, sitting in one of the guest chairs.

On the outside, Rose was all things Weasley: bright red hair, blue eyes, freckle-dotted pale face and a long nose like her father's. It was her posture that indicated she was Hermione's daughter, sitting primly, with her spine straight, tapping her feet anxiously against the floor while picking the little skin around her thumbs. She was humming a song and looking to the window, as if longing to be outside on that sunny day.

"Rose," Hermione said.

The girl's head whipped towards her, and a bright beam stretched her features. "Mum!"

She ran to hug her, and a wave of her smell flooded Hermione's system. It was such a good feeling of fullness to be hugging her child again. Like she had one of her limbs again. Or a vital organ.

"What is it? McGonagall wouldn't tell me—"

"*Headmistress* McGonagall, Rose."

"Yes." She waved off. "So, what is it? Is it Dad?"

"What? No," Hermione replied. "Ron is fine. Or at least, I suppose he is. I haven't heard from him."

"Yes, I know." Rose's smile was tight. "So... is it something else?"

Hermione guided them to sit on the armchairs near the fire that McGonagall had left lit. "Love, I just came because I was worried about you."

The girl frowned. "Why?"

Hermione considered not telling the truth, but in the spirit of honesty and perhaps inspiring the same in her daughter, she said, "Scorpius wrote to his father telling him you have been crying. I couldn't help but wonder if it has something to do with the news I gave you."

Several emotions flickered across Rose's face. Confusion, anger, resentment, and finally, an impassive mask. "No, Mum. As I told you, I am glad for you. You deserve to be happy."

Hermione inhaled slowly, taking in the novelty of a deceptive daughter. "Rose, you are the most important thing in my life. I can not be happy unless you are happy, too. If anything is bothering you, you should tell me, so I can try to fix it—"

"But you can't fix it!" she snapped. "You can't bring Dad back!"

Hermione opened her mouth and jumped to kneel before her sobbing daughter, caressing her hair. "Oh, baby..."

"He left," she continued. "And I always thought he would come back someday, but if you get a new husband... he won't. But it's fine, mum—you shouldn't wait. You should be with someone who is nice to you. I just... I miss Dad."

Hermione hugged her tightly, allowing her to cry on her shoulders and running her hands on her back. After a while, she cupped her pinky face and said, "Rose, your father would never come back home, even if I had no one else. He is still your father, and you are allowed to love him, but I don't want him as my husband again."

"I know, but—"

Torn between telling the truth and taking the blame for herself, Hermione went for a third approach. "Have you tried writing to him? Does he know you are in the Quidditch team?"

"Yes, I told him," Rose said. "He replied, saying he was proud and that he would come for today's match—"

Both of the girl's hands flew to her mouth. Hermione cocked her head to the side. "Rose, we don't keep secrets in our family. What is it?"

"Father said he would only come if you weren't here," she whispered, gnawing her bottom lip. "I am sorry, Mum, but you don't care for Quidditch, and Aunt Ginny and Uncle Harry would already be here to support Albus, so I thought—"

Clicking the pieces, Hermione said, "Oh, so the final House Cup match, the one you said allowed parents, is today?"

"Yes," the girl breathed out. "I am sorry I didn't invite you!"

"It's alright, love," Hermione reassured her. Did it sting that Rose chose Ron over her? Yes. But at the same time, the choice had been imposed by him, the one whose presence Rose was so deprived of, so she couldn't find anyone to blame but her ex-husband. *Why would he say he would not come if she were present?* "It is your match. You should be able to invite whoever you want. I am not hurt by it."

Rose nodded slowly and then huffed bitterly, "It was all for nothing, anyway. He sent a letter this morning telling me he won't make it in time from America."

Hermione traced patterns on her cheeks with her thumbs, wiping her tears. "In that case, would you like me to stay and watch?"

The girl's face lit up. "Would you like to?"

"Yes," she nodded. "I'd love to—" The bear hug silenced her.

"The game will be just after breakfast, and I am supposed to stay with my team, but the parents are already on the pitch talking, and you can meet Aunt Ginny there—I think—"

"Rose."

"Yes?"

"I'd like to finish our conversation first; this is important."

“R-right, yes, of course, mum.”

Hermione gestured for her to give some space so they could share the same armchair, wrapping an arm around her little daughter. “Love, your relationship with your father should not be affected by the end of our marriage. His visitations are even in terms of our divorce. If you want to spend more time with him, I can try to reach out to reinforce them—”

“Urgh, *mum!*” she groaned. “I don’t want our time together to be *enforced*. I want him to be like it was before!”

Hermione sighed. “Rose, my love... Unfortunately, your father, and I say this with all the love I have for him as the best friend he was for years... he is not the type that notices these subtle things. If you want—or rather, if you *need* something from him, you’ll have to ask.”

“But shouldn’t he *want* or *need* to spend time with me, too?”

She didn’t want to speak ill of her ex-husband, nor did she want Rose to feel unloved, so Hermione did what she had to do. “I am sure he does, Rose. He is just very *distracted* and busy. You’ll need to invite him more, reach out, and I can help with that. Would you let me?”

She pouted. “I suppose, so.” And then, after a while, she mumbled, “Thanks, Mum. For coming and—”

“Oh, that was all Scorpius. He is a very good friend, concerned with your well-being—”

“He was a proper brother, I think,” she muttered. “Going behind my back to snitch—”

“Rose!”

“What? He was, right? And I think I shall call him that, from now on, my little brother. The gossip.” She rolled her eyes. “I won’t call Mr Malfoy Dad, though.

A smile threatened to escape Hermione. “Yes. I don’t believe you should.”

“Will I meet him?” Rose asked. “As your boyfriend, I mean... Wait—he is not living in our flat, is he?”

Suddenly, it seemed wiser not to disclose that there was no flat left, but a nice penthouse in a luxurious neighbourhood. “No.”

“Great,” she breathed out, before snapping, “Are we moving to the *Manor*? Scorpius says we are—”

“No,” Hermione said. “It is still very early for this.”

“Yes.” Rose seemed relieved.

“But you can meet him,” she said. “Mr Malfoy. You can meet him today if you want.”

“Is he here?” Rose asked, her mouth falling slack. “In the *school*?”

“He is the only reason I got to come,” Hermione explained. “He is part of the board of governors, and—”

“*Mum*,” Rose said in playful suspicion. “Did you *abuse authority* to be here? That’s preposterous!”

“Well, I—” Hermione squared her shoulders. “Not really—I just—actually—”

“Relax, I am only joking.” Rose giggled. “Yes, I can meet him now. But it has to be quick because I really must meet my team soon.”

“Brilliant.”

The two of them made their way downstairs with arms wrapped around each other and met both the headmistress and Draco right next to the gargoyle. It was hard to decide which one looked more stiff and formal in their exchange, but as soon as they glanced at the arriving party, Draco’s entire face softened while McGonagall’s hardened.

“So? Is it done, then?”

“Yes, Headmistress,” Hermione replied. “Thank you for your time and for your office.”

“Just don’t make it a habit, Mrs Granger,” the witch said, already walking briskly towards the stairs. “I believe Miss Granger-Weasley can find her way back to her tasks without my help?”

“I do—I will, headmistress,” the girl stuttered. “Thank you.”

McGonagall huffed and left without another word.

“I thought you said she liked you,” Rose whispered.

“She does,” Hermione replied. “Her severity is justly unbiased and directed at everyone. I like that about her. She doesn’t play favourites and was probably mad that I forced my way here. She wouldn’t be friendly just because I have an Order of Merlin—”

“Well, Professor Flint is *always* treating the Slytherins better, so one would think we could have some leverage with a Gryffindor Headmistress—”

“No,” Hermione replied. “Dumbledore was a Gryffindor, and he was as fair as McGonagall—”

Her sentence was cut by a loud, mocking snort coming from Draco. The two witches glared at him and, catching himself, he fixed his face and stood taller. “Pardon me.”

Rose rolled her lips and looked at her mother for guidance, while Hermione could not distract herself from the offence. “I am sorry, did I say something funny?”

“Yes,” he said, pushing his hands down his pockets and *smirking*. “You implied that Albus Dumbledore didn’t favour Gryffindor.”

A cross of her arms. “And you disagree?”

“In my first year, when I was out of bed for a *good reason*, McGonagall took fifty points from my house—”

“She did the same to us!”

"I didn't say she was unfair. But don't you think it is funny that Gryffindor was losing the house cup by a hundred and sixty points, and Dumbledore *awarded* you just enough to win?" He ran a hand through his white-blond waves. "Regardless of the nobility of reasons, perhaps it was just a *tad* too generous?"

Hermione's mouth opened and closed like a fish. "W-well, I—" Her eyes darted around her, and she seized Rose by the shoulders, nearly using the girl as a shield to position between Draco and her. "Draco, this is my daughter, Rose. Rose, this is my boyfriend, Draco."

The girl turned with narrowed eyes at her mother, as if thinking, *Really?*

"Nice to meet you, Rose." He bowed respectfully. "Scorpius tells me only good things about you."

"Nice to meet you, Mr Malfoy," she replied. "Yes, I am aware of everything he tells you."

"Rose!"

"It's alright," he said, placing a placating hand on Hermione's arm. Goosebumps flared down her spine. "You'll have to forgive my son, Rose; he was merely worried about you. We, Malfoys, can be very protective. But that is a good thing."

"As long as it respects my independence," she hissed, crossing her arms. "My mother and I are just fine without the *protection of Malfoy men.*"

"Rose!"

"Your mother is a very special woman, intelligent and competent, capable of conquering the entire world," he agreed, squeezing Hermione lightly in a silent gesture for her to let him speak. Just like they had talked about. Their little secret. She pressed her lips together. "And I promise to take good care of her."

"You'd better."

He grinned, giving her a wink. "If I don't, you can hex me."

With raised eyebrows, Rose looked between Hermione and him before uncrossing her arms and sighing, "You can bring him to the match if you want, Mum. He is... alright, I suppose."

Relief washed over Hermione, and her heart swelled in her chest as she blinked back tears of joy and released a shuddering breath. "That's great, love. We'll be there."

The girl nodded and left, a skip in her step.

Once they were alone in the corridor, Draco didn't waste a single second before wrapping his arms around Hermione's waist and pressing her against a wall, attacking her lips with a lustful kiss.

"Draco!" she protested, as he slid his mouth towards her jaw and her cleavage. "We are in the middle of a school!"

"Mind your manners, Granger," he groaned, biting and sucking her neck. "The idea of snogging you in a corridor of Hogwarts is making me *mad*—"

"I can see that, *sir*," she breathed out, close to losing control. "But there are children here."

He stood taller, still caging her against the wall. “Do you trust me?”

“Yes, sir.”

“How long do we have until the game?”

“She said it will be right after breakfast—”

He whipped his hand at his side to look at his watch. “Forty minutes. Come.”

With a gentle tug to her wrist, he started guiding her through the corridors and passageways, luckily finding most of them empty. Hermione stumbled behind him, and they were giggling like teenagers, stopping at every corner to share a kiss as if they couldn’t bear to wait. And maybe they couldn’t.

“Rose likes you,” Hermione sighed, following him without paying attention to the direction they were going. “She is sad because of Ron. He isn’t very present, and she thinks that her only chance of getting more of him is over.”

He grunted.

“What?”

“Your ex is a bastard.”

“I know that, sir. But I think if I convince him to—”

With a twirl, he backed her against a wooden door, the cold surface hard against her flesh. “I don’t want to talk about Weasley right now, darling. I don’t have anything nice to say about him. I can promise you I will do everything in my power to ensure you and Rose have everything you need.”

Her eyelids fluttered. There was some biological explanation, she reasoned, to explain why there was nothing more arousing to her than the idea of having a man like him, competent and powerful, taking care of her and her child. She grabbed his face and pulled him into a violent kiss. He indulged her, his tongue stroking hers as his hands squeezed her waist.

Then, he pushed the door open, and Hermione was welcomed inside... the *library*.

“Draco?”

A gust of wind licked her entire body and, with a horrified gasp, she realised her clothes had been transfigured into *a school uniform*. Or at least a poor attempt of one. The shirt was so tight her breasts were practically jumping out, threatening to burst the buttons. The skirt was at least ten centimetres shorter than allowed. And she never wore *heels* at Hogwarts.

But when she turned to glare at him, he was just waving his wand at himself, transfiguring his robes into his school uniform, his green and silver tie neat. He even had his *prefect* badge and...

“Is that an Inquisitorial Squad badge?” she shrieked, and then, remembering herself, she whispered, “Draco! What are you doing? There could be people here!”

“If you continue to misbehave, Granger,” he sneered, and suddenly it was like she stood in front of his bully persona again, “I will have to *punish* you.”

She gulped, folding her hands before her and glancing around. There was no one there. Probably because of the final match or for the early hours, but Madam Pince could still...

“You said you wanted to practice free use,” he purred, his velvet baritone snaking through her senses and coiling low in her belly. “I want to use you.”

“Y-yes, sir.” Her head fell to look at the floor.

He walked around her. “What are your safety words?”

“Pause and stop, sir.”

“Who is responsible for you and your well-being?”

“You, sir.”

“So, who needs to worry whether we’ll be seen and caught?”

A shiver ran all over her. “Y-you, sir.”

“Yes,” he drawled. “Such a good girl you are...” His index finger traced a line from her shoulder to her wrist, and she nearly jerked with how much it prickled her. She was *very* aroused by everything. “I want to indulge in a bit of role play today, Granger. Can you follow along?”

“Y-yes, sir...”

He stepped back, and she glanced up to meet his eyes. The pupils were blown so wide that he looked a bit maniacal as he licked his lips in desire. It made her core clench, dampening her knickers.

“Go on, peruse the library... I will find you.”

She didn’t need to be told twice, walking awkwardly towards the first aisle she met. *History of Magic*. Just to find something to do with her hand, she brushed her digits against the tomes, heart beating loudly in her chest and anticipation nearly making her nauseous.

What did he mean by role play?

“Granger,” he drawled, startling her.

When she glanced back, the whiplash of his expression was painful. His lips were twisted in a scowl as he surveyed her. The morning light was filtered by the curtains and the towering bookshelves, casting long shadows on his face, which highlighted the sharpness of his features. He leaned back, arms crossed, and there was nothing but pure hatred in his features. It made her silent, fearful even.

“What do you think you’re doing here? After hours, no less.” His grey eyes narrowed with contempt. “One would think you are begging to lose house points, as if Gryffindor could spare any...”

Oh, she realised then. This was the *roleplay*. He wanted to pretend to be a prefect, catching her after hours. Her mind reeled with possible courses of action. Did he want her to *offer* something in exchange for letting her pass without detention? Or would that be too easy?

Hermione crossed her arms, and it made her breasts pop even more, his eyes jumping in that direction. “I am a prefect as well, Malfoy,” she hissed. “You can’t deduct points from me.”

He pushed himself, dark eyes glistening like a predator approaching prey.

“Prefects mean nothing now under the new Headmistress,” he barked, and she just knew he wasn’t talking about McGonagall. “As a member of the Inquisitorial Squad, I can do *anything* I want with you.”

He towered over her, and his minty breath fanned her pleasantly.

“And *what* exactly would that be, Malfoy?”

He grinned mischievously, swaggering until he caged her, one hand on either side of her head. “Turn around.”

He used that commanding tone, and she was *ready* to obey. But still, he had created this entire scenario, and the word escaped her before she could really think better of it, “No.”

Something flickered across his eyes, and he inhaled sharply. “Turn around, or I’ll have you sent to detention, Granger. You know how painful those quills can be.”

She huffed, obeying. There wasn’t much space between her and the shelves, so her breasts were pressing lightly against the books, and she could sense his presence just a few centimetres from her. If she moved just a bit, her back would brush against his front. And the possibility made her knees weak.

“Put your hands on the shelf,” he ordered. “Just... under... mine.”

She placed her hands underneath his, the tips of her fingers barely touching the heels of his palm.

“Good girl,” he praised. “Don’t move.” He took his hands and slid them over hers, gliding down over her arms and leaving a trail of prickling excitement everywhere as he moved towards her elbows. “The headmistress wants us to check every student, making sure there are no contrabands—”

His words were cut by a whimper Hermione let out when he reached her shoulders.

“Are you hiding something?”

“N-no,” she choked. Perhaps she had been getting carried away because even though he had used her entire body already, the faintest touch of him dragged out strong reactions. And she was now second-guessing whether she *was* hiding something.

He tugged on her tie, pulling it back and closing her airway. “You must pay your superiors the due respect, Granger,” he snarled.

“No, sir!” she whimpered, her hands clawing at the constriction.

He loosened his hold, allowing her access to air again. This was *a lot*.

While she had spent some time contemplating the possibility of having a crush on him during the years he claimed to have admired her from a distance, while being her bully, Hermione had never

seen anything appealing in *this* Malfoy. The cruel one. She liked her dom soft and carrying. But this–this was not real. It was *playing*. They were acting in a scene. The prefect and the naughty student, alone in the library. And she had her safewords if she got to a certain limit, right? She should test.

“P-pause,” she croaked.

He helped her turn around and held her cheek, eyes soft and concerned. “How are you feeling? Have I gone too far? Was it the tie? Or the phrasing?”

She placed her hands over his. “I am fine. The tie was fine and the phrasing—I just wanted to be sure that it was *you*.”

“It is,” he whispered, pecking her nose. “It’s me. Your boyfriend.”

She drew a shuddering breath. “Okay.”

“Do you want to stop?”

“No,” she replied truthfully. “I just wanted t-to make sure it is still you, and that you like me—”

“I like you *a lot*,” he replied. “This is acting. I just want the power play of prefect and student.”

She nodded. “We can continue, then.”

“Do you want me not to say I am your superior?” he checked again.

“No, it’s fine. I know you don’t believe that. I j-just—” She inhaled sharply. “I would like for you not to degrade me or m-my blood status—”

“I have no interest in doing that,” he said firmly, looking between her eyes as if to guarantee she would understand him. “I meant superior as in Inquisitorial Squad and prefect.”

“And Dom and Sub.”

“Yes, exactly.”

She shook herself, getting ready to get back to the scene. “Great. We can continue.”

He pulled her in for a loving kiss before allowing her to turn around and place her palms on the shelf. He returned his hands to her shoulders, pushing her curls over one shoulder, and wrapping her tie on one of his fists again, to angle her head so he could lick a straight line from her neckline to her ear, where he whispered, “I will only ask once again, and you’d better answer me correctly, Granger. Do you have any contraband?”

“N-no, sir!” she whimpered, because he had pressed his groin against her arse and she could feel the bulge.

While still holding her by the tie, he snaked his palm on her torso, drawing random patterns to grope her breasts, her waist, her hips, her—

“Oh!” she cried when he slid his hand under her skirt and palmed her sex. “W-what are you doing, Malfoy?”

"You lied to me, Granger," he grunted, roughly rubbing his digits against her clothed cunt. She was already so aroused that the contact sent jolts to quickly build pressure on her sacrum. "You have been hiding something."

"W-what?" she moaned, arching her back so she pressed herself harder against him.

"You have been wet, huh? So naughty," he grazed his teeth down her neck. His fingers had found a nice rhythm, but it was still not enough for what she needed. "Hiding in the library with her cunt pulsing, aching to be filled, right, Granger?"

"Yes," she breathed out, rolling her hips back to try and see if it would get him to do more.

He tugged her tie again. "Yes, *what?*" His consonants were crisp.

"Yes, sir," she keened, and was rewarded with him pushing her knickers to the side. The moment he touched her swollen clit directly, she bucked, and her hand flew back to meet his head.

It was too fast.

Suddenly, her cunt was left alone, throbbing unattended, as he yanked her forward by the tie, and she had to land her palms in front of her face not to hit her head on the shelf. With a whoosh, her skirt was up, exposing her arse for his hand to come down in an acute slap. A loud scream left her before she could bite it back. *Oh Godric, they were in the middle of the library. And she had just let out a wanton howl.*

He tsked. "What had I told you to do with your hands, Granger?"

"To place on the shelf, Sir."

Smack again. On the same spot, so that it burned harder.

"Did I say you could touch me?"

"N-no, sir— nghhh!"

This time, when he spanked her, she bit her hand to keep from screaming.

"Can't you follow rules, Granger?"

"Y-yes, sir, I am sorry—"

Another one. Two times. Three times.

"I was going to make you come, but you can't keep your hands to yourself—"

No. No. No. Not the edging. There was already too much built-up tension in her lower abdomen, and she couldn't wait to get the release she craved. Her legs were shaking and her chest heaving. Hermione turned to look at him, horrified. "No, Malfoy, please—"

Smack. "Please, what?"

"Please, sir—let me come! I'll be a good girl, I promise."

"I don't know..." He caressed her sore flesh, and it made her knees threaten to give out. "I have an idea," he said, toying with her knickers right between her cheeks. "If you can take my cock like a good girl, I might let you come."

Oh fuck, that was hot. "Y-yes, sir. P-please, let me t-take your cock! Where do you want it?"

He chuckled darkly, curling his fingers on her knickers and pulling them until they bit her cunt. "Merlin, how prettily you beg, Granger. I think you convinced me to help you out."

She sighed in relief, arching herself to better present her arse to him. But he let go of her knickers suddenly, making them snap against her core painfully. She whimpered.

He tugged her tie and then deftly undid the knot. Pressing his back against her, he reached around her shoulders to tie her wrists with it, finishing by wrapping it around her neck again. Hermione was bound, her arms folded in front of her and close to her face. He held the tie just as he pushed between her shoulder blades, forcing her torso down and her arse up.

Her stomach somersaulted, she was facing the floor and afraid to fall on her head, the only thing holding her was his grip on the flimsy fabric of the silk tie.

Malfoy pushed her knickers to the side with his other hand, and, without warning, pressed two fingers inside her cunt. Hermione keened.

"You're so fucking wet, all ready for me, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir!" she cried. There was movement behind her. "Please don't let me fall."

"Shut the fuck up and take this cock like a good girl," he growled, and that was the only warning she received before he thrust inside.

Hermione let out a piercing cry, her knees giving up. He held her by the hip and by the bindings in her wrists and neck. His words, his actions, the place they were in... it was all so much, so lewd; she already had white spots in her vision.

And he was pounding inside her, his hips snapping against her arse.

Every time he moved, her entire body jerked forward, and she felt the bite of the bondage

She was feeling dizzy and couldn't tell if it was from the sex, from the air constriction or the movement.

Heat gathered low in her belly and shook, shook, almost like a bomb ready to explode.

Malfoy was groaning behind her, saying nasty things that drove her wild.

The possibility of being caught completely forgotten, Hermione mewled in ecstasy.

Her body began convulsing around him, squeezing his cock inside her cunt, which made him drag with more pressure against her front wall, and it only added to the positive feedback loop she was in, drifting closer and closer to the edge.

Her orgasm was not explosive, but rather engulfing, as she found herself locked in the haze of pleasure, shaking violently on his grip, his fingers digging painfully into her flesh, and his cock

pistoning inside her until he came too, not long after her.

He yanked her up in an instant, without taking it off, as he quickly untied her wrists and neck. Slowly, she made her way back to earth, still quivering from the afterwaves of her climax, while he massaged the places where the restraints had bitten.

“My fifteen-year-old self imagination paled in comparison to the reality that you are, Granger,” he said, pampering the side of her face with kisses between each word, “My good, perfect, wonderful, beautiful girl.”

“Can I kiss you?” Her voice was weak and pathetic.

He turned her around, seeming to embrace her entire body with his large arms as he held her close and kissed her devotedly.

It could have been hours of that perfect, intimate moment when she finally pushed his chest with gentleness, breaking the kiss for air.

“We need to go watch Rose’s game,” she said, already back to her more reasonable self. Realising herself, however, she added, “Can we go, Sir, please?”

“Of course, darling.” He smiled, waving his wand to vanish the mess from their bodies, transfigure their clothes back, and even conjure a glass he filled with water for her.

Hermione downed it and refilled twice before gulping and turning in the direction they had come from. “I am nervous about meeting Madam Pince, though; she will be livid. We obviously were *not* discreet.”

He cackled. “Granger, we are *not* in the library. Do you really think I would risk flashing underage students?”

With a frown, she glanced at him. “What do you— Oh! The Room of Requirement?”

He nodded and then checked his watch. “Oh, the match is just starting, we must go.”

Hands intertwined, they left the Room and started to walk down the corridors in the direction of the main doors. Draco had just been saying that they should hope Rose was not a fast enough seeker for the game to end too soon, when a silver cat approached them.

“Mrs Granger, I am terribly sorry. Meet us in the Hospital Wing; there has been a grave accident with Rose on her broom.”

Chapter 21: When they visit St. Mungo's

Hermione's heart stopped; she felt the dull ache inside her chest, but couldn't hear it beating. Before her brain could string a single coherent thought and prompt her to do anything, Draco's hands held her arms, and his head came into her line of sight. "Granger, look at me." A sharp inhale grazed her throat with the burning oxygen. "It's going to be alright. I'll take care of everything, okay?"

She glanced at him, vision already blurred, and nodded with a jerk of her head.

Their path through the castle was smooth. Draco practically glided on the floor, gently tugging her by the wrist, and Hermione allowed herself not to pay attention on their way, focusing on his instructions to breathe and stay calm. Rose was going to be okay—she didn't know whether those words came from her mind or from his mouth, but they kept lulling her into a space of eerie calm.

No hyperventilation, no panic attack—Hermione was merely stepping a foot in front of the other, and breathing, as her Dom and boyfriend was instructing her to do.

As soon as they entered the Hospital Wing, the nauseating scent of blood crashed against her senses, almost like coming out of water for air. Hermione flew to the only occupied bed, surrounded by several people, whom she pushed to get to her baby.

What she saw in front of her tore a ragged gasp out of her chest. Rose's face was unrecognisable, all swollen and tinted with purple, green and yellow. Her arms stood in odd directions, and her chest—a wave of relief washed over Hermione—her daughter was breathing.

"What happened?" Draco demanded.

"The game hadn't even started," a young voice said. *Was that Scorpius?* "And Albus hit Rose with a bludger!"

"I didn't!"

"Yes, you did! You killed her!"

"McGonagall, Pomfrey, what is *he* doing here?" Draco barked. "Anyone who's not family can leave—"

"You are not her family, Death Eater!"

"Yes! Rose is *our* niece—"

"Mr Potter! I won't have name-calling in my school!"

"That's not a name, that's a brand—one you can't get off. He is a Death Eater and will be—"

"Don't call my father that!"

"Don't speak with *my* father, *Malfoy*—"

"I am not discussing this right now, tell me her status—"

Hermione's fingers trembled, feathering over her baby's shoulders. Her mind kept conjuring memories: the first time Rose ate a plum, the book she had Hermione read seven times a day, the day they bought her wand... *No*. She couldn't keep thinking like that. This wasn't goodbye. Rose was alive. She would continue that way. They just needed to take care of her wounds, and... *Why was no one taking care of her? Where was Pomfrey?* Hermione glanced around.

“—stopped the bleeding, but won’t mend the broken bones, until I am certain of the organ damage—”

The matron spoke to Draco, and he gave her curt nods before waving his wand to cast a Patronus. His silver borzoi took the message he wanted to send and lunged throw one of the windows to deliver it. Draco approached Hermione, his large hands soothing over her shoulders. She exhaled slowly, leaning towards his touch.

“Pomfrey has stabilised her wounds, but she will be transferred to St. Mungo’s. I just called them, in a few minutes they’ll come with—”

Hermione nodded warily. “I need—can you please contact my representative?”

His brows knit together. “I’m sorry... What?”

“For the Health Insurance,” she provided, glancing back at her daughter. “We have one from the Ministry, but I didn’t bring the card number and—”

“*Darling*,” he whispered desperately. “Don’t think about money.” He brought her to an embrace. “Everything will be alright.”

She sobbed in his embrace, “It’s my baby, Draco. My baby girl—”

“I know, darling...”

“And if anything happens to her—”

“I won’t. I’m here. She’ll be alright.” His arms tightened around her. She cried softly, feeling his caresses on her back and his chest supporting almost all of her weight.

When the mediwizards from St. Mungo’s arrived, in their light green robes, it was all efficiently conducted. They immobilised Rose so she wouldn’t hurt herself further, checked her vitals, levitated her on a stretcher and then used a portkey to go away.

“Mrs Granger,” McGonagall said suddenly, and Hermione stopped to realise who stood next to her for the first time. Neville, head of Gryffindor, Harry, Ginny, Albus, James, Scorpius, Pomfrey, Flint and Draco. “Mr Malfoy has signed the papers for Rose’s transfer, I’d just like to check with you if that is alright—”

Hermione frowned. “Yes, of course it is.”

Harry huffed, “You know, I hadn’t believed it when Ginny told me this nonsense, Mione! Are you really with *Malfoy*? ”

“This is not the time, Potter,” Draco barked, already taking Hermione by the shoulders and guiding her towards the door. “We are going to St. Mungo’s—”

"Let me come, too!" Scorpius said, and Hermione noticed how much he resembled his father in his first year. It was odd to see a young Draco Malfoy who wasn't scowling or sneering all the time.
"Father, please! I am her best friend! I need to know what—"

"You'll stay," Draco replied firmly, and then he snapped his fingers to Flint. "Marcus, please!"

"But I can be a witness!" Scorpius insisted. "We will press charges, right?"

"Charges?" Harry asked. "That's ridiculous, it was just a game—"

But Draco had already removed Hermione from the room, once again. Her mind was blank, and her body numb, only stepping forward as he guided her to. The only feeling she had was gratefulness. How thankful she was to have a man like hers at that moment, taking care of everything and not bothering her to think. Once out of the school wards, he side-apparated them to St. Mungo's, immediately getting her some water and going to the reception desk, where he filled out the paperwork and instructed the staff on everything.

Hermione tried to come near, rubbing his back, and was immediately pulled into a tight hug.

"Don't you need any information on her medical history?" she asked weakly. "Blood type or—?"

"I already gave them those," he said sheepishly, running a hand through his hair. "I had copies made of all your documents when you moved flats."

"Why?"

"For situations like this," he breathed out, sliding his hands inside his pockets. A fleeting thought of being perhaps concerned about his invasion of privacy was quickly replaced by the comforting notion that things were being taken care of. He seemed to relax upon her reaction, and added, "They are currently taking care of her, and we'll be able to enter in a few minutes. Do you need anything?"

She shook her head, wrapping her arms tighter against his waist. "Just you, sir."

"I am here, darling."

They sat on a sofa, and she rested on his chest while he rubbed circles on her back. Eventually, he summoned Lindy, instructing her on things Hermione couldn't bother paying attention to. She couldn't even bring herself to think; time was suspended as she waited to know what had happened to her baby. After what felt simultaneously like an eternity and five minutes, a healer came in their direction. Draco stood, listening to the man's words, nodding and answering. Eventually, when the healer gave them a bit of privacy, his thumb pushed her chin so she would meet his eyes.

"We can see Rose now," he said. "She is stable and under no risk of death." Relief flooded her system. "But she won't be awake. They have put her on a sleeping potion."

Sluggish concern spread over her. "Why?"

"Her brain is healing, and being awake, possibly distressed with the pain, could be prejudicial," he said. "They want to keep her under for at least two days. Is that okay?"

"Of course, sir," she agreed. "Can we see her now, please?"

He took her through the white corridors, the bright, sterile lights making her head ache. It smelled nauseatingly like soap and antiseptic, so Hermione clung to Draco, inhaling his herbal scent. And soon they were welcomed inside a room with a great window with a beautiful view of a park she knew for sure wasn't located in front of the building they were in. *Magic*, she thought. Except for that, she barely paid attention to the details of what she assumed was the best patient room money could pay for, running straight to her daughter.

Her bones had been mended, her eyes were swollen, but the bruises and cuts had been healed. She breathed deeply, moving her chest, and seemed to be sound asleep, with a peaceful expression. The sight burst something inside Hermione.

"Oh Merlin," she sobbed, running to sit next to her. "My baby!"

It was almost like she had been in a dormant state until then, not yet fully grasping the seriousness of the ordeal. Seeing her baby like that made it all too real, and tears poured from Hermione's eyes while she cried, processing what had just happened—what had *almost* just happened. Rose had almost died.

Draco stood behind her, pulling her curls back to wrap them in a ponytail, until she calmed down and just caressed her daughter's cheek. With time, Hermione started to grow restless. There wasn't anything left to do. Lindy had brought a bag with clothes for her, the hospital provided food, and Draco took care of any bureaucracy. All she could do was *wait*, and even that was painful.

"What happened, sir?" she asked after lunch, her voice hoarse. "How did *this*—?"

Draco scratched his forehead, leaning forward to rest his elbows on his knees. "Scorpius says that Albus Potter hit Rose with a bludger *before* the game started."

Hermione inhaled sharply. She remembered something in that sense. "What did Harry and Ginny say?"

His expression hardened. "They say it was an accident."

"Outside of the game?"

"Exactly. According to them, the bell rang immediately at the same time as he acted, so he had thought the game had begun—"

"Even so," she insisted, squinting as she tried to remember the rules she had read about during her first year, when she assumed she would be able to succeed in flying by gobbling as many books on the subject as she could find. "Isn't there a rule about the beaters only sending bludgers towards players that are actively reaching for the snitch or the quaffle?"

His lips pressed together as he dipped his chin.

Hermione rubbed her temples "What do you think, sir?"

He rolled his tongue inside his cheek. "Scorpius overreacts, but he is not a liar, Granger. And McGonagall took a hundred points from Slytherin, not to mention suspending the boy from the team until the end of the year—"

Her mind connected the dots quickly. "So she also thinks he did something wrong."

“It would seem so.”

“But why? Why would Albus do something like that to his *cousin*? ”

Draco shrugged. “I don’t know, but I don’t think it matters. She could have died.”

A violent shiver ran all over her body, and Hermione stood, hugging her sides. “So you think I should press charges, sir?”

He shook his head, getting to his feet. “I think you shouldn’t be concerned about this now.” He held her close to him, her face pressed against his chest, as his hand ran up and down her back. “I think you should try to get some rest; it has been a stressful situation.”

“Yes, sir.” She nodded, but then something hit her. “Ron!” she gasped. “I forgot! D-did you call him?”

He leaned back to look at her eyes, a question in his eyebrows. “I didn’t.”

“Well, alright, then I should—” She detangled herself from him, moving towards her bag.

“No.”

Hermione faltered, looking at him. “I beg your pardon?”

“You won’t call him,” he stated firmly, nostrils flaring. “You don’t need him. He hasn’t been present for you or Rose, and I don’t want you humiliating yourself for his attention—”

“This is not about me!” she snapped. “This is about Rose! He is her father! He deserves to—”

“Watch your tone.”

She shook her head, huffing while she grabbed her bag. “This is ridiculous.”

“Don’t you think the Potters have already told him?” he snarled. “Don’t you think that if he gave a sodding damn about his daughter, he would already be here?”

It was like a knife had slid through her heart. “D-Draco...”

“I don’t want you calling for him,” he insisted. “I am here. I will take care of you two.”

“Well, I am still obliged to—”

“Granger, this is non-negotiable. My decision is final.”

She pushed her hand inside her bag, retrieving her Muggle cellphone, nearly dropping it with how her fingers shook. “I *need* to tell him, Draco. Rose would want her father here—”

His hand closed around her wrist. “Don’t do this. He is going to hurt you two more—”

“*You* are hurting me!” she spat. “How can you be making this moment about you and your jealousy—”

“I am not! I am taking care of you, like I said I would! You don’t need more pain—”

“Stop!” she bellowed. “Let go of me and go home, please. I don’t want you here.”

Their safe words didn’t exactly apply to non-sexual situations, but he flinched all the same, taking a large step back. “Granger,” he pleaded. “It’s alright. Just don’t push me away—”

“Leave.”

His face fell, and his arms dropped to the side. Hermione seized the moment to dial Ron’s phone number. Draco stood there, frozen like a tree as he watched her.

The phone was ringing, her heart beating fast inside her chest, and the tears seemed ready to pour from her eyes.

“Hello?”

“Ron! Hi!”

“Hi, Hermione. Listen, this is not a good time—”

“Ron, Rose had an accident at school. She fell from her broom, and now we’re at St. Mungo’s—”

“I know, Mione, Harry and Ginny floo called me.”

Her stomach dropped. “You—so where are you? Aren’t you coming?”

“Yeah, as I said, this is not a good time. I can stop by later—”

“Ronald,” she hissed. “Your daughter is in a *coma*, cancel what you’re doing and come—”

“Oh, she ain’t even awake?” he said. “Well, then call me when she—”

“Ronald!” she shrieked, already sobbing. “You have to come now—”

“Why? Is she at risk of dying in the next three hours?”

“No—”

“Then, I’ll see you at night,” he said calmly. “Bloody hell, Hermione, you never know how to act in stressful situations—”

Hermione hung up the cellphone, fingers shaking. Her face burned with embarrassment and rage. Not daring to look at Draco, expecting him to boast that he had *told her so*, she moved towards the window. Warm hands reached for her hips, and he pressed a kiss on her crown. She wasn’t mad *at him*, but he was there, and she was so frustrated, tears threatening to escape her burning eyes... she just did it. Hermione shrugged him off.

“I thought I told you to leave.” Regret nearly suffocated her, but she was immature and resentful and too far gone to go back now.

He inhaled slowly, stepping back. “I will go outside for a smoke and come back in half an hour. Okay? If you need anything—”

“Yes. Just go.”

She didn't look, listening to the sound of his footsteps and flinching when the door clicked lightly. It would've hurt less if he had slammed it shut.

Hermione gasped, fisting her hair and pacing the room. She wasn't mad at Draco, so why was she mistreating him? He had been by her side, doing whatever she needed, taking care of her and now... taking care of Rose, too. He had been right, calling Ron did nothing but hurt her more.

But there was something unsolvable about that situation. She *could* be mad at Draco because he was there. He cared about her, and he took what she threw his way. While with Ron, it was the opposite; she had to force herself to be nice because the minor inconvenience could have him bolt, and Rose would be the one to suffer.

Yet it wasn't fair to punish Draco for staying, quite the opposite; she had to at least be nice and thankful. He deserved nothing less. Would he realise that? That he could have done much better than her and her problems? That he could just do as she told him to and *leave*? Insecurity crawled over her skin, but she forced herself to breathe through it. No, he *liked* her. A lot. He had told her that *and* proved it with his actions. Yet, she was impatiently waiting for him, and when he came back exactly half an hour later, she barely let him fully inside the room before throwing herself at him with a violent hug.

"I'm sorry," she whined. "I am so, so sorry, sir. I shouldn't have been that rude to you!"

He cupped her face, bringing her in for a kiss. "You are nervous, I understand that."

She nodded.

They stood like that for so long that the sun started to descend on the horizon of the magical window. Except for a few mediwitches that ran quick diagnosis charms to check Rose's vitals, no one came inside the room, and Hermione didn't pull back from the hug, nor did Draco. Eventually, though, she shifted on her feet, and, perhaps thinking that she could be tired, he guided them towards the sofa. Once seated, she forced herself to speak.

"I know you were right about Ron, Draco, but I was, too."

His lips nearly disappeared from how tightly he pressed them together. "Explain to me, then."

"It *is* humiliating, Draco, to call him, ask for the bare minimum from him... and have him just *brush* us off. I mean, no one would want to keep being forced to reach out to their ex, but I would much rather *bear* this humiliation, if I can shield Rose from feeling unloved—"

"She has plenty of people who *love* her, Granger—"

"But he is her *father*, Draco," she cried. "That is *not* something you can change or replace. And to be rejected or pushed aside by your own father must be *awful* to one's self-esteem. I can't let her think she isn't good enough for him. I can't let her feel... *unwanted*."

His tongue rolled inside his cheek. "So you'll keep covering up for him, instead of allowing her to know the truth? That he is a despicable man who never deserved you or her?"

Hermione exhaled sharply. "This isn't about him," she said. "This is about her. I am doing this *for* her. I don't want her to feel outcast by her family. She isn't in a place in her life where this information wouldn't damage her self-esteem—"

"You won't be able to hide things from her forever, Granger. One day, she'll know who they really are. She'll know that you've been supporting her by yourself for years, and that the letters and gifts... that it had always been *you*."

Hermione shook her head, wiping a single tear. "I'll never tell her that, but if she someday finds that out, I can only hope it's at a more mature age, not in her formative teenage years... I hope she'll have strong self-esteem so as not to be affected by their rejection. And—if she resents me for lying, then I will deal with that—"

"She will never resent you," he answered firmly. "If anything, she will love you even more, for all the sacrifices you've made and all the weight you have been carrying alone, protecting her from the pain..."

She intertwined her fingers with his and traced his veins with her digits. "I haven't been carrying it alone, though," she whispered. "Not since you came into my life."

Glancing up at him with big eyes, she puckered her lips slightly, inviting him to kiss her.

And he did just that, his fingers threading through her curls, pulling her closer, his tongue swiping over hers, and their love pouring between their bodies as if it was possible to say it without words.

The door to the room slammed open. "Really, Hermione? You are *snogging* while our daughter is sick?"

Hermione blinked several times, startled. "R-Ron?"

"What is he doing here anyway?" he barked, getting inside and shrugging off a coat, dripping with rain, that he tossed on the sofa next to Draco. "Oi, this is a family affair, Malfoy. Get lost—"

"Ronald!" she snapped. "Don't talk to him like that!"

Ron had crossed the room, coming to rest a palm on Rose's cheek. "Merlin, Mione, this is our daughter we are talking about. How dare you bring any fuck buddy to shag—"

Draco got to his feet, standing in front of Hermione. "I will only say this once, Weasley, you watch your mouth around my witch!"

"*Your* witch?" he chuckled. "That's ridiculous. She's *my* wife." Draco stepped forward, just as Ron nodded with his head towards Rose. "That's *our* daughter." He crossed his arms, not flinching at Draco's proximity. They both had the same height, but Ron was much larger. "Shagging her doesn't give you any right to be here—"

"Ronald," Hermione shrieked, trying to step between the two. "Draco and I are serious. He is my boyfriend and Rose's... stepfather. Besides, he is the one paying for the room—"

"Of course," Ron said. "Like he paid for your Sanctuary, right? Is that what you have been doing with him on the sofa just now? Thanking him for the luxurious room he got for Rose? Are you a whore now, Hermione? Fucking a Death Eater for his money?"

It happened too quickly. A whoosh of wind, Draco swinging a right hook, then a loud thud on the ground, and Ron was clutching his face, cursing and frothing on his way up.

"Draco!" she gasped. "What have you done?"

“Don’t you *dare* talk to her like that,” he snarled at Ron, almost breathing fire, and ignoring Hermione’s hands on his shoulders, trying to force him back.

“I’ll kill you,” Ron growled, already on his feet, at Hermione’s other side. “I’ll fucking kill you!”

“I’d like to see you try—”

“No! Draco!” Hermione cried, one hand in each of their chests, trying to push them. “Ron, Rose is just there! You’re going to hurt her—”

“Ha,” he barked, attempting to shove her hand from him. “You thought about her while snogging Malfoy right next to her bed? Godric, Hermione, I never knew you could be so—”

“Take your dirty hands off my witch, Weasley!” Draco tugged her behind him and was ready to lunge at Ron—

“Draco! Stop!” she yelled. “Go home! Now!”

He turned around to glare at her, just as Ron scoffed, “*Your* witch? I hope you enjoy my sloppy seconds, Malfoy—”

“NO!” Hermione howled, stepping in front of Draco just as he went to hit Ron again. She placed both hands on his chest and pushed him back. “Draco, go away! Wait outside or something—”

He narrowed his eyes at her, gently removing her wrists from his chest. “You want *me* to leave—”

“No,” she sighed. “I just— I don’t want you two fighting with Rose here, and he is her father.”

Ron stepped at her side, placing a hand on her shoulder that she quickly squirmed off. “Get lost, mate.”

Malfoy sneered at him, but when he spoke, it was only for Hermione, “Are you safe with him?”

“What the fuck is that supposed to mean?”

“Yes,” she replied, feeling her face heating.

“I’ll go outside for another cigarette. Please let me know when he leaves.”

Hermione nodded, and when he turned to leave, she held him by the sleeve of his robes, pulling him for a chaste peck. “See you soon?”

“Yes, of course,” he answered with a smile.

Without another glance at Ron, he left the room with his elegant, long strides, and she was left alone with her daughter and her ex-husband. She had been about to scowl at him when he beat her to it, shouting, “What the fuck, Mione? I thought Ginny was taking a shit at me when she said you were with Draco *bloody* Malfoy—what are you thinking?”

She gritted her teeth. “Ronald, my relationship does not concern you—”

“Hell yeah, it does when you are putting a Death Eater near my daughter!”

Hermione chuckled sourly. “First of all, they just met today. Second of all, you are one to talk about who stays near Rose—Ronald, you see her a handful of times a year!”

He pursed his lips, pink tinting his ears. “I do what I can—”

“Really?” she scoffed. “It’s not about what you *can*, Ron. It’s about what she *needs*! Do you think I *can* be a working single mum with no support? No, I do it because I *have to*. And you *have* to be more present in Rose’s life! Merlin, why didn’t you come as soon as you heard she was hospitalised?”

Ron groaned, “Hermione, I was *working*! You of all people should understand that, since you put your work above anything else—”

“Not my daughter!”

“Well, then your husband!” he spat.

She glared at him, mouth falling slack. “Ron, I—we’re not here to talk about us.”

“Of course, not,” he said. “You never wanted to talk about us! Fucking Malfoy came before you considered talking about us—”

Her blood rushed in her ears, and she felt her hands prickling. “Ron! Maybe it is because as soon as you decided you didn’t want to be married anymore, you stopped caring about me and Rose, while *Malfoy* cared about us, and took care of us, way before I had *anything* with him.”

His chin quivered. “He took care of you? What does that mean?”

“It’s none of your business,” she hissed. “You have disappointed me not only as a man, but as a friend I once held dearly, and I really want to forgive you for that, Ron, but you have to apologise first. You have to do better, not just for me, but for our daughter—”

“I’m sorry, Hermione,” he whispered. “I’ll do better. I’ll be more present.”

That was surprising. “Good.”

“Will you leave Malfoy then? Stop this nonsense and give us another chance?”

Her jaw fell. “Ron! No! I’m not leaving him, and even if I did, I don’t plan on giving you another chance.”

He huffed. “Oh.”

“Your relationship with Rose is not dependent on our relationship.” Hermione crossed her arms. “I want you to have her at least half of the time—”

“What? So you can shag Malfoy?”

“For fuck’s sake, stop thinking about him!” she roared. “No. You need to spend time with Rose because she *misses* you!”

“Yeah, right. And you just started thinking about Rose’s needs now that you got a new bloke?”

Hermione had had enough. "No, Ronald! I always thought about her needs. I always told you that you should spend more time with her. The only difference is that now you're listening because you are angry about Malfoy. And let me be clear, the only thing that has changed since I started dating him is that I started thinking about *my needs*, but they don't involve you; my man fulfils them all." Ron turned a sick shade of green, but she continued, "If you decide not to be a father to Rose, then the loss is yours because she is an amazing girl. But be assured that she will be loved enough by me, Draco and Scorpius."

Ron looked at her, face deflated for a few minutes, and then he rolled his jaw, glancing up at the ceiling for a sharp inhale before saying, "I can stay the night with her. If you want to go home and rest."

At first, she thought she had heard it wrong, but once she asked him to repeat it, and he did, Hermione didn't wait for Ron to change his mind, and, after telling him twice to call her if he needed to leave or anything else important happened, she quickly grabbed her bag and stepped outside.

Draco stood on the other side of the corridor, legs crossed at the ankles, and hands inside his pockets. He raised a pale eyebrow at her.

"He'll spend the night with her," she explained. "I think we could...go home?"

He nodded, thoughtfully. "Will I be allowed to spend the night with you?"

"What?" she gasped. "Of course! W-were you thinking of leaving me alone?"

"Never, darling."

"Good." She relaxed. "Because this little display of you two was really ridiculous—"

He licked the front of his teeth and glanced at the side before turning to her with darkened eyes. "Manners, Granger. Things aren't looking good for you already."

Something dropped inside her stomach, heavy, warm and wet, going all the way to her knickers. "Sorry, sir," she answered quickly. "Am I going to be punished tonight?"

The idea excited her.

"No." He shook his head. "Nothing of sorts until Rose is out of the hospital. But I am keeping count of your actions... and they will have consequences."

Chapter 22: When she is satisfied

Their walk back to the floo was silent under the sterile lights of St. Mungo's white and soft green corridors. It made her anxiety prickle, so by the time they stepped out of her fireplace, Hermione spun around and reached for his shoulders.

"Are you mad I called him?" she asked, gathering her arguments for the upcoming discussion.

"No," he answered, his big hands closing around her waist and tugging her in for a kiss. "I'm mad at Weasley."

"I had to call him!"

"You explained it to me," he said. "And it's fine. I wouldn't punish you for a decision regarding your daughter, that's yours to make..." He sighed, rubbing his hands on her sides. "I *am* going to punish you, however, for reprimanding me in front of Weasley—"

There were butterflies in her stomach, but anger simmered louder. "Sir! You two were fighting in a hospital—"

"You wanted a 24/7 dynamic, Granger," he said. "You can't choose to obey and respect me as your Dom only when I am acting in accordance with what you want."

Her mouth closed, and her spine stiffened.

"The right thing to do," he continued, "would be to let me handle the situation"—*wrongly*, she thought to herself—"and then talk to me about it in private." At the sight of her scowling, he smiled. "That would be the right thing in our dynamic. Say *yes, sir*; unless you want me to add this pouting to your spanking list."

Her tongue darted forward to wet her lips, and his eyes followed the movement. "Yes, sir," she whispered. "I just didn't want you and Ron to hurt—"

"You should be able to trust me. Trust that I'll never harm you or Rose," he said slowly. "But I did, in fact, act harshly, so I guess I have to apologise for that. I let my feelings run wild and did not act in the best interest of you and your daughter. I'm sorry. I'll do better."

Standing on her toes, she placed a peck on his lips. "I did *enjoy* seeing you possessive like that."

His fingers dug into her skin, but instead of doing anything about the heat that she felt radiating between them, her boyfriend merely ran a hand over her hair and said, "You should rest. I know you'll want to be at St. Mungo's first thing in the morning."

Hermione nodded and turned to leave, but received a gentle smack on her bum as she did and, glancing over her shoulder, she smiled at him. While in her shower, Hermione heard Malfoy calling someone and telling them to keep an eye on *them*. He didn't bring it up, so neither did she. A small part of her was actually grateful for it because the more time passed, the more she found herself second-guessing her decision to leave Rose with Ron.

He was her father and had never given Hermione any reason to worry about leaving the girl with him. Merlin, she had known him for years, and he wasn't mean or violent, just... neglectful.

Yet that day, she had seen a side of him that was new and horrible. How could her best friend for so long call her a *whore*? He had never acted that way, not even during their divorce. At that time, he had simply gone without looking back. His main problem had always been his passivity, his indifference, his absence... Not ever his violence. It sent shivers up her spine just to think about it.

"What's wrong?" Draco asked, rubbing the crease between her brows with his thumb when he joined her in her bed.

Her initial response would be to say that *nothing* was wrong, simply because it was natural for Hermione to deal with things alone, to bottle it up and then just do what she needed to do. But those were the old days, and now, even if she *didn't* feel completely safe with Draco, which she *did*, he was her Dom, and she was obliged to tell him everything. What a relief.

"I am concerned with Rose..." she began. "Can we be sure that everything is alright?"

He nodded, running a hand on her arms. "Yes, everything *is* alright. The healers said she doesn't have any organ damage or broken limbs. Her body is perfect. But she did hit her head pretty roughly, and while the scans don't show anything bad or permanent... We'll wait until she gets up to be a hundred per cent sure."

Hermione shuddered. "She's brilliant, Draco... I wonder if this will affect her mind and—"

"Listen to me." He cupped her face. "I will take care of you two. You don't need to worry. If Rose doesn't wake up just as she was before, we'll have every resource in our hands to treat and recover her."

A soft cry poured from her into his chest, and they both rested in that moment. Her needing to be cared for, him needing to be that person for her. How exquisite it was to fit so perfectly into someone's embrace, into someone's life and heart. They had both found each other despite all odds, and it felt right. Night slowly crept around them, eyelids falling heavier, and their breathing encountering a shared rhythm.

"I am worried about Ron," she said, nuzzling closer to him. "I don't think he'd do anything to Rose, but I also never thought he would... say the things he said to me today."

Draco tensed at the mention. "The only reason I won't kill him for calling you that is because of Rose, even if I think she would be better off without him—don't look at me like that, darling... I said what I said."

Hermione sighed, frowning. "Rose needs her father."

"She has—" He exhaled slowly. "You're right. She needs all the love she can get, and I... I think he loves her. I..." He scratched behind his ear. "I think he got jealous about us, and perhaps he felt threatened by me there... as if he were to lose his place in your lives..."

Biting her lip, she nodded slowly. It made sense; Ron had always been jealous and insecure.

"I don't think either of us acted correctly," he said. "He was way out of line, but we both resorted to violence when feeling like something important for us was threatened, and—"

"You two are nothing alike," she whispered. "You were violent towards a man bigger than you; he was violent towards a woman—*what*?"

Draco was scowling at her. "Did you just say he is *bigger* than me?"

Giggling, she tried to placate him with kisses, but he started to tickle her, biting the skin of her shoulders, as his fingers poked her ribs and he kept her in place with his legs. Eventually, whatever playful wrestling had begun grew heavier, and she raised her mouth to kiss him slowly, intensely.

"We shouldn't," he murmured against her lips, even as she felt him hardening against her core. "This is not the moment."

Feeling chastised, Hermione grimaced and nodded. It wasn't like she was a pervert. She wasn't really initiating something, just kissing. And if anything, he was the culprit because he had spoiled her rotten with multiple daily orgasms and now her body had adapted to expect them. He chuckled, wrapping his arms and legs around her, shifting them so they would be spooning and lulling her to sleep with the soft caresses his knuckles drew on her cheek.

That night, Hermione had a nightmare in which she found Rose dead upon entering the Hospital Wing at Hogwarts, and it felt so real that she woke up with a shouting gasp.

Draco hugged her, tightly containing her trashing until she calmed down and realised that it *had* been just a dream. Still, she was too worked up to linger at her flat, pushing some toast and coffee into her stomach and flooing straight towards the hospital with her boyfriend.

When Hermione entered her daughter's room, however, her heart almost came out through her throat, because Rose was awake, sitting high in her bed and playing with a PigmyPuff that Ron must've brought her.

"The healer just left," he said. "Examined her brain and said she is fine, but will stay another day for observation."

"My rose," Hermione cried, nearly jumping to cross the room. She immediately hugged her daughter, flinching upon noticing her wince. "Are you in pain?" She glanced back at Draco. "Can't we have some pain relief potions, please?"

Draco's eyes jumped from where they had been, watching Ron, who stood eerily silent by the windowsill, and he nodded at her. "Of course, darling, anything you need."

"No, mum," Rose said. "Actually, I wanted to talk to you."

Her tone was strange, and suspicion flared inside Hermione. She stood straighter, taking a step back but keeping a hand on her daughter's. "Yes, Rose. What is it?"

Rose's orange eyebrows lowered over her blue eyes. "Mum, Dad told me everything."

Hermione's blood ran cold, and her heart started to beat loudly inside her chest. She wanted to glance back at her ex, but instead, she remained focused on the girl in front of her, eyes waiting and jaw set. "Everything *what*?"

"He told me that you two"—Rose pointed to her mother and Draco—"were together when I fell," she said. "That you weren't *even* watching the game, but Aunt Ginny and Uncle Harry were the ones to

rescue me—”

“We were on our way—”

“—Then you two fought with my family, and brought me here after threatening to *press charges* against my cousin? Mum, it was just a game! Accidents happen!”

Hermione’s jaw dropped, and she felt Draco’s hand on her shoulder, soothing. Thankfully, he didn’t say anything, even if the tension radiating from him was palpable; they both allowed Rose to go on.

“Dad also told me he had to find out from Aunt Ginny that I was in St. Mungo’s—”

“I called him!”

“And that when he arrived here, he found you two snogging on the sofa while I was in a coma!” she exclaimed. “Upon all these actions, Dad feels like he has no option but to fight for my custody and—”

A horrified gasp tore its way out of her mouth, and Hermione’s hands flew to her mouth. She glanced at her side, finding Ron leaning against the windowframe, arms closed and an unreadable expression. How dare he? After all these years of absence, of neglect? It didn’t matter how much jealousy and insecurity he felt; *nothing* excused this betrayal. She wanted to howl, to lunge at him and scratch his face.

Behind Hermione, Draco huffed in disbelief while tightening his grip on her shoulders.

“Weasley...”

“No,” Rose cut him off. “Don’t talk to my dad, Mr Malfoy. I’m really sorry for him...” She glanced at Ron, and he pushed himself to stand closer to her in bed. “I am really sorry he doesn’t seem to notice that I heard everything.”

Three very quiet seconds followed her statement, while the air between the adults grew thick and charged. Rose was almost shaking, and Hermione squeezed her fingers.

“I heard Mum calling you, Dad, and you arrived *hours* later,” she sneered. “I heard you calling Mr Malfoy a Death Eater—”

“He is—”

“Scorpius told me that he was forced to be!” she snapped. “He is my best friend’s dad, even before he had anything with Mum. Did you know that? Do you know who any of my friends are?” Ron grumbled something inaudible, and she continued, “You called my Mum a *whore!*”

“I said I was sorry,” he said, his ears turning a bright shade of pink. “I was anxious about your health state and wasn’t thinking straight—”

“Were you also not thinking straight for the last six years?”

Ron’s face burned red, and Hermione’s mouth felt too dry to say anything at her daughter’s words. Rose took her hand free and crossed her arms in front of her chest, glaring at both her parents.

“Do you two honestly think I am stupid?” she asked. “That I didn’t notice I saw my own dad less than I saw Mrs Gimblaud?”

Ron frowned. “Who—?”

“She is the neighbour that Mum hired to watch over me when she couldn’t miss a meeting at work,” Rose spat. “I know my dad is absent, I know his side of the family apparently doesn’t give a damn about me—”

“That’s not true!” Ron and Hermione said at the same time, and their heads whipped to meet each other. She was almost afraid that her ex would claim *she* had been the one to push him away, but when he spoke, that was not what came out.

“Listen, Rose,” he said. “My family is pretty chaotic and messy and loud, and I know you don’t like this type of environment, but we all care—”

“Stop lying!” Rose snarled. “When you care about someone, you make an effort; you show up, you adapt, you don’t just give up—!”

“I never gave up on you,” Ron barked. “Your Mum was the one to give up on our family! I left and she—she never tried to get me back...”

Hermione and Rose rolled their eyes, and she was sure Draco did the same behind her back.

“Ronald, we are not going to debate our relationship in front of—”

“Well, then, when are we supposed to do it? Because we haven’t talked about it once in the last six years!”

“How about never?” Draco asked.

“Malfoy, stay out of this!”

“Ronald, *this* is not happening!” Hermione shrieked. “Our divorce is not the subject in hand—”

“Of course, it is!” Rose gasped. “Or at least it should be! I couldn’t call my mum to my Quidditch game because my dad didn’t want her there. I can’t have my dad visiting me at the Hospital because he gets into a fight with my mum’s boyfriend. Don’t you guys get it? It’s my life, too! If you two won’t get along with each other, obviously, it will affect me! And it sucks because I wasn’t the one to pick the two of you—*you* got married even if you hate each other—”

“We don’t hate each other.” Once again they had spoken simultaneously.

Rose gave them a sarcastic smile. “Perfect, so why don’t we just solve this once and for all?”

Hermione sat on the bedside and took Rose’s hand in hers. “Darling, this is a conversation for adults... You don’t have to worry about—”

“You two didn’t solve it by yourselves, even with six years to do it, so we’ll do it now—you can’t deny it because I’m hurt and it would be cruel!”

With a slow, fortifying intake of breath, Hermione first glanced back at Draco, who dipped his chin, then she summoned her patience and glared at her ex-husband. “Do you want to say something? It

looks like you do—”

She had barely finished speaking when he began, “Hermione! You were never home! You lived for your work! You wouldn’t cook, wouldn’t clean, most of the days I spent alone with Rose—”

Hermione’s eyes went wide, and she huffed offendedly. “Is that something *bad*? I was always career-driven, you knew that when you married me! Besides, you had shorter shifts at the store, of course, you could do more at home—”

“You could have shortened *your* shifts,” he sneered. “I mean, look how well you did it after I left.”

Hermione cocked her head back, frowning in disbelief. “Are you seriously saying that I should’ve been as overloaded *inside* our marriage as I have been in the past six years being a single mum?”

He stuttered, “W-well, I’m only saying you should’ve put some effort—”

“What effort did *you* put in?”

“I did everything by myself! When I dreamed about a family, it involved you, you know? It wasn’t spending time alone with a child at home while you conquered the world! And then—out of despair, I tried a wake-up call!” he shouted. “I tried to see if you would realise that our family was more important than fucking *hippogriffs!*”

Each word that came out of his mouth was more absurd than the previous one. Hermione looked back at Draco and found him barely holding back a laugh, the corners of his lips twitching. She whipped her head back to Rose because if they both burst into cackles there, it would be horrible.

“And then you *never* did,” Ron continued. “You simply went on, carrying the entire world on your shoulders and refusing to admit that you *needed* me, that you *wanted* me. I thought that once you were finished with the Sanctuary, you would come around and—” He heaved. “But then you show up with *Malfoy*!” He snapped his palms on the sides of his thighs. “I mean, why would you be willing to crawl to *him* and not back to me—”

“Do you want the list of reasons in alphabetical or chronological order?”

Hermione’s neck nearly cracked with the speed she turned to Draco, who had a smug expression on his face. He wouldn’t want her telling him off in public, so she merely placed a hand on the one he had on her shoulder and squeezed in signal.

“First of all, Malfoy, *fuck you*—”

“No.” Draco shook his head. “Watch your language near your daughter, Weasley, and stop playing the victim here. You were only wronged by *yourself*. You had two amazing women in your life, you messed up, you *abandoned* them, you left Granger fielding for herself with *your* child for years, you left Rose thinking she is unloved for *years*, and now you expect them to pity you?”

Ron’s face deflated. “I was always the one to come back and apologise.” He turned to Hermione. “I apologised over Scabbers—”

She scoffed. “He was a Death Eater!”

“And then to Harry during the Triwizard Tournament—”

“Another Death Eater’s fault!”

“And then to you over the Lavender thing—”

“You didn’t apologise—”

“And I came back to the tent—”

“You had left us!”

“The thing is,” he bellowed, “I am always the one to come back! No one comes for me—”

“You are the one to leave Ron!” Hermione pleaded. “Can’t you see this? You can’t just walk away and hope people miss you enough to do what you wanted! What’s going to end up happening is that they will realise that you are not that necessary and find a way of living without you! I already did. Are you waiting for Rose to do the same?”

Ron’s shoulders sagged, and he buried his face in the heels of his palms. His daughter stretched her arm and reached to tug him closer.

“I’m sorry,” he sobbed, wrapping his arms around her. “I’m sorry, Rose—I shouldn’t have been so absent I—”

“You won’t be anymore, right, Dad?” she asked, her voice thick with tears. “I miss you so much! I even joined the Quidditch Team for you, but I guess it didn’t work out that well—”

Draco squeezed Hermione’s shoulders, his whisper brushing against the shell of her ear. “How about we give them some privacy? Go for a tea?”

She nodded, and then he was guiding them out of the room, leaving behind a tearful Rose consoling a crying-mess Ron. When Draco closed the door, Hermione hugged him tightly, pressing her lips on his. He kissed her back slowly, his hands finding the curve of her waist, and their love was hidden under the soft sounds of the hospital morning, mediwitches talking, heels clicking, memos flying.

“What is it?” he murmured after breaking for air.

“I had forgotten,” she whispered, “what a childish man looks like. You are so good to me.”

A lot of emotions flickered across his face. First, his eyes flashed with something akin to pride. Then, they rolled quickly, making his eyelids flutter. And finally, he clenched his jaw in a scowl. “I don’t want to be good only in comparison to your ex, Granger.”

“You are great in comparison to the entire world,” she said with a smile, running her hands up and down the sides of his face. “But also in an isolated system. Draco, I—”

He placed a finger on her lips. “Please, don’t say what I think it is now.” He inhaled sharply. “I really want it to be in a more special setting.”

“Draco,” she whispered. “Love isn’t about the romantic dinners, mindblowing sex, expensive presents and grand gestures—even if I have them all with you. Love is about companionship, choice and, most important of all, support through hard times. It’s about who’s going to be next to you

when you're in a hospital sitting room, or in a funeral... Who's going to be with you when you're old, sick and crying... I hope you know that—”

“I do,” he said, eyes intense on hers. “I want to be with you in all those times. But I really don’t want the memory of the first time we exchanged these words to be connected with Weasley.”

She bit her lower lip and nodded. “Yes, sir.”

“Good girl.” With a smirk, he placed her hand on the crook of his elbow and walked them towards the hospital cafeteria, where they sat near the windows.

After Draco had made their orders with the waitress, and Hermione started to eat, they engaged in a silly conversation about the best fillings for scones and how much the choice was deeply connected to one’s character, which was Draco’s way of saying she was better than everyone else because her choice was the worst one, so truly she was making a sacrifice for the rest of human kind. She was giggling so much she couldn’t decide whether it had been a compliment or an offence.

Suddenly, however, he grew serious. “I’m going to name you a solicitor, Hermione.”

Her brows furrowed. “What for?”

He sighed, dabbing his lips with a napkin. “Weasley is not emotionally stable. Did you not notice how he had basically lied to Rose and tried to take her from you?”

She pursed her lips. “Of course, I did, but it didn’t work, my daughter is very intelligent—”

“Like her mother,” he said. “But still, it will be best if the two of you settle visitations and custody in court.”

“Yes, sir,” she said. “I should really look into some child support—”

His hand covered hers. “You don’t need his money. You have mine.”

Hermione never thought she had a money kink, but her womb disagreed because that made her hot and tingling. And perhaps a bit bratty, too... “Obviously, Draco. This isn’t for me, but for my daughter.”

“She has my money, too.”

“Well, then I’ll just save in case she wants to—“

“Whatever she wants, I’ll give it to her.”

“I suppose I can donate the bunch to the hippogriffs—“

“Am I not giving enough for them?”

She was forcing herself to remain serious, but she could cackle with happiness. Her daughter was well and had gotten her father back. And Hermione had the best boyfriend in the world, all nervous about providing for her every need. It was obvious that the child support would go to a Gringotts account exclusive for Rose, but getting her Dom riled up was working *her* up, and she needed release.

"For them perhaps," she said, placing her teacup on the table. "For me? Absolutely not."

Catching the way she was heading, his eyes darkened. "Granger... be careful."

"What?" she barked back. "I'm only being honest. I was promised to have a Dom that would tend to my every need, financial, emotional, physical... and I'm feeling deeply unsatisfied in the last realm—"

Hermione gasped, her fingers digging the table for support and her entire body trembling. Something had happened. She looked wide eyed at Draco and found him leaning back at his chair, a leg folded so his ankle rested on his knee. The picture of ease and comfort, but for an eyebrow raised at her.

It had been him. Somehow, without her noticing him getting his wand, he had conjured *something*.

It was cold, wet and hard against her core, held in place by her knickers, firmly pressed between her folds.

And then it was *buzzing*. Nearly imperceptible but clearly strange and *there*.

Hermione's mouth went dry, but she swallowed on nothing and attempted to glare at him. "D-Draco—"

The wizard inclined his head, a mocking smirk threatening to form. "Did you forget your manners?" His words were chastising, but what he did next was the punishment.

The buzzing, that had been just a soft humming, increased. Hermione's hand twitched in her thighs and she pressed her eyes close for a second before blinking open again.

"Apologise, Granger."

A spike of electricity ran up and down her spine, making the fine hairs of her body stand.

"S-sorry, sir," she muttered, after exhaling harshly. "We are in the middle of..."

Humming, Draco nodded slowly. Of course, he knew where they were. Hermione glanced around to the cafeteria, finding a few patrons and healers on their break, eating distractedly. No one knew, but her and Draco, and it made her stomach drop.

"W-we shouldn't," she tried to argue.

"What are your safe words?" he asked.

Hermione's entire body shuddered, like a pavlovian response. It was almost like he had switched a light inside her, and she was in another space completely. He had it covered. Her daughter wasn't there, it wasn't a workspace and she had given him control. If this was his idea, then she was on board.

"Stop and pause," she murmured so quietly it was barely audible.

"Good girl," he praised, but apparently his reward was the same as the punishment because the vibration increased another level.

Hermione whimpered, biting her bottom lip to hold it back. “S-sir, we’re in p-public—”

He gestured with his arm to call a waitress, and then nodded to her. “Yes, I suggest you be discreet.”

The old witch arrived, and Hermione figured Draco would be asking for their tab.

“Can I help you with anything, dearie?”

“Yes,” he said. “I think I want another coffee.” Hermione’s body jerked slightly. *Would they stay there?* “No, wait— Another scone, too.”

She fisted her palms and pressed them against her eyes, focusing on the maddening buzz between her thighs.

“Will you want anything, darling?” Draco voice reached her.

“N-no, thank you, sir.” It came out wobbly.

“Hm,” he cooed. “Are you alright? Feeling anything?”

She shook her head violently, her clit was beginning to throb under the attention.

Draco tutted. “I think she’ll want an herbal tea. It’s clear she’s feeling *unsatisfied*.”

“No!” she whined, taking her head from her hands. “I’m fine!”

But the waitress was gone.

Draco’s eyes showed he must’ve been enjoying the sight of her, because he stared hotly at her face. The hunger was so intense that it made warmth bloom until her neckline, and she nearly moaned.

Strategy. She needed one. Perhaps she could convince him to take her somewhere and shag her away from prying eyes. “D-dom...”

His eyebrows twitched. “Shhh... people might hear you.”

“Let’s go s-somewhere,” she pleaded softly. “I need you—”

The words had an immediate effect on him, and Draco’s jaw clenched, but he shook his head. “I just ordered. You’ll have to wait.”

“I can’t,” she breathed out, crossing her legs. “I’m close...”

He pouted mockingly. “I suppose you’ll have to be very quiet about it, darling. There is a lot of people around.”

The words sunk lower, heat pooling between her hips, and she cried, “N-no...”

His head cocked in surprise at her audacity, and then with another flicker of his hand, the rhythm increased.

Now, her clit was throbbing, sending jets of pleasure up her core. Hermione’s face scrunched and tiny beads of sweat slid down her neck. She realised then that she had been unfair, there was

nothing further from dissatisfied as her life with Draco. Merlin, she was so used to orgasming several times a day that spending twenty-four hours without a release had built her up almost as much as edging. She was dangerously, achingly close.

The waitress came back, sliding Draco's plate and teacup over the wooden table.

He moved to serve himself, not without increasing the speed once more.

Hermione groaned audibly, and even through the ringing in her ears she realised people around her stopped mid-conversation, if only for a second.

"S-sorry," she said. "Tummy ache—I think I need a bathroom!"

People were quick as a lightning to look *away* from the golden girl with diarrhea.

Everyone but Draco, who could barely hide his amusement then. She shot him a begging, desperate look. *Please, take me to a bathroom.*

"I'm sorry, darling," he said, sipping his coffee. "I can't take you there yet. You'll have to be a good girl and wait for me to finish. But feel free to release."

It was like she had just been waiting for his authorisation. Hermione exploded, eyes squeezing and body shaking on top of the wooden chair. She buried her face in her forearms on top of the table, the vibrations rocking her through the waves of delight.

When it didn't stop, however, she allowed only her eyes out, looking at him as if in a signal that it was over.

His look back illustrated that it was, in fact, not over. He parted his scone, taking it past his lips and then brushing the excess sugar with his thumb, which he sucked obscenely while looking at her. Hermione bit her skin to stifle a moan.

"Delicious," he murmured. "Excquisite. I think I need another one."

"Oh Godric," she sobbed. And then the buzzing increased, Hermione's breathing following suit. It was getting hotter, and harder and she just wanted to howl.

Instead, she was about to bury herself again when he held her forearm, his big hand warm and heavy and—Merlin, she needed him on her.

"No, Granger," he said. "I want to look at you while I eat. Eyes on me."

"Y-yes, sir, she squeaked.

And then, staring into his silver irises, raw pleasure running through her nerve endings, Hermione started to build up for another. Her breath was coming quickly, blood pounding in her veins as she tried to rock into her chair without being noticed.

"D-Draco..."

"What is it, darling?"

"I'm close," she announced again, pathetically, it was obvious for him that she was slipping into another vortex of bliss.

"Good girl," he said. "You're so good, Granger."

"Mhmm," she whimpered because the pending release was urgent, overwhelmingly so.

He must've taken it as encouragement, because the pace picked up and Hermoine couldn't help but gasp and shriek, thankfully muffling it in the fabric of her blouse.

"Oh my," she whimpered, her eyes still locked on his. "Oh, Draco... yes."

His thumb brushed up and down her elbow and it was almost more obscene than if he had been fisting her cunt. He was blushing when his tongue darted forward to wet his lip.

"Go on, darling..." he murmured. "You can come... You're such a good girl, you can come."

"Cast a silencing charm," she begged. "A notice-me-not, please."

He shook his head slightly. "No... You can be quiet."

She sobbed under her breath, and her hand jumped to grip his bicep, feeling the muscle under her nails. He was so strong, and so hers, that it made her want to crawl to him over the table, straddle his thick thighs and ride him right there in the middle of the cafeteria.

The mental image brought her over the edge, her fingers tightening on her hold, and then pleasure was racing along her entire body, forcing her to burst. Her walls clenched around nothing, and she knew that they were calling for her Dom's cock, almost in a Morse code.

His thumb continued to stroke her through it, and the softness of the caress made her see white spots. She furrowed her brows, silently telling how much she loved him, and found his pupils flared and lips parted. She moaned, far too loudly.

He tutted. "Shhh... I know, darling, but you have to be quiet..."

But at the second orgasm, he finally turned the toy down, until it was just a gentle whisper between her folds. Her entire body relaxed, falling slack. Her shirt was sticky with sweat and she wouldn't dare glance around to see if anyone had noticed that highly inappropriate and obscene thing she had just done.

"Salazar, look at you," he murmured. "You got me hard in the middle of St. Mungo's, Granger... Do you think that's nice?"

She shook her head, unable to answer anything. He vanished the thing and she was left with drenched knickers and a desire for Draco's cock.

"Let's go check on Rose, and then I can take good care of you—"

But whatever he was about to say, was cut off by an eagle owl tapping against the window. It was one of the ones he had at the Manor, and the sight was *surprisingly* unnerving. For it to have searched for Draco outside of his office, it must be a serious business. The same thought was evident in his expressions, as he allowed it in and retrieved the letter from its leg. His eyes scanned the parchment too quickly, and he let out a huge sigh.

“What is it?” she asked.

“I am to go to Hogwarts,” he explained. “Scorpius has been called into Headmistress’s office, he attacked Albus Potter.”

Chapter 23: When they shake hands

Chapter Notes

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

Hermione's breath caught, and she struggled to wrap her mind around his words.

"Scorpius?" He was harmless. A kind, sweet soul, as Rose had called him. According to her daughter, she had been the one to fight his battles for him, defending her friend from the bullying he suffered over being the son of a Death Eater. "Attacked Albus?"

While she had never been one to label children, believing their behaviour to be mostly the reproduction of what they learned at home mixed with the struggle of growing up, maturing, forming their own opinions... Albus Potter was a *difficult* child, to say the least.

It had started in their early childhood, when the boy would bite Rose any time they were together. Then, while growing up, he, too, was bullied and cast away by the oldest Weasley cousins, but instead of dealing silently as Rose, he would lash out at Fred II, Roxanne, Molly, Victoire, Dominique and James... Only they were much bigger than him, so he was constantly bruised and brooding.

Draco ran a hand through his hair. "Yes... I'm sorry, darling. Do you feel safe being alone with Weasley and Rose? I'll be back as soon as possible..."

Of course, she felt safe. Ron barked but didn't bite. Yet, Draco had done so much for her that she wanted to be able to do reciprocate it somehow. "Can't I... go with you, sir?"

His eyebrows knit together in a frown, and his lips moved a few times before any word came out. "I... is it Weasely? I can stay with you until he—"

"No," she replied quickly. "It's just... well, he's here with Rose, and I just thought I could accompany you..." Her voice grew quieter with every single word. *What was she thinking?* Was that a clingy, obsessive behaviour? Those were obviously private business for him, who said he'd want her meddling with his son's problems—

His hand rested on her cheek, soothing, silencing her anxiety. "Darling, I'd love for you to come with me. I just thought you'd want to stay with your daughter—"

"She's out of danger," she said. "And she wouldn't be alone, her father is here. Besides, it should be very quick, right? I just—" She reached for his hand and squeezed it with hers. "I want to be there for you, as you always are for me."

His face lit up in a genuine, heartfelt smile, and he nodded. "Such a good girl for me, Granger." And then his lips found hers, fingers threading in her curls, and the corners of his mouth insisted on curling upwards even while on her.

Before floo'ing to Scotland, the couple went to Rose's room. Ron had conjured a chessboard, and the two of them were playing, his hand resting on top of hers in the soft covers of the bed. She glanced over his head with her blue eyes at her mother, and Hermione practically melted at the warmth and happiness she saw there.

Deep down, while she had always wanted to be enough for her daughter, Hermione knew children deserved villages. It was delusional to believe a single person could provide all the emotional, intellectual, physical, financial and practical support a child demands to grow up healthy. Rose needed more. She needed her father, her grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins... everyone she could get. Yes, they were flawed, but so was Hermione, and if anything, they could serve as an example *not* to follow. Rose had already proved herself to be great in discerning right and wrong.

"My rose," she greeted. "I have to go with Draco somewhere, but I'll be back soon to—"

"Where are you going?" Rose narrowed her eyes.

Hermione couldn't help but blush at the suspicion. "Hogwarts."

The girl cocked her head to the side. "What for?"

Draco answered, "Scorpius and Albus Potter got into a fight."

Ron sighed. "Yeah, that tracks... The bloke can be a bit aggressive sometimes, Ginny's and Harry's genes together made something very unhinged if you ask me... I'm sorry that he hurt your little boy—"

Draco's arm on her back tensed. "*My son* was the one who injured Potter, Weasley. He's not a helpless victim—"

"Wait! What?" Rose gasped. "Scorpius attacked Albus? He would never! Why?"

Hermione said, "We'll find out, love. And I can tell you later, I just—" She stopped midsentence, an idea flashing in her brain. "Can you tell anything about their interactions?"

Rose shrugged, gnawing her bottom lip. "Albus is always being obnoxious." She rolled her eyes. "We sat together on the Hogwarts Express on the first day, and Scorpius had brought several sweets—he said it was the best way to make friends—"

Ron snorted.

"Do you think my son is funny, do you?" Draco sneered.

"Actually do," Ron said, setting his jaw. "I mean, who the fuck thinks bringing sweets would earn him friends? You were setting him up for bullying—"

"Just because you can't—"

Hermione's hand squeezed Draco's, and he looked at her. She raised her eyebrows, and he rolled his eyes before dipping his chin, allowing her to speak. "Ron, if my memory doesn't fail me, Harry brought you the entire lot of the trolley the day he befriended you."

Red tinted his ears, and Ron scoffed.

"Continue, please," Hermione told Rose.

"Well, Albus laughed at him, and I said it was rude," she explained. "Then Albus got all defensive, you know how he acts, he started blurting out how Scorpius was acting like he could *buy* people's

affections and that that was a Malfoy behaviour—” She pursed her lips. “Scorpius just said he was proud of his dad and that...”

Feeling Draco shift next to her, Hermione kept her gaze fixed on Rose, waiting for her to continue; she was fidgeting with the edge of her comforter.

“Well, he asked Albus if *he* would like to live under the shadow of his father...” She bit her lip. “This is a very sensitive subject for him, and he just snapped—he stormed off and has hated Scorpius ever since.”

Draco sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose. “Alright, I have to go to Hogwarts. Darling, will you—”

Hermione watched as Ron scowled with the term of endearment, but it was Rose who interrupted Draco. “Actually, Mr Malfoy?” Draco stopped to listen to her. “Can we talk?”

His entire body went stiff next to Hermione, but he nodded slowly. “Of course.”

“Mum, Dad, can you leave us? Just five minutes.”

Ron seemed personally offended by the suggestion, but Hermione reached for him. “We two should talk as well. Can I buy you a coffee?”

Her ex-husband got to his feet. “Sure... Let me—”

He had barely finished when Draco shoved a bag of gold into Hermione’s hands. “My treat.”

“I can pay for my own drink, Malfoy,” Ron barked.

“Good for you,” Draco said. “No one can pay for Granger’s drink, though.”

Rose groaned, “Godric, are you two planning on spending the rest of our lives fighting like that?”

Something hot bloomed inside Hermione’s chest, spreading a blush all the way to her neck. While her daughter had meant it as a complaint, it carried a secret message; she had accepted her mother’s boyfriend as someone who would be around for the foreseeable future, just as she felt safe that Ron wouldn’t go anywhere either. It was all Hermione wanted for Rose: acceptance and safety.

“Let’s go, Ron,” she whispered, holding his wrist and tugging him. “Draco and I have to go to Hogwarts soon.”

The two of them were almost at the door when Draco held the sleeve of her jumper, forcing her to turn and pecking her lips in a quick *see you soon*.

Hermione couldn’t help but smile. It had been small, fast and almost mindless, something they did frequently when leaving shared rooms, but in that context, she was sure it was mostly to spite Ron. And it had apparently worked, because her ex had a grimace on his face when he guided them through the corridors.

“Honestly, Hermione, I don’t know what you saw in this bloke... Actually, I am concerned with the things you chose to turn a blind eye to—”

She sighed. “Ronald, I’m not going to discuss my relationship—”

“Just tell me,” he said, smashing the button to the lift. “How did you two—?”

“We reconnected when I was pitching for donations for the Sanctuary,” she provided, entering the door he held open for her. “We ended up spending a lot of time together...” *Because he demanded that I become his 24/7 submissive.* “And we fell in love—”

“But how?” he asked, allowing her to step before him to the landing of the cafeteria.

Hermione felt her limbs prickling just being reminded of what had transpired in that place half an hour before, with her and her Dom. Now she was going to have a much less enjoyable interaction with her ex, but equally necessary.

“Ron,” she said firmly, taking a place in the line. “Listen to me,”—she spun to face him and held both his hands—“I am only going to say this because I really hope you find someone else to engage in a relationship with and that you’ll treat this woman better than you did me. Draco Malfoy cherishes me like a treasure. He doesn’t demand to be the centre of my life; quite the opposite, he requires that I shine on my own, in my career, my hobbies, and my personal relationships. He wants me to have a full and beautiful life and makes the effort to *earn* a place in it. This is what a man does. He takes on the mission of making his wife healthy and happy—”

“Wife? Is that what you’ll be? His wife?”

“Is this the only part you heard?” Hermione glared at him before turning to place their order, using Draco’s gold to pay. Once they had their drinks, and having breathed herself into a calmness, she said, “Ron... I don’t know if I’ll marry him, but yes, I plan on keeping this relationship. He’s good to me—”

“Oh, yes!” he mocked. “He makes you healthy and happy like a *real* man should do! What about a woman’s duty?”

Hermione sighed. “Ron, it’s not about duty, it’s a choice. I choose to serve him daily as well.” *In ways you can’t even fathom.* “A relationship shouldn’t be a competition to see which one is receiving more from the other... It should be quite the opposite, trying to outdo the other—”

“Why weren’t you like that with me?”

She sipped on her drink, gathering patience. “Because I felt like I was always making up for lost ground. You always needed more than I could offer and insisted on withdrawing simple things such as time together and house chores as a way of punishing me for working, which is something you knew was important to me. I was always in debt with you...” She ran a shuddering hand through her curls. “I never had enough to give back to you. With Draco, I... I am overflowing with it, and thus I can give lots to him.”

He scoffed. “Yeah...”

“I am saying this in hopes you’ll have something like that in your next relationship,” she said, placing a hand over his on the counter. “But my goal for this conversation was to seriously discuss some things regarding our daughter.”

He hummed in acknowledgement, taking a large gulp of his drink and grimacing at the temperature.

“How dare you try to lie to Rose like that? Attempting to turn her against me?”

Ron spluttered. “Hermione, I apologised—”

“And it worked for Rose because she *wanted* to forgive you,” she hissed. “But *I* will never let anything or anyone come between my daughter and me. You’ve known me for more than twenty years, Ron, and you’ve seen what I am capable of doing when something I care about is at stake. Now imagine that tenfold and financed by Draco’s fortune—”

“Are you threatening me?” he gasped in horror.

“Yes,” she said bluntly. “You and I both know that your behaviour towards Rose over the past years could very easily be classified as child neglect, and I hope you’re not naive enough to think I haven’t gathered proof of it.” She lowered her voice, stepping into his personal space. “But I assure you, Ron, that a lawsuit will be the least of your problems if you attempt something like what you did today. Are we understood?”

He blanched, his chin quivering. “Y-yes.”

“And don’t you *dare* hurt her by estranging yourself again.”

He gathered himself, adjusting his features into a scowl. “I won’t—”

“Great,” she chirped with a tight smile. “So, now that she’s at Hogwarts, I suppose we can be practical about scheduling visits. She stays with me during summer vacations and with you during winter and easter. And then whoever doesn’t have her will have every other weekend visitation. Does it sound good?”

Still taken aback by her quick shift in demeanour, he nodded dumbly.

“Brilliant,” she said. “Now, if you’ll excuse me... I have to meet my boyfriend.” She placed a hand on his and leaned forward to peck his cheek. “I’ll be back to spend the night with her, so you can rest, alright? Bye, Ron!”

And then she was walking away. Hermione couldn’t help but be affected by the symbolism of that scene; her leaving the man who had left her. Now, she was stronger, more confident and more respectful of her emotions. While some of it could rightfully be attributed to her incredible boyfriend and dom, most of the work had been done by herself.

She had been the one to dare step into the unknown, the one to give in to her desires and to let go of the false sense of control that had helped her achieve nothing in her pursuit of happiness and success.

Hermione had a new life. And it was all hers to share with those she loved; her daughter, her boyfriend and... now, perhaps, his son, too.

Draco waited for her near the fireplaces at the Hospital’s reception area, leaning against the wall with his ankles crossed. His outer robes draped elegantly against his toned form, and his wavy blond hair framed his face perfectly. She loved him, but he had asked her not to tell him just yet—to save it for a moment that belonged only to the two of them, so she decided to show it without words.

“How was it, darling?”

She pecked his lips. “Smoothly. We just discussed shared custody.”

He hummed. “I still want you to have it all written in a legal document...”

“Yes, sir.” She smiled submissively, relishing in the darkening of his eyes. “What about your conversation with Rose?”

“She reinforced her threat of killing me if I hurt you,” he replied simply. “Was quite graphic with her description of it, really.”

Hermione’s mouth fell open. “Did she?”

“Yes, I loved it,” he said. “Shall we go?”

She hooked her arm around his while they stepped into the green flames towards the Three Broomsticks. Once inside the pub, Draco side-apparated them to the iron gates, where they were welcomed again by Hagrid, who thankfully avoided offending Draco, focusing instead on praising both Rose and Scorpius, while Hermione insisted that he check his eyesight with a healer.

Their walk inside the castle happened in a comfortable silence, his fingers intertwined with hers, and Hermione found herself conjuring just how incredible it would have been to have Draco Malfoy as her boyfriend during the school years. But then again, that Draco Malfoy wasn’t *hers*, and the man at her side had only come into existence due to the growth of the previous two decades. She missed those years with him, but thanked them all the same. How could she be grateful for something she simultaneously resented?

“I can hear your thoughts,” he whispered just as they reached the gargoyle, his thumb brushing over the crease between her brows. “What is worrying you?”

“Nothing, sir.” She sighed, wrapping her arms around his middle and leaning her head on his chest. “I just... You mean a lot to me.” *I love you.*

He chuckled, squeezing her tighter. “You mean a lot to me, too... I wanted to thank you for joining me today.”

Her eyes jumped to meet his. “Of course, sir.” *I love you.*

Just as his lips brushed hers, they heard the statue behind them scraping the marble floor as it jumped sideways to reveal the spiral staircase towards the Headmistress’s Office. His palm rested on the small of her back as they both ascended, and Hermione couldn’t tell *why* she was surprised to find Ginny and Harry there, waiting next to Albus.

“Oh, good, Mrs Granger, you came too,” McGonagall said, gesturing for the two chairs behind the one Scorpius occupied. “From what I understand, this involves Rose...”

“How?” Harry asked. “She wasn’t even present.”

“Mr Malfoy says he was acting in defence of her *honour*—”

After pulling her chair, Draco took the seat next to her and opened two buttons of his robes to adjust himself. “Exactly *what* happened, if I may ask?”

“Scorpius and Albus scheduled a midnight duel,” Flint, the head of Slytherin House, said. “By the time I found them, they had destroyed one of the empty classrooms on the first floor and managed to cause quite the damage to each other’s faces.”

“Madam Pomfrey spent the morning healing them, and this would’ve gone down as another altercation between students, as I am sure the four of you are acquainted with.” She shot a stern look at the parents. “But then Scorpius attacked Albus *again*, and I realised we’d perhaps need a more *emphatic* approach to end this feud for once and for all.”

“Scorpius, why did you do it?” Draco asked his son.

The boy scoffed, crossing his arms. “I said he has to apologise to Rose, but he refuses… So I had to do the gentlemanly thing and—”

Draco ran a hand over his face. “Conflict is not gentlemen’s behaviour, son.”

He had punched Ron in the face less than twenty-four hours before.

“You said it is when it involves protecting—”

“Rose wasn’t at risk, so…”

“Well, but she’ll be!” Scorpius snapped, slapping his thighs and getting to his feet to point at Albus. “He keeps targeting us! Every class, every day. Rose and I mostly ignore him because it didn’t matter as long as it was harmless, but he *almost* killed her! And he’ll finish the job if—”

“I would never!” Albus barked, getting up as well. “Rose is *my* cousin! I wouldn’t!”

“You did! You made her fall from twenty metres—”

“It was an accident!”

The silence around the room was loud, cut only by heavy panting from the two boys.

“I didn’t mean to hurt her—” His voice cracked, and suddenly it hit Hermione just how young he was, reminding her of Harry at that age—they were very similar, but Albus had a fuller face, looking less abused, but equally tormented. “I just—I—”

He erupted into sobs, and Harry was quick to jump up and envelop him in a hug. Draco didn’t move, so Hermione acted on instinct, placing her hand on Scorpius’s shoulder. He tensed before leaning back tentatively into her touch.

“I’m s-so sorry, Aunt Hermione!” Albus cried. “I know I can’t take it back, but I wish I could—I never wanted to hurt Rose! I didn’t think straight—I was just so angry!”

“Why?” Harry asked.

“Because it’s not fair!” he sobbed. “She is *my* cousin! And she became *his* friend!” He pointed an accusing finger at Scorpius. “And James won’t talk to me because I’m his *baby brother*”—he mocked his voice to imitate the older Potter’s—“and I disappointed him by being sorted into Slytherin. Not a single one of my housemates likes me because my father got most of their parents into Azkaban, so..”

Oh. Realisation spread over Hermione, and her heart clenched in compassion for her nephew, who had been feeling lonely and cast out. Hurt people hurt people.

“Not that I would want to befriend any Death Eaters’ children, but of course, one of them decides he’d rather be friends with Rose without me! They’re both just ignoring me, like they’re superior or something!” he spat the words with venom. “Oh, of course they are! They win every house point; they’re both the best in every assignment of every class! And the *one thing*, the *one thing* I had that was just mine”—he heaved—“was Quidditch! But then Rose became a seeker, and she got *the best broom* in the market!”

Hermione’s eyes darted to Draco, finding him musing with his fingers in front of his mouth, his expression unreadable.

“I just wanted to ruin the broom,” he muttered. “She wasn’t supposed to get hurt. I even got her when she was right in front of the teachers’ stand, so someone could catch her… Dad told me they always saved him before he fell.”

“I didn’t say it so you could use it against your cousin,” Harry replied firmly. “If you wanted a new broom, you could’ve written home and we’d buy it.”

“If you wanted to be friends with Rose and Scorpius,” Ginny added, “you should’ve reached out, instead of brooding and mistreating them and hoping they would change their minds.”

“Yes,” Harry agreed. “This is inexcusable behaviour, Albus.”

“I know.” The boy glanced at his shoes, wringing his sweaty hands.

Draco sighed deeply, running a hand through his hair, and then he turned to Scorpius. “Son, I am deeply disappointed.”

Everyone in the room was shocked by that statement. After Albus’ confession, that his actions hadn’t been an accident, and that he had been targeting both Rose and Scorpius over jealousy, one would expect him to stand by his son’s side. Hermione’s fingers twitched on the boy’s shoulder, feeling him slouch slightly at the reprimand.

“What did I tell you the day before I took you to King’s Cross?” he asked seriously.

“N-not to let an annoyance become an enmity,” he bit out. “Because an enmity is almost impossible to get rid of and will most definitely become a regret.”

Hermione’s eyes widened, and she glanced around the room, feeling the heaviness of such a statement settle in each one of the present people. Harry’s face flushed, and Ginny’s hands flew to her mouth. A hint of a smirk could be seen on McGonagall’s face.

Draco, however, remained stoic. “And?”

“And that everyone is fighting their own battle,” Scorpius breathed out. “That given the choice, I should always pick kindness.”

His father nodded. “Did you follow my advice with Albus?”

“No, sir.” In empathy, Hermione rubbed encouraging palms on his shoulders.

"I believe Albus would've benefited from you and Rose extending a kind hand to him; he obviously felt lonely this year and ended up acting badly—"

"Wait, Malfoy," Harry said, scratching the back of his neck. "Albus isn't a victim, either—"

"He's your son to discipline, Potter," Draco said. "I can only answer for mine." And then he got to his feet, standing in front of Harry. "But if I might say something,"—he placed a hand on the other wizard's shoulder—"take it easy on him. I once was a Slytherin first-year, feeling wronged and cast aside. He..." He glanced at Albus. "He just needs a little love."

Harry stared, dumbfounded, lips parted and brows knit together.

Hermione didn't think before she acted. "M-maybe we could have a Quidditch match in the summer at the Manor, Draco? So the children can play together?"

Stepping back to stand at her side, one hand over hers in Scorpius, he said, "Of course, it would be our pleasure. Now... Scorpius, do you want to say anything to Albus?"

He nodded, rising from the chair and extending a hand to the other boy. "I am sorry, Albus, for attacking you and... not being your friend."

Albus looked at both his parents, who nodded, and took Scorpius's hand. "Sorry, too, Scorpius. For being so rude and violent..."

And with a handshake, it seemed like things would go a lot better from then on. The headmistress dismissed them, and an awkward walk guided them side by side with the Potters to Hogsmeade, exchanging tense apologies and promises of making an effort to bring the children together.

Hermione couldn't take it anymore. They had barely stepped out of the fireplace in her flat, where she had gone for a quick shower to spend the night with Rose in the hospital, and she just did it.

She wrapped her hands around his neck, pulling in for a bruising kiss. He had been so competent, so mature, so level-headed, so paternal, so soft, so kind...

"I love you!" she said fully, firmly and finally.

Chapter End Notes

Dear readers, apologies for another smutless chapter... The plot needed to be plotted. In the next chapter, we reach our conclusion, and I promise we have some smut!

I am so sad to say goodbye to this fic, this Draco has grown to be one of my favourites of all time!!!! But as always, I already have sooo many plans for the future of my writing.

As I love you all so much, I am going to run a little research with you.

What story would you like to have filling the gap of GGG in my posting schedules (a.k.a. new chapter every Monday)?

1. Perseus (3/?). 7th year, no voldy AU, (teenish? they're both 18) pregnancy, fluff and smut, Draco is very sweet and caring (much like GGGs)
2. Alkaline (1/?). 8th year, psycho simp Draco, soft oblivious Hermione, the dove is on life support (he'll be mean to everyone else but her)
3. Kiss it Better (5/16). 8th year, virgin Draco, no-inhibition Hermione, rom com
4. Secret fic (not posted yet, but I have 8 chapters written of 40). >35yo Dramione, rom com both with kids, coworkers teaching at Hogwarts, glacial burn and plot-driven. (This is a joke, don't choose this, I have too many published wips going on as it is, but if you want to, you can choose, but please don't want to, kidding, I'd do anything for you guys.)

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let me know in the comment section!!! And next week I'll already bring the new fic for you guys as a farewell gift.

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whoah, Mayan, that's a lot of stories you have! Yes! Make sure you check my other works, there's a great variety there hahaha (I'm crazy send help)

Chapter 24: When they go to King's Cross

Chapter Notes

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

Hermione inhaled slowly through her nose and let the puff of air pass her lips, feeling her breath dampening the mattress beneath her. She didn't want to be lying face-first on a puddle of her drool, so she shifted slightly, promising herself not to exhale through her mouth again. The effort to do so, however, spread a dull, straining sensation along the muscles of her arms and shoulders. Her hands were behind her back, thick leather cuffs linking her wrists to the spreader that kept her knees wide.

Another silent thanks to the hot yoga classes because she doubted her hips would've been able to endure something like that a few months before. But then again, that was just a small illustration of how far she had come.

Any deep thought about the passage of time or her second spring awakening vanished quickly, though, when something featherlight and smooth like leather grazed the skin on the back of her thighs. Hermione's entire body shuddered, fine hairs rising in alert.

Draco hummed behind her, repeating the motion on the other side. "You look so pretty like this, Granger, spread for me..." She squirmed when the leather brushed over her cunt. "Dripping... for?"

"For you, Dom," she whispered, feeling sparks bursting in her core.

"Good girl, Granger..."

Despite the praise, he lost contact with her body, and she heard his footsteps gaining distance, making her huff in frustration.

Draco tutted, "No, no, Granger... Be good."

"We agreed on no edging," she whined.

A low, deep chuckle she knew came from his chest echoed behind her, and Hermione felt warmth spreading over her face. "I am *not* edging you, Granger," he said and then she felt the leather again, this time tracing down her spine. "Edging would be stimulating you until you were close to an orgasm and then denying it to you. Do you feel close to an orgasm?"

Hermione let out a short, breathy moan when he finally placed his palm on her arse, his thumb lightly brushing against her entrance. He chuckled again, the bastard. "Words, Granger, are you close to an orgasm?"

"Y-yes, Sir."

Another soft snicker, and he caressed her cheek with his hand. "Don't lie to me, Granger."

It was too fast. The whoosh of wind from his hand coming down on her skin was so fast and sudden, she hadn't even noticed it leaving. The biting pain was immediate, radiating heat.

Hermione cried, arching her back.

“You are *not* close to an orgasm,” he murmured, rubbing a soothing palm against the sore spot. “Besides, I don’t even think you *will* orgasm today... This is not supposed to be a pleasurable moment, you know...”

A desperate whimper escaped her. “Dom, *please...*”

“Shhhh...” He squeezed her, borderline painful. “Granger, I *said* you were going to be punished, didn’t I?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Then... why are you complaining about edging, hm?” he asked. “Do you think you are going to come tonight?”

One of his hands continued grabbing her globe, while the other must’ve taken the leathery thing again to dance lightly against the skin: her back, her arse, her thighs, her calves, even her feet. Hermione was overwhelmed with opposing sensations of a firm grip and a teasing tingle, or the warmth shared between them against the cool air of his room in the Manor.

Tormented, she sobbed, “I do, Sir—yes.”

He, on the other hand, seemed to be having the time of his life, from the way he was laughing. “Why is that?”

“Because you always take care of me, Dom,” she said. “You never leave me hanging.”

His fingers dimpled on her flesh. “You are right... I don’t. I always give it all for my good girl.”

Relief washed over her. She had gotten to him; his sense of provider never failed. It wouldn’t take long now for him to take her out of her misery.

“But then again,” he continued, and her fear flared up. “You weren’t a good girl, were you, Granger?”

Oh no. Hermione buried her face in the mattress, groaning in frustration as his hand left her. Only the leather kept skating over her curves, but so softly it was barely anything but a tickle.

Smack. This time, it was hard and strong, acute. She knew it wasn’t his palm; instead, the leathery end of his paddle. The pain was sharper than a spanking, earning a loud yelp from her. She attempted to move, but her limbs were restrained, and she couldn’t do anything but wait for the pain to subside, melting into arousal and sliding down her thighs.

“Answer me when I ask you a question, Granger.”

She turned her head so she could speak, blowing away a loose curl. “No, Sir.”

“What did you do?”

“I told you off in front of another man,” she said.

Smack. “Manners, Granger.”

“I’m sorry, sir.”

His hand caressed the achy spot, where she could practically feel her skin getting swollen and red. “Yes... You were so mouthy, weren’t you?” *Smack.* “I thought you trusted me to take control of things.”

“I do—” *Smack.* “Oh, f-fuck!”

He tutted, “No cursing, Granger... That’s very *bad*.”

Smack. Smack. Smack. Smack.

Right cheek. Left cheek. Right thigh. Left thigh.

Lewd cries left her each time, and she tried to curl herself, but couldn’t with the bondage. It was blissfully torturous, the pain mixed with pleasure. She could feel the pressure building in her sacrum, not nearly enough for an orgasm, but clearly there. Hermione enjoyed being disciplined. What an odd thing to do.

“But I am, however,” he said, kneading the place where he’d hit, “going to let you come tonight, Granger. Do you know why?”

“Because you are a great Dom?” she tried, her voice hoarse from the screaming. “A great, generous man with me, Sir.”

He must have liked the praising, because his thumb brushed a straight line from arse hole, past her cunt to land on her clit, pressing firmly, and making her moan. It was swollen, hypersensitive and soaking wet. He wasn’t even moving, but she felt the waves of pleasure racing from where he touched her to the rest of her body. “Flattery will get you everywhere, Granger, but that’s not why...”

She pouted at being wrong, at the same time as she arched her back, pressing her chest against the mattress and trying to push her hips back towards his hand, aching for friction.

“I am going to let you come tonight,” he said quietly but firmly, “and all the other nights for the rest of your life... because I love you.”

It didn’t matter that she had heard it before; frankly, Hermione could hear it a thousand times, and it would always feel the same way: an eruption of pixies dancing joyfully inside her stomach and making her heart flutter proudly. He loved her.

He had said so on the day she told him. First, with his expression, the genuine smile that spread over his features, giving him a ten-year-younger look. Then, with his words, as he grabbed her by the waist and spun her around, like in a princess movie, saying it over and over again. And finally (or perhaps, it had been that way since the day she stepped into his office) with his actions; showering her with affection, spoiling her rotten with care, anticipating her every need and providing it to her. They had been so drunk in that love that for weeks, they couldn’t do anything other than love each other. Her punishment had been postponed until that morning and... well, it didn’t really make any difference.

He loved her.

He loved *her*.

He *loved* her.

Once upon a time, she had told herself that the feelings she often saw depicted in romantic books and movies had been written by women, and that she would never experience something like that. Real life had everyday problems, flawed people and pragmatic approaches. Hermione had settled with the idea that a timeless, all-consuming and blazing type of love wasn't written in her destiny.

She couldn't have been more wrong.

Standing behind her was a real man, competent, dedicated and passionate who *loved* her. She was everything for him, and he was everything for her. It was funny how they could occupy the other's heart entirely while still loving their children and being passionate about their careers. Hermione had once thought it was a zero-sum game. But no... it wasn't.

She had a full life. He had a full life. But they were each other's lives at the same time.

"I love you, Dom—"

The end of her sentence was cut off by a shriek when she felt his hot lips leaving a peck on the sore flesh of her arse.

"I love you, Granger."

His peck turned into an open-mouthed kiss, gentle with her sensitive skin.

"I l-love you, Draco—ohmm..."

His mouth snaked towards her centre, burying his face between her cheeks, his breathing coming straight against her ring of muscles and making it clench.

Hermione could be self-conscious about having his nose practically inside her arse, but he started to lap on her cunt and all thoughts left her mind.

"I love you, Granger."

His tongue thrust inside her entrance, her walls clenching on him as he moved it roughly.

"God—Draco, I love—ahh!"

He left her cunt and took the flat of his tongue to swirl around her clit, and Hermione exploded in a violent orgasm she didn't even see coming. She could practically see him smirking behind her, as his face left her heat, and two fingers pushed inside her cunt.

"What did you say? I didn't quite catch it—"

"I love—youuummmmm... "

He pumped his fingers, curling them to stimulate her G-spot, at the same time as his thumb swept over her clit. Hermione started to howl, body convulsing as she had barely come down from her first orgasm and was quickly building up a second, more intense one.

Her eyes rolled back, fingers curling and walls shuddering. “Draco!”

“That’s it, darling, come for me... Come, saying you love me.”

“I do,” she groaned, already peaking again, white spots in her vision and body pulling taut like a bow. “I love you!”

Her second orgasm was less abrupt, coming like a tidal wave and sweeping any last thread of consciousness she had, sending her into another dimension where her body spasmed around his fingers and her mind glided in awe and surrender. So good, so good...

His large hands held the soft flesh over her hips, and suddenly his cock was sliding inside.

“F-fuuck,” he grunted. “You’re so tight. And so hot. And so wet.”

“Eloquent,” she whispered airily, totally given to the cloud of delight.

Smack. “Don’t go being a brat just because you like spanking, Granger.”

Hermione grinned against the mattress, moaning a quick apology as he began pounding inside her. Every time his hips snapped against her bruised skin, she felt a sting of pain, but the stretch and the friction inside her cunt made up for it, and his balls slamming against her clit were quickly pushing her towards the edge.

So she began wailing how much she loved him, seeing as it was the only thing she could do to return his pleasure, bound as she was.

It worked. Draco came, with a scream, shooting blazing hot seed inside, and then seemed to want to drop over her, but held himself on the wooden poster, muttering a wandless incantation to vanish her spreader. Without the restraint, and spent as she was, Hermione fell heavily against the bed, shivering with the aftershocks. Only then did he allow himself to lie next to her, his long, large body enveloping her in a bear hug, as he whispered against her ear how much he loved her and how good she was to him.

As usual, their scene was followed by a healing body, infused with herbs, and filled with all the praises, cuddles and tending Hermione could wish for. It took her some time to come down from the high, slowly feeling herself more solid in his hug and regaining her senses to realise she was already dressed in a wool jumper and a pair of jeans, her hair combed and tied. They sat on her sofa, her thighs across his, her side resting against his front, and Draco was watching some old movie she didn’t know, tracing large circles on her back.

“When did you get so good at these?” she asked, running her hand over the long braid.

“Practice,” he replied. “You like to feel me playing with your hair when you are in subspace... so I thought I might as well do something with it.”

She giggled, covering her mouth with her hand.

“What is it?” His tone wasn’t offended, but amused, interested.

“I just—I think you’d be a great girl’s dad.”

"You mean you want to call me daddy?" He raised an eyebrow, immediately chuckling at the scowl she made. "I think so, too... I suppose I'll exercise that urge of care with you and your daughter."

Hermione snorted. "I doubt Rose will let you braid her hair."

He nuzzled against her neck, inhaling her deeply like she was the oxygen he needed, and then murmured, "I have you for that. You are everything I need."

Her hands cupped his cheek, thumbs brushing against the hard lines of his jaw, and she leaned her forehead to meet his. "I love you."

"I love you, too."

They kissed, slowly, indulgently and devotedly. Hermione loved to be in love. She loved to be loved. They still had a long way ahead of them, but it was nice to walk with someone, not alone anymore. The intercom rang, and before she could do anything, Draco had already manoeuvred her to lie on the sofa as he walked there. She appreciated his form: grey wool jumper stretching over his muscles, tailored black trousers that made his bum look biteable.

"I'll be back in a few," he said. "Our food is here."

Her brows furrowed in confusion. When Draco returned, carrying paper bags steaming with the delicious scent of Thai food from her favourite restaurant, she asked, "You ordered Muggle food? Why isn't Lindy bringing our meals as usual?"

He had laid things on the dining table and was summoning silverware while neatly taking the containers from the bags and placing them in order. "It's her day off."

Hermione gaped at him. "Her day off?"

"Yes," he replied. "I can excuse ordering in, Granger, but I draw the line at eating on the sofa. Come here."

She stumbled out of the sofa, nearly collapsing on her way there, but effectively hitting a toe on the coffee table. "What do you mean day off?"

"Sundays." He slid her plate across the table, just as she sat.

Hermione narrowed her eyes and shook her head, serving herself a spoonful of the warm meal. "Have you freed your elves?"

"Yes." He busied himself eating.

"When?"

A glint in his eyes showed her he had been waiting for that question for a long time. "Seven years ago, when you published that article at the Daily Prophet—"

"*What?*" she shrieked, her spoon clanking against the wooden surface and splashing soy sauce on her clothes. "No, no... They made brunch for us every Sunday—"

His lips were curled in a satisfied smirk. "They have a rotation so that there is at least one of them working at the Manor each Sunday to make meals and such, but most of them are enjoying a day

off. Blubby is busy with some gardening he wanted to do, so I thought we could order—”

“And they’re paid?”

“Naturally.”

“How much?”

His tongue darted forward to lick his lips. “About seventeen times the amount per hour that you suggested—”

“Draco!” she hissed. “Why have you been keeping this from me?”

A chuckle threatened to escape him, but he inhaled sharply to hold it in. “I haven’t. In fact, I believe you read a few of my payrolls during—”

“I was warming your cock!” she said exasperatedly. “I was barely paying attention—*sir*.” Her tone changed upon seeing his brows twitch. “Forgive me, I don’t mean to be disrespectful, but this is something I—you told me not to pester your elf!”

He continued eating calmly, as if they weren’t having that ludicrous interaction. “Lindy said you called her a slave that day, so I suppose I was right in doing so.”

“B-but,” she stuttered. “I thought—”

“Darling, eat.”

Hermione pursed her lips, reaching for the second spoon he summoned and nearly burning her tongue with the food before saying, “I thought she was a slave, sir. I didn’t know you had freed your elves.”

He cocked his head. “Funny... I think I asked Blubby to mention it the first time you went to the Manor.”

Her mouth fell open, and she shook her head in disbelief. “All this time... I had no idea.”

He grinned. “There are a few things I have done for you that you don’t know... Some you’ll never know.”

“Oh, but I want to!” And then, catching his words, she said, “You did it for me?”

“Yes, Granger.” He reached for her hand across the table. “It has always been about doing things for you.”

Warmth spread throughout her body, and she was overwhelmed by a sense of belonging and desire. It was only natural, then, that she would suck him off while he finished eating, only for him to bend her over the table and fuck her hard just before they had to leave.

They apparated outside King’s Cross and walked, holding hands, to Platform 9 ¾. Hermione had a fizzing sensation in her belly. In almost four months of their dynamics, it *had* become second nature to obey her Dom, to ask permission before doing anything and to let him lead the situations. Being in public, however, was always a challenge—especially in the Wizarding World, where they were both known. Just upon stepping onto the crowded platform, they were already met with

dozens of sets of eyes staring at them with curiosity. A former Death Eater and one-third of the Golden Trio would *always* receive attention.

“Hermione, Malfoy,” Harry greeted them with an awkward smile close to a grimace.

At his side stood Ginny, who said, “Hya!”

They hadn’t spoken since their meeting, but a tacit agreement had been reached to quash the family feud and foster healthier interactions among the children. Hermione sensed the two wizards had been confronted with the reality that they were supposed to be the mature ones, and that any rivalry between them should’ve ended with the end of the war and, mostly, age.

Hermione, on the other hand, had drifted apart from the Weasleys and Potters organically and realised she didn’t actually miss their friendship, so the only thing left was to forgive them, if only to find her own peace.

“Good afternoon,” Draco said smoothly.

She squeezed his hand, asking for his permission silently. Merlin, it was exciting to share that little secret with him, their little dynamic, having to submit to him in public... her knickers would be ruined by the end of the day. He dipped his chin, a hint of a smirk showing that it also amused him.

“Hi, Harry, Ginny,” she said. “Where are the twins?”

“With Mum,” the redhead replied. “Ron told us Rose will stay with you, but will come for next Sunday’s lunch?”

“Mhmm...” Hermione confirmed.

An awkward silence hung between them.

“Did she recover well?” asked Harry. “Albus said she did, but—”

“Yes, full recovery.” Draco shifted to stand behind Hermione, his hands on her shoulders, drawing circles against her bones. It was natural; she swayed slightly back to meet him. “Please, expect our owl to invite little Albus for a Quidditch afternoon at the Manor. Your oldest flies too, doesn’t he?”

“Yes,” Ginny said. “James.”

“He could come too. So it would be two against two. Scorpius, Rose, Albus and him.”

“Great,” Harry chirped. “We have a video game at our place...” He scratched the back of his neck. “Maybe Rose and Scorpius would like to come someday.”

“Perfect.”

Another uncomfortable silence began, but this one was luckily broken by the whistle of the Hogwarts Express approaching. Draco guided her to wait a little behind as the locomotive arrived, thick clouds of vapour spreading across the platform, and most families rushing forward to get their children.

Hermione tried to stretch her neck and search for the mane of red curls, or the white-blond locks, but she was effectively distracted by two hands on her hips, tugging her closer, and lips dropping

soft pecks on her crown.

“Dom...” she whispered, eyelids fluttering.

“It will be difficult,” he said, “having to restrain myself from fucking you all the time.”

Her entire body shuddered, heat coiling inside her belly. “It’s only going to be three months and then they’ll go back to school, Sir.”

“Far too long,” he grunted. “Expect to spend the entire night tending to my neglected desire.”

She flipped to face him, arms wrapping around his neck and pulling him down for a kiss, not caring about where they were—

“Ew,” Rose said behind them. “Are you two going to be snogging *all the time* during summer?”

Mortified, Hermione turned to see her. “N-no, w-we—”

“Good afternoon, Rose,” Draco said, extending his hand to grab her trunk. “How was the trip here?”

“Hi, Mr Malfoy,” she muttered, giving him a reluctant smile just as Draco shrunk her baggage to put inside his pocket. “It was fine.” She pointed at the boy arriving at her side. “Scorpius is a bit mad, though.”

“Really?” Draco asked as the girl moved to give Hermione a hug. “What happened?”

“James threw a dung bomb in our compartment,” Scorpius whined. “Salazar, I *hate* Gryffindors!”

Rose punched him lightly on the shoulder. “Oi!”

“Not you, obviously.” He rolled his eyes while hugging Draco, and then, with a mischievous grin, he added, “*Sis!*”

“Can you two tell him to *stop* calling me that?” Rose groaned.

“Why? We are all a family now,” Scorpius said, showing his tongue.

“Is that so?” Draco asked, taking his trunk and shrinking it as well. “Then why didn’t you address my girlfriend with respect?”

The boy’s face flared pink until his hairline, and he quickly extended his hand and stuttered, “G-good a-afternoon, Mrs Granger.”

While Rose made fun of Scorpius’s predicament, Hermione took his hand, saying, “You can call me Hermione, dear.”

“Mrs Hermione,” he corrected himself, making Rose guffaw. Scorpius scowled at her and had been about to say something when the Potters walked past them, Harry jerking a curt nod to Hermione and Draco, while Albus waved shyly.

“Nice summer, Scorp, Rose!”

"I'll see you next week, silly," Rose barked back, but they were already crossing the brick wall back to the Muggle station.

"Actually," Draco said, "we'll be inviting the Potters to the Manor during the week, so..."

"Really?"

"Rose, don't interrupt him," Hermione instructed, earning her a soft caress on her back.

"Sorry, Mr Malfoy."

"It's alright," Draco said, guiding them out as well. "And yes, really. Albus and James. We'll be playing Quidditch."

"I hate Quidditch," Scorpius complained. "*And I hate the Potters, so—*"

"You didn't seem to hate Albus that much lately..."

"Shut up, Rose!" he hissed.

"*Scorpius.*"

"Sorry, Father," he corrected himself. "Rose, please refrain from speaking about things you do not know about. Even if I don't hate Albus anymore, I still hate James and even more flying—"

"That's fine, Scorpius," Hermione provided, ruffling his hair as they walked towards the parking lot. "I don't fly either; we can both find something cool to do on the ground."

The look he gave her showed every bit of gratitude and relief.

"Wait," Rose said, "but then it'll be only three and we can't play with an odd number—"

"I'll join you," Draco offered.

"Thanks!" Rose grinned, blushing lightly, and then, turning to her mother, she asked, "Mum, can we get burgers for dinner, please?"

Hermione knew Draco had a five-course dinner waiting for them at the Manor, but she wanted more than anything to nudge at their dynamic. "It's Draco's decision, love."

"I think a burger would be great," he said as soon as he saw the pout in Rose's face.

It was like he just *couldn't* help but give them everything they wanted or needed.

Which was why, later that night, as Scorpius and Rose slept in front of the telly in the living room, after a long night of movies, snacks and family laughter, Hermione rode Draco on her bed, his fingers digging into the flesh of her arse, and pulling her up and down, her breasts bouncing against his hungry mouth.

"Dom, I want to build a sanctuary for unicorns."

And he said yes, because truly, what else would he say?

Chapter End Notes

I can't believe this is the end.

This story was born from both a fest prompt, a need to practice/improve my smut writing and a craving for a more mature Dramione fic after writing Letterbomb and Orion, in which they're both teens.

But it grew to be so much more than just porn with a mild plot! It was about Hermione's journey into losing and gaining control, while prioritising herself and seeking her own pleasure. It was about Draco making amends for his mistakes and gaining power to do better by the people he loved. It was about childhood rivalries being treated as only that, and adults being mature and communicating.

I'm sorry if perhaps the resolution of conflicts with Potters and Weasleys felt anticlimactic. I just wanted something more realistic and more positive when considering the children involved. Also, the absent father was very much inspired by *my father* and Rose did what I wanted to have done rs.

I'm also sorry for everyone who asked for Hermione to have a child with Draco, or expected a marriage. They've been together for less than six months at this point, and Hermione spent eleven years focused only on being a mother, I really wanted her to have this moment and this relationship for herself. It's an open ending, who knows where life will take them?

Thank you so much for joining me for this ride and supporting my writing. Let's continue together?

The winner of last week's poll was *by far* [Alkaline](#), and we'll have weekly updates every Monday, starting from November 10th.

But [Perseus](#) will also have weekly updates, every Thursday, starting from November 14th. Make sure to subscribe to either one of them (or both), if you'd like!

Kiss it Better *and* the secret fic will also be written and completed eventually, so if that was the vote, subscribe to [my user](#) to receive notifications on them!!

AHHHH I'm sobbing here!! Thank you all, so so so so so much!!!! LOVE YOU!!!

Let me know what your thoughts are about the story!!!

(Also, wouldn't it be amazing to have this as a podfic? *manifesting!*)

End Notes

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Thank you for reading. If you liked it, be sure to check [my other fics](#)  
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