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his navel and away from the bar.  
A strong tugging sensation pulled through  
one.”  
in preparation. “In five, four, three, two,  
the four of them hovering their hand over it  
Draco eyed his watch as he counted down,  
Congratulations again Zabini.”  
followed suit. “Well, enjoy your evening ladies,  
always being astute in her observations,  
downed their drinks and Hermione, as  
on the table between them. The group  
box inside out and unwrapped it, placing it  
pulled the handkerchief with the small music  
to his estate in France was now active. Draco  
them that the portkey that would take them  
A beeping from Draco’s watch altered  
Hermione struggled again. “It is what it is.”

It was unsettling and too stark a contrast for his brain to bridge the difference between this version of Granger who was evidently a grown woman and the girl from school. Draco tried to recall who Hermione had been dating, he knew it hadn’t been Weasley, he remembered an article in The Prophet a year or two ago about his and Luna Lovegood’s wedding. He vaguely recalled a conversation he had overheard a few months ago about her and Oliver Wood at the ministry but he hadn’t been overly interested at the time so he couldn’t say with certainty that it was in regards to a romantic relationship. Frankly, if he had never seen the witch again he wouldn’t have cared. He had indeed changed in his time since the war but she was a reminder of a much darker time in his life that he would much rather forget.

“My condolences.” Blaise offered up.

accidentally charm a witch’s robes see-  
eyes glistening with delight. “You  
Theo exhaled several large smoke rings, his  
curly-hair friend.  
definitely have not,” Blaise smirked at their  
Draco and Blaise laughed loudly. “They  
know mate, they might have moved out”  
Gregory snorted into his glass. “You never  
“Yikes.” Theo sighed.  
Miticent.”  
Blaise gave a hearty laugh. “Daphne and  
wiggled his eyebrows.  
again and are any of them single?” He  
who did Astoria choose as her bridesmaids  
resent that statement. Speaking of which,  
Theo lit up his cigarette with a smile. “I  
wife next week,” Blaise smirked back.  
“If you had planned it, I might not have a  
plan this shindig,” Theo grumbled.  
“I still don’t think it’s fair that Draco got to

through one time and suddenly you’re an asshole.”

“You are an asshole, and it was two witches, three times.” Draco retorted.

“It was a small prank, like five years ago. You would think they would have learnt to check after the first time and definitely after the second. Anyway, it’s not like anyone saw anything, it was only the top layer and I nearly got expelled. I had detention for a month.”

“In any case, I’m pretty sure if you try anything they will likely hex your balls off,” Blaise warned with a shrug.

“Can’t say I wouldn’t enjoy that. I’ll go get us another round.” Theo laughed standing and wandering off into the crowd.

“I can say I would enjoy witnessing it.” Gregory joked after he had gone.

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around her shoulder in cuffs. Between her cleavage, her hair hung loose leather jacket, heels, long dangly chains hung dress that barely made her mid-thigh, a conservative swot type but now she wore a her seemed wild, she had always been this to assume she had too. Yet this version of certainly changed in that time, it was only fair cascade since he had seen her last, he had though he supposed it had been half a controlled bookworm who lived by the rules. remembered going to Hogwarts with, the This certainly wasn't the girl he you." "Damn Granger!" Theo laughed, handing tequila.

"Cheating on me is easy, but trying to kiss her while she's got no teeth and a split lip isn't." Hermione threw back a shot of tequila.

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His head felt like it was about to split open, beyond his closed eyes the room was far too bright. A groan escaped his lips. Try as he might, Draco could not recall a single explanation for the throbbing in his head. The bar was the last thing he could remember, though somewhat foggy now. His throat struggled to swallow, his mouth was painfully dry.

An annoyed groan came from beside him followed by "Oh my lord, would you shut up I'm trying to sleep."

That was enough for his eyes to snap open because he knew that voice. He stared in wide-eyed horror, his brain trying to process the sight before him. Despite his thumping



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"Grangeter. Should I congratulate you in gave a nonchalant shrug. Hermione was a few drinks deep already, she earher?" Blaise eyed her with a smirk. return, that was quite the performance "Grangeter. Should I congratulate you in you're a lucky man."

"Zabini, I hear congratulations are in order." She drawled. "I would say don't do it but I have met Astoria and she's lovely," returning a few moments later with a tray of shots and whiskies with Hermione Granger "Look who I ran into," Theo said when of trying yourself to someone forever. There were no signs of doubt in his friend's expression and for the first time he wondered how it would feel to be so certain that." Draco chuckled, placing his glass on the table between them. He observed Blaise. "I think we would all enjoy witnessed the table between them. He observed his glass on the that."

Hermione was a few drinks deep already, she returned, that was quite the performance "Grangeter. Should I congratulate you in you're a lucky man."

"Zabini, I hear congratulations are in order." She drawled. "I would say don't do it but I have met Astoria and she's lovely," at his side.

"Look who I ran into," Theo said when returning a few moments later with a tray of shots and whiskies with Hermione Granger "Look who I ran into," Theo said when of trying yourself to someone forever. There were no signs of doubt in his friend's expression and for the first time he wondered how it would feel to be so certain that." Draco chuckled, placing his glass on the table between them. He observed his glass on the that."

entering the bar had not been one of them. The crunch of the blonde's face had been nauseatingly loud and naturally captured the attention of their little group as well as over half of the other patrons.

"Is that... Hermione Granger?" Theo seemed far too entertained with the scene before them, his eyes lighting up with glee.

"It seems so." Draco sipped on his fire whiskey. Blood was covering the blonde's face and for a few minutes, the two women appeared to be in some heated debate. Despite the drama that had occurred over the past few minutes it was short-lived and the blonde hastily exited the bar through the floo, no doubt to St Mungo's, the bar settled once more and Draco had turned his attention back to his group.

“What did you do?” Venom dripped from his voice, his friend however seemed unfazed.

An ear-splitting scream came from the other side of the bed and Hermione shot up to her feet, the blanket wrapped tightly around her, she was looking in horror at her hand. She looked over at the pillow curiously cowering his genitals and let out another scream. “Oh for fuck sake, stop screaming!” he snapped at her. If her mouth hung open like that for much longer she would no doubt swallow a fly. Draco observed that she finally seemed to have fallen into shocked silence and blushed furiously. When she lifted her hand, the sunlight gleamed off of a large shiny jewel on her ring finger.

**SELLING FANTASY IS ILLEGAL.**  
**DON’T DO IT.**  
**SHAME ON YOU.**  
**IF YOU BOUGHT THIS,**  
**IF YOU BOUND THIS,**  
**IF YOU BOULD THIS,**  
**OF YOU!**  
**XOXO SENNA**



## CHAPTER 1

**01 AUGUST 2003**

“To Blaise and Astoria!” Draco raised his glass, his friends mimicking his actions. “And a lifetime of happiness for you both.” The wizard in question smiled back at him in appreciation. Draco was truly happy for Blaise, he had never known anyone who was so genuinely in love as Blaise and Astoria were and this time next week the two of them would be married.

Draco launched forward and grabbed a pillow to cover himself. This was not good, his heart began pounding, and he tried again desperately to recall anything that might have led him to this moment. He couldn’t even place this room. It certainly wasn’t one from his estate in France. How long had it been since the bar?

The double doors to the room flew open again and there in the doorway stood a man who was no doubt to blame for this. He didn’t know how but he was certain it was all his fault.

“You.” He growled out.

Theo smiled looking far too pleased with himself. “Good morning Malfoy’s. I’ve brought gifts for the happy couple.”

Draco frowned “What the hell are you talking about? What happened Theodore?

again. "Oh my god, I'm naked!"  
dread before her shrill cries filled the air  
god, you're naked! A moment of silent  
shriek and she disappeared again. "Oh my  
her head popped up above the bed. Another  
"Me? What the hell are you doing here?"  
"Granger?" He exclaimed. "What the hell  
are you doing here?"

the other side of the bed taking the blankets  
followed by her tumbling onto the floor on  
matched his as a shriek filled the room.  
seemed her own feelings on the matter  
fluttering open and landing on him. It  
is your problem?" she snapped, her own eyes  
frowning with annoyance. "Oh my god, what  
at the witch in the bed who was now  
that nearby made him sick. He was still staring  
head, Draco receded from the bed at a speed  
with her.

His eyes fell in terror to the hand holding  
the pillow in front of him. There on his ring  
finger was a platinum-coloured band.

"I've brought you both some hangover  
remedies, then if you two aren't in a rush to  
fornicate again, you should probably get  
dressed, I need your help." Theo tossed a vial  
towards each of them, Draco instinctively  
caught it, while Hermione's fell softly onto  
the bed. She was still staring in horror at the  
ring on her hand.

"Help you?!" Draco snapped. "I'm going to  
murder you. I'm not going anywhere until  
you tell me what the hell happened!"

Theo shrugged with a smirk. "Suit yourself  
but I don't think that Astoria will be very  
happy with that, given that I don't remember  
about ninety-two per cent of last night and I  
seem to have misplaced Blaise and Gregory."

face off a table a measly two minutes after  
heroin, Hermione Granger bounce a witch's  
friends bachelor party, watching war  
bear witness to that evening at his best  
So of all the things Draco had expected to  
whisked him off to the Caribbean.

Right, he hadn't kidnapped Blaise and  
no strippers had arrived, no one had been in  
somehing sneaky but so far, he had behaved,  
had taken note. He had expected Theo to try  
certain young witch entered the bar, Draco  
chateau in France, which is why, when a  
more drinks followed by a bar having  
hardly worth the title of a bachelor party and  
part in planning it) he relented. It was quiet,  
with the stipulation that Theo would have no  
plan a bachelor party but in the end, (and  
been difficult to convince Blaise to let him

*"Those are penguins."*

remember something from last night,” see if we can find anything that will help us see if we can find anything that will help us „We should probably search the room, and

that it's rather scary.” He mumbled. „You know, when you look at me like two of them and slowly his smile dissipated. and glared at him. Theo looked between the grinne, Draco lifted his head from his hands activity to start your marriage off with.” Theo „Aww, that will be a sweet little bonding

emerged from the bathroom.

Hermione from behind him, finally having myself included.” Grumbled the voice of

„Something tells me there will be a line,

like he meant it too.

just so you know.” At that moment, it felt

„When this is all over, I am going to kill you

„Yeah, mate”

hidden in his hands.

again. „Theo?” he said quietly, his face still

dropped it, letting his head fall in his hands

portkey and replaced it with another one which brought us to fucking America.” He growled, slowly looking up at his curly-haired companion. “You kidnapped Granger from the bar, forcing her to come with us and then what...lost the fucking groom?”

Theo shoved his hands in his pockets and nodded dramatically “Yeah that about covers it.”

“You must know more than that Theodore. You knew Granger and I..” his voice trailed off, he couldn't bring himself to voice their situation.

Theo reached into his back pocket and produced a folded piece of paper. “I only knew because this was in my room underneath the key to your room” He extended it to Draco, who took it with uncertainty.

Unfolding it confirmed what he was so desperate to deny. It appeared to be a muggle marriage certificate. He let out a groan and



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to keep his voice even. "You stole the  
"So let me see if I have this right." He tried  
anything so horribly wrong in all his life.  
him despite being certain he had never worn  
seemed to belong to a male and certainly fit  
some clothes scattered around the floor that  
care, she could stay there. He had found  
about needing a minute, frankly, he didn't  
himself in the bathroom muttering something  
the end of the bed. Hermione had locked  
Draco's head hung in his hands as he sat at

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The story in which Draco and Hermione make up married after a drunken night out  
ON  
Then again, the events following were not exactly things Draco planned for either.  
had not been one of them.  
Of all the things Draco had expected to bear witness to that evening at his best friend's  
bachelor party, watching her brother, Hermione Granger bounce off a table  
backing away, was not one of them. Hermione Granger bounce off a table  
backing away, was not one of them.

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Two Weddings a Man Hunt

Hermione grumbled, opening the mini-fridge and peering inside.

"I don't recall asking for your help, Granger." Draco snapped, he was met with a cold look of disdain.

"Well, my dearest husband. Unfortunately for the time being we are stuck with each other until we can get back to London and have this whole mess sorted out. I'm guessing this genius didn't think to submit paperwork for the sudden fifth passenger before kidnapping me last night and unless you know where your identification papers are, then we're in this together." Hermione snapped.

Her little speech filled him with dread. His I.D. had been in his suit jacket, which from his very brief search of the room was not in here. He glared up at Theo again who this time at least had the decency to begin looking remorseful.

## TWO WEDDINGS AND A MAN HUNT

strained. "Don't worry darling, that will fade  
was clear to everyone but the woman was  
forced a small nod and held her smile, which  
a surreal feeling isn't it dear?" Hermione  
minutes before laughing "I suppose it is still

The woman stared back at her for a few  
"...So we really got married last night?"  
Hermione offered a forced smile. "So uh,

in his life.

thing because he had never seen them before  
Draco could only assume it was a muggle  
with a box of little white and black rectangles.

The grey-haired peppy woman returned  
Imminent death."

Theo sighed. "Yeah, yeah I know.  
"Theo?" Hermione gritted out.

conversation with his mother.  
going to lead to a very uncomfortable  
going to be a quick fix otherwise this was  
Rowena, Helga and Godric that this was  
sacred. He prayed to Merlin, Lazar,  
were raised with the belief that marriage was

piled like a beehive and too much make-up  
sauntered out. She seemed to recognise them  
because her face lit up in a smile. "Oh, you're  
back! I was expecting to see you at some  
point, I didn't think it would be so soon."

"You were?" Draco raised an eyebrow at  
her.

"Yes of course! You lot have good timing  
actually, I've just finished copying the  
ceremony onto the extra tapes for you. Wait  
here, I'll go get them." The woman was far  
too peppy but she disappeared out the back  
again before they could say anything else.  
Hermione sighed a deep sigh of  
disappointment. Draco followed her gaze to  
a certificate that hung on the wall behind the  
counter. Indicating that this was indeed a  
registered chapel. At least, among the muggle  
world, Draco couldn't recall any knowledge  
on muggle to wizarding laws regarding  
marriage. It probably had to do with the fact  
that those raised among the wizarding world,

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silence before a short woman with grey hair of them stood awkwardly looking around in open the door. For a few moments, the three further inside the building as they pushed stale liquor. A chime sounded somewhere in the office inside was dingly and melted off.

“Get this over with them.”

When no one answered, “Alright, well let’s look to the two wizards beside her, sighing, “Anyone remember this?” Hermione

“Instant weddings” hung above the door, the side and a neon flashing signs reading orange with green and pink bells painted on the chandelier was a disgusting shade of bright

alternatives he agreed.

and because he couldn’t think of an one of those sham fake ones.” She suggested official this is. With any luck it will just be remember us, and maybe find out how could start here, go back and see if they certificate from the ground. “I suppose we Hermione knelt and picked up the marriage

before you know it. Soon enough the very sight of him will drive you to contemplate suffocating him.” The lady joked waving her hand at Hermione as if they were old pals.

“Oh, you have no idea,” Theo muttered.

Hermione accepted the box hesitantly and turned to glower at Theo.

“Now what?” Draco snapped once they were in the empty parking lot once more.

Hermione shifted uncomfortably. “I guess we go back to the hotel and watch the tape to see if that tells us anything.”

“Watch these? Why? Does it move?” Draco picked up one of the rectangles out of the box and shook it expectantly. Hermione blinked disbelievingly at him.

“I’m married to an idiot.” She mumbled before walking away in the direction of the hotel they had left not even thirty minutes ago.

“I think your wife’s angry,” Theo stated casually.

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in the shower, also claimed to have no Gregory, who had spent a great deal of time their little mistake.

was going to add to the difficulty of reversing fucking idiots, the evidence of proper vows considered rather intelligent, that they were occasions that for two people who were both their wedding and exclaimed on several mornings. Blaise had watched the video that Hermione and Draco had awoken in the hotel suite. They had congregated in the hotel suite

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# CHAPTER 4



slowly but surely steered the muggles away from the area. When finally the last muggle left their sight she configured a door in the glass of the enclosure through which Gregory burst through. The door disappeared but now they were stuck with a Gorilla Gregory standing next to them.

“Quick before someone comes along.” Blaise hissed.

“Reparifarge,” Hermione whispered. Gorilla Gregory slowly morphed back to regular Gregory much to his relief and just in time because not a moment later, another muggle wandered around the corner towards them.

Gregory glared at Draco, Hermione and Theo. “What the hell took you guys so long? One of the gorillas wanted me as its mate!”

Even Blaise joined them when they burst into laughter.

“We may need to come up with a plan b,” The four of them looked at each other. Hermione mumbled and led the way. Draco

“The four of them looked at each other. information. Thank you.” of today we will look at offering a reward for on. If the penguins are not located by the end of which we currently have no information puzzling is the additional fully grown gorilla, have yet to be recovered, what is even more attempts to locate the missing penguins, they addressed the crowd. “Despite the crew’s In front of them, the muggle man

know,” Theo whispered.

stopped dead. “Somehow I think they the zoo behind him. The four of them interviewed a man in a uniform matching what appeared to be muggle reporters

The zoo was crowded and surrounded by secrecy and getting caught... unless anyone the enclosure without breaking the statute of we find an opportunity to levitate them into has any better ideas?”

found at that moment that he was extra thankful to have her expertise in that manner because there was no way he could have handled the muggle transaction of buying the tickets with as much fluidity as she did. He immediately cursed himself for the thought.

The three men followed her distractedly as she led them through the many walkways. The smells here were not pleasant. The creatures were weird-looking and weird-sounding. There were also far too many people and most definitely far too many small children complaining far too loudly. Hermione came to a stop not far from an enclosure that had several more of the birds they had found in the bathroom at the hotel, unfortunately for them, there were also hordes of people around. Which meant that it was going to be impossible to sneak the penguins back in with the others at the very least. Hermione pulled them behind a large bush in the gardens where they all crouched

has...or rather is...Gregory", she looked sheepishly between the three of them. Of course, Theodore thought that was hilarious and burst out laughing. Two guests who would have been responsible if it turned out that was indeed the case.

memory whatsoever of the previous night or how he had ended up as a gorilla but he had somehow acquired a rather unexplainable tattoo on his left butt cheek of a king muggle playing card wearing a cowboy hat that he spent a long time trying to scrub away in the shower before realising it was permanently fixed to his body.

It seemed to be something that would remain unanswered and after Hermione had ordered them all more food they set about trying to figure out how to get home.

"We will have to get in touch with the embassy," Draco grumbled.

"Sure except, we're in muggle Las Vegas, in a different country, with no knowledge of their wizarding government. Seriously Theo, did you really not plan a way home?" Blaise asked.

"Mate, I don't know what to tell you, okay? I'm sorry!"

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“You heard the zoo owner mention the extra gorilla night? I think we should probably head there next. I don’t know for sure, but I have a feeling that it probably their element here.

"Alright so now where do we go?" Blaise asked to Hermione expectantly, he seemed to have realised they were indeed very out of place in the library.

It actually seemed to be a not-so-bad idea so that's exactly what they did several minutes later when they failed to come up

"Althought. Here's my thoughts.", "Theo offered. Draco was about to make a remark about how no one wanted his thoughts but Theo carried on before he had the chance. "We cast a touch-me-not charm, turn the penquins back here and sneak away. Eventually, someone will spot them, catch them and return them to the cage right?"

looking at each other with a type of "what now?" look.

"It's a map of the zoo!" she cried out. A frown quickly replaced what little joy had been on her face.

"What." Draco snapped. She met his eyes with uncertainty.

"Well we can't exactly turn up with four stolen penguins and say 'Hey guys, here's the birds that were in a secured enclosure, this idiot thought it would be a good idea to borrow them for a night.' can we?" She jabbed her thumb in Theo's direction.

Theo suddenly sat up, feigning offence. "Hey! You don't even know it was my idea. It might have been *your* idea!" He was faced with three faces staring back at him with expressions that clearly said 'Are you fucking serious.' "Well we don't know, it might have been!"

Hermione rolled her eyes and turned back to Draco and Blaise. "I suppose we could try transfiguring them into stuffed toys or something, sneak them in that way and hope

thought you would at least wait until we were  
would kill me when this was over but I  
“Merlin Hermione, I know you told me you  
annoyingly liked the taste and sensation.

chooking. He also found that he rather  
throat but he remained blissfully free from  
his, the tingling pops carried on down his  
Draco found that as he carefully swallowed

fizzy liquid from his airways.  
before coughing to try and exhale any of the  
spluttered and the liquid shot from his nose  
unlike anything he had tasted before. Theo  
nose, a sweet taste danced across his tongue,  
Draco's throat and tingled in the back of his  
Fizzing bubbles instantly burst against

sipping cautiously on the red drink.  
gave each other a dubious glance before  
appeared. The rest of them followed suit and  
an odd crackling sound, a small opening  
mimicked her actions with curiosity and after  
is permanent?” Draco felt his chest

shaped puncture marker on top. Blaise

of it indicating that it was self-cooling but  
that seemed a bit beyond what he would have  
thought muggles capable of. He could see no  
liquid inside, in fact, the entire top of it  
appeared to be closed, yet Hermione was  
definitely sipping something from it. The  
amount of things he did not understand in  
this world made his head hurt. Hermione  
caught him frowning at her drink and raised  
an eyebrow. Silently she returned to the small  
icebox and after unburdening herself of her  
own cylinder, retrieved four more from  
inside.

Hermione handed one to each of them and  
grabbed her own. Draco frowned down at  
the cold object in his hand because as far as  
he could see there was no way in which he  
could sample the liquid inside. Theo lifted it  
to his lips, shaking it when nothing fell out.

Laughter sounded from the returning  
witch. “No, like this.” Hermione demonstrated  
the movement of an oddly

“him?”  
before Blaise chicked on. “You fucking lost  
at each other in uncertain silence for a minute  
around. Theo, Draco and Hermione looked  
“Where’s Gregory anyway?” Blaise looked  
gritted teeth.  
“I can’t say I recall,” Draco said through  
arms out beside him.  
jumping off the deep end?” Blaise drew his  
known didn’t even do a little research before  
most responsible overthinkers I have ever  
seriously not think this through? The two  
before a council for voting. Did you two  
of marriage in the wizarding world had to go  
least. The only case I know of the dissolution  
definitely won’t be quick or quiet at the very  
it might be *incredibly* difficult to get out of. It  
“Well I don’t know that it’s permanent but  
is permanent.” Blaise felt his chest  
tightening.

“Wait, please tell me you aren’t saying this

“To be fair Zabini, we also lost *you* but we  
got there in the end.” Hermione retorted,  
turning back to the drawers.

“Well, that’s fucking fantastic Granger.  
Gold star on your detective skills.” Blaise  
snapped in her direction. While she didn’t  
appear bothered by his mood it mildly irked  
Draco.

“Oy. Watch it.” He growled. Blaise snorted  
at him in disbelief. “She is the reason we  
managed to track you down at all. None of  
us know what the hell to do here.” Draco  
reasoned.

“Can I just point out that it’s Malfoy now,  
not Granger?” Theo piped from his corner.  
The three of them turned to glare at him  
again.

“No, it is definitely still Granger.  
Regardless of how difficult it is to end this, I  
have no interest in changing my name to  
Malfoy.” Hermione hissed.

seen, perspiration had gathered on the side to be the oddest-looking cup he had ever Draco eyed the cylinder in her hand, it had thing." Hermione shook her head.  
"It doesn't matter. It's obviously a muggle "A what?" Draco raised an eyebrow.

of the red cylinders and taking a sip. I'm guessing it's not as simple as getting an annulment." Hermione sighed, cracking one get us all home and Malfoy and I divorced, tomorrow coming up with a plan on how to that we're all reunited, we can spend the day will be here for at least one more night. Now England quickly but I think it's obvious we Zabini, I know you would like to get back to clearly worked out so well for us last night. where we are going, especially when that tripping around the city without any clue on I think it's probably unavoidable to go right now." Blaise gloated.

"I might believe you if you weren't grinning

home." Theo gasped, his coughing finally subsiding.

Hermione dramatically rolled her eyes at him. "Well take smaller sips then you idiot."

Blaise seemed to be observing his own drink in a pleased manner. "Coca-Cola?" He read the words on the side. "I like it."

Draco silently, and reluctantly, agreed.

"As much as it pains me to suggest this, I think it would be wise for us all to stay rather close tonight. Given that it took us an entire day to track us all down, something I'm rather not keen to do again tomorrow. We can transfigure some of these pillows and the chairs into extra beds but at least this way there will be no chances of certain people wandering off and getting lost." Hermione glared at Theo, indicating that the 'certain people' she was referring to was in fact him.

Realising that all four of them were glaring at him Theo rolled his eyes. "Oh honestly.

"I don't know if this helps anyone but I his temples. "That's tradition," Blaise mumbled rubbing his forehead. "That's archaic!" Hermione exclaimed in mother go into the study any time soon. Malfoy family tree. Merlin, *please* don't let his had also probably already appeared on the sudden realisation hit him that Hermione no matter how temporarily." Draco groaned. and purposes, you are technically a Malfoy, option. It's automatic. For all legal accounts with now. "In the wizarding world, it isn't an Draco sighed, he may as well get this over clearly growing tired of the man's attitude. "Excuse me?" Hermione glared his way, armchair. "Idiots," Blaise snapped, falling into the rushing forward to examine it. folded piece of paper. Hermione was already looking pictures on it." Theo held out a found a map? It's small and has funny- "I don't know if this helps anyone but I his temples.

"You know your mother is going to kill you right?" Blaise raised an eyebrow at him.

"We are hoping we can rectify this unfortunate incident rather quickly and quietly, and preferably without her ever finding out." Draco groaned.

The way the Blaise was staring at him now in disbelief was filling him with dread again. "You're an idiot." He finally threw out.

Theo snorted in the corner "That's twice in less than three hours he's been told that." He remained seemingly unfazed when Draco and Blaise glared his way.

"What do you mean?" Draco asked.

"Even if it occurs in the muggle world, marriages are binding between witches and wizards. There's a reason this type of thing just doesn't happen in our world."

"What!?" Hermione screeched, apparently having caught the conversation and turned to stare at Blaise with wide eyes, the colour draining from her face.

Find and help Blaise. I deserved this,” Draco stated before going to who stared back at him expectantly. “You suffocate. He smirked down at his friend onto his back so at the very least he wouldn’t undged his friend with his foot, rolling him He tried to ignore the feeling of pride as he Draco sighed and walked over to his friend.

slamming the door.

“Oh shut up Theo.” Hermione snapped before storming into the bathroom and incohereent mumblees.

broke the silence with another one of his anywhere but at each other. Eventually, Theo at the floor and Draco and Hermione looked Silence ensued as Gregory awkwardly stared hands and stomed out into the hallway. he snatched Theo’s room key from his staff, “Unbelievably stupid,” Blaise mumbled as the Weasleys to shame.

turining a brilliant shade of red that would put

Gregory stared wide-eyed at him. “You’re rather scary, you know that? Brilliant.. but scary.” He slowly cautioned a glance her way. Draco had to agree as he stared down at one of his oldest friends lying face down on the ground mumbling incoherently.

“What does he mean *again*? Please, please for the love of Merlin, tell me you two did not have sex last night.” Blaise pinched the bridge of his nose in exasperation.

Draco couldn’t bring himself to deny it. While the thought made him dizzy with regret and created a tightened feeling in his chest, while he had no memory of it occurring they had both woken up very naked and very much in the same bed. Hermione was as quiet as he was and after being met with several minutes of silence Blaise opened his eyes, looking bewildered between them.

“I can neither confirm nor deny that claim.” Hermione finally offered, her cheeks



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As it turned out, Blaise wasn’t much help either. Theo had apparently locked him in the bathroom until he could calm down but he had very little memory of anything other than Theo shouting through the door that Draco and Hermione had gotten married and suddenly the birds had appeared to ‘put him in a better mood’. Unfortunately for Theo, they hadn’t seemed to have done that because he had ended up with a second punch to the face before Hermione opened

stuff to the ground in a body-bounding curse. still in her hand, a moment later his body fell not thought it through because her wand was had clearly had enough and Theo had clearly again.” Theo quipped. Hermione thought, “If you would prefer the privacy to fornicate, “You Malfoy’s could always use that room pillows from your room.”

with making extra beds. “Theo, go get the So with that settled, Hermione got to work both shot warning looks his way.

quickly looked away as Draco and Hermione “Malfoy,” Theo mumbled in correction but Gregory started.

“Regardless, I think Granger is right,” how to get home!” He yelled.

I’m supposed to be getting married in less than seventy-two hours and we have no idea Blaise’s eyes grew comically large. “Theo, I planned it.”

You’re all acting as if the world’s ending and

Blaise frowned at him in annoyance as he entered Theo’s room, throwing the pillows he had gathered up back onto the bed. “I just don’t get it, man. You’re the careful one. The responsible one. All of this crap I expect from Theo, but you got married, Draco. On a whim. Granger was raised in this world, I don’t expect that anyone has taken the time to explain the seriousness of marriage in the wizarding world. Believe me, I thought it was rash and honestly entirely unexpected but I would have thought you would have thought it through, even a little, somehow decided that this was a mutually beneficial arrangement but it seems as the days gone on, the opposite has become obvious. You haven’t left yourselves many options to reverse this Draco, especially if you two have already consummated.”

Draco groaned at the thought “Please don’t.”

tables.

on to searching the drawers of the bedside seem to be listening anyway. She had moved because no one answered her and she didn’t Hermione asked, seemingly to no one member going to a zoo, does anyone “Penguins belonging in a zoo, ready to kill him.

against his face. Blaise looked positively despite holding his own bottle of cold water on though.” Theo chirped with a smile Hermione has a thing that you can watch it beautiful too, it’s a shame you missed it. “They sure did. The ceremony was against his now-swollen knuckles.

eyed them as he held a bottle of cold water “Did you two honestly get married?” Blaise meant something to the rest of them.

penguins.” She had announced it like that shook her head in shock. “Those are about. She shut the door again quickly and the door to check what birds he was taking

“Oh hey, guys. Nice to see ya. Congratulations on the nuptials. Excuse me.” He spat snarkily as he pushed past Draco and stormed toward Theo, who realised far too late what was about to happen.

There was a loud smacking sound as Blaise’s fist collided with Theo’s jaw.

bed. Hermione spluttered from her place on the bed.  
 „Astoria? What... How are you here?“  
 „Merlin, I will kill you.“ Astoria ground out.  
 „Theodore Euphides Not, I swear to  
 chance.  
 „Astoria?“ Blaise stared in shock at his  
 „You.“ The witch groaned.  
 Face as he tried to cover under his blanket.  
 eyed back up at her, colour draining from his  
 remained on the floor. Theo stared wide-  
 been released from his bindings but had  
 out form of Theo who had at some point  
 was too busy glaring down at the sprawled-  
 and he swallowed nervously. She however  
 the very angry-looking witch in the doorway  
 the room to find the danger, they landed on  
 with a start, panicked, his eyes flew around

The room was a loud bang that woke Draco

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thrown a blanket over him but it seemed they all were rather reluctant to reverse the body-binding curse.

Hermione was still shut away in the bathroom which frankly, allowed Draco to relax slightly. Blaise claimed one of the transfigured beds and immediately settled down to sleep, Gregory had done the same. Being locked in small spaces with a group of animals had not allowed either of them to get much sleep the night before. Draco looked between the queen bed and the couch. He chose the couch. There was no way he was getting into that bed again. He allowed the darkness to suck him into the world of sleep, praying that tomorrow would bring some solutions.



the man Hermione was now talking to with a knock on the door interrupted them. A knock on the door nearby.”

Draco looked from the object on the desk to the man Hermione was now talking to with a knock on the door nearby.”  
 must have our wands and I.D.s somewhere too. And I still had my bag, which means we stupid suit jacket over your shirt last night felt. „Malfoy look you were wearing that Zabini.“ Hermione looked as disgusted as he “Okay so Goye was with us then but no another so long as they live.  
 Granger pledging to love and cherish one horribly to watch and hear him and backround lying across several chairs. It was behind him and Gregory was in the could see a smaller version of Theo standing of himself and Hermione on the screen. He with the images of a very intoxicated version on the face of a black box and he was met clear that they all had. Images started moving last hour had taught him anything, it was ask if she had lost her damn mind but if the

trolley of food. The food smelt divine and his first bite confirmed that this was officially his new favourite meal.

“Theo, how far away is your room?” Theo had just been about to take a bite of one of the burgers but set it back down again with a disappointed sigh after examining her expression. It was only five minutes after the two of them disappeared down the hall before they returned again, this time not empty-handed. Hermione tossed his jacket at him and began ruffling through her bag.

Draco felt a sense of relief as his hands wrapped around his wand. There was another key too, it wasn’t like the one they had used to get back into this room, instead, there was a blue tag hanging from it with the name of what Draco could only assume was another hotel and the number 7 on the other side. Hermione’s eyes were wide with delight, rudely she snatched it out of his hand before hurrying back to the desk. “This is only a few

He wished he could recall what had led them to the stupid decision to elope in the first place. It seemed they had all agreed that enough had been said because no one said a word for the rest of the evening. Blaise had shovled a pillow under Theo's head and slept.

Blaise sighed and offered his friend a look  
of sympathy. "Look, I'm just saying, I think  
you should consider the possibility that this  
may be permanent. You haven't left  
yourselves much wiggle room in an already  
incredibly small opening to get out of this."

Draco helped gather the pillows in silence,  
the words, this may be permanent. Buried  
in the forefront of his mind. He hadn't  
wanted to think about that possibility, he  
possibility that he may be tied to Granger  
forever. Granted she was an attractive  
woman but she also made his blood boil.  
They had too much bad history, it was a  
recipe for disaster, it was bloody Granger for  
Merlin's sake.

Astoria looked up at her as if she had grown a third head. "Because you freaking owled me Granger?!" She shrieked.

"Malfoy," Theo mumbled in correction.

Astoria's eyes flew back to him. Marching forward she yanked the pillow out from under his head and started whacking him repeatedly in the face with it. "I—" Whack. "Don't—" Whack. "Want—" Whack. "To—" Whack. "Hear—" Whack. "A—" Whack. "Damn—" Whack. "Word—" Whack. "Out—" Whack. "Of—" Whack. "Your—" Whack. "Freaking—" Whack. "Mouth—" Whack.

“Ow! Ow! Okay! Merlin! Okay!” Theo’s hands flew up to protect his face from further assaults.

"I owled you?" Hermione asked in astonishment.

Astoria stood and straightened her dress and smoothed her curls again. She looked around their group in bewilderment. "Yes, with a very confused and scared owl, you

“I’m just saying, I know you’re her husband and all but it’s blatant favoritism.” Following her out of the room, “Serves you right!” Draco snapped back, “Oh for goodness sake, just bring it with you.” Hermione snapped over her shoulder. For such a short witch, she moved fast. She was practically bouncing as she opened the door to a dingy, cheap-looking hotel room. A constant thump was coming from the other side of a door leading off the room. Draco raced forward and tried to open the door to no avail. Checking the coat was clear he cast a quick Alohomora.

The door flung open to reveal a very strange-looking black and white birds. Aggravated-looking Blaise and several very doors down” she exclaimed, turning around again. “Let’s go.” She grabbed her bag and was halfway out the door. Theo sighed again as he put his larger down for a second time, untouched.

“I’m just saying, I know you’re her husband and all but it’s blatant favoritism.”

“Serves you right!” Draco snapped back, “Oh for goodness sake, just bring it with you.” Hermione snapped over her shoulder. For such a short witch, she moved fast. She was practically bouncing as she opened the door to a dingy, cheap-looking hotel room. A constant thump was coming from the other side of a door leading off the room. Draco raced forward and tried to open the door to no avail. Checking the coat was clear he cast a quick Alohomora.

The door flung open to reveal a very strange-looking black and white birds. Aggravated-looking Blaise and several very

"Theo, I swear to Merlin mate. Statue of secrecy or not, one more word and I'll Avada you right now." Draco snapped, storming off after the witch.

By the time they made it back to their hotel room, he was sweating from the hot Las Vegas sun, his stomach was rumbling and his headache was returning. Hermione however seemed driven by the need to get to the bottom of the events of last night, he didn't blame her for that but unfortunately, he was rather out of his depth here. Hermione was busy stuffing one of the black rectangles inside a larger silver rectangle box while he rifled through the small ice box she had been looking in earlier. "Do muggles not eat?" he grumbled when he was faced with what appeared to be bottles of water and some small red cylinders.

Hermione rolled her eyes and walked to an object on the desk, asking it for some cheeseburgers and fries. He was tempted to

because it's been a secret long-time dream of Draco raised an eyebrow at her. "Yes, Hermione snapped.

"I don't want to be married to you,"

opposite sides of the table alone.

Hermione and Draco awkwardly slumped on Gregory and Theo to move, leaving way she stood and motioned for Blaise, Astoria seemed to mean right now by the dread before averting their gaze.

already looking at him, they shared a look of Draco looked up to find Hermione was heads on a spike."

attitude she very likely will put both your to Narcissa with a we will see what happens' going to be a lengthy process and if you go returning to England? At the very least it is come up with some kind of plan before Astoria tutted. "Well, might I suggest you Hermione.

"No..." Draco whispered in union with

to your head, he isn't going to murder you simply for being his wife—"

"I wouldn't be so sure of that," Draco grumbled but fell quiet again under Hermione's glare.

"From a logical standpoint, your magic would become weaker should you break your vows. Your next marriage would be weak at best—"

"Blaise's mother was married seven times." Hermione snapped.

"Yes. She was also widowed seven times Granger, it's not the same as divorce." Blaise retorted with a dramatic eye roll.

"Malfoy." Theo didn't even flinch when the five of them scowled in his direction.

"Look I'm just saying, it's unlikely without any solid grounds other than the fact that you were drunk and did it on a whim, that the application will be accepted. So I ask again, have you two given any thought as to what you will do if that's the case?"

as they made their way down stairs.  
"I think I'd prefer that," Draco mumbled us all alive for being late." Gregory reminded, "I don't think it will matter if Astoria skins dead from the daggers Draco glared his way. shrugged. If looks could kill Theo would be calmed down by the time we get back?" Theo worse, who knows, maybe she will have "Well, I suppose that could have gone up and fell to pieces on the floor.

Draco swallowed as the envelope tore itself Elopement?

do I make myself clear Draco?

BRIDE come see me as soon as possible, kill me? I demand that you and your new they catch wind of this! Are you trying to press are going to have a field day when the hell are you? Elopement! My son! The I was mistaken about that as well! Where staying at the chateau but it turns out that even involved! I thought you were to be

Theo seemed far too eager as he linked arms with Hermione upon entering the foyer. "Sorry we're late, we received a very loud red congratulations from your mother-in-law about your marriage."

Hermione frowned. "How does she even know?"

"Malfoy family tree." Blaise sighed.

Hermione blanched. "Oh my god no. Harry—" Hermione choked out, panic settling in across her face.

"What?" Theo cocked his head to the side. Astoria steered her towards an armchair in the lobby just before Hermione collapsed. She looked up at Draco in horror, her fingers lingering near her mouth. "Harry lives at Grimmauld Place, it used to belong to Sirius Black. You and your parents were on the family tree. Oh my god, It would have changed there too."

“There’s no danger to yours or Malfoy’s lives by remaining married. You both exchanged the vows without a wand pointed quite likeley?” Hermione eyed her.

“Why is it unlikeley?” Hermione blurted out.  
“Okay, I’m just going to say it. Have you denied the divorce, which honestly is two discussed what you’re going to do if you get plates in front of them.

The six of them sat in awkward silence in the booth of a dinner, picking at food on the

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## CHAPTER 6



mine to be married to the insufferable know-it-all bookworm that is you.”

“Guess you hit the jackpot then.” She retorted sarcastically.

“If they deny the divorce there should be no reason for our paths to become intertwined. I am quite content with my life as it was, we should continue to live it separately.” He offered sympathetically.

Hermione looked somewhat relieved. “I agree. Let’s hope it doesn’t come to that.”

“I don’t think it’s wise for you to attend the audience with my mother either. With any luck, you will become widowed yourself after she finds out the true nature of this... arrangement.”

Hermione smirked at him and Draco observed that her eyes glistened when she was being playful. “Now, now Malfoy, it’s not fair to tease me with such a wonderful prospect.” Draco snorted.

sharp tapping on the window pulled their attention to a large owl. Draco’s stomach dropped. He recognized the owl immediately as his mothers. What’s more, he recognised the red envelope attached to its leg as a howler.

“Oh no.” Blaise quickly silenced the room and let the bird in before it could draw too much attention.

Gregory transfigured a lamp into a bird perch, which the poor thing collapsed onto. Draco took a deep breath before reaching for the envelope. It immediately burst with the sound of his mother’s voice screaming at him.

**Draco Lucius Malfoy!**

**Would you care to explain to me why the hell the family tree is telling me that my one and only child has eloped?! To one Hermione Granger no less?! No note! No letter! No invitation! No warning of any kind that you two were**

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a small fortune, he could only assume he had thing was rather impressive, it would have cost away from the man wearing baby oil, that Draco started thinking though as he walked responsibility.”

moron, not that I give a crap, she’s not my pretty massive rock on her finger, you Draco frowned at him. “She’s wearing a Draco he meant no harm.

bumped, throwing his hands up to show assume was baby oil coating his skin, marred.” The man, with what he could only “I’m so sorry man, I didn’t know she was before stalking off inside.

“Don’t remind me.” She had muttered embarrassed. Hermione only rolled her eyes. that the man appeared suddenly slid up beside her. Draco noticed with glee “Hello, my darling wife.” He smirked as he with her before deciding to have some fun.

areas. He watched the man flirt shamelessly minimum allotment of her more private

Astoria insisted on her and Hermione having dinner alone tonight to talk.



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The next day he was even more delighted when she failed to make an appearance at the hotel restaurant for brunch. Astoria mentioned that she had gone to do some emergency shopping. Later he had returned to find that a fresh set of clothes had been brought for everyone, much to everyone's relief.

He had decided to explore the hotel pool that afternoon but had quickly come up short when he saw Hermione laughing with a man poolside. She was practically naked, save for the tiny scraps of fabric covering the

tried to steady her breathing. “Well, when we Hermione wiped a tear from her eye as she “Would someone like to fill me in?”  
Astoria looked at them all, clearly confused. amusement.

Even Gregory began to chuckle in at Theo’s single struggled word of family. but quickly they too were in fits of laughter burst into laughter again, taking Blaise with inside the elevator once more before Theo accepting the key from him. They made it helpfully.” Hermione smiled, graciously “Thank you, Todd, that has been most ma’am.”

The name “Todd” smiled in return. “No wearing a tag pinned to his coat jacket with anything else mentioned.”  
“I see.” Astoria smiled sweetly. “Was there purse,” Hermione mumbled.  
“Well, I guess that explains the cash in my

woke up we had... in Theo’s words... misplaced Blaise and Greg, when we eventually found Greg, he had been transfigured into an ape at the zoo and was trapped in the enclosure.”

Astoria shook her head in amusement. “I see.”

It was quick work to tidy the hotel room and group each person’s belongings as none of them had much.

“Right, well I suppose we should work out who’s staying where,” Blaise said after it was done.

“Mrs Malfoy and I will be staying in the honeymoon suite,” Astoria emphasized the name Malfoy, her tone left little room for argument. “What you four idiots decide between yourselves, I couldn’t care less about.” Blaise looked like he was the only one who would dare argue in any case but didn’t.

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The bird took flight and Draco took  
Draco  
you.

little less dramatic, of course, I am not trying to kill  
to see you after Blaise's wedding. Please try to be a  
person, between the two of us if you please. I will come  
events. I would rather have this conversation in  
I am currently in the States after some unforeseen  
Mother,  
mother

Draco had penned a quick response for his  
temporarily truce.  
in the silence of what appeared to be their  
They had walked back to the hotel together  
response.

Hermione volteered. Draco only nodded in  
paperwork to apply while we're there." "We might be able to at the very least get the  
Astoria and Blaise's wedding. If we are quick  
"We should arrive a few hours before

brought it from a muggle shop somewhere  
nearby, though with what money? Goyles?  
No, that doesn't sound like something he  
would do. He was a Malfoy after all. More to  
the point, why was she still wearing it? Why  
was he still wearing his? The thought hadn't  
even occurred to him to remove the wedding  
band on his finger, in fact, if he was being  
honest, he had forgotten all about it until just  
now.

Hermione was noticeably absent from  
dinner that evening too, Draco rationalized  
that it didn't bother him but it did. It was  
rather rude to be fair. Instead, he made  
another toast to Blaise and Astoria wishing  
them the best for their wedding the next day.



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avoid the wrath of Astoria Greengrass, a  
getting ready to head down to the foyer to  
Fifty-two minutes later, just as they were  
mumbled.

Draco groaned. "Please don't." he  
stated staring at the door.

"Your wives are scary as hell," Gregory  
them in silence once more.

She followed Hermione out the door leaving  
alive if a single one of you is late or missing;"  
in the foyer and I swear I will skin you all  
will meet up for lunch in an hour. Be waiting  
Astoria narrowed her eyes at them. "We  
"Nope, you're right."

Hermione quickly stood upright grabbing  
her bag and was halfway out the door.  
Hermione staying with literally any of these

"Are you telling me you would like to  
Astoria stared at her for a few moments.  
Hermione asked.

"Oh, don't you want to stay with Blaise?"

he rejoined your group to collect his  
winnings."

"His winnings?" Hermione parroted.

"Yes ma'am, it was mentioned that he had  
been rather successful on the blackjack tables  
at the casino down the street, the amount in  
the safe is..." he paused to check his notes  
"\$683,110.00 US dollars. This was what  
remained after securing the three suites and  
providing very generous tips for the staff."  
He offered a warm smile.

"Three suites?" Draco asked.

"Yes, Mr Malfoy, suite 217, suite 223 and  
the honeymoon suite in preparation for the  
arrival of one Mrs Astoria Greengrass and  
her new husband Mr Greengrass." The man  
slid a key towards them with what Draco  
could only assume were the keys to said  
honeymoon suite. Blaise muttered  
something under his breath but Draco  
missed it.

“Well, fuck,” Hermione obviously felt the heat of her words. “The only thing Draco could think was that we need to be and when. Maybe also check if we have a solution and all know where that we have a solution and all know where should probably go see the front desk, now stuck here for another two nights. “We way home, it meant that they had a despite the relief he felt knowing they had a have made it to the wedding. However, possibly had been high that they would all be help otherwise, or that without Astoria, the hate to think how they would begin to seek forward thinking to find an owl, he would have to think that even in her merrimented state, Hermione had had the said nothing on the matter other than the Draco internalized his relief that even in her deep sigh that escaped her at its conclusion. remained silent and unlike her husband-to-be learning of the tape’s existence. She had wedding between Draco and Hermione after also, unfortunately, insisted on watching the head from both Blaise and Draco. She had the pages open to the third page. Sharlene’s

woman from the wedding chapel in Las Vegas. Unlike her peppy older counterpart, Sharlene was less than impressed by the requests being put forward to her by Hermione.

“I don’t understand.” Her voice was full of judgment. “Has no one explained the process to you?” Her eyes darted between the two of them.

“Clearly not,” Hermione growled through gritted teeth.

Sharlene offered her a withering look back. “You will need to fill out these forms here.” She dropped a stack of papers on the desk between them. “Once submitted they will be added to the roster for your hearing which will take place twelve months from the date of submission. From now until said hearing you will need to abide by the requirements set out on the third page. Failure to do so will result in automatic denial of your request.” Sharlene droned on with annoyance, flicking

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extra transfigured beds had created. She had a point and Draco would be glad to put as much distance between her and himself as possible.

The concierge, however, wasn’t as helpful. “I’m sorry Mrs. Malfoy, we have no extra rooms available.” Draco suppressed a shudder at his address of her. Hermione sighed in disappointment. “The rooms you secured for the week were the last ones we had.”

“Week?” Hermione frowned.

“Yes ma’am. You paid the charges for all suites until Friday.” The man had responded.

Hermione visibly relaxed a little. “I already paid?”

The man frowned at her. “Yes Ma’am?”

Hermione looked back at their little group before turning back to the man behind the counter. “I didn’t say anything else did I?”

The man looked between them all. His eyes softened towards Hermione, a playful glint

which who eerily reminded Draco of the themselves in front of Sharlene. A young person for a while they had found to person eventually after being passed from person

with the mess that was their marriage.

Theo and Gregory had left in record time as well leaving Draco and Hermione to deal with the mess that was their marriage.

Hermione didn't seem to hear her properly and nodded absent-mindedly.

Hermione did present at the wedding ceremony. Before she left stating that she expected to be held only briefly to gift Hermione's arm paused getting ready for the wedding. Astoria began crashing had both whisked away to Astoria and Blaise had both whisked away to into the nearest ministry official's trash can. Thrown up what little breakfast she had eaten felt like an eternity. Hermione had swiftly twisting and turning in all directions for what through the floor which had pulled them, they had all been far too eager to step

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same way because she promptly threw up again into the trash can beside the desk.

Sharlene wrinkled her nose in disgust. "You're not pregnant are you because that will likely result in a denied application as well."

Hermione and Draco glared at her. "No, she isn't bloody well pregnant." Draco snapped.

undeterred "and that he would be by when he was, the receptionist continued clearly confused. Being the professional that into fits of laughter. Astoria frowned at them, asshole while Blaise and Theo both erupted muttered something about Draco being an refuted from laughing herself. Gregory refine appearance to be struggling to amusement forced its way past Draco's lips. Hermione offered him an apologetic shrug. "Pecoky?" Gregory repeated.

"Goyle,"

look at his records. "One Mr Pecoky- asked to secure the winnings of one of your companions in the hotel safe." He paused to appearing at the realisation. "Yes Ma'am, you



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To the blissful relief of the others, Astoria had immediately headed to the ministry upon receiving Hermione's owl, filed the necessary paperwork, floored to the embassy here in Las Vegas, paid the fine for the extra unauthorized person (Hermione), scheduled the earliest available time slot to return floor to the ministry in England, which, not so blissfully wasn't until the morning of Blaise and Astoria's wedding. That had earned Theo a rather aggressive smack around the

Draco scolded at her still accusations. "Merlin Mother. I'm not being blackmailed."

However, what does that give him? He's over your shoulder! Are you being blackmailed?"

"Eloped Draco?" Are you serious right now? I was just about to check this place.

"Mother.. you look as lovely as ever. I don't have time to chat. I'm afraid, running behind schedule. I just came to change and get the things." He tried to move quickly but the woman was fast and matched his pace

lived with him.

He couldn't help but smirk but that was quickly replaced by dread as he found himself in the foyer of Malfoy Manor, face to face with his mother who looked absolutely

Coward.”

snarky voice saying "Oh you absolute

those he wanted, before he could carry him away

"Yeah... that one's all you. Don't be late."

"Right, well I will see you at the wedding then..." Draco trailed off.

"Wait what? You don't expect me to go to that, do you?" Hermione stuttered. Draco raised an eyebrow at her.

"Astoria told you to be there and you agreed."

"When did that happen?" The pitch in her voice rose an octave.

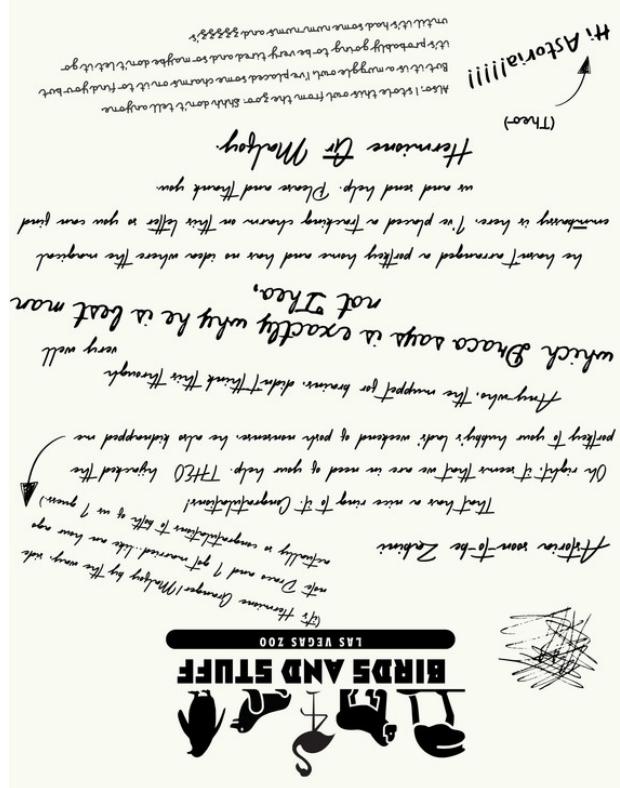
"When we got here?" He threw his arm away from his body.

"Oh... right. Where do I go? What time?"  
She mumbled.

“Zabini estate, be there by three. It’s a formal event so you know, try to dress appropriately.”

Hermione's eyes narrowed in annoyance.  
"Believe it or not Malfoy I do understand the proper etiquette for a wed—"

"Hermione!" Harry's shrill voice carried across the foyer, they both looked up to see him marching furiously toward them.



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awkwardly lunging in the ministry foyer. Grumbled. They found themselves “Okay! I was just checking.” Draco had been given. “No, I’m not breaking hitting him with the stack of paperwork they in annoyed disbelief. Suddenly she was stopped in her tracks and looked at him She cleared the office doorway.

“You’re not pregnant thought, right?” Draco whispered to her the second they

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“Then explain yourself Draco. You never even told me you two were involved, and you haven’t mentioned her once since you were at school, you can hardly blame me for jumping to that conclusion! It makes sense, what does she want, is it money?!” Her legs were moving twice as fast as his to keep up and even despite her floor-length gown, she chased him up the stairs.

Draco threw her a look “She has a Merlin of the first order Mother, I doubt she wants for anything. She isn’t blackmailing me, I don’t have time for this, I’m running late enough as it is.” He grumbled, reaching his floor.

“Then I truly do not understand Draco! Are you blackmailing her? Lord Draco, I swear if you drag us into the bad press again I’ll—”

Draco spun to face her. “You’ll what Mother? Hmm? Believe me, there is not a single thing that I could do that will result in

“Seriously you two! Married?!” quickly turned toward Draco and Hermione. have a way home.” She snapped. Her scowl She scowled in his direction. “Of course, I He asked nervously. tell me you have a way to get us home again?” idea how thrilled I am to see you but please Blaise stood and sheepishly looked at his other side. He disappeared into the bathroom and shut the door, his laughing echoing from the head and stood upright again. “Oh, man.” boomed through the room as he shook his head to look at her. Gregory started laughing, it letter, Blaise and Draco both slowly turned to Hermione was staring wide-eyed at the

seem to have commandeered from a muggle zoo. Poor thing had no idea what was going on. You charmed it to fly to my estate, do you not remember?”

Hermione shook her head. Astoria sighed and pulled out a rolled-up piece of paper, holding it out towards her. Hermione, Draco, Blaise and Gregory all scrambled towards her to read it. Theo, finally seeming to understand his position, remained fearfully glowering up at Astoria from his spot on the floor.

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silence only served to amuse Hermione unsure of even what to say. The elongated

Draco stood staring at her for a moment waving her hand to indicate to carry on.

"I'm not stopping you," Narcissa quipped,

He groaned.

"Mother, can I at least have a coffee first?" it, she didn't even look away from Draco.

If Narcissa was displeased she didn't show

custard danish and coffee.

"You," She told him before returning to her

staring back at him. "Yeah...that one's all

was taken aback to see a smirk on her face

Draco's eyes flew to Hermione's face and

Hermione to Draco with a pointed look.

"Rather...curious," Narcissa looked up from next to no information and I am

inquisitive nature, but Draco has given me

be a long morning. "I hope you'll forgive my

poured himself a coffee. This was going to

woman. Rude old bitch she was." Draco

me of Lucius' mother and boy did I hate that

Hermione, sitting at the table with a terrified look on her face and a cup of coffee halfway to her mouth. At the last second, he steered away in the opposite direction and away from the dining hall. With any luck his mother would follow and he could lose her further in the house. "Oh for goodness sake Draco where are you going? I feel like I deserve answers about the sit—" his mother's voice stopped and so he stopped in his tracks too.

"Oh. I see." He turned to see his mother gliding into the dining hall. Dammit.

"Sorry." He muttered in Hermione's direction as he entered the hall. His mother was already taking her seat and observing Hermione studiously.

"Hello." His mother offered. Hermione looked at him in panic before smiling back at his mother.

"Good morning Mrs. Malfoy."

"Narcissa dear, after all I am, it seems, your mother-in-law, besides Mrs. Malfoy reminds

it's not necessary among the rich and famous. She rolled her eyes in response. "I suppose

Draco blinked at her. "Flatmate?"

flatmate-type situation."

though, we should approach this as a

that to remain the case as much as possible

Hermione nodded. "Quite. I would prefer

become null and void."

"We should discuss some ground rules,

"Given that our intended plan of living our separate lives unaffected has obviously

abrupt,"

She laughed. "I suppose our union is rather

definite blackmail involved."

"My mother was working under the

"Naturally." Draco shrugged with a smile.

"Thought you had impeded me."

"Oh yes, brilliant thanks for that. He

crossed her face.

Potter?" He smirked when an annoyed scowl

It's two people with a shared living space without regulation over the other person's life. You will be free to continue to date as you wish, come and go as you please, you won't be required to tell me what time you will be home etcetera, vice versa and all that rubbish."

"I see. Though for the record we are both rich and famous." Draco smiled into his drink.

"Hence why I don't have a flatmate." She chuckled.

"I thought that was because you eat your meals in your bedroom." He quipped. She rolled her eyes. Draco sighed. "We should think about issuing a statement, however, this is going to get out one way or another, I'm honestly surprised it hasn't already and at least that way we will have control over the angle."

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his mother was hot on his tail and there was  
He thought of entering the dining hall but  
own conclusions.”

You have left me no choice but to draw my  
information Draco. What did you expect?  
was losing her mind. “You have given me no  
rushed down the stairs that suggested she  
Draco threw a frown over his shoulder as he  
her? Her tone was full of disapproval.  
for the rest of your lives or will you be joining  
“So she intends to live in the help’s quarters

and minded.”  
time she was here she was brutally tortured  
search for coffee. “You know, given the last  
covers and climbed out of bed, heading on a  
snarky than he intended. He threw back the  
house.” Draco offered, sounding more  
doesn’t have the fondest memories of this  
the floor as possible. Understandably she  
“A what? No, she wanted to be as close to  
intending your wife to live a Cinderella life?”  
night. In the maid’s quarters. Are you

more. Narcissa only huffed in annoyance.  
“Oh, honestly Draco. When did you two  
become involved?”

Hermione choked on her coffee which  
Draco found he enjoyed very much.  
Hermione looked up to see him smirking at  
her and muttered something about being a  
tosser under her breath.

“We’re not involved, mother.” He sighed  
sitting down.

Narcissa looked between them with  
narrowing eyes. “So this is a political  
marriage then?”

Hermione cleared her throat. Draco just  
stared at his mother from the other end of  
the table. “No mother, it is not a political  
move.”

Narcissa huffed in exasperated frustration.  
“Are you really going to force me to play  
twenty questions Draco?”

“Oh for Merlin’s sake Malfoy, just spit it  
out already. The poor woman has been far

to be informed that your bride has spent the  
to wait up and then I woke up this morning  
inappropriately late last night, I wasn’t going  
down at him sternly. “You got home  
She raised an eyebrow at him as she stared  
me sleep? It’s creepy.”

His eyes fluttered open the next morning  
and he nearly jumped out of his skin. “Merlin  
mother. Could you not stand there watching

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more with her eyes.  
“The penguins were a beautiful gift.” Draco  
offered and Draco noted that she smiled  
tomorrow to decide on what we want to say.”  
Hermione agreed.  
“That’s not a bad idea. We can sit down

“He thinks he’s found love.” Draco  
laughed when he was met with a disbelieving  
look. “Yeah, I know.” He agreed with her  
unspoken doubts.

He downed his drink quickly. “I suppose  
it’s a fair trade-off to alternate between  
houses. I know you don’t exactly have  
pleasant memories of the manor. If anything  
it will serve as an incentive to find a third  
location faster right? Though I should warn  
you, mother can be... nosy and overbearing  
at times so I can’t imagine the memories  
there will improve.”

It was Hermione’s turn to blink. “I see.  
Should I assume you have yet to have a  
discussion with her about our situation?” She  
smirked at him.

“I am not afraid of my mother so you can  
stop looking at me like that. Our  
conversation today was.. brief. Speaking of  
which, how was your conversation with

his damn coffee. He did what he set out to do in the first place, drink in his own home no less, shocked him, so he and the audacity that this witch had to do so, entire life, had thrown muffins at his head, neglected on the floor. No one, not in this

The tension was thick in the air as Narcissa closed her eyes and focused on her breathing. Eventually, she rose with grace from her chair. "I see." Was all she said before floating from the room.

Draco and Hermione blinked at the door she had disappeared through. Draco scoffed, drawing her attention back to him.

"Nice going Granger, you've probably caused my mother a heart attack. Did you have to be so cavalier about it?" He growled.

Rage flowed through her. "If you would have just told her in the first place instead of torturing the poor woman then I wouldn't have had to get involved at all!" She snapped, standing quickly. "You know what Malfoy, bite me!" She picked up a muffin from the pastry tray and threw it at him which was quickly followed by several more before she stormed from the room. Draco sat, crumpled bits of blueberry muffins strewn across his person and pyjamas, the majority lying

"myself." She raised her chin proudly. "I didn't feel the need to live in a mansion by live in a studio is not for lack of money. I live here not a sufficient cash prize attached to the merit of the first order award?"

"Is there not a sufficient cash prize attached finished. He blinked at her.

"Is about ten feet from my bed." She "So your kitchen?"

trailed off. "Well, I'm not sure how comfortable you would be staying at my place. I live in a renovated industrial studio, which is to say... it's all one room except the bathroom." She small smile gracing her lips.

for us." He joked and was pleased to see a sooner rather than later since our history onwards so it's probably best we discuss it Shadene had said they applied from today with alcohol and decisions doesn't bode well Draco nodded. "No, that's fine, I agree.

"I don't live there by myself." He muttered defensively.

"Yes well, all the same, in the spirit of honesty, I don't feel very comfortable staying at the manor either and at the end of this I should think we would like to return to our spaces without them feeling tainted in some way...what I'm trying to ask, rather poorly it seems, is if you would consider us finding a third neutral location in which we could reside for the next year?"

"That's a reasonable request I suppose, though I think we should be hard-pressed to pull that off tonight."

She laughed. "No, I suppose not. I was hoping you would be open to switching off every other night until we can find somewhere. I'll stay at the manor tonight, we can stay at my place tomorrow, I'll even let you take the bed."

Draco opened his mouth to respond but a loud crash sounded toward the dance floor.

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raised her hand to stop talking.  
 history...” Hermione trailed off as Narcissa  
 awful as a divorce to be part of his marital  
 your son attached to or for something as  
 sorry, I’m sure I am the last person you want  
 to progress with a divorce. I truly am very  
 guidelines that we have to abide by in order  
 a simple process...here are certain  
 making this disappear isn’t quite going to be  
 have any recollection of it. It seems that  
 that part and I were married. I don’t even  
 Vegas, when we woke up the next morning  
 party as a whole and we ended up in Las  
 kidnapped me and...well frankly the bachelor  
 large misunderstanding. Theodore  
 “Unfortunatly, this has been all a rather  
 when she caught sight of the woman’s face.  
 Narcissa.” Hermione corrected quickly  
 deep breath. “I do apologise, Mrs. Mal-  
 too patient with you. I’d have hexed you to  
 oblivion already...breaking coward.”

“What was that about?”  
 sat watching with amusement.  
 back and retreated back to where Hermione  
 Draco rolled his eyes, patted Theo on the  
 in two with how big his grin was.  
 Theo stared after the blonde who was now  
 got the memo on that one mate.”  
 Draco shook his head. “I don’t think she  
 declared with a grin.  
 hex subsided. “She’s my soulmate.” Theo  
 Draco strode over to help him up as the  
 she stomped away.  
 Dauphe who scowled down at him before  
 Despite this Theo was grinning up at  
 skin. Breathing out across the surface of his  
 x’s desperately scratching whatever part of his  
 body he could get his hands on. Angry pink  
 wrists on the ground, his hands  
 His head whipped up to see Theo’s body



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“This is beautiful,” Hermione stated, looking around, from her seat at their bar table, a glass of champagne in front of her.

“Yes, the Greengrass family have always known how to pull off rustic elegance better than anyone else.” Draco volleyed, looking down into his drink briefly.

“So, I apologise in advance for turning a beautiful occasion into a meeting about us but we should probably discuss the requirements?” Hermione said nervously.

“Darling? What the fuck is this git doing here Malone?” Oliver didn’t even wait for her made her consider Draco the safe option?

“Darling? What the fuck is this git doing here annoyed him, what had Oliver done that to catch on and the relief on her sheltered could give her a purposeful look. She seemed and Oliver, his back to the man so that he arms around her while stepping between his are you okay?” He purposefully wrapped his whatever this situation was, clearly it wasn’t would play along and he could get her out of “Darling,” Draco said, eyeing Oliver as he in his stomach.

Oliver’s direction, an uneasy feeling settling amongst the wreckage. Draco scowled in to be a vase given the discarded flowers laid the shattered remains of what appeared Oliver looked angry and between them here. Oliver dripping water all over the floor below and dripping around her, her hair soaking pulled closely around her, her hair soaking

his left. Straight ahead of him was a staircase. Hermione had said her studio was upstairs but it wasn’t until he reached the top of the stairwell that he heard the shouting. That was definitely Hermione’s voice.

Oliver wood. He would recognize that pony pricks voice anywhere. Draco hesitated, he considered carrying on up the stairs to the rooftop to give them some privacy but the tone in Hermione’s voice had him stepping closer to the door, she sounded distressed. He couldn’t make out what she was saying but when he heard something smash he made his decision. He slid the door open and tried not to appear surprised with the interior of her apartment, this was not what he had been expecting. It was nice, and much bigger than he had anticipated. Both Oliver and Hermione whirled toward him at his entrance.

Hermione looked on the verge of tears, she was wearing a satin black dressing gown

she looked entirely elegant enough to be seen venue that had popped up for the reception, Hermione stood at the edge of the open towards what had caught Theo’s attention. Certainly, she had fulfilled the brief. Draco’s head shot up, once again looking right swoop in on Hermione instead.” If your divorce goes off without a hitch I rolled his eyes. “Thought on second thoughts beautiful.” Theo sighed. Draco smirked and “just you wait. Our babies will be wild and back to the bar.

That’s never going to happen.” He turned laughed again and shook his head. “Nope. Theo’s gaze to the aforementioned sister. He “Is that so?” He chuckled and followed getting himself a free whiskey.

dramatically against the bar where Draco was “I think I’m in love.” Theo mused the wrong vase of flowers on a table. heard her snapping at someone for putting repercussions of his actions. Later he had

here among the upper class of their society in a rouge pink dress, but it wasn’t the elegance that had Draco’s breath catching in his throat. She looked like herself. She looked beautiful, soft and real. He frowned, catching his thoughts, he shook them from his mind, he turned his attention back towards Daphne. “Well, I suppose if that’s the case, I might have better luck with Daphne,” Draco smirked at the horrified look that Theo threw him.

“Don’t you dare.” Draco laughed and grabbed a glass of champagne from the bar, weaving through the crowd towards where Hermione was now talking with Blaise and Astoria and handing them a small gift box.

“It’s not much but I hope if nothing else it brings you a smile,” Hermione spoke quietly as the happy couple lifted the box.

For a moment there was silence before laughter erupted from Blaise’s chest and a genuine smile washed over Astoria’s face.

III

faced with a door to his right and a door to  
wand over the door and was immediately  
indication of residential life. He swiped his  
a liquor store on the corner there was no  
appeared to be a takeaway store, a dairy and  
of multiple factories, other than what  
location? This was smack bang in the middle  
studio but surely he was in the wrong  
had said she lived in a converted industrial  
stared up at it with disapproval. Hermione  
This could not be the building. Draco

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## CHAPTER 9

to respond. "You know what, I don't care, bugger off Malfoy, this is between me and my girlfriend." He snarled in Draco's direction. Draco rounded to face him, keeping Hermione behind him. He couldn't contain his sneer toward the man when he felt Hermione push in closer to him, her hands clutching at the back of his shirt, she was cold and she was shaking.

"I don't think so, Wood. This is my home too after all and there is no way I'm leaving you alone with my wife when you are very clearly not welcome here any longer. It's time for you to go. Now." He almost enjoyed watching Oliver's emotions pass over his face as what Draco had just said sunk in.

"Wife?" Oliver laughed in disbelief "She's not your fucking wife, and you sure as shit don't live here mate. I would have noticed that in the six months, I was spending half the week here. Piss off with your bullshit games, this has nothing to do with you."

it.  
dammitt all if he didn't hate her a little bit for  
Hermione smiled radiantly at them and  
to their partners and mate for life."  
ones from the zoo. They are incredibly loyal  
,"They are Magellanic penguins, just like the  
beautiful crystal penguins.  
Draco peeked into the box and saw a pair of

Theo's suit. "Looks good." He smiled at him. "We won't even need to change you for the funeral."

Theo frowned "Funeral?" Draco chuckled. Perhaps he wasn't that over it.

"Yours mate. Astoria and I might be caught up in our wedding day bliss but Daphne is out for blood." Blaise patted his shoulder. Theo swallowed hard. Draco couldn't contain the laughter.

The grounds were beautifully decorated. Wildflowers have been artfully intertwined with arches of roses and twinkling lights everywhere and Astoria had looked simply radiant. Their wedding had gone off without a hitch. He suspected largely due to the aggressiveness of Astoria's older sister Daphne. At one point he had seen her holding Theo by the scruff of his collar against the edge of the house swearing that if he put another toe out of line his great-grandchildren would still be dealing with the

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lecture on why violence isn't okay?"  
He eyed her with suspicion, "What? No you."  
"You didn't." She rushed out, "You didn't scare me, please don't apologize. Thank sorry, I didn't mean to scare—"  
hands up to show he wasn't a threat. "I'm down on the entrance table, holding his himself and the floor before putting his wand Draco sighed and vanished the blood over shook her head, struggling to find her voice. you okay? Did he hurt you?" Hermione arms still tugging the robe around her. "Are Hermione, staring at him with wide eyes, her down the stairs. Draco turned to look at two." Oliver scrambled out the door and ensure your life becomes a living hell, three, and if I ever catch you back here again I will wouldn't hesitate, you have three seconds, so determined not to have negative memories tainting this place I swear I Oliver towards the door. "If my wife wasn't

Blaise hummed, "Makes sense."  
in our divorce... living together."  
meet. Marriage counsellings, letters of support  
meanwhile, they have requirements for us to  
be twelve months from the date of  
submission of the paperwork. In the  
hope to protect his nerves. "The hearing will  
about him and Astoria's future, he needn't  
calm, he was at peace, there were no doubts  
Draco searched Blaise's eyes. Blaise was  
mystery".

"Take it that things didn't go well at the  
him. Because he nodded his head up at  
his face because he had read the expression on  
with. Blaise must have read his life  
witch that frankly he wanted very little to do  
with. Draco however, was now tied to a  
in love with and wanted to spend his life  
doing it right. He had found someone he was  
meant it. He swallowed nervously. Blaise was  
today." He smiled and Draco could tell he  
nothing will stop me from marrying Astoria  
no things, the entire day could go to hell but

growled as he looked down at the man who hadn't appeared to have grown any since school. "I warned you not to speak badly about my wife. Then you proceeded to yell at her, call her a whore and then what? A death eater what Wood? Finish that sentence." His eyes narrowed into a glare.

It was clear Oliver was trying to appear unaffected by Draco's looming size, or his wand at his throat, or the near-black look in Draco's eyes. Oliver tried not to appear intimidated but the slow swallow in his throat gave him away. He was a Gryffindor though and he wasn't one to back down even when afraid. "Death eater slut." Oliver spat out.

Draco's head was thrown back and forward again to collide with Oliver's nose before he could react. Hermione's squeal drowned out the sound of the loud crack of Oliver's nose breaking. Blood poured from his face, several drops landing on the floor and on Draco but Draco didn't care as he shoved

Draco frowned at him. "It makes the opposite of sense Blaise. We're seeking a divorce, these are all things that—"

"Seek to make sure it's truly what both of you want. If you come out of it at the end of the year having lived together and done everything in your combined powers to make the marriage work and yet it simply doesn't, they will feel more justified in severing that bond."

When he put it like that it made sense in a roundabout way. "There." Draco let go of his bowtie. "Why couldn't you just wear a regular tie anyway?"

Blaise smiled back at Draco's reflection. "Bowties are cool." Draco shook his head with a smile. "So when do you move in together?" Blaise carried on, moving on to adjusting his cufflinks.

"Sharlene said it had to be from today onwards. I don't know man. It almost feels like it would be easier to just accept that we

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"Finish that word wood, I dare you." He and had shoved it under Oliver's chin. Draco had crossed the room, and drawn death after slu—"

him for what? To show me up? You fucking but you went out and worse yourself out to bitch me out for one mistake with one girl To this tosser? What the fuck! You want to leave. "You got fucking married Hermione?" Oliver's choice to ignore his warning to screched at her, Draco sighed deeply at than thirty seconds. "You got married?" He lifted his hand to display his ring. Oliver's her own ring visible now that Draco had Hermione's hand gripping at Draco's waist. Oliver didn't move, his eyes had fallen to wife this way."

Draco held up his hand, his ring still your fucking balls off for daring to treat my married asshole now get out before I blast right where it should be. "Newly ghestening, they were before."

She stared at him again with wide blinking eyes for what felt like minutes. "You did..." she started "You did see me bounce Vanessa's face off a table just last week right? And remember that time I punched you in the face in third year? I don't think I have the authority to tell you not to, especially when it's in defence of me, seriously Malfoy. Thank you. He didn't hurt me but I can't say he wouldn't have."

Draco nodded and eyed her appearance, her hair was stuck to her neck and robe, and patches of water soaked her shoulders. "You were in the shower?" It wasn't even really a question, he knew the answer.

She nodded hesitantly "Yeah, I was, he walked into the bathroom like last week never happened, I started screaming at him to get out, the robe was the closest thing I had, he wouldn't leave, kept saying we needed to talk, kept telling me I was overreacting, wouldn't leave and then when I

their friend. Blaise stepped back and eyed Blaise to put aside his earlier anger towards fast-approaching wedding was enough for him in for a hug. It seemed the reality of his Blaise threw a grin Theo's way and pulled sake. "Well, that was... graphic. and dark."

Draco rolled his eyes. "Oh for Merlin's room. "Malfoy," Theo grinned stepping into the Draco mumbled. "Blaise scoffed at him. "You're an idiot. Blaise is never going to happen. Even if you both agree to that, it's only a matter of time before word gets out and then it will be everywhere she goes for the rest of her life media field day, Rita will be trailing Granger to pick at her carcass."

That is never going to happen. Even if you will be married and carry on with our lives as society girls will swoop on her like vultures trying to catch her doing something wrong, everywhere she goes for the rest of her life before word gets out and then it will be a media field day, Rita will be trailing Granger before a mate word gets out that, it's only a matter of time both agree to that, it's only a matter of time Blaise scoffed at him. "You're an idiot. Blaise scoffed at him. "You're an idiot. They were before."

will be married and carry on with our lives as

a bigger blow to our reputation than what Father has already done, and that includes eloping with Hermione fucking Granger on a stupid drunken whim!"

She looked at him as if he had slapped her. He didn't have time for this. He should be at the estate already.

"Malfoy." She growled. "It's Hermione fucking **Malfoy** now, remember?" She spun away from him and glided back down the corridor. He wished people would stop reminding him of that. It would have to be dealt with later, he really was running very late.

"There he is!" Blaise smiled in the mirror at Draco's reflection as he tried to straighten his bowtie.

"Yes, sorry. I'm here. I have the rings. It's all going to be fine." Draco stepped forward to help him.

"Oh I know mate, I'm not worried. You could have been a no-show, we could have

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same enthusiasm.

“Are you serious right now? Why do you think it is doc?” Hermione snapped. “It couldn’t possibly have anything to do with the fact that we were children, literal children, assigned sides and forced to fight in a war that started before any of us were even born. I know the family life Draco grew up with, he’s been judged enough for the actions of his father and he doesn’t need you picking at insecurities that we all have. That war was fucking traumatic. At the end of it regardless of what side we had been on, we came out of it with the same scars and the same horrible memories and the same stolen childhoods.”

Silence fell again while Mr Thorne made more notes. Five minutes of silence in which Draco glared at the healer. Suddenly the pad popped out of existence. “That’s a good start, I think. I can tell you’re both reaching your breaking points so we will call it a day early for this week. Normally I would assign homework for date nights to rekindle some

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confused. Draco just glared at the healer Hermione’s eyes flew to him, wide and percieved weaknesses?”,

“Hermione has a history of making fun of your self-amused by your vulnerabilities? Does she would automatically assume your wife to be interesting. Why is it that you instead was looking as horrified as he felt. direction that she wasn’t snickering at him to see with a quick glance in Hermione’s asking about the weather. Draco was relieved others?”, She looked at him as if she was difficult for you to place your trust in little about when exactly it became so Malfoy, for my eyes only. Can you tell me a wouldn’t see his thoughts either. “Correct Mr felt he could safely assume Hermione task of becoming friends by the end of this year. Hang out with each other, figure out what makes each other laugh, what your favorite foods are, maybe share a meal with other friends. Up to you, but do something between now and next week. Good job you two, despite how you’re both feeling, you’ve made amazing progress today.”

He hadn’t noticed the way she had been looking above their heads before, he glanced said defensively. indication of who you are as a person.” He

before them and worked meticulously to quiet his mind, shoving thoughts and memories into boxes and stacking them away out of her reach. She stared at him for a few moments before leaning forward on her knees and looking at him with sincerity. It was aggravating.

“Mr Malfoy, I’m not a legilimens, occluding isn’t going to stop me from seeing your thoughts. I am here to help you both, if at the end of your fifty-two weeks you both feel that divorce is what you want then I will submit my approval to do so, which will help greatly in your case. I am not going to do that however unless you both participate during these sessions. One hour a week for fifty-two weeks in exchange for my sign-off to the council of vows and bonds. You both seem to feel strongly about divorce so then there should be no harm in participating, you are after all not in love with each other correct?”

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“Would you say you have always been this assertive in the conflict of others?”  
Draco huffed in annoyance. “That’s hardly a fair question to ask her, we haven’t exactly had normal childhoods here. She’s earned the right to be protective of herself and her friends.”  
Another smile tugged at the healer’s lips, causing both Hermione and Draco to scowl at her. “Hm. You said she has earned her friends?” Do you think she considers you a friend? Another look at Draco and a quick glance at Hermione, another scribble. She insisted on not being a couple, you’re both most interesting to me is despite your smile back at the scowling pair. “What’s most interesting to me is despite your insistence on not being a couple, you’re both insistently protective of each other, despite the shared belief that the other person doesn’t consider you a friend. Why do you think that is?”

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“Of course not.” Draco spluttered at the same time that Hermione snapped “Absolutely not.”  
Hr Thorne smiled. “Fantastic then this will back on you Mrs Malfoy, what is it about me that indicates to you that I’m judging you? Is it my tone? Perhaps the way I sit? My very presence? You’ve decided that I’m here to be an easy case for all of us then, provided you do the work. Now I would like to touch you on your shoulder. I’m not here to touch you. I’m here to judge you and I would like to understand.”  
“You are judging us, you’ve made several remarks on his self-perceived weaknesses, of course, he’s going to be on the defensive,” Hermione groaned in her direction.  
“Yes, I’m interested in your life,” Hermione stated through gritted teeth.  
“Mrs Malfoy, would you say that you have always been protective over the people in your life?”  
“Yes,” Hermione smiled at Hr Thorne regardless of her attitude, Hr Thorne’s thoughts, “Interesting.”  
“You are judging us, you’ve made several remarks on his self-perceived weaknesses, of course, he’s going to be on the defensive,” Hermione groaned in her direction.  
“Mrs Malfoy, would you say that you have always been protective over the people in your life?”  
“Yes,” Hermione stated through gritted teeth.

the mind healer to maximize positive results. These thoughts will remain confidential to the mind healer.

“That’s insane!” Hermione yelled in frustration.

Hr Thorne pursed her lips and gave her a knowing look. “Yes, I suspect you’re probably feeling a bit embarrassed by some of your earlier thoughts but I assure you I have taken no offence. You’re not truly angry with me after all Mrs Malfoy. I do understand your frustrations.” Hermione’s face reddened. Hr Thorne turned back to Draco. “You didn’t answer my question, do you feel that the house I was placed in during my school years is somehow relevant to my ability to assist in your marriage?”

Draco felt his face growing hot. “No..” he mumbled. Hr Thorne eyed the top of his head and hummed before nodding at her quill. “I mean it’s not relevant to your ability to be a healer, but it would provide some

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comment on our non-existent baby, I swear congratulated us or made some stupid divorce case. Five freaking people have that was too far. Especially for a simple know there's pushing a client but that was... was treating you Draco, it's uncalled for. I disaster. I still can not believe the way she stupid healers, on top of that absolute "That's the fifth person since we left the form. She threw a way.

"Hermione," Draco growled at her pacing the stairs and took several deep breaths. "The realtor practically collapsed onto him. The realtor profiling the properties assigned papers, all profiling the properties assigned him a stack of With shaking hands he handed him a stack of listings, give me the portfolio and stay here." have to go deal with that. Again. Now I throwing him his own glare. "Great. Now I Her husband sighed deeply before out the front of the property again.

"I'm not pregnant!" The witch hissed at him through gritted teeth before storming out the front of the property again. He shuddered to realise that the couple were glaring around the place, avoiding eye contact with one another. He cleared his throat awkwardly.

"So there are five bedrooms, a nice big backyard, one of the trees has a tyre swing for when the little one is older—" The air left his lungs at the way they both turned to him with deathly glares.

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"Would you sod off? Don't you have a job to go to?" Hermione snarled, waving her wand to repair the broken owl and summoning the cushion. "What?"

Draco turned to look at her with raised eyebrows. "You're rather feisty, you know it over where it fell to the floor and shattered. of the ornaments on her bookshelf, knocking back of his head, it collided instead with one He ducked as she threw a cushion at the rule enforcer I thought you were in school." surprised that you're not the stickler-snow Granger. I won't pretend I'm not pleased "I don't even know what to say to that Draco exhaled deeply and shook his head. animagus, illegally, but one all the same." few months when we were at school after her series of particularly offensive articles about my supposed promiscuity. She's an Oh... I may have trapped Rita in a jar for a Blush spread across Hermione's cheeks.

Draco smirked at her. "Don't tell me you're sick of me already sweet wife, I might begin to suspect the prophet is telling the truth and that I will soon be nursing a broken heart." He chuckled when she flipped him off. "For the record though, I work from home. Investment portfolios, buying up companies and estates. I haven't heard any mention of your own career, am I too assume you also don't have a job that you need to rush off to after our first appointment?"

"Appointment?" She looked up with confusion.

"The mind healer, remember? Merlin Granger, you were the one that selected the time slot."

The manner in which she threw her head back, rolled her eyes and groaned in annoyance reminded him of a toddler. Feisty and dramatic Draco decided.

Ten minutes of silence had lapsed since their introductions to Mr Thorne, ten

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of the head at the previous three properties his office two hours ago. Other than a shake hadn't said a single word since they had left said nothing to each other, and these two but what was worse was when the couples hated jobs that involved bickering couples. Hating his permission to investigate. He waving his arms folded across their chests. He took a deep breath and unlocked the front door, before him, both were visibly angry, with The realtor looked between the two people

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## CHAPTER 11



I will not be held accountable for my actions if anyone else says anything.” He stepped slowly closer to his pacing wife, she had a kind of radiance about her when she was angry, but it had been a rough morning and so he let her vent, better to get it out now rather than hex him later. “Do you think that’s why he keeps showing us freaking family homes? Even if I were pregnant, which I’m not” Draco raised an eyebrow when she yelled the last three words of the house behind him. “This is not the kind of house I would want to raise a baby in. Is that how people see me? Hermione Granger, war heroine, living in a white picket fence fairytale cottage in the countryside surrounded by baby ducks and chickens—”

“Don’t forget the penguins.” Draco offered. It seemed to be enough to break her out of her mood because those big caramel-coloured eyes stared back at him for a second before she burst out laughing.

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sessions, their thoughts will be recorded for parties agree that whilst present during their sentence that made his blood run cold. Highlighted a third of the way down was a reading it.” She held them out each a copy. You two signed the agreement without A small smile graced her lips. “Ah, I see.

Hermione said something he had missed?

her. Had he spoken that out loud? Had him directly, staring him. He frowned at “Do you feel that is relevant?” She asked

Hufflepuff

woman before them had once been in here, with lots of green plants. Perhaps she look around the room, it was light and airy in of her. Draco rolled his eyes and began to scribbling a note on the pad floating in front and occasionally nodding at the quick quill between them over her half-moon spectacles. Ten minutes of Mr. Thorne looking sofa. So far from Draco as she could on the minutes of awkward silence while Hermione

scattered everywhere as she flung the paper away from her.

Draco nodded silently, sipping on his coffee. He wasn’t listening as the witch ranted about the factual inaccuracies of her previous relationships and the events surrounding their newfound marriage, one week was still new, wasn’t it? Especially since their engagement would have been no more than thirty minutes long. They only had themselves to blame. They were supposed to sit down and write out a statement yesterday but between the muffins and Oliver’s inappropriate behaviour they hadn’t gotten around to it and now Oliver had beaten them to it. It was now a matter of damage control rather than story dictation and it seemed that Rita really had it out for Hermione.

“...I should have left her in that jar for the rest of her bloody life!”

Draco raised an eyebrow. “Come again?”

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month crammed in the studio or photographing  
She folded her arms. "What and send a  
fast-track things, you didn't mind did you?"  
and I've found that money can almost always  
He chuckled, "No point in mucking around  
that?"  
impressive when you're working, you know  
smirking when he caught her. "You're  
Hermione raised an eyebrow at him,  
that happen."  
file whatever paperwork you need to to make  
be in by tomorrow afternoon and then you  
now, tell them I'll double the asking price to  
"No. Too long. Get on the phone right  
silence.  
fell short as Draco held up his hand in  
before handover," the poor man's babblings  
current owners, typically it would be a month  
windows.  
absently, stepping forward towards the  
"When can we move in?" Hermione asked

place they called home for the next twelve months. The large living space was two stories high with floor-to-ceiling glass windows that overlooked the city below along the entire side of the apartment. There was a beautiful modern fireplace set in stone and on the opposite side of the room was an expansive kitchen made from white marble, the island with a breakfast bench overlooking the living area. There was a hallway that led to two large bedrooms with a bathroom nestled in between them, there was a staircase behind the kitchen that led up to an open balcony that overlooked the living space, another hallway upstairs led to two more rooms, with another bathroom between them and an office at the far end. The place was huge, modern and perfect to live in comfortably for the next year.

"We will take it." They said at once. A stab of guilt hit Hermione at the look of relief on the realtor's face.



## CHAPTER 10

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**Golden Girl resorting to old ways? The latest conquest suggests so.**

*It seems golden girl Hermione Granger is slipping into old habits, the war heroine made headlines during her time at Hogwarts for her many whirlwind relationships that left a string of wizards heartbroken. Some more recognizable among the list are none other than long-time ally Harry Potter as well as quidditch superstars Ronald Weasley and Victor Krum. Her latest conquest? The sole heir to the Malfoy empire, Draco Malfoy. Sources claim the witch recently ditched seemingly serious boyfriend*

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when they stepped inside. This would be the realtor. It was only further confirming tearing it from the portfolio and taking it to London, right on the border of the muggle and wizarding worlds. "Yip," Draco stated, and Hermione's mouth was in unison. Hermione stopped him as Draco flipped to a penthouse in central London, surprising them all with their variations of, swearing quickly from their everythings they saw. A series of no's and the surprisedly holding the same views on nearly everything they had seen so far.

"They flipped through the papers, She smiled at him in appreciation. "Thank you" she whispered. "For letting me rant and help me sift through these."

Draco shrugged. "You're a bird, I'm a bird, birds, I'm a bird it seems."

"Right of course. A whole assortment of

for calling me down. Thank you. I know today hasn't been ideal for you either."

around the manor carefully trying not to set off panic attacks, no thank you. I'd rather pay the extra too. Though this place is significantly larger than the studio. Might need to do some shopping for extra furnishings. I love this couch though, it will be such a shame to see it go." She ran her hands across the back of a large light blue L-shaped suede couch. It looked big enough for at least ten people to sit comfortably and still have room. Behind her, she heard Draco tell the realtor who was now on the phone with the owners that he would throw in extra for the couch. She chuckled to herself. She knew she should feel bad about the ridiculous way in which they were spending money at the moment but she simply couldn't bring herself to care. They had already gotten themselves into this mess and they may as well enjoy the adventure, otherwise it was going to be a long twelve months. If the war had taught Hermione and

"That bitch!" Hermione screamed after she had read it through several times. Papers who had talked to the prophet.

Hermione's mouth was hanging open after having read the front page of that morning's daily prophet. Draco was standing at what he hoped was a safe distance, having already read it himself. He had a strong suspicion of

coming to sit in the armchair next to him, "Who is she talking to?" Narcissa asked, pausing to observe his wife with interest. He peered up as his mother entered, therefore remained intact.

Not been thrown around the room and so morning, his mother's copy had thankfully had been snatched away from him earlier that reading the remainder of the prophet that what he felt was a well-deserved break by sitting room. Draco however was taking device pressed against her ear, pinching the arms around, taking into some muggy Hermione walked aimlessly waving her tomorrow afternoon and not a minute later." delivered and all rooms set by three p.m. happen by then Clarcie, I want the future "I don't care what you have to do to make it



room she had claimed for herself at the start of the hall.

The realtor came to find them a few minutes later looking very pale. "The owners have accepted the offer and conditions and the property will be yours from seven a.m. tomorrow."

Draco smiled. "Relax Michael, you'll be getting double commission too for making sure the paperwork is filed properly by then." Then he turned back to Hermione. "So game night tomorrow moved here?"

She nodded as if it were obvious. "Do you need help to tell your Mummy again?" She poked a tongue at him.

"I'm sure she will figure it out when she realizes I haven't been home for a while." He deadpanned.

"Christ's sake Draco." She shook her head.

Draco was surprised to see that while she bookshelves extended off of the kitchen, unsupervised around the room. Large white vase was cleaned up easily with a wave of his wand, which left him with time to soap along the wood tones and whites. The shade of green. Blue accents littered around to see the walls of the bathroom were actually which pleased him, instead, he was shocked there was a distinct lack of Gryffindor red

so they could make this work surely?

hotel suite which was smaller than the studio sufficient room, they had made do in the else in the studio she was but there was talk to her from the kitchen no matter where manor by any means and he could certainly as she had led him to believe, it wasn't the pleased that it wasn't as small and close-knit Draco looked around the place and was the door with a light click.

She snorted in response but said nothing as she retreated back to the bathroom, shutting

owned a lot of books, the shelves were not busting at the seams with them, several shelves didn't even have books, some had plants or ornaments. A few had weird boxes with strange images on them, big chunky letters on the sides. Monopoly, twister, Cluedo, charades, operation? He was still staring at them when Hermione reappeared, this time with a towel atop her head and proper clothes on her person, even if it was just cosy loungewear.

She must have seen the confusion on his face "Didn't you ever play board games as a kid?" Draco shook his head. She nodded in response and then after a few minutes "We're hosting a board game night here on Saturday, you should invite the sleuths to come along too."

He raised an eyebrow at her "Sleuths?"

She smirked his way. "Sleuths, the Slytherin group. You know because you're all sly and sneaky and sleuth-like?"

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dismissively at him and went back to the “sure?” She simply waved her hand

Draco raised an eyebrow at her. “If you’re biggest of the rooms further down the hall.

Hermione said, waving her hand at the more sense for you, given your work,” the office which should be yours too, makes “You should take this room, it’s closer to eased Draco’s nerves.

enough up that it wouldn’t matter but it still were frosty, not that they weren’t high windows, thankfully though it seemed they Even the bathrooms had floor-to-ceiling shrouded in a light glow from the setting sun.

all four bedrooms and the office were whole side of the building which meant that

They found themselves wandering upstairs

as well enjoy it.

Draco anything it was that life was short, may

pouring herself a tea and watching the witch argue into the thing she had called a ‘phone.’

Draco had returned to his paper, trying to find if there was anything of interest in the business section. “She’s ordering furniture.”

“Is her room here not to standard? Perhaps she would prefer one of the rooms intended for family upstairs?” His mother hinted.

“I’m sure the room she’s using is fine mother, you have impeccable taste. She’s ordering furniture for the new house. We closed on a property this afternoon.” He looked up to see his mother staring at him, whatever emotions she was feeling weren’t visible. Hermione snapped the phone closed and stepped toward them.

“Oh. I see. May I make a request then if I’m to be left alone?” Her quiet voice stabbed at Draco’s conscience. “Would you two still visit once a week for dinner?”

Hermione shook her head. “Narcissa, of course, we will come for dinner whenever

green.” One hundred per cent. That is Granger. Draco shook his head. “That is green fact tone.

“That’s blue.” She stated in her matter-of-fact tone. “He gestured towards the painted walls. “blue.” he red and gold, not green and tiny and very red and gold, not expecting not what I expected Granger, I was expecting Astoria especially had grown on her. “This is her during their time in Vegas. He knew better he would say his friends had grown on hide a small smile. If he didn’t know any in her direction when she tried and failed to title sluths.” Draco raised an eyebrow again you and I will invite them, I meant no to the “Yes I will, that’s very considerate thank her cardigan sleeve.

“Oh well that’s fine, I just thought you might feel more comfortable with your friends here too.” She mumbled, pulling at fell slightly.

“No.” Draco snapped out. Hermione’s face

wouldn’t take his stupid flowers threw them on the ground, then you arrived.” Draco nodded at her retelling of the events. Anger bubbled in him because he hated the idea of what could have happened if he had given them privacy like he had planned to. What could have happened if he had arrived an hour later? He wasn’t thrilled to be married to her but he didn’t want to see her hurt either. “Go finish your shower, I’m here now so you’ll be safe, I’ll clean up this mess.” Draco indicated to the shattered vase.

Hermione stood still for a moment, Draco looked towards her just as she stepped towards him with trepidation. She wrapped her wet cold arms around his middle and gave him a quick squeeze of a hug before retreating from him again as quickly as she had done it. “Thank you.”

Draco waved his hand dismissively “Go get in the shower, get warmed up before you freeze a tit off. You’re freezing.”

“Luna honey, your left hand needs to go on blue not green.” Ron gently prompted her.

Theo had the nerve to grin at everyone before going to apologise. Theo slammed the door to the guest room. Hall, slamming the door to the guest room. Daphne and after twisting the other way, knocked her over. She stormed off down the hat is until Theo put his right foot under which of course made for a hilarious time, chirped up. They had all had several drinks “Oh let’s play Twister next!” Astoria

“Well, what can I say, maybe I just got sick of it.” Harry smiled back.

“Thought you were supposed to be the comfortable than he had expected to. good guy.” Draco joked, feeling far more

“Harry, in the kitchen with the candlestick” hysterics that Luna spoke up. “I think it was

Ron guessed Ginny in the billiard room with the candlestick, wrong again.

The game took an interesting turn when while exploring the study, Theo’s character found himself surrounded by Blaise, Astoria and Hermione’s miniatures, all of which held miniature weapons in their hands. “Oh hey, guys. Are we having a party in the study?” Theo laughed but then the house flashed dark and when it came to light again, Theo’s miniature was lying in a pool of imaginary blood, the other three all covered in blood and eying up the real Theo who stared wide-eyed down at the board. Harry, Daphne and Ron burst into laughter. Hermione had a proud smirk on her face.

“I did say I would kill you.” She shrugged.

“That is brilliant. Can you revive him and give me a go?” Ginny giggled, leaning forward to look.

It wasn’t until everyone else in the room had a turn to kill the fake Theo while in

were all prattling about Quidditch and Thunderstorm 3000. Ron, Greg and Theo forever about the latest broom model, the Harry as if they had been friends away to Harry as if they had been chattering perhaps a little too well, Blaise was chatting to be getting along rather well. seemed to be anyone and if anything everyone was pleased that at that time no one had hexed anyone and if anything everyone with drunks and ice-breakings providing everyone tour of the Penhouse, providing everyone see? The following half an hour consisted of a see?

Ginny shot Hermione a questioning look to which Hermione mouthed back ‘You’ll to hide chuckles.

Draco and Hermione both tried and failed to Draco. Daphne.

Another knock announced Greg, several moments later it was Blaise and Astoria, and much to Theo’s utter delight, and her horror,

Ron and Harry and the scowl on Draco’s face.

Astoria, Daphne, Luna and Ginny were gossiping about something that Draco couldn’t quite follow, he surmised it was to do with make-up at least. Hermione prodded him on the shoulder ‘You okay?’ She mouthed. He just nodded.

It was a surreal feeling to find himself in this position, even more surreal to find he didn’t hate it. It just seemed to be any typical other night. “Should we start a game?” Hermione announced, holding up a box called Cluedo.

The rules, it turned out, were fairly simple. Hermione had charmed the game tokens so that instead of the various colour-titled characters, there were miniature versions of themselves standing along the edge of the board.

“Throwing the murder elephant out there early Granger, it’s a hell of a way to clear the air,” Greg smirked.

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“Theo you’re cheating, you need to count the squares out properly” Daphne snapped at him.

“Okay Gin, we’ll take a guess then but if it’s wrong you can’t tell anyone and you’re out of the game.” Hermione handed over a miniature envelope with the answers in it.

Ginny bolted upright, “I think I know!”

“Sure blame the Slytherin’s,” Theo joked.

Astoria threw a cushion at him.

“Ginny wrinkled her forehead. “I’m sure he was in good humor though,

Ginny looked hesitant. Shaking the doubt off she declared, “I think it was Blaise, in the kitchen with the rope.”

“Really? She exclaimed and her eyes widened as she peeked inside the games sitting room.

Greg guessed next, “Theo in the kitchen placed in the games sitting room.

“Ginny’s miniature envelope enveloped the small man.

Draco chuckled “It’s okay, Hermione’s the judge and she can’t tell the difference between the two anyway.” He teased.

“Oh for Merlin’s sake Malfoy, it’s freaking blue,” Hermione called out in frustration.

“What’s this?” Ron threw Draco’s way.

“You’ve been to Hermione’s studio. She is convinced that the walls around the bathroom are blue.” He gave a pointed look in her direction.

“Would you lot back me up please!?” Hermione cried out.

Ginny coughed awkwardly and looked away, Ron just stared. “Mione, I would love to do that except that they are green, I never thought I would say this but Malfoy’s right,” Harry said regrettably.

Greg burst out laughing which caused the group to shift, lose footing and collapse in a pile.

“You’re not serious?” Hermione screeched, looking at Ron and Ginny who both gave her

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“Malfoy,” Theo said, almost instinctively at this point.

“Theo.” Hermione, Draco, Astoria and Blaise all growled at the same time causing Ginny to chuckle into her drink.

“What I don’t understand is how this happened in the first place.” Harry pointed between Draco and Hermione.

“No one has any memory of that night ours,” Greg mumbled.

“Mate your guess is as good as the rest of ours,” Theo asked. A chorus of No’s followed.

“Seriously?” Daphne asked.

“With certain creatures only she and her even seem to be interested in the clues, she even tries to find evidence. Luna didn’t much-sized version of himself slinking around a manor trying to catch a half-It was a bizarre experience to watch a half-ensued.

“It was a bizarre experience to watch a half-ensued.

representation could see.

Another knock at the door felt like a relief and Draco excused himself to answer it. Theo stood with his arms out, a bottle of fire whiskey in one hand and a grin on his face. “There he is, Mr domesticated. Sweet place man.”

Draco rolled his eyes. “Theo you remember ‘The boy who lived’ Harry Potter, Ginny, Ron and of course Luna.”

“I’m the only one who gets a title in that huh?” Harry smirked

“What was it that you said to me in fourth year Harry? You are the chosen one?” Hermione teased as she finally reappeared. “Theo, hope you don’t have any portkeys this time with plans to kidnap us?” She joked as she stepped forward to offer him a hug.

“Well to be fair, I didn’t exactly plan to take you last time, it was a spur-of-the-moment decision, something I’m sure you and Draco understand.” He poked back. Hermione laughed despite the grumblings coming from

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confirmed that.  
that he felt the same, a small nod and a smile  
well.” Hermione paused to check with Draco  
we’ve both seemed to settle in there really  
“We brought a place to live in together,  
let her ruin it.

modest though and he was determined not to  
She said with a smile. Draco was in a good  
knees, her back upright. “Why don’t you two  
“So.” Mr. Thorne sat with her palms on her

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## CHAPTER 13



change much at all since school, trailed over  
penthouse. Luna, who had not seemed to  
at how high the ceiling was in that part of the  
whilst rushing past her lips as she looked up  
Ginny stepped into the living area, a low  
stand awkwardly looking at one another.  
disappeared again leaving the three men to  
down in a minute.” And with that, she  
one of her earlobes. “Oh hey, guys. I’ll be  
smile as she tried to shove an earring through  
balcony and grinned down at them with a  
called out, Hermione bursted out to the  
others to enter. “Ginger, it’s your lot” He  
apartment holding the door open for the  
Draco promptly stepped back into the  
and brushed past him without invitation,  
on the other side of it. Ginny seemed amused  
doorway, somewhat surprised to see Draco  
Ginny, Ron and Luna all stood in the  
to reveal not one redhead but two. Harry,  
He took a deep breath and opened the door

slowly toward the female redhead, looking around with a dreamy expression.

“Can I get anyone a drink?” Draco offered, relieved when they both nodded. He walked back to the fridge and pulled out three beers, holding them up to the men standing awkwardly at the kitchen counter for approval. Both nodded and so he absently handed them one each. “Weaselette?” He held up the beer to her.

She turned with a grin on her face. “I’ll make you a deal, don’t ever call me that again and I won’t call you Ferret. Besides, it’s Potter now.”

Draco nodded as she stepped closer. “Okay, Potterette would you like a beer?” He held up the beer again. Harry sighed beside him but looked up surprised when Ginny started laughing. She nodded and accepted the bottle.

back.

"Thank you, Draco." Her singsong voice called a way to get her out of there but then dooby had managed to rescue her anyway. "No manor, he had been held prisoner at his when she had been sneaking her food and blankets kindness by time at Hogwarts, he had tried to repay the been anything but kind to him during their start with Hermione had thought she was barney to Hermione knew full well that both Ron and Draco smiled politely. "Wasn't everyone?" were friends with my wife?" Ron choked on his beer. "Wait, what? You aware, I still hate me."

and I were friends at school, as far as I'm Draco looked at him and shrugged, "Luna

"Luna?" Harry raised an eyebrow.

"I know," Draco called to the blonde staring at a blank space on the wall.

sharing the same look as what Draco had. "Oh ew! Theo!" Hermione groaned, edge into fits of laughter. Faster, a muffled moan sent them all over the The knocking started getting louder and "Is that..." Blaise started. Everyone's eyes looking toward the sound. Knocking sound. Hermione tilted her head, Down the hall was a light but consistent stopped. She was clearly about to say something but similar looks. Her eyes narrowed on Draco, "I know," Harry raised an eyebrow.

"Yes, it's been great to be there actually, my mother even came over for dinner last night and spent the night in her guest room. She was rather impressed too." Hermione nodded at him in response. Mr Thorne made a few notes, reminding them that she was there.

"Oh, we had friends over for game night. My friends and Hermione's friends. That went rather well too I think." Draco carried on.

Hermione snorted, a quick look up from Mr Thorne and she too had a small smile and made a silent 'oh.' Before continuing with her notes.

"I have taken up positions on several committees and joined a few boards of directors chairs as well, with the help of Narcissa. I have a gala at the end of the month for the Hogwarts BOD, which should be good. Narcissa has been amazing with all of that and so supportive too." Hermione

be the first time that Draco would be encountering her friends since their ill-advised elopement. It would also be the first time that a group of Slytherins willingly spent several hours in the same space as a group of Gryffindors, possibly ever.

"Draco, would you relax, it will be fine. We're all adults, we've all moved on. Were not in school anymore fighting on opposite sides of the war. Take a breath and hand me that bag would you." Hermione seemed to pick up on his mood without him even saying anything. He grabbed the paper bag from the bar stool and moved toward the fridge. "Want these in the icebox thing?" He asked. Hermione hummed in agreement. He was unloading the last bottle of something called Vodka into the fridge when there was a knock at the door. He looked around, but he couldn't see Hermione. "Get that would you?" Her voice called from the balcony above him.

her choice to keep one of the spare rooms his father had raised him. "I was surprised by gratitude towards people, it hadn't been how it was hard for him to be open about his cleared his throat and shifted uncomfortably, waited for him to voice it instead. Draco knew she could see an example above his Draco stared at her for a long time. He

"elaborate on that?"  
"But some of her actions have, can you  
"No."

"Does that surprise you?"  
Draco shrugged, "I'd say that yes."  
"Would any of your other friends?"  
"Would you say you care for her as you  
Draco frowned, "Of course."

"So you would say that you care about her  
happiness?"  
"So you would say that you care about her  
way because it wouldn't be true."

up and feel like she failed in some kind of

"Yes, I'm not doubting your support of her Mr Malfoy, but I can see your concern for her emotional well-being when it comes time for her to give those seats up." The healer peered over her glasses at him.

"Hermione is a grown woman. She understands the implications, and I'm sure she would rather do as much as she can in the next year than do nothing at all."

"That's right. I do know there's an expiry date here but I would like to focus on what can be done in the meantime and cross that bridge when the time comes." Hermione agreed.

Hr Thorne remained expressionless and made several more notes. "And yet, you remain concerned. Why?"

Hermione peered over at him, Draco swallowed. "I want her to succeed, whatever that means for her. I don't want her to get eighty per cent of the way and have to give it

glaring after her.  
victory and glided from the room, Draco my spot." She rose with a smile that spoke of everybody that you will be stepping in to fill my study after dinner, we will nosey my study while it's here. Come see me in opportunity while it's here. After all, there is no harm in taking advantage of the could implement in that time. After all, three applications, think of all the changes you are getting a divorce." "Yes I know dear, but that won't be for a whole year, assuming they approve the Hermione blanched. "Narcissa... I... we



## 08 AUGUST 2003

"I've got to hand it to you, Granger, it's impressive that you've managed to fully furnish this place overnight." Draco looked around him at the penthouse, now with every room fully furnished and decorated. It didn't even feel as though they had only brought it yesterday, there wasn't a single box in sight. Art lined the walls, occasionally with the odd photo frame of him and his mother or his friends or Hermione and her parents or her

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“She is entitled to claim the seats and I support her choice to do so, as my mother will and make some long overdue changes the next year so she might as well do some said, we’re going to be in this thing for at least said, “I’d rather we didn’t.” Draco cut her off.

“She is entitled to claim the seats and I support her choice to do so, as my mother will take up position on—”  
could briefly touch on Hermione’s decision to hear you two are getting along. Perhaps we seem more comfortable around each other them for a moment. “Well, you two certainly Hr Thorne hummed and sat observing smile.

“Over all we have had a rather pleasant week.” Draco finished with a slightly pinched hint of a frown but she said nothing for now. and between the two of them, the slightest said, this made Hr Thorne pause and look up

exclusively for my mother’s use. It was extraordinarily considerate of her.”

Hr Thorne hummed again. “You feel that being open and expressing this gratitude makes you vulnerable, have you considered that the opposite might be true? To form deeper connections with those around you can be beneficial to you.” She turned to Hermione. “Mrs Malfoy has something happened in the last week that has resulted in you feeling gratitude towards your husband?”

“Of course, but can you stop doing that? Can you call me Hermione instead of Mrs Malfoy and stop referring to Draco as my husband.”

“He is your husband and no, Mr and Mrs Malfoy keeps our environment professional. What is it that he did this week that left you glad to have him around?”

Hermione’s eyes narrowed at the healer for a moment, she sighed and looked at Draco

lying if he said he wasn’t nervous. It would friends should start arriving. He would be Hermione’s studio, any minute now their sat the stack of board games from assembling a platter of food. On the bench from her spot in the kitchen where she stood you throw enough money at it.” She smirked very wise that anything can be fast-tracked if “Thank you. I was told once by someone captured his mother’s tastes.

mother would love it, she had perfectly as the one in the manor but Draco knew his to stay, she had said it wouldn’t be as elegant would be his mother’s room when she came already fully stocked with his clothes from the manor. Hermione had shown him what had not anticipated. His wardrobe was placed along the couch or on the armchair of the living area provided a cosiness that he even comforted throw rugs and cushions bookshelves in the office.

friends displayed amongst it. Books lined the

they are placed before them in a professional capacity but you would be surprised what you can achieve over a glass of wine and a few well-timed jokes at a gala.”

The glint in her eyes had disappeared and Draco could see the wheels turning in Hermione’s mind. “I don’t think I will have much luck being nominated for a seat Narcissa, as much as I can see how that could be a lucrative plan.”

Narcissa smiled at Draco. He knew that smile, it meant his mother was up to her old tricks. She had set a trap for Hermione and the poor thing hadn’t even realised that she had been caught. She turned back to Hermione with a sickening level of glee. “Darling you don’t need to be nominated. You married into the Malfoy family and since Draco hasn’t claimed our seats since I stepped back, you would be free to do so as his wife.”

“No, you’re here to make sure there is no obstacle when it comes to you, is your belief that your not worthy of Mrs Malfoy’s affection or forgiveness. Clearly, that stems from your father’s lack of acceptance of you and the conditions placed on you to receive his love. It isn’t your fault.”

“Stop it, I’m not here to hash out childhood traumas.”

“Would you say you had a happy childhood?”

“My father has no relevance to my current situation.”

“Do you believe that your father was proud of you?” She pushed.

“No.” Draco glowered.

“Why do you feel so uncomfortable hearing positive things about you? Is it because you still harbour some guilt for the side you were on during the war?” Draco glared.

“Enough.” Hermione snapped. “I already know why he feels uncomfortable about it. I don’t need you to bring that to the surface in an attempt to fix our relationship.”

More scratching from the quill. Mr Thorne’s eyes never leaving Draco’s.

“With all due respect Mrs Malfoy, I’m not doing it for your benefit. Mr Malfoy’s inability to accept praise is something that he should work on for himself, I am simply helping him to confront that.”

“It’s not your place to decide that for him,” Hermione growled. The middle-aged witch ignored her, appearing completely undeterred by Hermione’s criticisms.

“Mr Malfoy, I would like you to describe your father to me.”

of silence seemed to startle her. sound of someone’s voice after forty minutes asked suddenly over dessert. The abrupt dear, what do you do for work?” His mother and he wasn’t sure he liked that. “Hermione formulating opinions and plans in her head glancing at him. Draco just knew that she was dinner as she drew glances her way before than he had memory of her ever being over own conclusions because she was quieter His mother seemed to be trying to draw her fell into that category.

was just somewhat surprising that his mother capacity, were taken care of, he supposed it sure those around her, no matter the selfless which who always sought to make had shown time and time again to be a nothing less from Hermione Granger. She Of course, he should have expected he liked that.

constantly surprising him and he wasn’t sure

“I don’t. I was working at the ministry after the war, right up until about six months ago. Then I was rather burnt out, I had gone into the job with false expectations that I would be changing the magical world, helping shape it into something better during the rebuilding process but everything was pushed back or denied and in the end, I gave up. It’s not my finest moment I’ll admit, I’m looking to go back and try again in a few months but I just needed some time to myself, I hadn’t allowed myself that after everything that happened before jumping straight into work.” She explained carefully.

“Oh no dear, you don’t want to do that.”

“Mother.” He warned over the top of his whiskey.

“What do you mean?” Hermione asked hesitantly.

“Well, you won’t ever achieve what you want to achieve working at the ministry. You were brilliant in the war, in my opinion I’m

"You're trying to transition us from friends to partners."

"You're trying to transition us, from strangers to friends and then you will raise an eyebrow at him.

"What am I doing Mr Malfoy?" She raised her eyebrows at him.

"I know what you're doing," Draco stated.

"How does it make you feel, Mr Malfoy, to know that your wife thinks so positively about you, not just your actions but you as a human being?"

Hermione nodded in response.

"There's a lot of personality traits that you're fond of with your husband. Would you also say you care for him and his well-being?"

"Another hum, another scribble. 'It seems expectable, but he is. He's a good listener too.' Funny, which I don't think was something I and he makes me laugh a lot. He's really needs to. He's also generous and protective great knock for calming me down when he who shifited uncomfortably again. "He has a

Draco couldn't listen to this anymore, he stood abruptly and stormed from the office they were in.

Hermione glared at the healer. The healer, unfazed, stared back. "Mrs Malfoy, you have a deep-seated desire to protect those around you, your parents incl—"

"No. Stop it right now. That was unfair and cruel. You have no idea what kind of things you could be dredging up. I'm not saying that Draco's methods of dealing with things are perfect but he is coping—"

"No, he's not. His biggest reason behind why a marriage between you two couldn't work is because he has convinced himself he doesn't deserve you. Taking you aside, assuming I sign off on the divorce, his lack of relationships comes from his self-designed penance. Mr Malfoy has not allowed himself a single relationship since he took the mark. So what is to happen if I allow him out of this marriage without dealing with his issues?

Listen to women and their ideologies when committes as possible, men don't like to find yourself on as many boards and with a few nominated outsiders. You need to have a few members of esteemed families officiates and boards are not ministry committes of a committee. The people on those before a board of directors, or pass in front of a committee, "Every change you want to pass, will go here.

at all. It annoyed him that he knew that about eyes Draco wouldn't know she was annoyed her voice. If it wasn't for that spark in her Hermione did well to hide any annoyance in "What would you advise me to do then?" statement.

seemingly not sure what to make of her harshly. Hermione stared at Narcissa, "Mother," Draco warned again more without you but you are wasting your time at the ministry during git."

you like, or Draco will if you prefer I didn't attend, but you should know that I've just ordered the furniture for your room at the new property, your welcome to stay as often or as little as you like. My not wanting to live here at the manor isn't personal against you and as I don't have the option of having my parents nearby, I would never dream of trying to separate you and Draco."

Narcissa stared at the young witch in shock. "I have a room?" She spluttered.

Hermione laughed as if it was preposterous to think otherwise. "Of course. Though it won't be as elegant as your room here I'm sure, but it will be yours and yours only to use whenever you wish."

Draco observed his wife in quiet shock. Hermione had not mentioned this to him but here she was making sure his mother wouldn't feel rejected herself. It was a gesture that he appreciated more than he could express. It seemed that this witch was

ridiculous how easy that was, after years, itteral years, of what I can only describe as bashing my head against a brick wall. I...” she shook her head again in disbelief, knocking a strand of her hair free from the pin. Draco reached out and tucked it behind her ear, Hermione stared up at him for only a briefest moment before reaching up to quickly press her lips against the corner of his mouth. “Thank you. For being here, and not putting up a fight about me taking the position, for just being you Draco, you truly are an amazing person.” And just for a moment, he forgot how to breathe.

Christmas holidays would allow them enough time.

After nearly two hours they finally found themselves alone in the corner for a breather. "Granger, you're shaking, are you cold?" Draco frowned with concern. He went to cast a warming charm but stopped as she shook her head. She looked at him with wide eyes, the faintest hints of watering glazing her caramel eyes.

"I can not believe it. Draco do you know how many times I tried to suggest that exact idea at the ministry? The minister for education regulation wouldn't even meet with me. One Gala and people are rushing to push it through, snowballing ideas on how to expand on it and make it better. Do you know what a difference that will make to muggleborns in particular, to not come into this world two weeks before you're expected to leave your parents, knowing nothing and no one? I...I just can't believe it, it seems

Every so often a flash in the background would pull at Draco's peripheral vision indicating someone somewhere was being photographed, he hoped that at least one of those photos would include Hermione and her discussion with Ptolemy, and he hoped even more that it would find its way onto the cover of the prophet tomorrow morning. He has rather

It was a smooth deflection. They stood politely and listened to him ramble in pride about how she was expecting a boy and they thought they might call him Eddicus, after

that Rita Skeeter hasn't written an honest word in her career, no there is no truth. Draco and I are both rather private by nature is all". She waved her hand dismissively. Draco couldn't help but be impressed by her charm. "Speaking of which, I believe congratulations are in order, your eldest daughter is pregnant with your first grandchild is she not?"

didn't know why but he had become somewhat invested in ensuring Hermione made as many of her desired changes as she could before they went their separate ways and it would be great for her public image to be seen as friendly with the President of the Hogwarts board of directors.

"Tell me dear, you're young and full of fresh ideas, what's one change that you think would benefit our future generations?" Ptolemy asked as he puffed on a cigar, Hermione, quite the actress, pretended to contemplate his question for a moment. Ptolemy winked at Draco who smiled back, he knew that he was asking her this only because she had passed some hidden test he had been conducting on her.

After a moment Hermione sipped her champagne. "I suppose, it would be beneficial for all students that they all spend a week or two here at Hogwarts the year before they are expected to start their

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as soon as possible, perhaps over the  
amongst each other to try and implement it  
darling, they ate it up themselves, scrambling  
thought it a great idea, don't be modest  
Hermione, and heard that Ptolemy also  
course, as soon as they had been charmed by  
Ptolemy towards the hopeful change. Of  
attention about this great idea, turning the  
that Hermione had just been speaking to  
Occasionally Draco would casually drop in  
winning over witches and wizards all around.  
carrying much of the conversations and  
Draco barely needed to speak, Hermione  
those gathered.

away and continue making their rounds of  
and distract Ptolemy, allowing them to slip  
He smiled. Finally, another gentleman came  
excited than Lav for this baby to be born.”  
she goes into labour. I think she's more  
“No, she is staying close to Lavinia in case  
knew his wife and had noticed her absence.

Looked mildly impressed that Hermione

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“Say where is Elanore? Did she not join you  
tonight?” Hermione sidled up, Ptolemy  
bouncing but she kept her composure.  
warm smile, Draco could tell inside she was  
Mrs Malfoy!” She returned his gaze with a  
which we should think about implementing  
achievable. “Hm, certainly a great idea in  
what she was proposing was rather  
reform of muggle studies or the like. Instead  
had no doubt expected a spell on curriculum  
Hermione seemed to surprise Ptolemy, he  
scratches the first day of school.”

daunting to those who are starting from  
which in my opinion, is fantastic but can be  
with the children of other wizarding families  
wizarding families to grow up being friends  
pals for the year, it's common for children of  
children sooner, perhaps even become pen  
able to begin friendships with these other  
and those of magical-born families would be  
have a less jarringly introduction to this world  
schools. Muggelborns would be able to

clinics throughout England, it had always  
been intended for Hermione to go to  
boarding school, though one in magical  
nature had been a surprise. Her summers had  
been as crammed with dance classes, french  
lessons, piano lessons and table etiquette  
classes as his had, the difference however  
being that both of her parents had loved her  
very much. His mother loved him of course  
but it was harder to show him when his  
father had been around.

“I couldn't agree with you more Mrs  
Malfoy! Now you must tell me if there is any  
truth to that article in the Prophet the other  
week, are we to be expecting a new Malfoy  
sometime soon?” Draco wanted to scowl at  
the nosy old bastard but he held a tight  
smile.

Hermione chuckled and rolled her eyes as  
if the thought of eloping and being pregnant  
with his love child was preposterous. “Oh  
come now Ptolemy, you know as well as I

Hermione rolled her eyes and stomped away from him toward the front door. “Careful Draco, you’re letting your dramatic show again.” She called over her shoulder. “Maybe I’m just annoyed because you told me off like I was a freaking child for eating chips at two o’clock this afternoon, spouting off about how we would be going to dinner soon and I’d ruin my appetite and now it’s six and guess what, we still haven’t eaten,” Draco said, his snarky attitude on full display. “I did not tell you off like a child!” Hermione shrieked at the accusation. “Draco jabbed the button on the elevator angrily. “Hermione you smacked my fucking hand!” She argued. “I did not smack your hand, I smacked the chip out of your hand!” She argued. “Like I was a fucking child!” Draco gave her a pointed look.

dinner there was no need for her to be taking so long.

“Draco, I swear I will muffliato you.”

“I’d like to see you try.” He grumbled under his breath. Finally, he heard the tap of her shoes on the floor above him. “About bloody time.” He muttered. He looked up to see her wearing those things she had told him were called jeans again. Personally, he hated it when she wore them, they looked uncomfortably tight against her skin and highlighted certain areas of her body he would rather not be drawn toward, no matter how fine her behind was. They were getting a divorce and he couldn’t afford to have thoughts about her ass. “You look nice.” The words tumbled out of him and he mentally slapped himself.

“Only if you’re sure you’re done mucking around? We could clean the kitchen first if you prefer?” Draco drawled sarcastically.

"Oh lush now Mr Malfoy, I am so pleased to see you both again. I'm sure you won't have any trouble locating the great hall?"  
"I think we will manage. Will you be joining us later Professor? I would love to catch up properly." Hermione's soft voice floated out.  
"Yes, I will come down once all the guests have come through." She smiled.  
"Excellen't then we shall see you later."

Draco followed Hermione from the office, his hand resting with a feather touch against her lower back. They had agreed following Hermione's acceptance of the committee of an international marriage. Other committee members would be less indulgent towards her if they thought they were in a legitimate union.

Her family in this part of the world and the only reason to schmooze up to Hermione was if they believed she would continue to have access to those funds.

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experience at a movie theatre, it was a casual what would for most of them, be their first their groups of friends out to dinner and growled. It had been her idea to invite both who knows where this damn place is.” Draco will be waiting for us, you’re the only one “Witch, I have given you twenty. Everyone She snapped back.

“Yeah, yeah give me a minute would you.” called up the staircase.  
“Hermione! We’re going to be late!” Draco

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“Fine! Next time I’ll let you fill up on chips, and the rest of us will enjoy our meals.”

The elevator doors slid open but Draco was too busy glaring at the witch beside him. “Even if I had eaten the whole bag, it was four hours ago because you insist on getting ready as slowly as possible, I could have eaten the chips and still been hungry enough to eat my meal.” He hissed.

“It’s not my fault that you can’t control your feelings just because you’re hangry.” She glared up at him.

“Hangry?!”

“Angry because you’re hungry” She explained.

Draco’s mouth opened and closed several times in shock. “It literally is your fault! You’re the one who smacked the chip out of my freaking hands and took the bag off me. Like a fucking child!” He called out exasperated.

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successful dentists who had owned a chain of parents had been wealthy and wildly equivalent to the Greengrasses family, her in the muggle world, her family had been the He had discovered earlier in the week that and in a way she had. this role as though she had been born for it, have worried because she had stepped into now.” Hermione smiled sweetly. She needn’t with work that it hasn’t been feasible until unfortunately, Draco has just been so busy long since our family was active in the community and it is so important, Hermione replied gracfully. “It has been too “The pleasure is ours, Mr Smith,” criticism.

them, Draco suspected from poor his cheeks had a permanent purple tinge to large old man with an impossible round face, input the last couple of years.” He was afraid the board has rather missed Narcissa’s were claiming your seat once more! I’m

able to step out the other side without so much as a wobble in her step.

Headmistress Minerva McGonagall stood before them, a surprised but pleased smile on her face at their arrival. “Miss Granger! Mr Malfoy! What a pleasure to see you both, my how you’ve both grown!” She smiled, stepping forward to clasp Hermione’s hands, followed by a pat on his shoulder. “Oh of course. Forgive me, it’s Mrs Malfoy now, isn’t it? Old habits you see.” The elderly witch bustled looking between the two. Draco searched her face for any traces of judgment or disapproval but found none. She genuinely seemed happy just to see them, Draco didn’t doubt that more so applied to Hermione than himself.

“Professor, you look incredible.” He offered with a slight bow. A small blush rose in the Headmistresses face, waving her hand to dismiss his compliments.

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thought I'd say this but I think you snakes are can all stay friends because, and I never goes through I would like to hope that we I'm trying to say is that even if your divorce or become close but here we all are. So what groups that I never thought would get along couple and you've brought together two divorce but you fight like an old married thought she had gone completely barry. And I know you two are trying to get a that Malfoy and Nijone had gotten married I have something to say, when I first heard cleared his throat, "It's okay with everyone wasn't until they were seated that Ron and waited for everyone else to catch up. Hermione stopped outside the restaurant

happy? Would she? life, that could have been him and Hermione, love and pursued a relationship. Would he be drunken haze, if they had actually fallen in war, if they hadn't gotten married in a if they hadn't been on opposite sides of the

now and been fine, and I didn't let you take the sandwich off me 'cause your right, I let you take it off me because your fucking scary Gin, and I've gone up against Voldemort." He said seriously. Several laughs erupted from their group as they followed Hermione's form still stomping down the street toward the muggle side of London.

"Well I ate earlier and I could definitely eat again," Theo smirked. Blaise and Astoria groaned.

"We all know what you ate earlier Theo and we don't need to hear about it. That's my sister." Astoria grumbled. Several more groans filtered through the group but Daphne grinned at Theo and started whispering in his ear.

Ron and Luna seemed to have fallen into their own world, hand in hand with her head resting on his shoulder, talking in hushed tones to each other. Briefly Draco wondered if under different circumstances, in another

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an orbital habit, the rest of her curves falling hair was pulled back and pinned in place with reflection of the mirror. The top half of her quietly. Her eyes darted up to meet his in the "You look incredible, Granger." He spoke Hermione, not just some thing she has done. himself up to vulnerability and compliment finding at least one opportunity a day to open mind healers, Draco had been tasked with accepting compliments this past week at the They had been working on giving and chest tighten a little.

said that seeing her like this didn't make his completely open and he would be lying if he Hermione's cleavage. The back was left neckline, exposing the fine curves of out mid-thigh, the front had a deep plunging around it that hugged her hips before flaring with shimmering gold sequins swirling was made from a silky cream-colored fabric brought with her a gown for Hermione. It His mother had come to stay last night and

naturally around her shoulders in delicate waves.

"You look fairly dashing yourself." She smiled back at him. His outfit wasn't anything special, he had a rotation of suits he wore to events like this, crossed somewhere between modern dress robes and muggle business suits but he accepted the compliment for what it was. Tonight after all was about Hermione.

"Ready when you are." Tonight they would travel through the floo to Hogwarts, it wouldn't be the first time he had been back since the battle but it still wasn't a place he felt comfortable being. A sharp nod from Hermione and she strolled to his side.

"Thank you for coming with me tonight. You are much more experienced at this type of thing than I am and I would feel a bit like a fish out of water without you there." Hermione looked up at him as her hand affectionately came to grip his elbow.

Harry stared at her for a second. "You can say that all you like but I'm with Malfoy on this one. I could have eaten both earlier and

With a pointed look at Harry.

"No, he let her take them off him because he knows his wife is right." Ginni chimed in.

an eyebrow at him.

"She's like a foot shorter than you and half your weight, you're telling me she managed to take a bag of chips off you?" Greg raised

stomped away through the foyer.

Hermione scowled in Theo's direction and crossed her arms.

frustrations to work out." Theo wiggled his eyebrows.

"Unless you two would prefer to catch up with us later if you guys have some

"wouldn't it be nice if we can change and in the same way so can we go now?" Harry asked.

expressions. "As amusing as that was, Cindy wouldn't let me either and I'm starting to

Someone beside them cleared their throat. Both Draco and Hermione looked up to see their entire group standing there with mixed

alright, pretty decent actually, the lot of ya, even Theodore. Luna and I are going to need the extra support soon too because well... We're having a baby!" He finished with a grin.

It was a surreal moment as he sat there with a smile on his face, to look around the table and see his friends genuinely happy for Ronald freaking Weasley. It was a bizarre feeling that Draco himself felt happiness for the redhead. The groups had seemingly blended together and he hoped that Hermione and himself had formed a good enough friendship by the end of their marriage that they would remain in each other's lives. He looked across the table to where she sat and found she was already looking at him. A truce, in the way of a smile, was exchanged.

Draco ordered the biggest steak on the menu and sat back with a smug smile upon its completion. His earlier snappiness had

They stepped through the door in the office, Hermitone's grip tightening, no doubt returning their previous experience when returning from Las Vegas. Thankfully this time though was much shorter and she was

This mother had spent several hours over that he wasn't so thrilled about. the last week tutoring Hermione on the names of everyone else on the board, their wives, children and if they had them, grandchildren. Who was friendly with who, what topics to avoid with certain members and whose wives she should get on her side. It's less about the ideas you're pushing and more about how likeable you are to the rest.

"I'm sure you will do fine with or without me Hermione, you are the brightest witch of our age after all, but out of course, I'm happy to accompany you," Draco mumbled back. He was happy to accompany her, it was everyone else that he would have to schmooze with



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Draco stood in her doorway watching her fiddle with her dress in the mirror, picking at parts of it and flattening it down. They would be attending her first gala tonight since she had stepped into the position open to the Malfoy family among the Hogwarts board of directors. She was nervous, he could tell. She had spent four and a half years at the ministry and had never gotten close to coming face to face with them.

The movie they had chosen to see was a new Christmas movie. That made very little sense to Draco because it was only the middle of September. The storyline itself confused him for a while as it kept jumping to new characters that hadn't been introduced and seemed to consist more of multiple little stories rather than one big one. Hermoine had been watching at home. She way the movies had been that he and the couch at home, but he got to try another floor, he found he missed laying on the did have to sit upright and with his feet on the floor, this time he This experience was different, this time he did have to sit upright and with his feet on the floor, he found he missed laying on the couch at home, but he got to try another couch at home, this one was called flavour of soda, this one was called

"It's a strong no, but I'll be sure to tell Pottterette that you tried really hard to convince me otherwise." He offered.  
"I heard that," Ginny called over her shoulder.  
"Oh, well I tried." Draco shrugged half-heartedly to the dark-haired wizard.

“Yeah, I’m still missing details on that, what the hell happened?”

"You and me both mate," Draco recalled what information they did have, which consisted entirely of what they had figured out the following day.

"Wait, there's a videotape?" Harry responded a little too enthusiastically for Draco's liking. Draco groaned and nodded, knowing full well he would be forced to endure another viewing of his wedding to Hermione sometime soon.

"Wait, Greg was really a gorilla? You didn't get footage of that too, did ya?" Harry asked with a laugh.

Greg who was walking directly in front of them groaned. "Please don't remind me, I wasn't right for like a week after that." Draco laughed.

"So that's a no to the bachelor party?" Harry asked to clarify.

"A what?" Draco asked with confusion.  
"She shook her head with a small smile.  
"Take your shoes off and sit down. Right here." It felt weird for him to be shoeless  
here.

"I was thinking that we could watch a movie." She indicated to the large white rectangle that had appeared above the track.

Draco sighed internally, wishing that he could be more objective, her curls framed her face and the glow from the fireplace made her eyes sparkle. She was stepping towards him, extending out a glass of wine for him to taste-sleved dark shirt.

“Long-sleaved black shirt  
he owed her anything nor did she owe him.  
explaining. He didn’t know why, it’s not like  
The penhouse was dark, the only lights on  
were the lights in the kitchen and the glow  
from the fireplace. “Hey, it’s alright, I’m glad  
you’re okay.” Her arms still hungled tightly to  
her chest blushing into the darkness in her

anywhere other than bed but he did as he was told. Her laugh floated through the air. "Are you always so rigid, put your legs up, lean back, relax." She carried a bowl of funny-shaped white things that Draco vaguely recalled as being popcorn, he had never eaten it himself though.

She pointed a slim black stick to the small box hanging from the ceiling and light filled the rectangle on the wall. She seemed to know what she was doing because she worked her way across a screen, clicking different things to make new words appear, finally settling on Lilo & Stitch. She placed the bowl on his lap, physically rearranging his body to her liking, he had never sat so haphazardly in all his life. If his parents could see him now with his feet on the couch of all places they would have a fit.

He expected her to sit away from him, the sofa was certainly large enough for it, but instead, she tucked her feet beneath herself

The movie theatre was only another block down; the fresh air did them all good after their meal and they found that they fell into little groups. Harry walked beside him with his hands in the pockets of his jacket, watching Ginny, Hermione and Astoria gossiping enthusiastically. "Ginny keeps trying to convince me that we need to throw a belated bachelor and bachelorette party for you and Harry nodded. "Oh yeah I know, but Ginny is convinced that you too are, and that Draco chuckled. "Tell her our trip to Vegas the next two days."

"You know we're not together right?"  
Hermione." Draco frowned over at him.  
"I'm going to hear about that elevator if it's all I'm going to hear about for the next two days."

"You know we're not together right?"  
Harry nodded. "Oh yeah I know, but Ginny is convinced that you too are, and that Draco chuckled. "Tell her our trip to Vegas the next two days."

'lemonade'. It was nice but it wasn't as good as the Coca-Cola one that they had tried in Vegas, Draco decided. Also, this room was significantly louder and darker but the screen filled an entire wall.

It seemed Hermione was the only one of their group to have been to a movie theatre before, Harry mumbling something about being locked in a cupboard instead. It sounded like a touchy subject and since he would rather avoid discussions of his own childhood, he let the comment slide. It wasn't until towards the end of the movie and in a rather clever way Draco thought, that the multitude of different storylines merged into one. Love actually wasn't perhaps his favourite movie but it had been the first movie he had seen that wasn't what Hermione called 'animated' and he liked it all the same.

Leaning on the couch next to his shoulder and grabbed a few pieces from the bowl. He barely managed to open his mouth as she shoved them them through his lips before grabbing her own handful. A salty buttery taste filled his mouth as pictures began to move on the rectangle before them, sound filling the penthouse around them, all he could do was watch on in fascination at the brilliance of the muggle creation which Draco noted carried the theme of family and acceptance.

He will return to a life of solitude, sure he has friends and his mother but he will never open himself up to love, he has a rather irrational fear of becoming his father. Which I know, and you know is ridiculous because you were able to list five positive things about him off the top of your head in a heartbeat. I am not pushing him to be cruel, Hermione. I am pushing him so that in the end if you still decide to leave he doesn't view it as his fault.”

The seriousness of what the witch was saying hit her upon hearing her first name. The floating pad popped out of the air, she had been dismissed.

It was dark and Hermione was staring out at all the city lights below her, a glass of red wine in her hand, arms folded across her chest when Draco finally stepped into the penthouse that night. Relief flooded her face when she heard him open the door and that caused a stab of guilt in his gut. "I'm sorry, I just needed some time." He found himself

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The black-haired witch, who was trying desperately to get a grip on Hermione, was scratching at the witch's face.

“Leave her out of it.”

“You've said your peace now get lost and that is enough.” Draco snarled harshly.

“Fuckin' slit—”

Hermione just smiled at her. “Like a baby.”

The witch turned back to him, reaching her hand up and shoving Draco's face backwards. He blamed the shock of that and bakkwards. The witch turned back to him, reaching her hand up and shoving Draco's face back to him, ready to pounce.

“You would say that, you're just as bad, to your friends.” Hermione bit out.

“I think it's best if you find your way back

It was Astoria's turn next. “Never have I ever pined over someone I had a crush on for more than a year.” Daphne, Hermione, Harry and Ginny all drank.

Draco smirked at Harry's only remaining drink. Ginny shook her head in amusement.

“Never have I ever, killed the same evil wizard four fucking times.”

Harry sighed deeply before drinking it down, thrusting the glass back onto the table and raising two fists in the air above his head. The laughter that passed around the group was short-lived.

“No, you wouldn't have because you were one of his little lackeys weren't you?” Draco turned to see the black-haired witch from earlier.

“I'm not that person,” Draco stated firmly, it wasn't the first time he had to deal with this kind of reaction, though it had been over two years since the last incident.

“I never have smirked at Theo. ‘Never have I ever hijacked a portkey.’ Theo narrowed his eyes at her but his grin gave him away. Harry also took a shot. When they all looked at him in amazement he reddened, explaining that he knew the quidditch world cup was rubbish so he accommodated Ron had chosen for the last Superstingly Harry also took a shot. When ever hijacked a portkey.” Theo narrowed his wimp out.

The entire group had five shots and a glass of Ogden's lined up in front of them as they circled the table. Daphne turned her scary voice on as she explained the rules of Never have I ever? They would start with Hermione, who was standing next to him and go clockwise around the table making a statement, Draco going last and repeating until someone had finished all the drunks in front of them. Harry chuckled at the drunks in laugher as Daphne glared down at each of them while explaining that no one was toاتهم while explaining that no one was to change it.

“I never have I ever eloped.” Draco and Hermione both blinked at him before downing their shots with slightly embarrassed faces.

Gregory smirked. “Never have I ever used polyjuice potion to spy on someone else.” Hermione and Harry both lit up and downed a shot. Draco frowned in confusion.

“Yeah sorry about that mate.” Harry chuckled as he looked over at Draco, Draco shook his head in shock.

“Wait what, you turned into Gregory?”

Harry roared with laughter pointing at Gregory, obviously having just remembered something. “He asked why you were wearing glasses and then when I said you were reading, he was so surprised you could read.” Everyone else erupted into laughter as a slow realisation dawned on Draco.

“You cheeky bastard!” Draco chuckled. He turned to Hermione in confusion “Wait, who

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"Hermione!" was the shocked chorus of the table.  
"It was Snape." She said as if that was explanation enough.  
"Speaking of Snape, never have I ever had detention with Snape," Ginny chimed.  
"Seriously? You never had detention with him?" Draco smirked with a shake of the head.  
"Mate he could have burnt the place to the ground and Snape would have looked the other way." Blaise laughed.

"That's so messed up mate." Gregory to realtà, his cheeks reddening again. They all burst into laughter, startling him back. Everyone stared at him for a moment before his focus disappeared in his drunken state. He was in love with my mum." Harry stated, "He used to tell me that I stink like my dad."

leaving gouges all over Hermione's arms and face. It seemed the entire group was as shocked as he was for a moment because it wasn't until Hermione punched the witch while still gripping her hair, screaming at her that Draco wouldn't hit a woman but that didn't mean she wouldn't do it for him, that everyone strung into action.

Harry went to stumble towards her but Ginny pulled him back. Draco managed to get his arms around her waist as the other witch finally grabbed a handful of Hermione's hair, instead of deterring her, Hermione started fighting harder against Draco's grasp, Theo's arms grabbed at Hermione's arms, trying to convince her to let go unsuccessfully.

Another set of arms snaked around the other witch, finally managing to pull them apart with a few strangled cries. Hermione was panting but still trying to break free and go back for round two. In between her

hand was lightly holding onto her waist to anchor her.

Gregory yelled to head back to the table and then disappeared in the way of the bar, presumably to get more drinks. The rational part of Draco, still emotionally recovering from the last drunken night out, knew he shouldn't have anymore. The irrational part of him took one look at Hermione giggling and pulling on Astoria's arm, Ginny doubling over in laughter on the other side of her, saw Harry playfully shoving Theo as the two of them joked about something and decided he didn't want to be an outsider tonight. He wanted to let his guard down and enjoy Hermione's birthday, after all, there were no portkeys planned for tonight. He was fairly certain he wasn't going to wake up tomorrow in an unknown location married to yet another witch, what could it hurt to have one or two more?

did you turn into?" Harry and Hermione roared with laughter again.  
Tears running down her cheeks she finally caught her breath, "Millicent's cat." Another eruption of laughter around the table.  
"Never have I ever had sex in the library at Hogwarts," Daphne said when the laughter died down. Blaise, Astoria, Theo, Harry, Ginny, Gregory, Theo and Daphne all took a shot.

Hermione looked outraged. "You're kidding, all of you?" Daphne, it was your statement why did you take a shot?"  
Daphne shrugged with a smile, "Because I was lying."  
"The library?" Hermione exclaimed again, "I never have I ever set a teacher on fire." Playfully as a form of mocking comfort. "Everyone chuckling. Draco patted her head, "I'm sorry?" Hermione asked again, "Harry stared straight at Hermoine who down her shot with a guilty grimace.

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pointed at the two guys, the black-haired girl way. Take your girls with you too." He on the Diagonal Alley side. "You lot, out that out, that way." He pointed towards the door Blaise and Draco. "You, take your girls, get groups. He motioned to Harry, Greg, Theo, "You lot. Get out. You want to fight, go do it somewhere else." The guard glared at both hair.

girls' friends, another witch with Brunette pulling Ginny off one of the black-haired boomed. Draco turned to see another guard overheard. "Enough!" a security guard's voice Merlin's sake, Ginny!'"

The loud music suddenly disappeared from Hermione was yelling at someone behind him, the girls all huddling around her trying to keep her out. There was a slap and he heard Astoria's voice cry out "Oh for Merlin's sake, Ginny!" He growled.

behind him to point at him. "Stay the fuck

him struggled, landing a few punches to Draco himself, one to Draco's ribs, one to Draco's cheekbone, the rest were insignificant. Distantly he was aware of someone else fighting, likely Gregory and the other tough guy, but he was too focused on hurting the man below him. Arms gripped him by the shoulders and yanked him backwards. It was chaos. Greg was indeed fighting with the other guy, Harry, trying to yank him backwards, something was said because, in the midst of trying to separate them, Harry turned around and punched the guy in the face. People all around them in the club were either egging them on or trying to break up the fight. Blaise and Theo were still gripping his shoulders trying to push him backwards.

Blaise glared over at the guy Draco had been punching who was getting ready to get up and try to tackle them. One arm shot out

Ogden's but the rest of them loaded up Harry, Blaise and Daphne all switched to rather liked it though, it seemed so did Greg. Blaise started coughing. Draco found he looked as though he had bitten a bludger and Theo let out a loud wooring noise, Harry fruit

Lick the salt, down the shot, suck on the shots together before mimicking her actions, rest of the group laughed. Chinking their lets get drunk!" Theo cheered loudly as the love you guys, thanks for being here, now Hermione offered a shot up in cheers. "I wedge of some green fruit.

salt on everyone's hands and handed them a Hermione for some reason started sprinkling fines. Shots were passed around before Gregory with multiple glasses of Ogden's shots, apparently a muggle form of alcohol, what must have been twenty-odd Tequila responses Harry had returned with a tray of to help him. He gave a nervous nod in

another round. The warmth lighting his insides.

Ginny started swaying to the music and decided to pull Harry out to the dance floor. The girls all loaded up another shot, looking at Theo and Draco expectantly.

Draco shrugged. "Why not." Embracing the spirit of Hermione's birthday. Theo, ever the party animal nodded in glee.

"Man, I am just praying that one of them wakes up in a zoo tomorrow," Gregory smirked. Blaise burst with laughter, Hermione having heard him gave Gregory a wink.

Everyone had a significant glow on by the time they followed Harry and Ginny out to the dancefloor, Draco was glad for the drinks because they allowed him to do what Ginny said and loosen up a little, well as much as one could when there were so many strangers in such close proximity to him.

"I said, keep a tighter leash on your fucking bitch." He snapped again. Draco stared for a second, nodded and then launched forward, straight down. Draco went down with him, punching him continuously, the man below.

Blaise looked up at him in panic. He heard Theo say “Oh shit.” But he was already turning around, the black-hairred witch was red-faced, bleeding, in tears and in the arms of someone trying to comfort her, another guy stood in front of him, glaring at Draco.

"You better learn to keep your bitch on a stringer than that she had tripped from the other bitch's head. She whined against Draco, but eventually, he managed to turn her away, Harry and Ginny helping to keep her in place. Blaise was saying something to her but Draco was too focused on the voice behind him.

Theo and Daphne seemed to be particularly close, finding and pressed as closely to each other as possible, Draco noted that Harry and Ginny were dancing in much the same manner, as were Blaise and Astoria, even Gregory was now dancing with some witch he didn't recognize, Draco wasn't sure he felt particularly comfortable dancing like that with a stranger.

and her friend and then pointed to the Knockturn alley exit.

It took a few minutes for the group to reconvene outside and when they did Draco noticed most of them looked a little too pleased with themselves. Hermione especially looked thoroughly proud. The guys were all a little shocked but most of them had glints in their eyes. Blaise rolled his eyes but couldn't hide the small tug at the corner of his lips. "Merlin Granger, remind me not to get on your bad side..." Theo exclaimed, and then after a moment. "...again." Almost everyone laughed. Except Draco, he was a little too stunned to speak, he just kept staring at Hermione, this witch just continued to blast away any notions he had of her and he was beginning to wonder if he was in a little too deep here with her. He shouldn't be proud that she essentially attacked some witch on his behalf. He shouldn't be turned on by her violent

line to get through into Diagon Alley. The club, The Naked Philosopher, was significantly more crowded than the pub, the music was loud and it was dark. Crowds of people pressed against each other in some kind of bizarre dance that Draco was sure he had never seen before in his life. He didn't know the steps to this dance, he didn't even know what it was called. They crowded around a table off to the side of the club while Harry and Gregory went to go get everyone drinks. The panic or confusion must have shown on his face as he tried to observe the pattern, failing miserably because Ginny tugged on his arm until he bent down for her to speak into his ear.

"It's not a practised dance, it's just about letting loose and having fun. Breathe a little Draco." He stared at her wide-eyed at hearing his first name from her lips. The pointed raise of her eyebrows and nod of her head indicated that she genuinely was trying

“Good,” Narcissa looked between them scolded.  
quiet voice as if afraid she was about to be welcome anytime”, Hermione said in a “Of course, it’s not Narcissa, you know you stay tonight if that’s not an inconvenience”  
darling, Happy birthday. I thought I would and forced a smile on her face. “Hermione over her lips before she straightened her back with narrow eyes, another deep sigh passing “Good,” Narcissa gawked. “What? No!” She exclaimed.  
Hermione gawked. “What? No!” She other:”  
you two at least did not do that to each hand and shaking her head. “Please tell me She sighed deeply, putting her head in one expected her to be standing by his kitchen. “Mother?” Draco asked, not having Narcissa.  
faltering when they came face to face with

Draco and gave him what he could only describe as an approving nod. Draco frowned in confusion. He wasn’t sure what part of any of this it was that she approved of.

Theo whispered something in Daphne’s ear causing her to giggle. They both rushed their goodbyes and disappeared into the floo. Astoria pulled Hermione in for another hug.

“Happy birthday again Hermione, you, me and the girls, lunch next week yes?”  
Hermione nodded in response. Blaise exchanged his farewells too before dragging his wife off as well.

Gregory looked between the two of them and shook his head. “I’d hate to go up against you two once you’re on the same page.” He mumbled, ruffling Hermione’s hair and giving Draco’s shoulder a quick squeeze.

Hermione giggled all the way through the floo and smiled all the way up the elevator and into the penthouse. Her smile only

it was the first time that his mother had Blaise had also mentioned on the quiet that Blaise had made him angry.

That thought alone made him recovery and pain management potions. healing spells and was particularly good at seemed to conveniently know so many Draco think it that was perhaps why Theo and that it had been particularly bad. It made his eyes that Theo hadn’t had the same luxury on Blaise but Draco could tell by the look in the ground. He apparently never laid a hand marred, he had been glad to see that one in whispered that of all the men his mother had went back for year six though, Blaise had mysteriously over the summer before they start of fifth year, the man had died Blaise’s mum had married Theo’s dad at the their group.

Gregory and him but never fully engaged in studies. He trailed around after Blaise, up until their sixth year he had been quiet, loose canon, throughout childhood and right

wanted next to nothing to do with the estates and assets of her late husband. She had gladly turned it all over to Theo on the condition that a governess was hired to watch over the estate until he came of age. When Theo returned it was like he was a different person, he was loud, he laughed a lot and he had a mischievous streak a mile wide that Draco had never seen in him before, so while he knew that tonight would likely lead to trouble of some kind, he couldn’t bring himself to actually mind if it meant Theo was happy and Hermione had a good birthday.

Draco also couldn’t stifle the pride he felt as he watched Daphne help Hermione fasten the necklace he had gotten her for her birthday around her neck. It was a white gold oval-shaped locket with the constellation of Virgo made out of tiny blue diamonds on the front of it. He had recruited the help of Potterette to get hold of a photo of her mum and dad to go inside. When she had burst

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else grimaced. Ginny paused on her way past Ginny perked up at the idea while everyone my wife home now and she's her senseless." Harry turned, still drunk towards Hermione, pulling her in for a one-armed hug. "I love ya Malone, but I'm going to take Harry's eye.

brushing forming around the side of his left him fighting anyone, Blaise had some his own, and while he couldn't recall seeing knuckles looked only slightly less busted than with a split in the corner of her lip. Gregory's arms. Somehow Ginny had ended up ponytail, deep scratch marks across her face a wild mess and half hanging from her been tipped at the shoulder. Harry's shirt had entered the leaky cauldron. Harry's appearance at their disheveled as they Several groups of people stopped to stare feeling all those things.

being so defensive of him but here he was, alteration. He shouldn't feel delighted at her

"Wonderful. Perhaps we should talk in the morning, once you two have had time to sleep this off, yes?"

Hermione was wide-eyed as she embraced Narcissa with a quick peck on the cheek and scurried off up the stairs. His mother raised an eyebrow at him. He couldn't help the chuckle that escaped him.

"Honestly Draco. Fighting?" she gave him a disapproving look. Draco stepped forward and placed a kiss on her forehead before going to the icebox for a bottle of water.

"Do you want the short story?" he asked after polishing off half the bottle. Her face clearly said 'obviously.' He sighed. "Someone had an issue with my past, a woman, she put her hands on me, Hermione threw hands back. The woman's friend, a guy, spoke very ill of Hermione. I threw hands at him, then it was a massive chaotic mess in which everyone was in on, even Harry Potter got involved at one point. I'm sorry, mother."

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The Leaky Cauldron was just as busy as ever and the group had to form a single file was quicker than having to walk to the foyer Draco had been rather pleased by that and it access the floors they intended to visit. Within permission by its occupants could building, only those who had been given increase the security of each resident in the main foyer downstair, the idea being to upset her after all.

Finally allowed himself to believe he hadn't She mouthed a quick thank you and Draco Her eyes flew up and caught him watching. Watched as a distant smile crossed her face. to brush over the front of the locket, he though, her long delicate fingers reached up him he hadn't, still he wasn't sure. Now mistake in doing so but Ginny had made a huge moment he thought he had made a huge into tears and excused herself earlier for a

frankly after today's therapy session, Draco could use the distraction.

Despite having been assigned to both of them to determine if their marriage could be salvaged, healer Thorne had seemed to zero in on Draco more so than Hermione. Today's session was about highlighting the differences between him and his father. Hermione had been especially quick to point out that she believed him to be kind, which had taken him by surprise.

He was annoyed to admit that these therapy sessions were making it rather hard to keep an objective mind about her, to keep his feelings distant.

"Oi are you lot ready yet or what?" Ginny shouted as if they had just been waiting on the guys. Theo whooped and downed his drink. Draco couldn't help but groan internally at his friend's enthusiasm, it was bound to lead them to more trouble at some stage tonight. Theo hadn't always been a

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the smile that passed over her face in amusement.

hardened length. She tried and failed to stop skin and pressed against her thigh was his indicating that he was still asleep tickling her behind her shoulder, the soft breaths hand tucking into her hip, his face buried beside her. Draco's arm lay across her, his eyes fluttering open to look out the windows Hermione stretched her arms upward, her sunlight filled the room with a warm glow.

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### CHAPTER 17



There in his bed asleep was his wife, what he did find was that he didn't mind in the least, he crawled into bed, fully clothed, too tired and sore to care with a small smile on his face.

### CHAPTER 16



## 19 SEPTEMBER 2003

Draco watched across the room as Astoria expertly straightened Hermione's hair. He could see the way her face lit up in the mirror, he was drawn to the smile that broke out across her face in laughter at something Daphne said as she sat across from her, Ginny applying light makeup to Hermione's face. Harry walked over to him and stared, following his gaze towards the girls.

"You know you're staring right?" He muttered into his beer.

was seeing things?

Surely not so intoxicated however that he was certain he was still rather intoxicated. It wouldn't be wise to do so tonight given that deal with the healing spells tomorrow, it stars and rolled out his shoulders, he would

Draco clicked his neck as he walked up the

Stairs well, mother."

Draco chuckled to himself. "Obviously.

"Obiously."

Her sigh was audible. "To bribe the papers,

"Where are you going?" he called after her.

turing down the hallway.

Narcissa rolled her eyes, stepping forward

"Much."

he looks worse than you do?" Draco

"Tomorrow's headline. At least tell me that

Draco frowned. "What?"

the chosen one astray." She mumbled.

Narcissa sighed. "Former death eater leads

but today was Hermione's birthday, and few days since they had last seen each other opened." He explained. It had only been a going on about it since before it even nightclubs that muggles go to. Ginny's been week on the border of Diagon and Knockturn. It's supposed to mimic the Harry had an amused look on his face as if we going again?" Draco asked.

"There's some new club that opened last he wasn't quite buying Draco's dismissal. Lounging about chatting away. "So where are head and turned to survey the rest of the guys draw any more attention so he shook his focused on the expressions that danced over her face in response. Still, he didn't want to they said to each other at all and entirely hadn't been paying attention to the words gossiping." Draco drawled. In truth, he to shut up. They just kept talking and "I just don't understand, they never seem

She had come into his room last night with the intention of saying thank you for standing up for her but had clearly fallen asleep. She found that she didn't mind waking up next to him this morning it felt rather cosy to have his arm across her like this. The necklace he had gotten her for her birthday had touched her more than he could understand, it had been kind and considerate and thoughtful, and then last night he had been protective and dammit all if watching him punching someone for calling her a bitch didn't cause tingly feelings in the pit of her stomach.

She slowly turned to face him, tucking her hands up under her cheek, his arm, instinctively reaching around her back and readjusting his grip. He looked peaceful when he was sleeping, even despite the blue bruise on his cheekbone and his tasseled hair. There were no subtle frown lines, no tightness pulling at his mouth and she was

When the lights turned back on in the theatre everyone sat there in a kind of amazed silence for a while.

"Was it just me, or did anyone else think that Harry bloke looked a bit like Snape?" Theo asked.

"mother?" Draco joked in a mocking tone.  
"I avoid a repeat incident, isn't that the best of it to rise above so in future we should strive to always strive to be better than everyone else," encouraged and when in public you should keep the troublesome lecture, it's not bag large enough she's rather successful at prophecies, with enough notice and a money shocked. Mother has connections with the a fish next to him, "Hermione darling, close your mouth you shouldn't appear so Narcissa glared at him, "Five thousand."

Hermione spluttered beside him, "What do you mean?"  
"Hermione's mouth opened and closed like cost this time?"  
cheeky grin on his face, "How much did it raised an eyebrow at his mother with a something as common as rawling?" Draco and let either of us end up on the cover for

judgement placed on Hermione, not when she played such a major role in saving them all from the malicious bald snake-man.

The apricot danish was sweet with the perfect amount of tart to it and it did an excellent job of highlighting the lingering tastes of Hermione's juices. He could have died in that moment in his room upstairs and he would have been happy. It had taken every ounce of control to walk out of that room instead of making her scream his name for hours, Merlin, had he wanted to.

"Honestly I'm a little surprised it's not all over the front page, it's not like there weren't dozens of witnesses, I would have thought Rita would jump at the chance to drag mine or Draco's name through the mud, a slug of a woman that she is." Hermione's voice filtered through to grab his attention.

Draco snorted, tearing a small corner of his danish off. "Of course, it's not. Do you honestly think that mother would sit back

a paper bag with the logo of the bakery down the counter next to her, Hermione could see awfully avoiding looking up at them. On assembling an array of pastries onto a plate, Narcissa was busy in the kitchen again followed him downstairs.

She nodded and after getting dressed earlier. She had been discarded pyjama shorts that had been discarded looking to wake us up." He handed her the should head down though before she comes think you would want me listening to it. We wrong, I found it sexy as hell but I didn't reddening cheeks. He chuckled at the sight of her penthouse. He heard her taking care of herself the first night they had slept here in the Mortification hit her as she realised that he quiet with your self-love either."

the end of the bed, "But you're not exactly

He said with a smirk from where he stood at also because I don't know if you know this."

silencing charms on all the bedrooms, and

the street on the front. Horror flooded her system at the realisation. "I thought you said you silenced the rooms." She hissed quietly at Draco under her breath, Draco raised an eyebrow at her.

"He did dear, but there was no mistaking that level of magical power and that is not something anyone's mother wants to be present for or discuss so shall we move on and discuss the events of last night instead?" Narcissa turned and looked at the two of them with a raised eyebrow, tutting when she saw the scratches still evident on Hermione's face and the bruise still on Draco's cheek.

Hermione swallowed.

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of himself, what he couldn't tolerate was the some people. He could handle the judgement very real and permanent consequences for were in the past but a lot of his actions had He could appreciate her sentiment that they judged him for the things he did in his past. and ravaging about how unfair it is that people out ten minutes ago, Hermione was ranting the apricot danish in his hand. He had tuned Draco sat in silence, thoroughly enjoying

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## CHAPTER 18



Narcissa's eyes narrowed at him in annoyance but there was the slightest of smiles tugging at the corner of her mouth that she was desperately trying to conceal, Draco knew his mother wasn't really angry, he knew beneath the surface she was thrilled by the current events, Draco and Hermione protecting each other and to the best of her knowledge, sleeping together, meant that there would be a fighting chance she would get to keep the daughter in law she had grown so attached to over the past month and a half. "Quite." Her response didn't clip in the way she had intended it to either.

Narcissa turned to Hermione. "While I don't condone the violence, I do appreciate your protective stance of my son, but Draco is right, please do try to refrain from making this a common occurrence. If it does happen I need to know immediately so I can get on top of it before it's too late." Hermione swallowed and gave a weak nod, clearly

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endorphin rush, but nothing else can happen between us Hermione until you mean it, do you understand?"

She wanted to argue and tell him she did mean it but she knew there was no point right now, and deep down she thought that perhaps he was right, maybe the fact that she just had the best orgasm of her life was clouding her judgement a little, doubtful, but was a possibility, so instead she nodded silently.

"Good." He placed another kiss on her forehead before pulling away from her and Hermione found that she immediately missed his presence.

Sudden embarrassment hit her like a truck. "Oh my god, Draco! Your mum!" she buried her face in her hands in shame, removing them to glare at him when she heard him chuckling.

"Don't worry, after the Theo, Daphne incident a few weeks ago I put permanent

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Narcissa stared at her for a moment before turning back to the goblin at the counter "Well as the beneficiary of my member?"

Hermione hung her head and whispered in a low voice, "I broke into Bellatrix's vault", "What?" Narcissa gasped, taken aback.

"You, Mrs Malfoy, yes, but your companion shall have to wait here." His tone would be looking at her.

"I would like to access the Malfoy family vault please Kripke." She heard Narcissa demand in a soft tone next to her. Hermione goblins closer to the door.

Other creatures went to fetch her requested funds. made to wait in the foyer while one of the staid anything else. Almost always, she was watchful eyes to make sure she didn't try to

did. He nodded and stepped up to place a kiss on his mother's head, placing his hand on Hermione's back as he did so.

"Very well. You two stay out of mischief and have fun." Draco did intend to go annoy someone else, he intended to annoy several someone's if it meant he would keep busy for the day so he retreated upstairs to get ready and then go in search of Harry freaking Potter to challenge him to a friendly game of quidditch.

As soon as they had stepped through into the leaky cauldron Narcissa had linked her arm with Hermione's. She still had no idea what it was that they were to do here, but thought it would be impolite to push her mother-in-law. She nearly broke in that resolve as they stepped through the doors of Gringotts. Several of the older goblins stared at her, following her every movement as they walked. Hermione had been back here since but had always felt the pressure of the

her answer, glided his tongue over her once in her brain. Draco hummed, pleased with managed to whisper through the fog settling "I'm yours, Draco, I'm all yours." She words. Tell me your mine."

was nod, "No, be a good girl and use your ago, her voice was lost and all she could do from the heaven she had been in seconds growled possessively. Her head still spinning "Tell me your mine, Hermione." He

barely recognise him beneath his lust.

her with eyes like a dark storm, she could groaned in frustration, but he was looking at he rippled away from her, involuntarily she crescendo was right within her grasp when her, curving to hit that same sweet spot. The more air, Draco dipped another finger into she arched her back in an attempt to gasp at suck at her clit, lashing at it with his tongue, felt like she could breathe as he continued to rapid pace within her. Hermione no longer flutter of the pleasure that was mounting at a

more, lapping her up like a man dying of thirst. His fingers slid through her to reclaim their place as his mouth closed over her clit again, with ravenous vigour Draco sucked at her, pressure building hard and fast yanking at the coil within her, she was distantly aware of how loud her cries of pleasure, whimpers of his name had become but the rest of the world had ceased to exist. His fingers, worked her core, moving faster as he stroked against that pleasure centre. His growls of enjoyment vibrated against her.

"Come for me Hermione, show me what a good girl you can be for me and come." He rushed out against her before his tongue lapped at her bundle of nerves again, sucking and pulling. It would be impossible for her to resist doing what he was asking of her even if she had wanted to, that band had already snapped, her eyes rolled far back into her skull and all sound faded to nothing as her core clenched painfully around his fingers. It

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Hermione might not feel the same way he take this away from her. Especially when annoy her just to get a rise he felt he couldn't here eyes and thought he was tempted to grumbled but there was a pleased sparkle in "It is, so find someone else to bother." She

"Is that so?" Draco questioned.  
Hermione and myself." She said with finality.

"You are not coming. This is between Narcissa gave him a stern look.  
"I'll go get ready then." He said but coffee and stood.

on her face. Draco finished the last of his still and passed her wand over the scratches attend to." Narcissa held Hermione's face "Yes, you and I have some business to

"Diagon Alley?" Hermione questioned.  
Alley."

looking like that when we go to Diagon dear, let's get you fixed up, I can't have you papers could be brought off. "Right, sit still trying to get her head around the fact that the

sister's vault, I find her to be forgiven. Now if you please, the Malfoy vault."

Krippkei narrowed his eyes on Hermione. "While you might find her forgiven Mrs Malfoy, Gringotts does not."

"I beg your pardon?" Narcissa growled.

Hermione cleared her throat. "I may have also stolen their dragon. Frankly, the thing was better off. It's totally barbaric to keep a creature like that chained and tortured in a pit of darkness, but nonetheless, I stole it... and broke through their ceiling..." Hermione trailed off.

Narcissa stared at her with wide unblinking eyes. Krippkei's narrowed even further as he huffed and sat further back in his chair. Laughter suddenly echoed around the atrium and it took Hermione a second to realise that it was coming from Narcissa. She had never not once heard Narcissa laugh. The woman stopped to examine her for a moment with

now, not when you're still on the high of that answer. I don't want you to say anything right I meant that but I'm not holding you to your that you were mine, I want you to know that a subtle hint of fear. "I told you to tell me voice wasn't drenched in lust, there was now breathing her in. When he spoke again, his briefly, she swore she could feel him so well." His body stiffened above her she nodded against his lips. "Good. You did Her body felt like it had been set on fire but "Hermione? Darling, are you with me?" away from her face.

forehead and brushing stray strands of hair over her again, pressing soft kisses to her earbleat felt impossible fast. Draco leaned through the other side of her orgasm. Her slowly drank her up, guiding her softly murmuring pleased phrases against her as he whooshing back. She could hear Draco gasped for air and suddenly she was felt as if her soul had left her body. Hermione

magical energy in the air around them, sparking and threatening to set fire to everything and burn it to the ground. Draco's mouth immediately closed around her clit again and he sucked on it, rolling his tongue over it while he did.

She could hear herself panting as waves of pleasure rolled over her, she could hear herself moaning with delight but she was too lost in the feeling he was causing her to care. One hand left her thigh and a second later one of his fingers was sliding with ease into her, curling to hit that sweet spot inside of her that had her grasping at the sheets below her, his other hand no longer held down her thigh, instead, he had snaked it around and had it splayed across her hips, pinning her further into the mattress.

She could feel her arousal coating his hand as he continued to slide his finger in and out of her. His enjoyment was clear when he growled at her every moan, every gasp, every

but it was still a shock to see so much money keep her comfortable for the rest of her life, merit in of the first class award that would received a large sum after the war for her matterialistic and at the end of the day she had money, Hermione had never really been to the ceiling. She had no interest in their least Hogwarts. Shiny gold gallions sat stacked at least equal to, if not bigger than the great hall foyer, straight ahead was an archway that led entered the vault into what appeared to be a prepared her for the sight before her. They of the world but nothing would have were the richest wizarding family on this side family was rich, rumors even said that they Malfoy Hermione had known that the Malfoy arrived inside.

Hermione knew by the woman's silence information about the matter until they that she would be getting no more

the goblin sent shivers down Hermione's spine. Several minutes passed with Narcissa and the goblin seemingly locked in a battle of strength as they glared each other down.

"Very well." Krippkei hissed, barely containing his anger.

Narcissa ignored him and a large smile broke out across her face. "Excellent!" she clasped her hands together. "Come along, darling." She motioned for Hermione to take her arm.

"Narcissa I really wouldn't have minded waiting for you in the foyer, you shouldn't have gone to the trouble, I'm not even allowed near my own vault most of the time," Hermione whispered, taking the woman's elbow and falling into step beside her.

Narcissa raised an eyebrow at that information but shook her head. "Nonsense, besides I was being truthful with Krippkei, it is imperative that you accompany me today."

further apart with a firmness that somehow further to race. His hands pushing her thighs of him settled between her legs causing her knee for her made her head spin. The sight her face. The pleasure of seeing this man her bed, his eyes never looking away from lowered himself to his knees at the foot of with it. Her eyes glued to him as slowly he herself up to the feeling of safety that came of Draco and in the moment she opened Hermione could feel the power rolling off of her.

down the bed. A delighted squeal rushed out behind her knees and yanked her further opened her eyes when his hands gripped her pulled away from her, she hadn't even veering off to trace down her thigh. He kisses all the way down her stomach and neck again, carrying further south, right beginning him up. Her eyes fluttered as he held her arms on either side of her ribs above her, his arms on either side of her ribs

was just as gentle sent electric shocks through her. Hermione fought the need to tremble beneath his touch, he hadn't even touched her yet and she was a light with the feeling of pleasure running through her veins. "Hermione, you are exquisite, do you know that? Look at you, already glistening for me." Draco breathed out in admiration. His hands roamed up and over her stomach, her heart threatening to break through her chest at his praises. His hands tenderly traced back down and came to rest at the inner part of the backs of her thighs, lightly pulling her open further for him to see.

That growl in his chest was back and it hit some primal part of Hermione's soul. There is a look of desire and appreciation in Draco's dark eyes that had her wanting to push closer to him. She was thankful that he took the hint because he looked at her again, pure delight in his eyes before lowering himself to her, placing a tender kiss above

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dismisively but the look on her face toward wizarding world again." Narcissa wavered whilst under the threat of trying to save the escape on the back of one of your beasts daughter-in-law felt the need to suddenly That way you are covered should my so why don't you set up a security bond? that Mrs Malfoy accompany me to the vault insensitivity of me. I'm afraid it is impulsive "I do apologise Kippke, how horribly the front of her robes almost subconsciously. be able to contain herself, smoothing down Eventually, her mother-in-law seemed to a moment.

happy to see Narcissa so free even if just for just too contagious and pure, it made her that escaped her lips, Narcissa's laugh was Hermione couldn't stop the small chuckle of them seemed to care and try as she might, People nearby stopped to stare but neither bursting with laughter once more.

her fingers pressed against her lips before

Narcissa seemed amused by her shock. "That's nothing dear, Draco and I donated three-quarters of our money after the war to fund the rebuilding efforts, I suspect it's why the wizengamot never placed either of us on probation. Not that either of us would have fought it if they had, we were guilty of some crimes. Namely blind stupidity and loyalty to that man."

"Voldemort wasn't a man." Hermione disagreed quietly.

Narcissa looked up from her purse, stepping closer to brush Hermione's cheek. "Oh no dear, I was referring to Lucius, though I suppose he wasn't really a man either." She stepped to her right toward another archway, darkness filling the frame stopping Hermione from seeing what lay beyond. "More like a perpetual child," Narcissa grumbled to herself as she stepped through, Hermione followed her, passing through a thin veil of darkness. "It's

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between them she could feel the surge of making her feel so powerful right now? how could a man as Draco be once more with a sharp shot of electricity, Draco's eyes fluttering closed and she was hit at her clit. Hermione looked down to see up over her entrance and resided once more goosebumps over her skin. His tongue licked breath against her centre and sent "Fuck, Hermione you taste incredible." His growled again in delight.

tongue slid against her clit and Draco connected with the bundle of nerves. His kisses. A gasp sounded as his lips finally smirked, resuming his agonizingly slow made a tutting sound. "Patience pet." He were holding her too firmly in place. Draco tried to wiggle her hips up but his hands placing another kiss only fractionally closer, Hermione felt him smile against her, release from her.

her clit that caused a small whimper to

ducking down and capturing her taut nipple between his teeth, the feel of his hot tongue rolling over it sent shooting shocks straight to her core. His hand, which she had only now realised was huge, framed the underside of her breast as his mouth sealed over her and pressure rose as he sucked her nipple further into his mouth. His hand began to retreat further south again, pushing her pyjama shorts down with him. A deep groan rippled through him at the realisation that beneath her shorts, she wasn't wearing any underwear.

He lifted his head to peer down at her again with those dark eyes of his. "You slept in my bed last night without underwear?"

Truth be told she really hadn't meant to fall asleep in here, but right now she felt nothing but glad that she did. She gave a shy nod.

"You're going to be the death of me, I swear." He dipped his head again giving her a lingering kiss, he rolled himself to hover

walking along, slowly examining everything  
for a birthday gift as it was. Hermione was  
of those options seemed more appropriate  
supposed that left earrings or a bracelet, both  
that a necklace had been ruled out too. She  
for her birthday the day before and so she felt  
Draco had bought her a stunning locket

attached to the simple elegance it brought.  
had grown on her and she was rather  
starting at it in admiration more than once. It  
and truth be told she had caught herself  
ridiculously sized clear oval-shaped diamond,  
wearing, a simple white gold band with a  
something she often forgot she was even  
wedding ring attached to her wedding finger,  
breathaking, but she still had the surprise  
impossible for her to choose. The rings were  
Everything was so beautiful, it felt

dead witches and wizards.  
than the thought of upsetting a bunch of  
the look Narcissa gave her scared her more  
hundreds of years, to accept such a gift, but

Hermione smiled at the realisation that the older witch had an extension charm on her purse.

Narcissa placed the black jewellery box on the counter in the centre of the room, with a wave of her wand, thin drawers and cupboards opened up, climbing on top of each other until it resembled a small display shelf. "Right darling girl, you may find something you wish to keep, my birthday present to you. I will not listen to any complaints or arguments whatsoever and I will be greatly offended should you choose to do so, do I make myself clear?" She tilted her head sternly in Hermione's direction.

The argument was right there on the tip of her tongue and she had to swallow several times to fight back letting the words tumble out of her mouth. This was too much, she knew the majority of these pieces were family heirlooms, it felt wrong for someone of her kind, whom their family had hated for

for the cheeky grin on her face. "Draco?" she innocently, he might have believed her if not She batred her eylashes and feigned an undertone of pleading in his voice.

His breath hitched, ever so slowly lifting his head to look at her. "Hermione." He warned,

His lips in a slow manner that purposely rubbed grimed "Do you mean like this?" rolling her difference in their dynamic lately. She hadn't been the only one to feel the so she decided to test a theory, perhaps she he had made no move to roll away from her Draco's arm was still tight against her waist, mind, her lips parting in a silent "Oh", but His erection jumped to the forefront of her whispering in the

"Please don't wiggle like that." He dropped his forehead against her shoulder. pit of her stomach twisted sharply. Draco chest filled her ears and that tingling in the

rolled her hips again, a playful sparkle appearing in her eyes.

"Don't start something that you're not prepared to finish." His eyes were dark as he stared down at her, fingers gripping her ribs tighter as he rolled her further onto her back, his face hovering above hers, pushing himself harder against her hip involuntarily.

"Who said I wasn't prepared to finish it?" her voice came out in a breathy, quiet confidence.

His hand slid down her ribs, lower passed her waist, fingers dancing over her hip and coming to grip firmly at her thigh. "I mean it, Hermione. If you start this, I won't want to stop."

There was a tone in his voice that made her think he meant more than right now in this moment. Her heart fluttered against her chest and she reached up behind him to run her finger through the back of his platinum hair. "So then don't stop." She whispered,

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that was significantly larger than her bag. Pulling from her purse a black jeweller's box "Ah, there it is." Narcissa cried with joy, every time period.

end jeweller who specialized in pieces across felt as though she had stepped into a high-busts with various necklaces and earrings. It busts with similar display cases, all containing lined with size, shape and coloured gem. The walls were at least a thousand different rings in every the room was a large display case, lined with same size as her bedroom, in the centre of They had stepped into a room around the real notice.

around the room in shock thought to take any her face. Hermione was too busy looking something with a look of great frustration on still running through her purse trying to find goldbins don't know what's in here." She was step through it. Even those noisy binnin' asking, "Only those in the Malfoy family can warred." She explained without Hermione

in the display cases, when something caught her eye in the bottom right corner. It appeared to be some kind of diadem, not so far as to be considered a tiara but more than a headband.

Her eyes were glued to it, it was the same white gold as the ring and the locket, delicate flowers and leaves making up its body. The centre of each flower was a small shimmering white diamond. Narcissa stepped up beside her. "Oh yes, that is lovely."

Hermione smiled, opening her mouth to argue that it would be too much but Narcissa held up her hand with a stern look. Hermione sighed in resignation and nodded. "Alright, thank you Narcissa, it is truly beautiful."

"It is my pleasure, my sweet girl. Happy birthday. Now, the next order of business." She levitated the headpiece to the jewellery box where it cushioned itself into the top tray and then stepped back through the archway,

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changed into last night higher, his head back upward, pushing the baggy shirt she had that made his cock twitch. His hand moved she keened beneath him. A pleading sound back arching upward slightly. "Please Draco" A small moan brushed past her lips, her delicacy.

way that straddled the line of pain and before sinking his teeth into her neck in a tongue flicking over her sensitive flesh her mouth to her jaw then to her neck, his himself against her hip again, moving from pulling her up closer to him. He ground hand by her head pushing into her hair, her lips against his in a bruising passion. His groan and dipped his head to hers, capturing doubt, when he found none he let out a small her face, checking every tiny expression for He let out a shaky breath, eyes calculating squeezing in her chest while a hot need burned at her core.

fear that he would roll away from her

forced to admit that her husband truly was blessed with good looks.

She reached one hand out and traced a light feather line between his eyebrows down to the tip of his nose. His brow furrowed slightly and his nose crinkled in such a mild way that she couldn't help but smile and do it again, she was on the third line of his nose when his arm that was still thrown over her tightened, yanking her closer to him and closing what little space there had been between him. His eyes flew open as hers grew wide. She expected to see surprise on his face but instead, he looked at her with purpose, lifting himself onto an elbow and hovering over her.

"If you don't stop tickling my nose I will roll you over, sit on your thighs and tickle your feet." He growled, his voice deep and low.

A small shocked laugh escaped her at the absurdity of it. Another growl from in his

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since and had not spared them a single  
She had been scribbling handwritten notes

about the events of the last week.  
expressions rapidly upon seeing the thoughts  
healer had gone through a wide range of  
didn't matter, no but he was still curious. The  
found out what house she had been in and it  
time that they had been here. He never had  
ten minutes. It reminded Draco of the first  
healer Thorne's office in silence for nearly  
They had been sitting on the couch in

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wasn't serious. She smiled at him. "I can give  
dating a go."

Draco smiled up at her. "Good, now come  
here, I've been dying to kiss you all bloody  
week." He grabbed the backs of her knees  
and yanked her forward onto his lap, his  
arms wrapping themselves around her waist  
and pulling her tight against his chest. Her  
hair fell around his face as he reached  
forward pressing his lips to hers.

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desk flashing through his mind, claiming her  
green had images of him taking her on his  
imagine it would be. The dress was soft as he  
against her thigh. The dress was as soft as he  
touched her dress, his fingers stroking  
Draco hummed, his fingers reaching out to  
forever, you know?"  
to jump from trying for a divorce to love and  
want from me? It feels extreme and sudden  
what I was wondering is what it is that you  
would be able to hear it any second. "I guess  
heart lurched and Draco was certain she  
She had said she had feelings for him? His  
have I find myself rather at a loss as to what I  
develop feelings towards you and now that I  
for you but I certainly wasn't expecting to  
night out, planning for divorce, I can't speak  
found ourselves in. Married on a drunken  
stomach drop. "It's quite a situation we have  
bush here." She started and Draco felt his  
"I don't see the point in beating around the

as his. "I do know, perhaps this is something  
we can discuss further with healer Thorne  
tomorrow, provided we can get a word in  
edgewise. Between your birthday, the  
morning after and this conversation she's  
going to have her work cut out for her I'm  
sure." His grey eyes tore themselves from  
where his fingers were playing with her dress  
and clashed with her brown ones. "As for  
what I want? I want you, Hermione. I've  
found myself rather inexplicably infatuated  
with you and frankly, this distance is driving  
me crazy. I think you're right, it is a sudden  
leap, perhaps one I'm more willing to take  
than you at this point and I'm okay with that.  
I will wait and bide my time but I'm no  
longer under the impression that this can't  
work between us.. if you would let me, I  
would like to try dating you."

She stared at him, her mouth slightly agape.  
Draco watched as his words sunk in. "You  
would?"

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chuckled at her theatrics knowing that she hungered in her throat and pretended to gag. He She scrunched her nose up, sticking one you try dating me?"

What do you think, my darling wife, would you truly want, but I would like to try first. And I will try to give that to you if it's what away and divorce me, I will try to accept that this a proper shot. If you still want to walk make you less than. So, what I want is to give and I can tell you now I won't ever try to really happy not just a content kind of happy, him. "But I think I could make you happy, running up her calves. She grinned back at impeccable charm." He smirked, his hands on account of my devilish good looks and but I think I've earned the right to that one and I definitely have a superiority complex, can be a lot, grumpy, arrogant, selfish, bossy wanted just because it's too hard. I know I never seen you run away from something you jump all in, it's going to take work, but I have

glance. Draco kept himself entertained by watching Hermione, every so often she would look up and they would share a smile, or a chuckle at their healer's response. Draco had thought about saying something but it seemed as if the witch had forgotten they were even there and he was rather enjoying not being berated.

"So, you two have decided to start dating?" She said, finally looking up at them with warm eyes.

"Yes, we have." Hermione smiled over at Draco.

"I see. Well, I shouldn't say anything but honestly, I'm a little relieved to hear that, you two have very complementary personalities and I've thought from the start that you two would make a good match. So shall we discuss what that means for your marriage then?"

"We are still taking things relatively slow. I would like to take Hermione on some dates

going to be hard, and I'm not saying I'm going to sit on either side of his thighs. "It's He pushed his chair closer to her, fitting her control but beautiful in the best ways."

feet to sit on either side of his thighs. "It's reminded me of Friend Fyre, impossible to tame and wild and so incredibly smart. You kind and generous to a fault, you are brave its merits and tasks, you are protective and you are quick to analyze every situation for those things about you. You are fiercely loyal, into every situation, but I find that I like interrupting me and tend to insert yourself just proved his point. "You're forever raised an eyebrow at her as if she had been winning me over?"

She laughed, "I'm sorry, is this supposed to aren't, and you're stubborn—"

and always think you're right even when you pain in the ass a lot of the time, your bossy, we're going to fight, because you are a giant over. I'm not saying it is going to be perfect, "If you will let me, yes, see if I can't win you

Draco raised an eyebrow at her. "Come again?"

She shook her head "It doesn't matter, are you busy? I thought we could talk?"

"Give me two minutes to finish signing these off and then I'm all yours." His heart began to beat faster in his chest from anticipation, was she going to tell him that the other morning had been a mistake and they should keep their distance again? She turned next to him and leaned back against the desk, her dress falling in a soft and subtle v between her thighs. Draco could still remember the taste of her on his tongue, the sounds she had made for him. He couldn't think about those damned sounds without becoming painfully hard, he had found his cock in his fist so often he had started to feel like a teenage boy again. He signed the final contract and leaned back in his chair to look up at her.

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her. Though she was looking at the ground I will be enjoying the view today. Take your time.” He said firmly. “I have my coffee and you.” He said firmly. “I have my coffee and because of what exactly? Me? No, thank otherwise would be an enjoyable experience book. I have no interest in you rushing what excited every five minutes about a different bouncing between shelves and getting day would likely be spent watching you knew when I suggested it that the rest of my chin to look him in the eyes. “Hermione, I Draco stepped in front of her, lifting her long periods of time in bookshops as I am.” People aren’t as enthusiastic about spending She shook her head. “No I just know, most Draco frowned at her. “Are you in a rush?” lip.

“I’ll try to be quick.” Hermione worried her him, realising he had remembered her drink order. Her eyes sparkled when she took it from

whole world. I guess the selfish part of me doesn’t want to lose that.”

“Well, I’m pleased with the development and look forward to seeing the outcome. I would like both of you to plan a date within the following week for the other person, preferably out of the house. Bonus points for creativity.” Hr Thorne snapped her pad closed, It seemed they had been dismissed early. Hermione and Draco wasted no time getting out of there and found themselves wandering slowly up the side street towards Diagon Alley.

“Do you want to go look at flourish and blotts?” Draco suggested casually.

Hermione’s face lit up. “Really? You wouldn’t mind?”

Draco laughed. “No Hermione, of course not. Just let me grab a coffee quickly first.” He ducked into the café on the corner, ordering Hermione a spicy chai latte, her favourite and himself a cappuccino.

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Ginny?”  
Would anyone on your team be interested  
Ginny can recruit a few players surely?  
enthusiasm. “We could all help organize it  
Hermione!” Astoria cried out with  
“Oh, that sounds like a wonderful idea  
Astoria and Daphne about it.  
to pull this off now that she had informed  
circle of several important names to be inner  
counting on Hermione being in the inner  
plan was entirely Ginny and she was  
Hermione had no interest in quidditch, this  
the opening and she took it. She knew  
she had to hand it to the witch, she had seen  
her eyes in a combination of pride and mirth,  
Hermione pursed her lips and narrowed  
satisfaction.  
Ginny looked at Hermione with  
Ginny said without any hesitation.  
would consider commenting if Harry  
golden snidget, she was wondering if Harry  
fundraise support for the conservation of the

“Oh, I think there would be enough people in the quidditch community that I could convince to join us, After all, if Hermione Granger says it’s a good cause, it must be right?”

Hermione shook her head in amusement, a grin still in place. She couldn’t help but think to herself that the girl should have been in Slytherin.

“Wonderful! Astoria and I could help with the venue and decorations, Gregory could help with the marketing?” Daphne smiled.

“That sounds fantastic Daphne, thank you so much.” Hermione offered with a smile.

Despite her sneaky underhandedness, Hermione knew that this no doubt was for a good cause and she would be happy to play along and help her friend achieve her goal. Hermione couldn’t help but think that she was right about the other thing too. There would be no way to figure anything out without another conversation with Draco.

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she has a light about her that brightens up my  
talented and kind and feisty and caring and  
anyone it would be her. She is exceptionally  
I'm going to be willing to spend my life with  
„Hermione is extraordinary. I think that if

marry, so what has changed.”  
resigned to the fact that you would never  
but then you have spent the last seven years  
The witch peered over her glasses. „Yes,  
so strongly.”

especially when I already care for Hermione  
marriage so it's not that big a leap for me,  
thinking I was going to have an arranged  
me. I spent the first sixteen years of my life  
Draco shrugged. „I think it's different for

observed.  
her being in your life forever.” Mr Thorpe  
„You seem like you have already accepted

she can accept me in her life forever” Draco  
Hermione needs more time to figure out if  
and spend time as a couple first. I think

he caught her small smile, the kind she didn't  
even know she did when something made  
her happy.

Just as expected, while he sat with one leg  
crossed on the old black leather sofa in the  
middle of the store, Hermione slowly trailed  
along each shelf. Her eyes lit up with joy  
every so often as she stumbled across  
another book she wanted. He had finished  
his coffee some time ago but found that he  
was rather content to just be along for the  
ride. When her stack grew from one book to  
five, he stepped up beside her and silently  
took them for her, offering a reassuring smile  
every time another book was added to the  
pile. He remained silent as she spouted off  
facts about the cross-overs in muggle and  
magical history when it came to ancient  
Rome. Draco observed the way her cheeks  
moved the freckles across her nose when she  
smiled, or that she had one particular curl  
that she was constantly tucking behind her

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in her head.  
idea.” Her caramel-colored eyes rolled back  
for Ginny under the guise of it being my  
“I got roped into organizing a charity event  
and the way it perfectly shaped her body.  
“Hey, how was lunch?” Draco eyed her dress



his desk to see her walking towards him.  
room to Draco's ears. Draco looked up from  
“Hey.” Hermione's voice flittered across the  
room to Draco's ears. Draco looked up from

reader.  
completely wrong because she wasn't a mind  
head around it and still end up getting it  
could drive herself insane trying to wrap her  
she wasn't interested in more herself. She  
from her and she would be lying if she said  
He had given the indication he wanted more

whole thing off the table? Then what if in  
another two months, we hate each other  
again and we're back to square one? It seems  
like such a leap to go from, hey I have some  
feelings for you to let's spend the rest of our  
lives together.”

Ginny nodded sympathetically. “Listen,  
Hermione, you are a smart witch. It doesn't  
have to go from one extreme to the other,  
you could just date for a while, and I know  
this is a radical concept but I'll throw it out  
there anyway, maybe try have a conversation  
with him to see where his heads at, because  
you will never actually know unless you  
discuss it with him.”

“Discuss what with who?” Astoria sat  
down, a tray floated its way onto the table  
with tea for everyone and a small tower with  
finger food. Daphne placed a plate in front  
of each of them.

“Hermione has some thoughts about  
organizing a charity game of quidditch to

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several plates of Chinese take-out. Agrememt every few minutes as he dashed up about it. Draco rolled his eyes, humming in principal of the matter. He had been sneakily books she wanted yes, but it had been the him for having bought so many books, the enjoying the fact that Hermione was berating in her newspaper pretending not to be Narcissa sat at the breakfast counter, nose man and husband than his father had been. Could perhaps have a chance to be a better have been the case. That thought brought him some comfort in the knowledge that he have been like this and knew it would never Narcissa like this and knew it would never tried to picture Lucius trailing after in return but he was rather enjoying himself. in comradery. Draco offered a small chuckle smiled at him and gave him a playful eye roll elder ly gentleman in the aisle with them „Sounds wonderful dear.“ Draco smiled, and show her a movie, what do you think?“

got when she was annoyed with him. He wanted it all.

He might not have said it out loud yet, he didn't want to rush things with her and ruin the opportunity he had to win her over but he more than cared for her. Draco had never been in love before but he was fairly certain that this is what it felt like. The heaviness of that weighed on his heart. Somewhere along the way he had stumbled into a hole and hit the jackpot and the fact that he was now indebted to Theo for it irked him.

Several times he had seen her debate over a book and decided against it when she eyed the already tall stack Draco was carrying. Several times he had tapped his wand against it after she had moved on and sent it off to the counter.

“Perhaps we can pick up some takeaway on the way home? Maybe even owl your mother and see if she wants to join us? Oh, we could

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„Oh my Lord Hermione, you and Draco need Ginn sat next to Hermione, leaning in close. Inside to order some tea and longer food. Astoria rolled her eyes and tuggeded Daaphne littered the courtyard. yellow and white striped sun umbrellas lavender bushes with little white tables under little courtyard out the front, hedged by down Diagon Alley, there was a cafe halfway They had decided to meet at a cafe halfway „I think you look lovely!“ Daaphne grimmed. „It's pretty blimmin' close!“ Ginny threw behind Ginny, Daaphne at her side. „It's not even Slytherin green.“ Astoria other colours, just not green. „No, you can wear Ginny grinned at her. „No, you can wear for the rest of my life.“ She laughed. didn't realise I was only allowed to wear red Hermione rolled her eyes. „Gods Ginny, I referring to the green colouring of her dress.

to get into fights more often, Harry was on such a high from the fight that we had sex all over Grimmauld Place. It was mind-blowing!“

Hermione tried not to grimace at the image of her oldest friend and Ginny going at it like rabbits.

“Maybe that's what you need? You have an incredibly fit husband might I add, loosen up a little, take advantage of some casual sex while he's right there at your disposal?” Her friend rushed out.

Hermione looked away, her eyes falling on a shrub of Lavender behind her. It smelt divine and the pops of purple against the green were very pretty.

“Oh. My. Stars! You already did!?” Ginny all but yelled. Hermione desperately looked around, shushing her.

“No! Well I mean, we haven't had sex, but things may or may not have gotten away from us the other morning and...”

with her because he loved seeing the way she moments he could. He wanted to pick fights wanted to go back and snatch whatever in one, he felt like he had been tipped off. He relationship with her, and now that they were have been more appalled by the idea of a promise during school when he couldn't on the most. This side of her had missed out was the one Draco felt like he had without restraint simply exist around books without restraint that only came out when being allowed to attitude but this Hermione, the Hermione at school, more open with her friendliness and more free with her identity than she had been stuck in books the way she used to, she was him. She didn't constantly have her head particular version of Hermione could show shopped, were things that only this one what he learnt about Hermione while she grow frustrated each time.

ear, and though he loved it she seemed to

"You're not even listening to me!"  
Hermione cried out exasperated.

"Of course, I'm not Hermione. I was a Slytherin. I am a Malfoy. You wanted the books. I brought you the books. The fact that you are upset that I didn't give you the chance to argue your way out of my opportunity to spoil you and be a pain in the ass, and don't pretend like you wouldn't have, is not my problem, now would you like a Coca-Cola or a Sprite?" He held up two cans of soda for her to take her pick.

She glared up at him for a moment, and huffed a big sigh, her face softening as she did. "Sprite please."

He chuckled, stepped forward to place a kiss on her head and pressed the can into her hands, catching as he did the delighted look of victory on his mother's face. His eyes narrowed at her.

"Mother, Hermione brought you a gift today."

does that mean for us?" Do we take that through this application process, so what it too, but we're supposed to be going lay. Which if I'm honest is how I feel about that he wants more from me than a casual Hermione frowned. "I got the impression happened at your birthday anyway?"

two had started sleeping together after what you two are married, everyone assumed you around. So, what's with the secret? I mean fair, rich, attractive and knows his way Ginny grinned back at her. "Hardly seems hat."

rushed, her cheeks turning as red as Ginny's still get dizzy thinking about it now." She body, I have never come so hard in my life. Merlin that man ate the soul clean out of my her voice to a whisper. "Ginny, I swear to the redhead, leaning in close and lowering standing by the counter. She turned back to was relieved to see Astoria and Daphne still Hermione looked back toward the door and



## 25 SEPTEMBER 2003

Diagon Alley was bustling with people, a last-ditch heat wave left over from summer meant that even in her A-line cold shoulder-styled chiffon dress she was still warm. Ginny raised an eyebrow at her as she approached the café.

"Has living with Malfoy turned you into a traitor?" She asked with a hint of mirth in her tone.

"What?" Hermione asked in confusion, she looked down and realised Ginny was

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discomfort of wearing such a bright colour, him, trying desperately to shift through his yellow suit that Hermione had bought for He had re-emerged wearing the matching yours on, right now.”

exactly where this was headed. “Draco go get turned to face him, Draco gulping knowing “Shall we make a night of it then?” She cosy.” She observed his mother with delight. Hermione giggled. “Yes, they are rather that is what we are doing tonight isn’t it?”

to wear during sleepovers to watch movies, comfortable, and you did say it was common dare I say it, I can’t recall ever having been so expected of her. “Absolutely ridiculous, but make polite ones that she offered when a laugh, a genuine laugh, not one of those “Ridiculous darling.” His mother said with

Hermione spluttered out.

“Yes! Yes, you are! How do you feel?”

nervously.

“Am I wearing it correctly?” Narcissa asked

with Draco about the three of us having matching PJs.” Hermione waved her hand about.

Narcissa looked up between them for a moment. “Excuse me.” She stated before retreating towards her guest room.

Draco looked at Hermione with a furrowed brow. Hermione glared up at him. “Now look at what you’ve done. We’ve probably upset her!” Hermione hissed.

Draco sighed. “I’m sure she’s fine Hermione.” Suddenly the movement of bright purple caught his eyes and he couldn’t stop the shocked laughter that burst from him at a great volume.

Narcissa stood there, wearing the onesie, patting down the front of it to smooth it. He had never in his twenty-three years of life seen his mother look so commonplace, it was coming as quite a shock. Hermione’s eyes went as wide as dinner plates at the sight too.

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but it hadn’t just been Hogwarts. themselves with the textbooks and supplies, to school starting to properly familiarize return to Diagon Alley in the year leading up that they would be entitled to be able to rather than being left to figure it out alone, Alley and have everything explained to them families would be guided around Diagon which, muggleborn children and their Tilba had included an additional day in tips into the orientation schedule, Kartona Julian Jones had incorporated Hogwarts into the ministry. She told Narcissa all about how more than she had in four and a half years at being a charwoman, she had accomplished Narcissa had been, in a month and a half of pushing as she raved about how right thrilled, she couldnt stop herself from December to introduce next year’s intake I hear, you must be pleased?”

At the start of the month, she had a brunch with the board of governors at St Mungo’s about expanding into the community, opening pop-up clinics in the areas still recovering from the war, potentially offering training incentives to those seeking to become a healer, and further down the track, having a team of on-call healers that could be called in an emergency when someone had been injured too badly to risk travelling.

She was so busy rambling about the successes that she had had that she didn’t think too much about the items of jewellery that she was selecting, not allowing herself to feel the guilt of accepting them. It wasn’t until she placed the final bracelet that she realised she had filled the black jewellery case, she turned to Narcissa and was surprised to see the woman’s eyes shining back at her with what Hermione could swear was love and pride.

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or wear it. I was being funny, I was joking said, please don't feel obligated to thank me movie marathons at sleepovers. But like I ridiculous, though they are popular for most muggles think they are a little pajama. They are very comfortable but even over it, "It's called a onesie, it's a type of appeared to be a muggle animal dotted all one-piece suit with little pictures of what Narcissa pulled out a large fluffy purple

a joke." She murmured in dismissal. wear it, I brought all of us matching ones as to be funny, please don't feel like you have to few moments later with a bag. "I brought it and disappeared down the hall to return a Draco stared at Hermione until she sighed small shake of her head.

Narcissa smirked into her paper and gave a she loves me more than you." She teased at him. "Don't be bitter Draco just because looking at his mother and raised an eyebrow Hermione caught sight of the way he was

but if it would make his mother and Hermione happy then he would suffer through it. Hermione had changed into her pink one and she and his mother were discussing the differences between each of the different flavours of soda in their fridge, something Draco had become rather addicted to.

"Draco sweetheart, which is your favorite?" His mother asked him suddenly.

"Coca-Cola?" Draco answered questioningly.

Narcissa nodded, "Then I shall try that one." She told Hermione with a nod.

Draco shook his head in bewilderment, what in the world was happening right now, had he stepped into an alternative universe at some stage?

Hermione smiled and showed Narcissa how to open the can. Tentatively with her fingertips from both hands placed delicately on either side of the can Narcissa took a

the box floating in front of her, the witch carried on straight to another concealed archway to the left of the entry foyer, Hermione followed slowly behind her.

This room was much the same as the last, filled to the brim with jewellery of all kinds. "This jewellery is for galas and benefits and so on. You may borrow anything in here for any upcoming events, and since you are representing the Malfoy family you should note that this is also not up for debate. You can come here whenever you please but I have always found it less troublesome to take a selection with me and switch them out when I've cycled through them, so choose what you wish and put it all in this box here." There was a black ottoman near the doorway that Narcissa settled onto, continuing to talk before Hermione could object. "So, Ptolemy has signed off on the introductory program for new students. Everything is all set for

"I'm having a debate with Hermione about Jane's status," Draco explained.

apparating to the foyer of their penthouse to quickly change and drop off the basket of goods Hermione had collected before rushing back out the door and flooring to the Malfoy Manor.

"Mother?" he called as he stepped into the foyer, heading towards where he knew she would be in the tea room.

"Ah, Draco. There you are." Narcissa said with a smile.

"Hello, mother." He bent and pressed a kiss to her cheek before plopping onto the seat opposite her. "I was wondering if I could ask to borrow your estate in Porquerolles for a few days, I want to surprise Hermione with a trip."

Narcissa looked simply delighted. "Yes of course dear, I'll have the elves' stock and clean it for you."

"Thank you, mother, also... Can you send the copies of Jane's books here too?" Narcissa raised an eyebrow at his request.

down and see Theo looking at him with which pulled Draco out of his head to look out to Hermione, let out a low whistle her mouth. Theo, who was looking from owner said made a bright laugh filter out of the harshest of the winds. Something the stall white cardigan keeping her safe from the Draco's opinion, Hermione looked simply angelic in her cream and floral sundress, a chill of autumn hadn't quite kicked in yet. In The lingering summer heat had faded but the heat, enduring about a jar of homemade jam. The ear, smelling at the stalks perched in front of her, watched as Hermione tucked her hair behind sweet-smelling fruits and cured meats. Draco and the scents of dozens of different flowers, The markets were stuffed full of muggles get to afterwards anyway so Hermione will be all yours for retail advice."

"Congratulations on your wedding, man. I'm really happy for you." Theo offered up genuinely.

"That was months ago you idiot. You were there?" Draco drawled.

"Yeah..." Theo nodded, checking that they were still out of earshot. "But now you mean it." Draco stared at him for a long moment. It hadn't been phrased like a question and Draco knew it wasn't, but he found himself giving a small unsure nod anyway. He didn't know if it was a good idea to tell his friend that when there was still a chance Hermione might decide to leave anyway. Theo gave a pat on Draco's arm and wandered off to rejoin Hermione who was now negotiating over some oranges. Draco lurched forward to carry them, placing them in a basket that Hermione had brought with them along with the jam. She smiled her appreciation. He watched silently as Hermione joked with Theo, discussed the upcoming charity game amused eyes.

shoeaces.

"Yes, she was." He challenged. Theo hid a smile and pretended to be interested in his better.

He might have believed her, but he did know conviction that if Draco didn't know better "She was not." She stated with such stopped and looked at him with wide eyes.

"A witch," Draco mumbled. Hermione saying is that Jane Austen who was."

"Well I'm glad to hear that but what I'm Hermione looked at him with offence.

Draco snorted, causing them to both look at him. "No, but wizarding women did."

Draco snorted, looking passionately at Hermione.

"She was years ahead of her time. You have and choices that they do now." Hermione time didn't have the same level of freedom to understand that muggle women in that

"She was years ahead of her time. You have Austen's writing.

of Quidditch that Ginny had pulled her into

"Malfoy's, more than I wanted to see of either of you at eight in the morning," Theo mumbled, Hermione who was still standing at the counter where Draco had just fucked her snorted. "Maybe you should try knocking first then, what's up?"

"Fair play and noted for future reference. I need you." Theo looked at her pointedly.

Draco laughed and went to retrieve his coffee mug.

Hermione smirked at their curly-haired friend "Oh Theo I'm flattered, but I'm a married woman."

Theo gave her a withering look. "You've been around that one too long." He jabbed his finger in Draco's direction. "No, I need you to give me advice on some purchases I intend to make."

Draco and Hermione exchanged a look. "We're heading to the markets in a minute, you can come with us. I have a meeting to

He turned and headed to a secluded alleyway, "I'll see you at home later then." He smiled.

"Now anyway." She smiled up at him "Of course! I'm done against her forehead.

"Theo?" He said with a brush of his lips to get to, will you be alright to carry on with "Darling I have to go, I have a meeting I need when Draco put a hand on her shoulder. even interrupted. It was a little before eleven surprise. Draco rolled his eyes but let her rant remained quiet and didn't give away his authors had been a bitch. Theo thankfully she would know it one of her favourite walking, which she did arguing about how Draco chuckled and motioned to carry on

"Yes, she was. I can prove it to you later."

Draco smirked in victory.

"Shut up, she was not." Hermione's tone had turned to doubt.

"Are you serious? No. She can't have been."

Draco smirked in victory.

"Yes, she was. I can prove it to you later."

"Shut up, she was not?" Hermione's tone

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*My dearest and most beloved cousin,*  
have ever passed across his face.  
been quite possibly the smuggest smirk to  
peer over her shoulder with what could have  
his trouser pockets and stepped forward to  
gasped loudly. Draco shoved his hands into  
lifting the top one she opened the cover and  
repidation when Draco pointed at them.  
Hermione stepped toward them with  
on top of each other.

of six thick old notebooks sat nearly stacked  
small round dining table where a collection  
air. He stepped back inside and toward the  
wisteria, a hint of citrus undertones filled the  
beach, the smell of fresh bougainvillea and  
was barely a five-minute walk down to the  
filled with woods and creams and golds. It  
added to the charm. Inside however was  
area were painted with bright colours, it all  
light pastel pink, most of the houses in the  
type, the outside of it was painted a beautiful  
townhouse was a beautiful old rustic

"I'm here." he took her hand once more and led her outside. "Now you may take it off."

Hermione fumbled with it next to him, Draco watched her face as she took in the view before her with a gasp. Hermione stepped forward to the railing and looked down to the quaint street below them. It was quiet here, the island of Porquerolles only allowed the use of service cars. This had been the first house his mother had brought with her own money, a place that Lucius had been forbidden from visiting. It had been her quiet haven away for when she needed a break. Lucius had an estate himself for the same purpose, a dark damp castle in Ireland.

"Draco! This is beautiful! Where are we?!"  
Hermione said in shock.

"Porquerolles. Off the coast of France. I have something else to show you though, something I'm sure you will appreciate more." Draco said with mirth.

she had started whimpering needly little  
come undone again first. She was so close  
He had to hold on, he needed to feel her  
Princess, come all over me. I want to feel it."  
urge to push back as she fought the  
subtle wiggle of her hips she could feel the  
thrust. She was close again, he could feel each  
good." Their skin slapped together with each  
grawled in her ear. "You feel so fucking  
feel like heaven. "Fuck Hermione." He  
Her walls clenched tightly around him, she  
at her waist dipping lower to circle her clit.  
away to the base of her throat, his other hand  
hand holding her leg to the counter moved  
started rolling his hips in fluid motions. His  
Draco groaned at the sound of her plea and  
the movement, pushing him deeper into her.  
back on his shoulder, her back arching with  
"Harder." She moaned, leaning her head  
this time.

withdrew to the tip pushing in again slower

mews, whispering his name over and over, lost in her own world.

The front door opened, Theo took one step in before turning and walking straight back out calling a "Fucking nope." Over his shoulder.

Draco smirked and increased his speed, she broke, locking down tightly around him, her walls spasming. Her torso slumped forward against the counter, a long, loud, luxurious moan filling the penthouse. Draco moved his hands to her hips with near-bruising pressure, his own loud groan mixing with the sound of hers as he thrust one last time deeper before he spilt inside her.

Silently Draco cursed himself because that hadn't been how he had meant their first time together to go. He had meant for it to be more than a quickie in the kitchen, regardless of how much he had enjoyed it.

“Draco?” she asked nervously.  
French double doors.  
“Not yet. Nearly, patience dear.” Draco chuckled, letting her go to open the large took off her earmuffs.  
toward the balcony. Draco chuckled and tipping onto Draco’s elbow as he led her Hermione questioned, loudly, her arms “Draco, can I take the blindfold off yet?”

## 01 OCTOBER 2003



*I hope this manuscript of my latest novel finds you well. The weather here has been dreary and I have wished infinitely that this rain would dissipate, my poor owl has had a terrible time with the post of late. I hope the weather has been kinder to you. It is my hope that I will be able to visit again when my health is better. It has been too long my sweet Tryphena.*

*As always, with much love*

*Jane.*

“What!?” Hermione screeched. “You’re related to Jane Austen!?” She rounded on him in a fury at only just finding out.

Draco laughed. “She was my... Great, great, great grandmother’s cousin on my mothers, father’s side. Her mother, Cassandra married a muggle man named George but she and Ophelia, who was Tryphena’s mother, stayed in touch, even though the rest of the family scorned Cassandra. Thus Jane and Tryphena grew up in contact.” Draco traced the family tree in his mind.

Theo spottet Draco and immediately amused smirk and raised an eyebrow at him. His fingers in his ears singing ‘Lalalahala’ over Theo was at the other end of the hall with open. Reddened before he barged into the apartment.

Before walking to the door and yanking it cleanings charm and donned her clothes smirk. He waited until she had waved a quick “Good morning all night.” She said with a the back of her head.

Gentle kisses on her hips, one hand holding turned her into a suggerie against him, placing first again. Good morning by the way.” He think he’s going to barged in without knocking “Yes, and I have no idea, though I don’t doing here.” Draco chuckled.

“Was that Theo before?” Hermione frowned at the front door. “What was he

“Please Draco, I need more, I need you.” She gasped. His heart leapt, gently replacing her leg on the floor he climbed back to his feet. Turning her head to meet him he kissed her deeply. One hand reached down to grab her thigh after extracting himself. Lifting it up sideways to rest on the edge of the counter. His other hand gripped the base of his cock, sliding it back and forth through her arousal.

“Please Draco.” She moaned. The tone in her voice was enough to have him snapping his hips forward in one firm motion until he was fully seated inside her. He heard her gasp as she tried to adjust to him, he should have taken it slower, given her time to stretch to his size.

“Fuck.” He hissed against her shoulder. As she pushed back against him, encouraging him to move he wrapped his arm around her waist, holding her tight against him. Draco

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the shells at the water's edge and she could watching as Draco bent to examine some of the beach She was sitting on a log along the beach kiss.

minutes before capturing her with a bruising and he had chased her laughing for a few Once she had playfully kicked water at him water's edge.

looking. They would dip their toes into the extended pocket of her dress when he wasn't here. She would slip it into the charm thought was pretty and he would give it to would stop and pick up a shell that he were travelling at. Every so often Draco them were enjoying the slow pace that they dinner wasn't for a while yet but the two of beneath it. It was barely four o'clock and of his shirt unbuttoned, exposing his chest rolled halfway up his calves and the top half bottoms of his sandy-coloured linen pants. It was equally as bizarre to see him with the that she could walk barefoot along the sand.

Draco's great-great-great grandmother. Draco offered her a small sad smile as he handed her a cup of tea, clearly understanding the change in her mood. "My mother told me to let you know that she did get her final visit with Tryphena. She passed away the week after returning home. I do not doubt that you will pour over the diaries at some stage for yourself."

"Diaries?!" Hermione gasped.

"Yes, all the women from the Black household have kept diaries over the years, they are currently all at the manor, I can't touch them, they have a curse on them to ward off men but now that you're a Malfoy, and I am Narcissa's son, you should be able to view them." Draco waved dismissively as if he hadn't just told her that all her birthdays had just come at once. "Drink your tea and we will go." He gave her a knowing smile.

It was a bizarre feeling to watch Draco carrying her sandals in one hand for her so

"Draco?" She squealed, "What are you doing?"  
gripped her hips, slowly lowering her pyjama shorts.

to read it. His fingers reached out and to read. She rolled her eyes and looked down Draco pointed to the article he wanted her

breakfast." Hermione grumbled.  
the curtains and you haven't even made your "Draco! I wasn't done with the article on business pages.

reached down and flipped the prophet to the brushing lightly against each other. He stepped up close to her, their bodies "Excellent," Draco smirked. Draco but nodded at him all the same.

while I eat breakfast?" She raised an eyebrow read the business section out loud for me coffee. "I should have time for that, can you He turned to face her while slipping his "I was thinking around nine?"

Draco stared down at her, pulling her closer "Having breakfast." He breathed, lowering his lips to brush against her shoulder before sitting down against the kitchen counter. His fingers trace up the inside of her right leg, before lifting it and placing it over his shoulder.

Hermione let out a breathy moan as he exhaled against her centre.

"You're not reading Hermione, it's very important you don't stop reading, and don't skip any."

The tip of Draco's tongue barely made contact with her as he teased a line up her slit to the peak of her clit. Gently running two fingers through the rapidly growing arousal at her core before pushing them into her. Above him, he heard her smack her hands down on the counter.

"Read Hermione." He growled before he leant in and latched his mouth around her clit, sucking at the bundle of nerves, curling

Hermione nodded too stunned to speak. She let out a scream as she turned the page and realised that the entire book had been handwritten. Draco laughed and she looked at him with wide questioning eyes. "They all suppose it made sense considering shakings as she placed it back on top, she couldn't help but wonder with a sense of sadness if she had ever made it to visit six months after her death. Her hands were Persuasion hadn't even been published until Hermione nodded too stunned to speak. She answered her unspoken thoughts. She was. "They all suppose it made sense considering shakings as she placed it back on top, she couldn't help but wonder with a sense of sadness if she had ever made it to visit six months after her death. Her hands were Persuasion hadn't even been published until

Hermione stared at him in shock. "Tea?" He asked casually, moving away to allow her to processes. She opened and closed her mouth in shock several times, falling each time to put a voice to her words. "I was thinking that we could take a stroll along the beach this evening. I've made dinner reservations at a restaurant that overlooks the beach, I was thinking it might be nice to walk down there?"

suddenly picture a future where they might have a little boy, with her curls but Draco's blonde colouring. A future where Draco would be pointing the shells out to him and they would be talking about all the creatures that lived in them beforehand. A future where that blonde toddler would run up to her waving his little arms to show her something, and Draco would be trailing behind him looking exactly how he did right now, carefree and alive, watching her with those storm-coloured eyes of his.

The images of that future hit Hermione like a truck and the sudden ache of it not being reality hurt. It was the epiphany that she had been falling in love with him for the last few months, the way he was gentle yet dominating with her, that he allowed her to be herself in a safe space, the way he laughed with her friends and the softness in which he treated his mother. The way he was fiercely loyal and protective. The effort he would

his fingers and rubbing against the soft walls inside her, stroking that magical sweet spot. He could hear her trying and failing to keep her breath steady enough and focus clear enough to put sound to the words. Against his thigh, his hardened cock twitched. He needed more, more of her moans, more of her juices flowing over his fingers and tongue. Inside he could already feel tiny flutters of her building orgasm. He continued to build his speed, her moans infiltrated every sentence. He wasn't even paying attention to the article, he was too busy chasing her pleasure. One of her hands reached down and grabbed at his hair, the harder she gripped the blonde wisps the faster his fingers and tongue moved.

She threw her head back and a loud gasping man filled the penthouse. It was enough to drive him wild. His strokes slowed as he moaned through her orgasm.



28 SEPTEMBER 2003

Hermione was leaning against the island counter, a cup of freshly brewed coffee in her hands, the prophet spread out before her. Draco noticed that she had already placed his favourite mug next to the coffee pot for him. “Hey, are you busy this morning? I was thinking of heading to the markets, would you like to accompany me?” She asked without looking up

Draco hummed for a moment. "What time do you want to go?"

through to the bedroom, growling each time kissing her deeply. He stumbled with her forward, lifting her up around his waist, where were we?" She smirked. He reached Hermione's hand towards him, "Now

in nothing but a pair of blue underwear.

Leaving her breasts exposed as she was now her dress up and over her head a smirk, was satisfied that was all of them, she pulled and was placing them in the sink. When she shock that it was every shell he had given her pulling things from her pocket, realising with water. He continued to watch as she began hummed a song while filling the sink with very large glass jar. Draco watched her as she until she found what she was looking for, a kitchen and began pulling open cupboards

Draco watched her and she went to the cause holy Merlin."

"Wait, wait, wait." Hermione giggled.

deeply that they toppled backwards into the sand behind her, their kiss never breaking.

Draco kissed her like that for a few moments before breaking and resting his forehead against hers. "I'm in love with you too, Hermione. Merlin, am I in love with you too." He recaptured her lips with what could only be described as raw hunger.

Draco reared back, scrambling to his feet and offering Hermione his hand and pulling her back the way they had walked towards the townhouse.

"Draco! What about dinner!" She laughed.

He threw her a look that clearly said 'fuck dinner' She giggled and followed along behind him. They barely made it in the house when Draco grabbed her waist spun her around and slammed her up against the wall, his lips already at her throat licking at the salt from the beach air.

movie. He looked at Hermione, the woman into laughter at something happening in the lakeout in front of her and at times burst the odd sip of Coca-Cola, graciously try to eat clasped Hermione's hand every so often, take front of her. Draco barely watched the world existed, her eyes glued to the screen in His mother seemed to forget the rest of the Diaries."

selecting something called "The Princesses", "Ah!" Hermione cried out with a smile,

Narcissa would like. Hermione tried to find a movie she thought words flashing across the screen as watching fascination at the images and part that was due to the fact she was have recovered from the shock. Draco felt in dinner and coke on it that she seemed to with the small table in front of her, her

It wasn't until Narcissa had been set up,

responsible for it all and he knew that this was indeed what being in love felt like.

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around hers. He kissed her so hard and face and the feel of his lips crashing down off by the feel of his hands grasping at her anything just isn't", she whispered but was cut with you... I'm sorry I shouldn't have said just ruined everything. "I said, I'm in love She swallowed, fear seizing her that she had whispered.

"Well, "What did you just say? Say it again." He shock passed over his face and his smile face and say it so bluntly but she did. Meant to stare up at him with a frown on her offering her yet another shell. She hadn't approached her wearing a goofy smile and She hadn't meant to blurt it out as he doors at the base of her back.

in passing comfort or guide her through feeling his hand stroke the back of her head she went too long without seeing him or anyway. That way in which she missed him if when she wouldn't, he would just know make for her if only she would ask, and even

her mouth evaded his. Finally, she found herself placed down on the bed.

Draco stood back taking her underwear with him. It was the first time she had been fully exposed to him since Vegas. He stood looking down at her, his eyes roaming over every inch of her, pinning her to the bed with lust in his eyes. "You really are fucking glorious Hermione." His voice barely a whisper but the deep desire in it sent goosebumps erupting all over her and heat rushing to her center.

"This hardly seems fair." She grinned back at him, still fully clothed. Draco didn't look away as he undid the few buttons he had bothered to do up in the first place. Beneath it, his defined muscles flexed with every movement. Scars rippled across his chest that she knew had been caused by Harry. She swallowed that guilt and let her eyes roam instead as the shirt dropped to the floor. Her eyes were drawn to the black mark etched

small sip, a wide delighted look appeared in her eyes as the bubbles no doubt hit her tongue.

He looked from Hermione to his mother and found himself relieved that he had married this witch on a drunken whim. Even if she decided to continue with the divorce, she could never take away this moment of seeing his mother breathing and living, not just surviving and existing.

"Oh my!" Narcissa cried out with a small giggle.

"Wait till you hear that we're eating on the couch." He laughed.

His mother looked as if someone had just told her Voldemort had risen from the dead again. "You can't be serious?!"

Hermione giggled. "He is, but it's because we wanted to show you a movie and we have what muggles call TV tray tables. It's like a miniature table that stores away."

<sup>361</sup>  
„Use your teeth to take off Greg's socks.”

„Dare.”

„Blaise, Truth or dare?”  
laughed.

Draco glared at her, he finished his drink before hissing out a „Yes” while his friends laughed.

She grinned. „Alright, I heard a rumor in second year that you used to suck your thumb, was it true?”

„Truth”  
either. Malfoy, truth or dare?”  
nose twice. „Not the one you would think wider. She gave a quick tap on the tip of her nose. Her face reddened but her grin spread

proud shock.  
Weasley brother’s?!” Blaise exclaimed in

„Granger! You slept with two of the Weasleys twice.” Theo said

Hermione smirked „Yes, yes I did.”  
„You said Weasley twice.” Theo said  
Himigan, Weasley, Thomas.”

„Alright. Smallest Krum, Weasley, Wood,

Hermione gave an embarrassed laugh.

His eyes grew wide in outrage “How dare you—”

“Yeah, yeah, spit on my name, dirty blood, blah blah blah. Drink up.” She threw her drink back again. Blaise who was trying to hide a smirk threw his back too, Theo and Gregory following shortly after. All four of them stared at Draco expectantly. Draco let out a deep sigh and then downed his drink. Hermione was going to get them all very drunk, he was already feeling the room start to spin from the glasses of clear liquid she was pouring down their throats, something called Vodka.

“Alright Granger, truth or dare?” Blaise asked her as he watched her refilling his drink.

“Truth.”

“In order from smallest to largest, rank the size of your sexual partners’ appendages.” He said with a smirk.

about to get killed.  
nodded with far too much glee for someone She turned and shook her head at Theo who sounded laughing came out. „We’re in Vegas!” and flung it open before a hysterical Hermione had stomped over to the door

„Theo!”  
sodding minute?” Draco snapped at her.  
„Oh, would you shove off Granger, for one at him.

„I have a name you know?” Hermione spat and why is she here?”

„Theo,” Draco growled out. „Where are we motel room and Granger was with them.

eyes open and groaned when he saw they were standing in a rather shady-looking

This was bad. Draco slowly cracked his yelled out.

„Hitting you? Your lucky I don’t fucking kill you.” Blaise roared.

„Ow! Ow! Stop hitting me!” Theo

She shook her head in disbelief “Fuck me.” She muttered and before anyone could react to that or the knowledge that they were in Las Vegas she stormed off slamming the door behind her.

Gregory raised an eyebrow at them as if they were going to do something.

Blaise lurched forward having apparently finally snapped. “What the fuck Theo!” He yelled, tackling him to the ground and aiming to punch Theo in the head. Gregory dove to pull him off him before his fist collided.

“Right everyone calm down!” Draco found himself yelling. “Everyone just take a minute.” He said, calmer this time.

Draco ran his hand through his hair. “Okay... Okay... We’re in Vegas? As in America?”

Theo nodded and looked at each other in silence. The motel door swung open again a few minutes later and Hermione walked back

a muggle city? No? Then shut the fuck up, have a drink and play a game with me until I feel I'm sufficiently intoxicated enough to deal with you lot, after which I will take you guys to the casino across the road and we can throw Blaise a real bachelor party, where going to go and do some hunting, play some Quidditch. Draco has an estate here, we were were you supposed to be going anyway?"  
"So boring posh bullshit?" She cut him off.  
Theo laughed, "Yeah pretty much."  
"You say that because you've never experienced aristocratic culture Granger?"  
Draco defeneded, annoyed.  
Hermione threw her head back and laughed. "Oh Lord, that truly is what you believe isn't it? That I'm a muggle therefore I must be poor. My family are incredibly well off Malfoy. Our que tu passes te faire foute avec tes connexions biasses. Maintenant tais-toi et bois ton enome cretin."

“Oh, that’s nasty.” Theo chuckled.

After some difficulty, he managed to successfully complete the dare, making sure to throw them in Draco's face when he was done, drinking two large glasses of alcohol in quick succession to 'get the taste' out of his mouth.

"Gregory, truth or dare?"

Greg raised an eyebrow “After that one? Truth”

"Have you ever given bad love advice to a friend so you could move in on their crush?"

Gregory threw a quick glance Draco's way, before nodding. "Yeah, Pansy in third year. Failed epically anyway."

Draco had started to feel rather hot from the alcohol coursing through his system, he offered a smile to show that he had no hard feelings.

"Theo, truth or dare man?"

"Dare, definitely dare."

"Alright. We may as well enjoy ourselves since we're here." She explained and retreived five glasses from the cupboard, pouring generous amounts of booze into them. "Merlin Grammer, steady on," Gregory exclaimed. Her look silenced him. They all downed their drinks only to be refilled seconds later. "Right, we're going to play a game of truth or dare," Hermione said taking control of the situation. "Everyone knows how to play? It's pretty self-explanatory if you can't work it out then... Well, I can't help you."

"Who put you in charge?" Draco growled out.

"I'm sorry. Do you know how to function in Hermione pinned him with a look. "Oh,



# CHAPTER 24: WHERE IT STARTED:

#### **...THE NIGHT IN QUESTION...**

He knew that something had gone wrong the second he was pulled out the other side of the portkey. His eyes were pressed closed and he felt a little queasy, that had taken far too long to have nipped them off to France.

"Theodore Nott!" A high-pitched screech assaulted his ears. Oh no. Draco thought to himself. Oh no... that sounded like...

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was much too distracted by Hermione's ass.  
he should be pulling Blaise off Theo, but he  
Draco knew he should be angry, he knew  
way.

waved out dramatically in an "I can't even."  
wolves when Theo shrugged. Her hands  
She seemed content to feed him to the  
slurred, "Where is the magical embassy?"  
"Okay everyone calm down!" Hermione  
punched.

answer before Blaise started throwing  
at Theo. Theo didn't even have time to  
organize a potkay home[?]. Blaise screamed  
"What the fuck do you mean you didn't  
That was of course when she hit the fan.

night and hopefully sober up Blaise  
come up with a plan about how to send the  
decided to head back to the motel briefly to  
guy nearby over something trivial they  
them. After he nearly got into a fight with a  
more drunks at the bar while waiting for  
fracture.

for some American muggle money, apparently, there was a difference, she had then exchanged the American money for some plastic circular discs. Each of them had taken to 'the tables' Blaise had won a few rounds in a game called roulette, but then he had promptly lost as much.

Theo had terrible luck on craps.

Draco had given the brightly lit machines a go, he was doing quite well he thought, Hermione and Gregory had wandered off to something called blackjack, turns out Hermione wasn't bad because she won a few thousand dollars. Gregory, however, seemed to be the natural amongst them as he raked in jackpot after jackpot, he had also somehow acquired some older gentleman's hat.

Hermione was either wildly stroking his ego or he had just become comfortably wealthy in the muggle world. Blaise was barely capable of standing up having had several

"Oh! You two." Daphne snapped at them, started whispering away to each other.  
"Maybe for our anniversary." Hermione  
joked but immediately Astoria and Ginny  
winked their noses in disagreement, smiles  
Drapco and Hermione looked at each other  
exclaimed.  
pulling at the edge of their mouths.  
winking their noses in disagreement, smiles  
more than a drunk Greg and Theo!" Astoria  
married again! Do it properly this time with  
"Oh, you know what. You guys should get  
faces beaming back at him.  
a divorcee." He smiled at everyone's pleased  
look at her. "We have decided not to pursue  
would like to tell you guys." He paused to  
"Well, Hermione and I have something we

Everyone erupted into surprised cheering, cries of congratulations drawing the attention of several nearby tables.

Draco looked down at his wife and saw that she looked quite pleased with herself. "That's what Theo wanted your help with, wasn't it? He whispered into her hair. Her nod made him smile.

"Please for the love of Merlin, tell me that we get to plan the bachelor party. Think you owe us that one mate." Blaise asked motioning between Draco and himself.

Draco chuckled into his drink. As if Theo could stop them.

"Oh! Can I help with the Bachelorette party?" Hermione piped up with a smirk.

"Granger, wipe that look off your face right now, i had nothing to do with that, don't punish me for Theo's mistakes." Daphne pointed at her, attempting and failing to stop herself from smiling.

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British muggle money she had in her purse  
Hermione had exchanged some of the  
and muttering some rushed apology.

Pulling him away claiming that he was French  
him as if he was mental. Hermione giggled,  
Four women and three men who all stared at  
had kissed every member of a passing group.  
barely made it through the door before he  
the muggle coins than others. Theo had  
could tell, certain pictures produced more of  
when a muggle pulled a lever. As far as he  
shaped metal boxes with pictures that spun  
swarming with people. There were weirdly  
The casino was bright and loud and  
“Fantastic let's go then shall we?”

“Rather embarrassed Granger, how do you  
we all feeling?”  
Hermione stood on wobbly legs. “How are  
Theo grinned, “Brilliant.”  
tonight with no explanation.”  
“I dare you to kiss five random strangers  
“Malfy,” Draco, Blaise, Gregory, Theo  
whole table laughed and offered up a round  
and Ginny corrected her unamously. The  
of cheers at their announcements.

Her dress highlighted every curve of it and all  
he wanted to do was take a bite out of it...

“Ouch!” She screamed when he did exactly  
that “What the FUCK Malfoy?!”

He gave her what he hoped was a seductive  
look. “Just appreciating your fine ass.”

She stared at him for a bit before bursting  
into laughter. “Dude you’re so drunk.”

“Hey guys” Gregory called from the  
doorway to the bathroom that he was now  
holding closed. “A little help?”

Hermione flicked her wand and the door  
clicked audibly. They all stared at the door  
when they heard a thump on the other side  
of it. “Okay. So give him an hour to sleep it  
off, we need to find a way home so he  
doesn’t kill Theo. At least not before I do. So  
no portkey, no embassy... We need an  
owl... Oh, I know!! The zoo will have owls!”  
She cried out.



“Malfy,” Draco, Blaise, Gregory, Theo  
and Ginny corrected her unamously. The  
whole table laughed and offered up a round  
of cheers at their announcements.

Draco looked around the table at his friends  
old and new. He was even happy that Ron  
and Luna were here tonight, it was strange to  
think to himself that he had missed their  
presence over the previous few weeks. Ginny  
eyed the arm Draco had draped across the  
back of Hermione’s chair and his thumb  
running back and forth on her shoulder  
before looking at him with a knowing look.

Theo and Daphne whispered excitedly  
together. It was nice to look around the table  
and see everyone. Gregory was engaged with  
Harry about something at the ministry.  
Astoria whispered excitedly to Luna about  
the baby, who they had today found out was  
a girl. Molly had burst into tears apparently  
and Ginny rolled her eyes when Ron told her  
she was no longer their mum’s favourite.

„Nope, no you don't, get up you fucking highweight." Hermione walked over and around her waist and pulled her down on top of them.

"I tried to pull him up but Draco's arms snaked further argument. Draco was sitting on the end of the double bed and as he drained his drink he fell backwards.

Greg sighed and accepted the drink without smirking back at her.

She jabbed her finger at Theo, who just practically pinched motion "To kill him." She held her index and thumb up in a situation then yes, because I'm this close.."

You want to be dealing with a murderer

Hermione gave him a stern face. "Unless

"Is that a good idea?" Greg slurred.

Large ones at that. Large ones at that. Pouring another series of drinks for them. Pamphlete around. To everyone's horror, she

"I got a map!" Hermione claimed waving a

Greg stared at him when they had left the room. "What the fuck was he thinking?" Was all he said, Draco shrugged and tried to focus on a spot in the room that wasn't tilting. After another minute Greg snapped at him again. "What the fuck are you thinking by the way? Stop hitting on her." He finished with a laugh.

Draco smirked and gave another shrug "She's fine."

Theo bustled into the room with his arms loaded with weird plastic packages with pictures of food on them. Hermione waved her wand from the motel door. Theo opened the door currently containing Blaise in the bathroom and dumped them onto the man who was asleep with his head next to the toilet. "For you to calm down." He said as Blaise's eyes flew open. Quickly he pulled the door closed again and Hermione locked it once more.



## 04 OCTOBER 2003

"You're serious? You're not pulling my foot or whatever the saying is? You promise?" Narcissa beamed from ear to ear.

"Yes mother, Hermione and I have decided to remain married."

"Oh, but that's wonderful news!" Narcissa cried, pulling them both in for hugs.

"You're the first to know. We're going to dinner tonight with everyone else, we will tell them then but we wanted you to be the first." Hermione smiled at her mother-in-law.

“With me.”  
here and do not wander off. Theo, you’re  
to do in the area. For the love of god. Stay  
like this have heaps of pamphlets on things  
laugh. “I’ll go to the reception, often places  
her hip but she swatted him away with a  
Draco reached out and tried to grab onto  
to chuckle it didn’t seem to be very effective.  
But given that he was smiling and trying not  
back of the head. He offered a weak, “Sorry.”  
moment later she smacked him around the  
Hermione caught him looking because a

Had Granger’s ass always looked so good?  
“Here?” Draco drooned, his eyes still on her ass.  
Granger? Do you know your way around  
“Where are we going to find a zoo  
since I’ll be stealing the fucking ding.”  
She glared his way, “You should hope not  
the idiot here.  
zoo isn’t open.” Theo chuckled as if she was

Behind them, Theo started whistling.  
Hermione giggled and punched Draco in the  
chest playfully until he let her go. “Come on  
Casanova, we need to save your best friend’s  
wedding.”

The motel Blaise was currently sleeping off  
his drunken rage in was on a boulevard of  
brightly lit shops. They were stumbling along  
trying their best to keep Theo from entering  
every single one.

“I just can’t believe you won so much  
money, have you really never played  
blackjack before?” Hermione frowned up at  
Greg, who for some reason had brought a  
beer with him from the miniature ice box at  
the motel. Draco wasn’t clear on why, Greg  
could barely see straight as it was. Then  
again, perhaps he wasn’t one to talk, having  
done the same.

“Nope! Luck..lucky..lucky what’s it  
called... Beginner’s luck!” He cried out,  
raising his glass to the air.

another hug.  
Narcissa beamed and pulled them in for  
look too.

Hermione explained, clearly catching the  
be open to accompanying us sometime?”  
as well, Narcissa, we were hoping you would  
individuals. We also want to travel a bit first  
month as a couple and twice a month as  
would like us to continue to see her once a  
wanted to continue with our marriage, she  
“We told our healer yesterday that we  
say, “We’ll see about that.”

Narcissa narrowed her eyes at him as if to  
wish to do before we have children.”  
three years. Hermione and I have a lot we  
not mother, at least not in the next two or  
Draco and Hermione snorted. “I’m afraid  
two to give me a grandchild anytime soon?”  
moment. “Any chance of convincing you  
eyes. She looked at them with a Sly look for a  
“Oh thank you!” Tears welled in Narcissa’s  
“We’ll see about that.”

His words sent her undone, her back  
arching off the bed, shattering around him  
with a scream of his name.

“Oh fuck Hermione!” His eyes closed as he  
followed her over that edge. He released her  
legs with a shaky breath, lowering them to  
either side of him. Draco leant down and  
placed a kiss on her forehead, the tip of her  
nose and then her soft lips.

“Draco?” She whispered, tracing her nails  
up and down his back.

“Mmm?” He murmured as he began to  
stroke her hair.

“I don’t want to get divorced.” His laughter  
filled the room at her statement.

“Hermione, you ripped that option off the  
table the second you told me you loved me,  
you silly witch, I am never letting you go.”

noncommittal shrug. "It's your name, isn't it?"  
 Draco stared back, finally offering a  
 stare at him for a long time.  
 "You just called me Milione." Hermione  
 Draco waved his hand dismissively.  
 "Don't bother Milione, he won't do it."  
 side.  
 wrong." Hermione chirped up from his other  
 "I dare you to get one then, prove us  
 wrong." "Stop saying that!" Greg groaned.  
 shrugged.  
 cause you're too snooty for it." Draco  
 "I got a tattoo, you don't, and you wouldn't  
 Draco smirked.  
 "Sounds like you're the pussy then Draco,"  
 Draco's shoulder in solidarity.  
 "The woman can be scary." Theo tapped  
 so."  
 Draco nodded with a grin "Unashamedly  
 Hermione teased.  
 "Sounds like you're afraid of mummy."

"Why would I get a unicorn on my dick?  
 Tell Greg to get a unicorn on his dick." Theo  
 grumbled.

Draco snorted. "Greg wouldn't get a tattoo,  
 he's too much of a tight ass." Greg threw a  
 glare his way. Draco shrugged, finishing his  
 beer. "What you are. Far too much of a  
 pussy."

"I am not, I'm just not an idiot."

"Pussy." Theo chuckled. Draco and Theo  
 started laughing and leaning against each  
 other. Hermione smirked at them with a  
 shake of her head.

"Shut up, you get one then Draco if you're  
 so tough." Greg retorted

Draco snorted again. "I already did  
 remember? Still trying to get rid of that one  
 thank you very much. Besides, I'm pretty  
 sure if I come home with anything else  
 permanently attached to me then my mother  
 will kill me."

already trembling from the explosion of her  
 of those hips with more force. Her body was  
 rolled his hips firmly into her waist. Draco  
 finger tips dug firmly into her chest. His  
 dig into his back, scratching down it. His  
 through it at any moment. He felt her nails  
 pounding in his chest, threatening to burst  
 He wondered if she could hear his heart  
 at his hip.

Hips again, one of her knees came up to rest  
 all he could to keep control. He rolled his  
 answering growl was fetal and he was doing  
 husky moans from her in the process. His  
 pushing deeper into her than before, pulling  
 weight above her. He rolled his hips again,  
 pulling her closer. His arm circled under her in response,  
 him, his arm arched up toward  
 pleasure. Hermione's back arched up toward  
 "Fuck Hermione." He hissed with his own  
 the sudden fullness.

himself into her. She cried out in pleasure, at  
 slightly, coming back forward he pushed

magic recognizing his. Each thrust left her  
 gasping, "That's it, baby." He growled into  
 her neck. "Come for me, darling." Draco  
 moved the arm under her waist to push her  
 knee further back towards her. Forcing a  
 deeper angle that rubbed directly against the  
 magic spot inside her.

Hermione threw her head back, digging her  
 nails in deep enough that Draco was sure she  
 was drawing blood. Her core clamped down  
 around his cock, gripping it tightly causing  
 him to hiss in restraint. "That's a good girl,  
 that's a good fucking girl." He groaned  
 before slowing his movements as she came  
 down from her high. When she seemed to  
 have returned to earth he sat up to lean on  
 the heels of his feet, moving both her legs to  
 his shoulders where he pinned them with one  
 of his arms, thrusting into her again  
 frantically.

"Oh god! Draco!" Hermione screamed as  
 she threw her head back against the mattress.

"Yeah, Yeah, whatever you want man. If they can do whatever picture you like?"  
 Theo wanted a unicorn on his dick they window as the tattoo artist worked on a Greg stepped forward to watch in the linked to a dark lord of evil."

"You know like the dark mark, c'cept not women's ankle. "It looks pretty cool, and they can do whatever picture you like?"  
 "A what?" Draco mumbled.

and dehciously slender.  
 Look good, they made her legs look so long didn't look comfortable but damn did they was doing in those high heels, they definitely admit he was impressed with how well she explained stumbling to a stop. Draco had to "Oh, it's a tattoo shop," Hermione were littered with little drawings.  
 against the glass of a shop whose windows "Guys!!" Theo had stopped dead, his face "Here!" Draco called out.

It's a pretty name. Hermione. Hermione. Hermione. Hermione. Herm—"  
 "Hey guys?" Theo called out  
 "-ione.  
 Heeeeerrrrrrmmmmmmiiiiooooonnnnneeee.  
 It sounds a bit strange though when you say it too many times. Like it's not a proper word. Hermione." Draco continued. Hermione stared at him wide-eyed for a moment before bursting into laughter.

"Guys?" Theo called again a bit more urgently, causing them to look up. Theo was looking in the shop window, lazily pointing towards one of the tattoo stations.

"Oh shit!" Hermione laughed before rushing into the shop.

"Greg, what the hell are you doing?" She chuckled.

"What does it look like? I'm going to get a tattoo, prove you guys wrong."

The tattoo artist looked up at the approaching group from his stool with an

"So use me, use me to make yourself come." So now. I'm fucking yours, Hermione, forever. Coming all over this cock, it's yours you're fucking gorgeous, especially when you're one." He groaned. "You can do it, your ears. "Come on my love, give me another Her moans were loud and like music to his speed of his thrusts.

her clit. His speed picked up to match the her thigh, his thumb coming down to circle He encouraged. He curled one arm around tightly. "Fuck, Hermione. That's it, baby." Fingers groped at the sheets, scrunching them fluttering around him with every thrust. Her stomach was blinding, the feel of her walls The pleasure building in the pit of his snap of his hips.

cracking away. Her arousal flared freely, was hot and snapped like fire, sparkling and coating him in the hot sticky mess with every The energy between them was terrifying, it

into his forearm before flying up to meet his where he eyed her for any reaction but she had none. She held no ill feelings toward him and his involvement in the war. They had all been children, something that had become more and more apparent with every passing year.

With a flick of the button, he discarded his trousers and boxers, revealing a fully naked version of himself. Hermione's eyes widened at the size of him, she had felt it the other morning sure, but it was another thing to see him so up close. His eyes were so dark they were nearly black. He came down to balance above her, those eyes staring down at her, his rigid member pressed against her.

"Tell me again." He demanded. She didn't need him to tell her what he meant, she knew.

"I'm in love with you Draco. I'm in love with you and I'm yours." She told him, looking him in the eyes. He rolled back

"Theo put Draco on. I need his help."

"Mioneer..," Theo's voice sounded on the other end.

Ring  
Ring  
Ring

nearly leapt for joy when she got one. desparately trying to find a bar of service. She

"Come on.. come on.." she grumbled,

managed to find her way onto the roof.

indeed deserted, and after a few minutes, she first and the tallest building here. It was her shoulder absently. Making her way to the okay? Stay here in the shade." She called over

"Hey Gin I'm going to go try to get service

semiingly deserted area.

She looked around at the buildings of the

that she had 8% battery and no service.

Draco had gotten her for her Christmas last

Elated when she pulled out the mobile phone

signs of writing she could see were all in a language she did not recognise.

Behind her, she heard the distinct sounds of Ginny vomiting almost violently into a discarded trash can.

Her wand was gone, who knows where. Luna, Daphne, Millicent and Astoria were nowhere to be seen. In fact, there wasn't a single soul as far as she could see.

She tried to think, to remember anything about how they had gotten to this point, again. Panicking, she looked at her hand and was relieved to see her wedding ring still on her finger.

"Hey Gin.." Hermione turned, stumbling toward the redhead. "Do you remember anything about where we might be?"

The girl gasped in the air that she had been struggling to get while emptying her stomach. Still breathless she shook her head.

"I was afraid you were going to say that," Hermione mumbled, patting her pockets.

were in once morning time arrived. had trouble remembering which one they leave their hotel key in his room in case he and his head hurt. Perhaps it would be best go fetch Blaise. Frankly, he was tired and sore but found his room already empty, likely to face. He walked down the hall to find Theo barely bothering to brush her hair out of her feet as she fell backwards on the bed, her waved a quick healing charm over both second-hand pain just from looking at them. "Christ Granger," Draco grumbled in Achilles heels as well as on her pinky toes. skin was torn and bleeding just below her for the craziness. Her feet were raw and her Blaise as she later explained was to make up reserive the honeymoon suite for Astoria and every request she gave them, including to their counter they obliged with pretty much hundreds of thousands worth of chips onto sight of them but when Hermione dumped the hotel clerk was rather amused by the

Stumbling back off to his and Hermione's room he was shocked to find her clothes had been discarded on the floor. "Hmmm, there he is, my husband." Hermione giggled from the bed, only a sheet covering what appeared to be her very naked body.

"Granger." He chuckled. "What are you doing?!"

"It's hot and my clothes are constricting and they were making me feel sick." She mumbled with a pout. "Besides, what does it matter if you see me naked, husband?"

"I suppose it doesn't. It is hot isn't it?" He realised just how overheated he felt and he couldn't decide if it came from the desert heat or the excessive amounts of alcohol still coursing through his system. It wasn't until he was sitting still on the edge of the bed that he realised how much the room was spinning.

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them, surrounded by desert wasteland. Any  
A total of six buildings stood tall next to  
Where the fuck were they?  
desert surrounding them.

open. She squinted as she looked around the  
sticky and her head felt like it had been split  
feet like a thousand degrees. She was hot,  
The sun was barely in the sky and it already

...NEARLY ONE YEAR LATER...

## IT ENDED: CHAPTER 25: WHERE



There was a long pause of silence. Hermione checked to make sure the call hadn't dropped out.

She just opened her mouth to speak again when Theo responded.

"I would Mione.. but uh... I don't know where he is. It um... it happened again."

Her heart dropped. "No... no Theo!?"

"I know Mione but listen I'll find them and it will be okay and I'll get him to call you back."

"No Theo. You don't get it. My phone's going to die soon...and it happened again with us too. I don't even know what country we're in, and Ginny is the only one with me.." she groaned.

"Well fuck." Theo laughed. "I guess Blaise got his revenge after all..."

"Theo, you're supposed to get married tomorrow. What are we going to do?!"

"Mione. It will be okay. I promise."

his head hit the pillow.  
response came. He was already asleep before  
"Goodnight Draco" her barely coherent  
wife." He mumbled.  
shredded the rest of his clothes. "Goodnight  
it was too tight, his eyes closing as he  
Dracon tipped his shirt off, suddenly feeling  
much better." Hermione mumbled half  
asleep.  
"You should take your clothes off. I feel so  
smirk on her face. "Think of it as payback for  
us being married." She giggled.

Hermione was somehow still coherent enough to think to wipe the cameras as they hitched themselves and the shrunk-down penguins over the wall again. She was clearly hitting the wall though because they were halfway between the wedding chapel and the motel Blaise was locked away in when she stopped, leaning against the wall of a building with an alarming lack of balance.

"I'm tired." She whined. Draco looked around and spotted a bigger, more comfortable-looking hotel.

"Get on." Draco bent down, offering his back for her to climb on.

"Naww, what a good husband looking after his wife." Theo teased but Hermione grinned.

"He is a good husband isn't he?" She stumbled over and climbed onto Draco's back.

"Those are penguins," Hermione whispered back. "They are really interesting, white birds."

"Hey guys, what are these things, they look so cute!" Theo exclaimed pointing into an enclosure with some odd-looking black and white birds.

The zoo was a different time at night, most of the animals were asleep in their enclosures, the odd animal walking to peer out at them from within.

Quickly.

The poor thing but they needed to get help birdhouse. She felt bad when she charmed moment and then crept off towards the and dropped down looking at the map for a need to find an owl." Hermione whispered "We will deal with him later, come on, we from the top of the wall and giggled at him. The three of them sat, peering down at him completely blacked out.

were helping pull up Theo when Greg fell with a thump onto the path below them,

they mate for life, and then when it's mating season, they all huddle together, taking turns to be on the outside, the males keep the egg warm while the females go off to hunt the fish but they are incredibly loyal to their partners."

"Nawww like Blaise and Astoria. It's a shame he's in such a mood, he would like these guys."

Draco stared at him. "Theo. You kidnapped him and the rest of us and didn't even plan a way home. I think his mood is warranted." Draco stated obviously.

"We should borrow a few for him, cheer him up." Hermione giggled. Draco grinned at his new wife.

"No." He shook his head.

"Oh come on, live a little husband." She exaggerated that final word, turning his own words back on him.

He regretted his choice to give in though when they approached Gregory's sleeping

All she could do was sigh and think 'Well shit. Here we go again.'

When she turned she had a devious little levitated him in to join the rest of the gorillas. repaled Greg's sleeping form before she her wad over him and a gorilla slowly levitated Greg over to the enclosure, waving fine but he's too heavy to carry." Hermione "We will come back and get him, it will be , "Malfoy." Theo corrected absenly.

"Malfy." Theo hissed.

"Granger, what are you doing?" Draco handed Draco the penguin in her hand.

Hermione scoffed. "Hold this." She forms just like Greg.

several large gorillas all sleeping in spread-out now." He pointed into an enclosure that held chucked. "These guys look like Greg right they would be able to carry him. Theo he wouldn't wake up and there was no way named Peckory and Millibear, and released their hands, Theo with two that he had form, each with a shrunken down penguin in

perhaps that the man sell her a men's wedding band.

She was more annoyed when they stumbled across a wedding chapel only a little way down the road. Both Theo and Greg insisted they go in and get the ceremony over and done with and she was even more annoyed when she found that Malfoy was rather enjoying this little joke of theirs. She cursed herself when she found herself enjoying his kiss or the way he would throw his arm around her and pull her closer. She reminded herself that they were just drunk and having a bit of fun and the lady there was so sweet and cheerful it was hard to argue that this was a mistake.

Breaking into the zoo was far easier than she had anticipated it to be. Theo, Draco and her had hoisted Greg up the wall, then Draco had lifted Granger up, whistling as he snuck a look up her dress. Hermione and Greg helped pull Draco up, Draco and Hermione

to him.  
 on the bench. Hermione's eyes drifted over  
 "Hey, Granger!" Greg called from his spot  
 mouth hanging open staring at him in shock.  
 clutching the velvet box in one hand and her  
 in shock. Then he was gone, leaving her  
 react, her hands just waving around in the air  
 close. Hermione was too shocked to even  
 arm winding around her waist and pulling her  
 slamming his mouth against hers, his other  
 the back of her neck and pulled her in,  
 "Malfoy, shut up. You do not—"  
 "I might," Draco stated with a shrug.  
 to marry me—"

and I aren't getting married, he doesn't want  
 frown. "Greg, don't be ridiculous! Malfoy  
 "What?" Hermione looked at him with a  
 Greg called out.  
 "Oh, you two totally have to get married!"  
 and Hermione, in surprise.  
 at the ring in the box, looking between Draco

"You dared me to get a tattoo, it will be on  
 my body permanently for the rest of my life.  
 I think it's only fair that I dare you two to get  
 married."

"Gre—" "Okay." Malfoy shrugged. Hermione  
 glared at him.

"We are not getting married! We're not  
 even friends for fuck sake!" She screeched.

"I'm sorry what?!" The tattoo artist asked.  
 "Do you typically go around buying jewellery  
 that costs thousands of dollars for people  
 you're not even mates with?"

"Well no but we don't typically go around  
 getting our friends tattooed either." Theo  
 offered.

"Oh come on Granger, live a little! How  
 many years did you spend on the—"

Hermione's eyes widened at how close he  
 was to revealing their secrets to the muggles  
 in this shop but Draco seemed to catch  
 himself in time.

She had promptly entered the same jeweler's store that the ring had been purchased from, demanding rather rudely done:”

The tattoo man let out a shaky and disbelieving laugh. “You guys are out the gate.” He finished off the last of the tattoo on Greg’s butt cheek and sat back with a satisfied smile. “Man, I wish I could be a fly on the wall of your hotel room tomorrow. All

“Fine.” She hissed. In the way and she slid the ring on her finger. Country and stranded. Instead, her pride got they were all incredibly drunk, in a foreign country and stranded, her pride got she should say no. This was a terrible idea, knew somewhere deep within herself that Hermione narrowed her eyes at him. She

“Good two shoes train. Go wild for once. Unless you’re a pussy. Greg isn’t a pussy. He didn’t back down from a dare. You’re not gonna let a bunch of snakes beat you at your own game are you, little lion?”

to leave the boys here as punishment, which would be fair, but she wanted to make sure Astoria got her wedding day. Astoria would be the best bet realistically, nothing like a pissed-off bride to get things done.

“Hermione!” Draco called out, stumbling into the shop again, both he and Theo wearing entirely new outfits apart from Draco’s suit jacket which he wore like a blazer. Theo grinning behind him. “I got you a present!” He shoved a little blue velvet box at her.

She opened it and felt her mouth fall open, her eyes wide as dinner plates.

“Malfoy! What the fuck dude!?” She screeched.

“It’s pretty right? Like you.” He grinned

“Malfoy this is an engagement ring, an incredibly expensive engagement ring by the looks of it!” She hissed a little too loudly. Unfortunately, it also got the attention of the tattoo artist and Greg who both looked over

"She's right, man. You're likely to still regret disinterested over Greg's butt cheek nodded. The guy, who was now whipping a cloth with permanency."

Fucking unicorn drawn onto you you will be glad that I didn't let you get a care right now but I promise in the morning shaking her head in disbelief. "You might not Hermione threw her hands up again, don't care what it is."

"Somethings going on my butt Granger, I Hermione cried out exasperated.

"Do not put a unicorn on his butt" with a grin.

He asked Greg, he was clearly very amused by their little group. Greg yanked down his pants over his ass cheeks and flopped onto his stomach. The tattoo guy shook his head especially this drunk. I can put a unicorn on your ass though?"

a grin. "Genitalia is a hard pass for me,

this anyway but a unicorn will make it so much worse."

"Aww!" Theo whined in disappointment from behind them. Hermione spun around so fast hissing at him to be quiet that Draco threw his own hands up in innocence. He gave her an appreciative scan though.

"Granger you're sexy when you're feisty you know that?" He bit at his bottom lip.

Hermione chuckled quietly, closed her eyes and let out an annoyed sigh. "You cut it out too. Christ."

She turned back to the tattoo artist who was already drawing something onto Greg's ass cheek with a marker. "How about that?" He said sitting back after a minute. Hermione peered down at the cartoon-style playing card, a king, with stick figure arms and legs that had cowboy boots on and a cowboy hat resting along its top side. "You said he won big on blackjack right?"

get to them quickly but he might be inclined she was going to do. Harry would be able to Hermione the chance to think about what preoccupied doing Lord knows what gave The ten minutes that all boys were noting.

The tattoo guy chuckled but said the wall. The tattoo guy shook his head but he and collapsed into a couch pushed against in the shop. "Oh for fuck sake." She sighed to have a look but found that they were not to work. She looked up to tell the boys to come started up his machine anyway and got to The tattoo guy shook his head but he determined.

"Nope, just do it," Greg stated with it?"

the mirror and make sure you're happy with grand now. Do you want to go take a look in impulsive, I feel less guilty taking your two The artist whistled. "Congrats dude. That's a mill." She offered.

Hermione nodded "Yeah, a little over half

amused grin. "I don't like to tattoo, when people are this drunk, they usually wake up regretting it but the dude won't take no for an answer. Threw two grand on the bench and said he's not leaving till he gets something, any suggestions?"

Hermione sighed. "He won big on the tables, like mega big. Natural at blackjack but a bit of an idiot it seems." She looked at Greg. "I was joking, I'm letting you off the dare, don't be dumb."

He looked up at her with a grin and pulled the finger. "Fuck you, Granger, don't be all nice about it now, I leave we both know ill never hear the end of it. Tattoo me, my dude."

"He really wants a unicorn on his dick," Theo said before he and Draco delved into fits of laughter.

Hermione looked back at them in shock. She had just turned to argue not to but the tattoo guy was already shaking his head with