

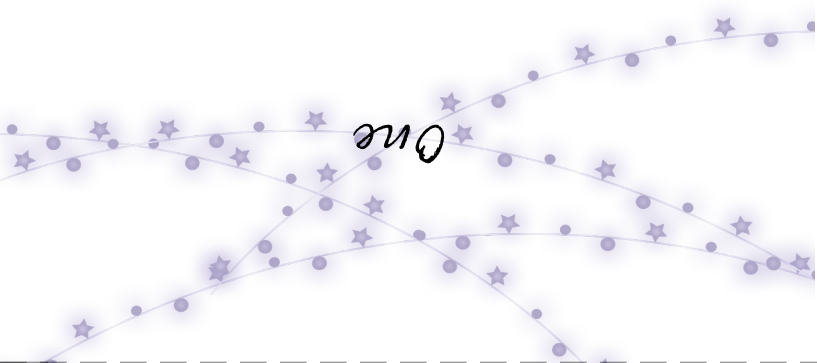
Draco Malfoy had spent the last hour in Hermione's office prattling on about the Hinkypunk Music Festival, their next collaborative project. The lineup was just released and his excitement rivalled that of a Niffler in a jewellery shop. She smiled to herself as he chattered away.

"This is an A-list lineup, Granger."

"So you've said, Malfoy."

She was finalising her review of last week's blunder. A miscast charm at the Magical Menagerie ended up with the streets of Muggle London being flooded with familiars and pets of all sorts. The Obliviator and the Invisibility Task Force members spent four days tracking down all the Muggles who witnessed the event. As director of the Department of Magical Accidents and Catastrophes, Hermione had to sign off and audit their reports. She could have finished an hour ago, but the blond was tramping around

Hermione



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DON'T DO IT.
IF YOU BOUGHT THIS, SHAME ON
YOU.
IF YOU BOUND THIS YOURSELF. IM SO
PROUD OF YOU!
XOXO -JENNA



Hinkypunk
her office, rambling on and on about headliners and opening acts.

“Stop pacing, I’m nearly finished.” She was searching for the final page of the report, which had gotten lost amongst the clutter on her desk when Draco made his way over and picked up the errant page without missing a beat. She could feel his gaze as she signed the parchment and placed it in its proper file. In the past year, he had become a constant in her life. His position with the Department of Extraordinary Affairs meant their paths crossed often. He had inherited his family’s penchant for event planning and most wizarding world events fell under his jurisdiction, whether it be galas, Quidditch matches or – on occasion – birthday parties. Their unlikely friendship following the war was a shock to everyone.

“Oi!”

The door flew open as Ron strutted in holding up the pink flyer.

“Malfoy, have you seen this —”

“Lineup? I was just telling Granger how this is the best we’ve seen in years and she’s —”

“She was in the middle of finishing up a report before you clamoured in here going on about the festival, distracting me.”

“I was merely updating you with pertinent information on our next joint venture.” He shrugged, unaffected by the annoyance in her voice.

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Relationship is Hermione Granger/Draco Malfoy
Based on Harry Potter - J. K. Rowling

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Hermione and Draco are working on the Hinkypunk Music Festival. Draco has been an infuriatingly charming friend to Hermione...except for the fact that he's been pining for her for years. The problem is, she happens to be in a relationship with Cormac McLaggen. As the festival draws near, long nights turn into stolen moments and Draco has to find a way to show Hermione that her soulmate has been right in front of her all along.



Draco watched her eyes scanning the parchment -
 "Watch it, 'Mione!"
 she grabbed the flyer from Ron's hands, nearly spilling his drink.
 work hours, Malfoy." Her face flushed in indignation as
 busy finishing the Menagerie case. Some of us work during
 ance. "I never even saw who was performing because I was
 "Now hold on." Hermione held her finger up in annoy-
 ing a sip of Blaise's drink.
 "Cranger is less than impressed." Draco smirked, tak-
 school, they meshed surprisingly well.
 ed tolerating each other's company. Given their years in
 It was easier than he expected when the two houses start-
 beer and whiskey sat in front of his former housemates.
 at the head of the table. Half finished glasses of Butter-
 Draco raised an eyebrow at Cranger as he took the seat
 "All of our favourites in one place!"
 "The lineup looks phenomenal!"
 "So...Hinkypunk!"
 excited voices.
 Ron made their way towards the Slytherins, hearing their
 ed at their usual table in the back. Draco, Hermione, and
 their crew. Theo, Pansy, and Blaise were already congregat-
 The Hog's Head was the usual Friday night spot for

Draco

Blaise

Hinkypunk

argument about the influences of their formative years be-
 fore landing on the similarities of their overbearing and
 overprotective mothers. They had been friends ever since.

As Hermione sorted the last of her documents, she
 smiled to herself. She never thought the day would come
 when Draco Malfoy would have a willing and civil interac-
 tion with Ron Weasley. It filled her with peace and happi-
 ness to see how far they had all come.

She grabbed her bag and was walking towards the for-
 mer rivals when Draco plucked it out of her hands and
 slung it over his shoulder.

"Malfoy, I am perfectly capable of —"

"I know you are, but you don't have to do everything
 alone." He grinned, eyes sparkling with mirth.

"A true gent, this one." Ron teased, tipping an invisible
 hat.

She felt her cheeks flush as she awkwardly debated
 what to do with her hands now that she had nothing to
 hold. She ended up clapping them once and heading for
 the door past the two men.

"Shall we?"

Ronsniggeredwhenshepassed.Sheletthedoorswingback

swiftly,hopingthatitwouldclocktheannoyingredheadasitdid.

She felt a tug in her chest as she watched the two men huddled together. It hadn't always been this way. Years after the war, the two of them had continued their schoolyard rivalry on the basis of Muggleborn rights. Ron had always been fiercely loyal and he could not understand how, after years of calling Hermione a 'Mudblood' and fighting on the wrong side of the war, she had forgiven him. He struggled to believe Draco had actually changed. Whenever the subject came up, Draco countered that people like him are never given the chance to change post-war and Ron should get off his high horse. It all eventually devolved into an

drafting a schedule of must-see artists with Ron. over to see if he had noticed, but Draco was already busy she flinched slightly, surprised at the sensation. She looked walked past. It sent a buzz of electricity up her spine and Draco placed a warm hand on her lower back as he pressure of deadlines, Ronald."

"Not all of us have the pleasure of working without the office already!"

"Come on, Mione. It's Friday, everyone else has left the she minded the company terribly.

presence could be counterproductive at times, she can't say Statute of Secrecy was maintained. Although his constant of the event. They would be working closely to ensure the ed to be overseen by her department due to the magnitude in his direction. The festival was indeed an affair that need-

Snuggles

Hinkypunk

growing brighter as she made it down the list.

"The Banshees?? Boggart Dreams? Love Incendio??"

She looked up from the list of artists, her eyes like sparkling pools of amber. He couldn't look away, holding her gaze longer than was appropriate. Her cheeks flushed before she broke the trance as Potter and the Weaselette walked in.

"Saw the headliners, did you?"

Potter slid into the booth next to Theo as Ginny slipped behind Pansy to kiss her on the cheek.

"The Harpies have a bye that weekend so I should be able to have the time off."

Draco could see Hermione was already lost in her head planning for worst-case scenarios at an event of this scale. Her gaze was unfocused, her bottom lip between her teeth and her legs bouncing to the rhythm of her racing thoughts. He'd grown familiar with these moments when he could see her mind in action. He was rather fond of it.

"My family has a chateau not far from the festival grounds should we need a place to stay," He shared nonchalantly, avoiding Blaise's knowing gaze. "We could easily apparate back and forth as needed."

When Draco looked back at Hermione, she was reading over the flyer once more with surprise written on her face.

"Did you know the festival was being sponsored by the McLag—"

He grabbed the sheet and scanned it, groaning.

Draco snorted and, realising his error, tried to cover it up as a cough. For all the meals they shared, she would always steal bites of his dessert even though she refused to order one herself. Cormac glanced over at him with his brows furrowed.

"I was hoping to convince you into skiving work for the afternoon," Draco's eyes darted towards him, accusingly. "Unfortunately, McLaggen, we have quite a lot more work today," He drawled. "Right, Granger?"

Hermione bit her lip nervously as she nodded.

"Well, I was hoping you'd join me because 'The Banshees have an open rehearsal for Hinkypunk that they invited me to and..." He saw the moment her eyes lit up at the offer.

"Oh!" She jumped from her seat looking over apologetically at Draco. "You wouldn't mind, would you Malfoy?" How could he deny her the opportunity to see one of her favourite bands after the look of pure joy on her face?

"Sure, Granger."

She clapped excitedly and fell into the wanker's open arms.

"Thanks, Malfoy, you're tops." He winked his way and casually slung an arm around her shoulders to steer her away. Draco could feel the heat creeping up his neck at the gesture.

He stared at their retreating forms, waiting for her to look back and acknowledge him as she left, but it was for

He huffed and continued to eat, stabbing at the olives with his fork. Hermione hid her smirk as they ate in silence. He knew he was acting childish. It should have been perfectly acceptable for her to stay with McLaggen, yet his irritation remained over a battle lost. He pushed away his filet, exchanging it for his slice of lemon meringue pie. As he took a bite, he looked up to find her wearing a smug smile.

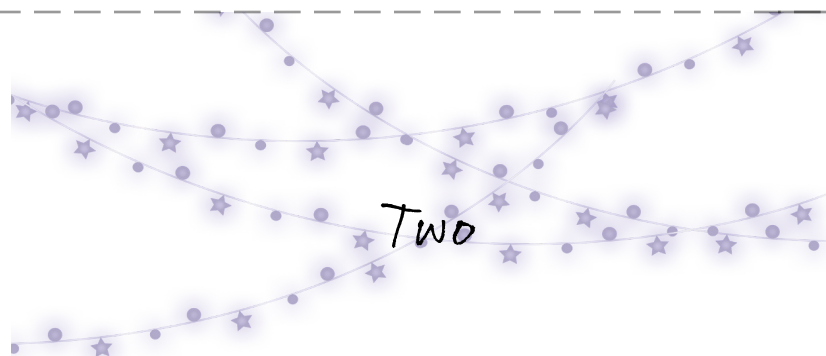
Hinkypunk

"What?"

"Well if you had let me finish, you would know that although Cormac has somewhere for us to stay, I would much rather be with my friends. He's not particularly happy about it, but he'll be off securing donations for The Societys, so I would be left on my own anyway." The pressure in his chest eased as excitement and hope took its place.

She reached over to steal a bite of his pie. He watched how her lips closed around the fork and the way her tongue darted out to lick off some of the meringue clinging to the corner of her mouth. Circe save him, this was torture. He was fighting the urge to wipe a stray crumb from her bottom lip, when a grating voice called out.

"Golden Girl! There you are!" Cormac trotted over with the grace of a bloody hippogriff, a proud grin on his face. "I looked for you in your office but Joanna said that you went to lunch." He noticed the bit of pie and wiped it away with his thumb before bringing it to his lips. "Dessert? You never have dessert." Hermione blushed at the public display.



Hermione

She was listing the number of aurors needed to adequately ward the festival when Draco waltzed into her office, two coffees in hand.

"You know, Granger, starting early doesn't make you better than me. It just makes you petty."

She sighed, taking the cup from his outstretched hand. "And you know bringing me coffee doesn't mean I'm going to let you cut corners, right?"

"Wouldn't expect you to." He winked, sipping from his cup.

He took a seat across from her as they quietly enjoyed their morning ritual. She savoured the hazelnut and cinnamon, the aroma invading her nostrils and warming her throat. She looked over at him as he settled in. Only once had she told him how she took her coffee. He hadn't gotten it wrong since.

"We should probably go over the projected attendance

Hermione offered up the briny little buggers. "Cormac does have somewhere planned for us to stay..."

"Oh, come on Granger. Everyone is going to be so disappointed if you don't stay with us."

"Everyone is going to be disappointed? That I'm staying with my boyfriend?"

"You're planning on staying with us at the chateau, took them. He hated olives."

"He watched as Hermione meticulously picked the olives out of her salad. She had the option to order it without them, but insisted since she knew he enjoyed them. He had mistakenly told her he loved olives months ago. She was having a particularly trying day and looked as if she would burst into tears at the sight of the olives in her salad. So he took them. He hated olives."

Draco



"And where do you propose to eat said take-away?"

Hermione gazed down at the chaos of her desk. She sighed, grabbed her work tote and hurried down the hall after him.

Hinkypunk

nought. Suddenly, an afternoon working in a cramped office didn't sound quite as appealing as usual.



"You're in trouble, mate." Theo walked over and placed a glass of Ogden's Finest in his hands.

Draco sighed as he sank into the velvet chaise, downing it in one pull. Nott Manor didn't hold as many bad memories for him as his own, so he preferred to spend his time here.

"What's wrong with me? She's unavailable. She's had a boyfriend the whole time we've worked together and I can't...I can't..."

"You can't bring yourself to tell her how you actually feel because you're a coward?" Blaise offered. Draco threw one of the decorative pillows his way.

"I can't tell her." He stood abruptly, pacing in front of the bar cart with restless energy. "If I can't have her the way I want, I'll take whatever she gives me. I'll ruin whatever this is if I say anything." He reached for the decanter just to keep his hands busy as Harry walked in.

"He has a point." Harry shrugged. "Hermione is a Gryffindor and she wouldn't do something to intentionally harm someone. Even if that someone is that slimy knob." The three of them snorted in agreement.

Theo pursed his lips, thinking it over. Then his eye-

"You need to eat and I am starving. Come on, witch."

Draco turned towards the door as she absentmindedly caressed her hand where the warmth of his touch lingered. Realising what she was doing, she shook her head out of its daze. "Can't you just bring me take-away? We still have so much to do!" she called after him.

"Granger."

She continued to ignore him as she sorted through her notes until a gentle hand stilled hers. She glanced up as something unfamiliar stirred in her chest.

"Mmmhmm." She was distractedly sifting through the piles on her desk.

"It's lunchtime, Granger. Let's go."

A comfortable rhythm was set as they volleyed back and forth about each department's needs leading up to the event. The soft rustle of parchment and the scratch of their quills became the soundtrack to their morning. As midday approached, Draco began to pack up his bag.

"You've read my mind, Malfoy."

"And once we have the aurors, we'll need to set aside accommodations or portkeys ahead of time. I would prefer if the vendors will have ample time to set up."

curly still sprang free.

wand into her hair in an attempt to pull it back, yet her the DMLE know what we need." Hermione twisted her numbers. Once we have those estimates, I'll be able to let

Hinkypunk

Julejinx

"I think you mean all's fair in love and war, Weasley." Blaise countered.

Draco looked around at his friends as he considered what they were saying before raising his glass.

"To war, then."

Draco laughed, getting up from the chaise, vanishing his empty glass. His friends had moved on from the topic of his heartache to more enjoyable matters, such as the Quidditch match-ups for the weekend. As he made for the door to return to the Ministry, he decided he would run one more errand before returning to work.

He smirked, picturing Weasley's face when he found a fresh crop of mandrakes that needed reporting at his flat.

Snugglyux

Hinkypunk

"Maybe because last time you were here, you got completely pissed, insisted she was a Mandrake and repeatedly tried to pot her," Theo said as he abruptly grabbed the bottle of Ogden's out of his hands.

"Bloody hell!" Ron exclaimed as he kept his drink out of reach. "Well, she was certainly screaming at me like one." He grunted to no one in particular taking a seat next to Draco who shook his head in amusement.

"Well, Weasley – maybe you can offer some insight into this lad's pickle." Blaise said, gesturing in Draco's direction.

"Whoa whoa...no offence, mate, but you're not my type..." Ron threw an awkward glance at Draco's groin before downing his drink, eyes wide.

"No, you knob. Pickle, dilemma, predicament."

"Ohhh, you mean with 'Mione?" Ron's eyes lit up with relief, then sagged. "I'm 'fraid I won't be any help with that either for obvious reasons."

Draco closed his eyes and dropped his head back onto the chaise. "Fuck," he groaned. Ron patted his thigh sympathetically.

"Honestly, mate, I don't think there's much you can do other than be there." Blaise cut in with a smirk. "Be there for whatever she needs. For whenever that wanker falls short." He tossed back his drink, pleased with his brilliance.

"So a doormat then?" Draco scoffed, defeated.

"Like you wouldn't let her step on you."

"Fuck off, Weasel."

"Malfoy, I hear we get the opportunity to work together this time around. If you need recommendations on where to stay while in town for the festival, I'd be happy to oblige." He slid both arms around Hermione's waist as returning it to her.

Draco's eye twitched as the brutish Scot grabbed the McLaggen winked at Granger as he pulled her closer.

"Like that do you, Weasley? I figured if I had a say, I'd have to include most of my bird's favourite performers."

"We were actually making plans for the Hinkypunk Festival. The lineup is cracking."

"Gladly," Draco said under his breath. Blaise smirked side, but he either didn't notice or didn't care.

"So what are you tossers up to? Don't tell me this is another one of your game nights." He mocked. "I'd rather poke my own eyes out." Granger elbowed Cormac in the head.

"McLaggen," Potter acknowledged with a nod of his snogs at the Slug Club.

The unfortunate coupling started about a year ago – right around the time Draco had been offered his position at the Ministry. Allegedly, she and McLaggen had recon-nected after McLaggen's family charity had started sponsoring more and more events supporting causes for which she advocated. Gone were the days of hiding from sloppy

Hinkypunk

Snugglyux

he eyed Draco.

"Draco actually offered up his chateau for the weekend. We prefer something a little more upscale than what you're used to." Pansy winked at Draco before dragging Ginny onto her lap.

"You mean the Ministry didn't reclaim that property after the war? My, my Draco, aren't we lucky? Or did the Malfoy vault have influence over that?" He winked as he reached for another sip of his girlfriend's Butterbeer. Draco's jaw clenched.

Hermione looked mortified and stole her drink back. "Cormac."

"Château des Sables Éternels is in fact one of our remaining properties. It should be able to accommodate us all if that works for you, Granger."

There was a hum of agreement at the table. McLaggen, looking slightly put out, turned to Hermione.

"Well as fun as it has been to be around you lot, I think I would much rather be spending some one on one time with the Golden Girl." He wagged his eyebrows suggestively, her face and neck blooming crimson.

"Merlin, I need another drink." As Potter downed the last of his firewhiskey, Hermione said her farewells while avoiding Draco's eyes. When the door to The Hog's Head closed behind them, he ambled up to the bar for another round in hopes of erasing the image of Cormac pawing and grabbing at her.

brows lifted, a slow grin forming. "Unless you make her think it was her idea..."

"How Slytherin of you, love. But I doubt she would appreciate being manipulated into a relationship." Potter squeezed Theo's shoulders as he passed.

"You." Draco pointed at Theo. "How did you bag yourself a Gryffindor? The Chosen One to be exact?"

"You assume that I even had to try, Malfoy." Theo walked over to Potter planting a sweet kiss on his cheek. "Besides, Granger is not Potter. You'd be barking up the wrong tree. I doubt my tactics would work on anyone but this one." He winked at Potter as he playfully smacked his bum. Potter blushed.

"Oi, enough you two. We're supposed to be helping the poor sod." Draco raised his glass to Blaise at that. "There was a sudden crack of magic when Millie, the Nott Manor's house elf, appeared.

"Mister Theo, the ginger one is back." She adjusted the pleats of her pink dress, clearly unimpressed by the arrival of his new guest.

"Ah, the Weasel is here. Thank you, Mills." Theo pressed a hand to his heart and offered a grand, sweeping bow as she disappeared with a pop, just before the heavy footsteps reached the parlour doors.

"Nott, I don't think your house elf likes me." Ron waltzed into the room, immediately making his way to the bar cart.

When he rejoined his friends, he was met with pitying stares.

"How you holding up, mate?" Blaise clapped him on the back.

"Grand. Bloody grand." He scowled, relishing the burn of whiskey down his throat.

"You know, hypothetically speaking, I may know of people that could orchestrate an unfortunate portkey accident." Ron winked, mischief twinkling in his eyes.

"For fuck's sake, Ron. We work at the DMLE." Harry pinched the bridge of his nose.

He raised his hands innocently. "Hypothetically, I said hypothetically, Harry." Draco huffed in amusement.

"Saying 'hypothetically' doesn't actually grant you clemency, Weasel." Theo rolled his eyes while rubbing his boyfriend's back. Ron shrugged it off, winking at Draco again. "How am I supposed to work under that wanker for the next few months?" He loved that his job meant he'd be working with Hermione more often than not. However, working with her while working for her boyfriend was dodgy territory.

"You think she'll still stay with us at the chateau? Or will Cormac be arranging separate accommodations?"

"I don't know, Parks. I'm sure the bastard will do anything to get her away from us."

"Then you'll just have to do the same to him. An eye for an eye right?"

"Brilliant. Just what we need." He dropped his head back in exasperation. He enjoyed the times his job aligned with Granger's – but less so when it involved McLaggen.

"Don't be an arse, Malfoy."

She sighed as she got up to get a drink. He waited a moment before deciding to get up and follow. He approached cautiously as she placed her order.

"Are you saying you didn't know he was sponsoring this event beforehand?" Draco asked casually leaning against the bar facing her.

"It may come as a surprise to you, Malfoy, but I don't, in fact, know it all."

He scoffed and signalled the server for a glass of Ogden's. "You're telling me 'The Golden Girl' is not aware of the goings on at the Ministry when it involves Cormac McLaggen?" Draco sneered with an eye roll, reaching his hand to touch her brow. "Are you well??"

She laughed as the barkeep served their drinks. Just as Draco was about to continue to pester her about the festival, a foreign arm snaked around her waist from behind, drawing her in and away from his side.

"Who's buying?" McLaggen drawled, peppering kisses up the side of her neck. She giggled, turning towards the git. Draco's eyes narrowed as he grabbed his drink to return to their table, retreating from the nauseating scene. Going by the uneasy stares his mates were giving him, he knew Granger and that insufferable twit was not far behind.

Hermione raised her face to the sun, soaking in the heat while tendrils of hair stuck to the back of her neck. She had been warding the grounds for the past few hours and was nearly finished. The artists and bands were due to arrive soon and then she'd be able to brief them on the protocol for entering and leaving the festival. As she scanned the area, she found Draco directing the set-up of various tents and stages. His sleeves were rolled up and she couldn't help but notice the flex of his muscles as he ran a hand through his hair. Malfoy's usual alabaster complexion showed hints of colour after hours of standing in the sun. It suited him. She watched as he lifted the hem of his shirt to wipe the sweat from his brow and got a glimpse of his taut, sculpted core. Her eyes travelled south, following the trail disappearing into his waistband. As if feeling her assessing gaze, he looked over at her with a boyish grin.

"Alright there, Cranger?"

Hermione

Four

idly and shook her head, willing the thoughts away as she began to pack up her tote. She cursed herself for even noticing these details about the man in front of her when she was involved with another. Her movements slowed as her thoughts rationalised. It was completely normal and acceptable for friends to appreciate each other, platonically. Completely normal.

"Is there a conversation happening in that head of yours that I should be aware of?"

She nearly jumped, forgetting that he was still waiting for her, "What? No. I'm ready, let's go." She swung her bag over her shoulder, nearly knocking the ink pot over... again.

Draco smirked as he held the door open for her. She huffed as she passed, unable to ignore the scent of cedar and mint that invaded her senses as she did.

"How Hermione is with Cormac but most definitely about tonight?"

ly stretched her legs over his lap. "So, who are we talking taking a seat next to Pansy on the couch who immediately nothing ladylike about them." He sauntered back to them, "I've heard of your past girls' nights and there was glass of wine.

Theo made his way to her kitchen, pouring himself a ture and took a delicate sip from her glass.

"Ladies, Theo. We're ladies." Pansy adjusted her posture and took a delicate sip from her glass.

"I can't believe you lot are having a girls' night without flat.

awkward silence, as an unexpected wizard waltzed into her hands. The sound of her Floo startled them out of the anymore. With an exasperated huff, her head fell into her either from the wine or the conversation, she couldn't tell "There's nothing to see!" She felt her cheeks flushing,

"So you do see it."

together." "course, we would be comfortable spending so much time

"Malfoy and I are just friends. We work together a lot. Of She bit her lip and raised her head to look at her friend.

see it." "Please tell me you're not acting like you don't her face. "Ginny groaned, sliding her hands down

been him and Malfoy mostly..."

Hinkypunk

has feelings for Draco." *Jukjinx*

"Ginny!"

"Ah, yes. What shall we do about that?"

"We will be doing nothing, Theodore, because this has nothing to do with any of you!" She got up from the floor and headed towards the kitchen. "I don't owe anyone an explanation for who I choose to spend my time with and I would appreciate it if my friends could respect that!" She braced her hands on the counter, head bowed, trying to breathe through the tug of war happening between her head and her heart. Her friends stayed silent, exchanging furtive glances. Several moments passed before a throat cleared.

"So, when do we think Potter is going to propose to me?" The tension in the air dissipated. Hermione sighed with relief as she uncorked a new bottle and returned to her friends.



In the week leading up to the festival, Hermione's anxiety and anticipation for everything to go off without a hitch were reflected in the untamed curls that refused to obey any law of physics or magic. No amount of Sleekeazy's Hair Potion could bring it to heel. She huffed and attempted yet again to twist her hair back with her wand, but it did nothing except give the impression that it was

quizzically over at the distracted witch. She blinked rapidly. “Granger?” Draco had paused his movements looking blessed in appearance, intellect and competency.

angles of his jaw. It was rather unfair that someone be this eyes, the soft pout of his lips contrasting with the sharp part of this wizard’s face; the glimmer of mischief in those the urge to push them back for their audacity to hide any strands of hair falling onto his forehead and was filled with As he began packing up his carryall, Hermione noticed will have time to settle in before our friends arrive.”

Eternels was already prepped for guests last week so we for us to make any last minute changes. Chateau des Sables before the artists arrive Friday night, with plenty of time tivate that morning. We’ll be able to do a final run through grounds on Wednesday afternoon. Our portkey is set to arrive at the ready in place. The vendors are scheduled to arrive at the itinerary. “The apparition points and portkey zones are annoyingly unfrazzled blond resumed sorting through his made me jump through, we are ahead of schedule.” The “It’s ready. We’re ready. Despite all the extra hoops you the will to do the same.

relieved. He removed his hand from hers before she found ed attention unnering, but instead, she felt grounded and didn’t help the matter. She should have found his undivided read her thoughts. The fact that he was a master Legilimens at her. Piercing silver eyes that she was pretty sure could hands touched before glancing up to find him looking back

Snuggly

Hinkypunk

She snapped her eyes away from him, looking towards the sky, pretending she hadn’t heard him and wasn’t just inappropriately ogling her coworker.

“Granger?”

“Huh? Oh, me?” She pointed to herself as if unsure of who he was speaking to. He grinned knowingly before walking towards her. She, again, found herself not knowing what to do with her hands and ended up waving both of them awkwardly at him. Since girls’ night, she couldn’t remember how to act normally around him.

“We’re nearly done with the mainstage and the concession tents. How’s the warding going?”

Thankful that he didn’t acknowledge the bizarreness of the last few moments, she breathed a sigh of relief. “We just finished. I’m going to double check the apparition points and the portkey zones, but then we’re all set.”

“Excellent, I’ll wait for you before heading to the Chateau.”

“Oh, that’s not necessary—”

“Go on, Granger. I’ll be waiting at the apparition point when you’re done.” He held her waist as he passed, his long fingers curling around her possessively. It sent a thrill through her that stole her breath. Hermione stood there for a moment before realising she was staring, again. Merlin, I need to get a grip. She shook her head and headed towards the portkey zones.

It was nearly supper time when they arrived back at the

as that familiar warmth returned. She stared at where their out her hand, stilling her frantic energy. Her breath caught charities Cormac has invited depend on it!” Draco sought “I just need this to be perfect. Donations for all of the place the ink pot out of harm’s way.

her eyes at him as she continued her work, making sure to search the festival grounds for Nargles.” She narrowed me, with a straight face, if I thought Luna would be willing “I knew everything was going to be fine when you asked ough.” She huffed, falling ungracefully back into her seat. “Everything is ready, Granger. You were very thorough further.

eyes as she handed it to him. His calmness only irritated that you’re as grown up as ever, Malfoy.” She rolled her up the missing parchment from the floor. “Good to know She scowled at him before getting up from her seat to pick Hermione cleared the spilt ink with a flick of her wand. in there.” He grinned trying to hide his smirk.

checked that mane of yours? Surely you’ve lost something ing his arms over his chest as he examined her. “Have you He paused his work, leaning back in his chair, cross-desk. Oh bollocks.” She had spilt another ink pot.

to keep track of every parchment of yours that passes my “I have enough on my plate, Malfoy, without having asked without looking up from his work.

“Have you seen the file for the portkey zoning?” Draco growing by the minute.

Hinkypunk

Snuggly

“Mmmhmm.” Ginny raised her eyebrows, loudly sipping from her glass.

“Ok, out with it. I know you two have something to say so let’s get it over with.” Resigned, she leaned her head back into Pansy’s lap.

“Are you happy?”

“Wow, Pans. Don’t hold your punches.” Ginny set her wine on the coffee table before lying on her side to face them.

“Of course I’m happy! Why wouldn’t I be happy? Cormac makes me...happy.”

“But?” She could feel Pansy tug on her hair a little more forcefully than necessary.

“I don’t know. I know he cares for me and he is not shy about it, but sometimes I would prefer a quieter love.” She took another sip of her wine, giving her the courage to go on. “Something that doesn’t always need to be shouted from the rooftops. I want the little things. The little gestures that show that he knows me. Like bringing me coffee the way I like it or sitting in comfortable silence together or letting me ramble about what’s in my head without making me feel silly or—”

“— or working together to plan a festival?” Pansy had given up on the plaits and had switched to a calming rhythm of running her fingers through her curls.

“I mean, besides taking me to the open rehearsal, Cormac and I haven’t really worked together on anything. It’s

Draco awoke with a start to darkness, the only light provided by the moon spilling in from the windows. As his eyes adjusted, he glanced next to him and realised that Hermione wasn't there. Disappointed that she had gone off to bed without waking him, he sighed, stretching his arms above his head before getting up. He folded up the blanket and was heading towards the stairs when the TV came to life, revealing a snowy screen. The static emitted from the box was loud. His heart jumped in his chest at the sudden intrusion of his senses. He looked over to the telly and laughed.

"Very funny, Cragger," he called into the darkness as he walked over to the screen, turning it off. He had almost

reliable to you than an Unbreakable Vow." Draco shook his head, holding out his pinky to intertwine with hers. Satisfied with the promise, she quickly climbed the stairs to her room. The spark of his touch still danced across her skin as she closed the bedroom door.



Draco

"I don't understand how Muggles could possibly survive these horrors without magic. A deranged Moaning Myrtle climbing out of your telly to murder you?" Draco reached his chopsticks over to steal another piece of broccoli.

"It's the thrill, Malfoy. Don't tell me you don't at least find this thrilling."

"I guess if she had control of some form of Dark Magic, it would make this situation more palatable. But after the horrors I've faced in my life, I doubt there's much that can scare me anymore."

"Is that so?" She looked over at him, eyebrows raised, unconvinced. They were sitting together on the couch in their pyjamas, the glow of the TV the only light in the room. Her legs were tucked under her and fuzzy socks covered her feet.

"It is so."

he didn't call her by her name at all. Cormac attempted to place his arm around her waist, but Hermione side-stepped him under the guise of examining the stage props. He disregarded the slight and turned his attention to Aster.

"After all she's done for the Wizarding World? I'd do anything for my bird. Including taking her to see her favourite band and watching her swoon over The Aster Ketleburn."

Her cheeks heated and irritation crawled up her spine. She was not a bargaining piece in someone else's game. Favourite band or not, she resented him for using her this way. As the band continued to pack up their instruments, she felt a knot form in her chest. This was supposed to be a fun activity for them to do together after weeks of working non-stop. She was so eager to step away, even for a moment, to enjoy each other's company, but now it felt tainted.

Cormac shook Aster's hand and clapped him on the back before he made his way to her.

"Are you alright, Dove?" He braced his hands on her shoulders and bent down in an effort to meet her eyes. Instead of finding his touch and attention comforting, she found it heavy and laced with expectation. She sighed, avoiding his gaze and removing his hands.

"It cheapens the gesture, Cormac, when it seems like you've used my name to get special privileges." He straightened, confusion written in his eyes.

"I'm sorry, babes. I know I can get carried away sometimes." He reached for her hand. "There are still times when I can't believe you've chosen to be with me when you've accomplished so much and I have yet to create my own legacy. It's all I can do not to shout at everyone who passes by that you're with me. You chose me." He brought her hand to his lips to place a chaste kiss. She closed her eyes, calming the waves of frustration threatening to pull her under. With a long exhale, she looked back at him.

"I would just prefer it if you just thought of me as your girlfriend and not The Golden Girl. I want to be liked for who I am and not who people think I am or expect me to be because of a silly title."

"As you wish." Cormac tugged her closer with his hands around her waist and placed a soft kiss on her lips. "Would it please you to know that the real reason I brought you was to convince Aster to donate to The Society for the Betterment of Muggle Relations? His donation will be enough to fund this year's incoming Muggleborn students and their transition to the Wizarding World. Impressing you by bringing you here was just the cherry on top." Hermione stepped back, her eyes shining with surprise and confusion. The knot in her chest slowly began to unravel, releasing its hold on her.

"You're joking."

"I certainly hope not. I am a primary sponsor for this festival, Dove. I don't need to name-drop to get an audi-

“I still don’t understand how a pinky promise is more promise, mischief dancing in her eyes.”

“I won’t tell if you won’t.” She held her pinky out in fit if he finds out we watched it without him.”

“Without our friends? You know Weasley will throw a our horror movie marathon!”

scary movie night? The King is out now. We can continue

ning back around towards him. “Oh! Shall we make it a She nodded, making her way to the stairs before spinning back around towards him. “Oh! Shall we make it a old and the plumbing isn’t up to our modern standards.”

“Mind the pipes while you do. This place is centuries don’t mind, I’m going to have a shower before dinner.”

Her heart fluttered in her chest. “Right. Well, if you er.”

said with a mocking grin. “You’re lucky I like you, Granger.”

since I know you have a taste for both, but you can’t possibly order two entrees because it would be too much,” he

“Yes, you can have some of my orange chicken as well “Yes, but –”

“The usual? Beef and broccoli with white rice?”

well aware of that fact.

than a bite or two all day and her stomach was making her

“Gods, that sounds fantastic.” She hadn’t eaten more ner, unless you wanted something else?”

“I was thinking of ordering Chinese takeaway for dinner, but I don’t want to order something else.”

morning so tonight it was just the two of them.

chateau. Their friends weren’t due to arrive until tomorrow

Hinkypunk

made it to the foot of the stairs when the same white noise came from the living room. He looked towards the sound of the noise, hesitant.

“Granger?”

The time of night and the darkness did nothing to help the paranoia now invading his mind. He walked back to the living room and shut the TV off once more. Cursing under his breath for leaving his wand in his room, he quickly made his way back to the stairs. He took them two at a time before making it to the landing. Draco waited and listened, but heard nothing. Shaking his head, he laughed at himself and the ridiculousness of the situation.

“Bloody Muggle contraptions. Can’t even depend on them to function properly.” He took a deep breath and continued down the hall towards his room. As he approached the room Hermione was staying in, there was a blue flickering light from under the door. Curious to see if she was still awake, he knocked, the force of which pushed it open slightly.

“Granger? You awake?” He stepped in and his eyes widened at the sight of the television in her room, flickering on and off, crackling with static. He backed himself up against the wall and looked towards the bed, finding it empty. Panic alarms started ringing in the back of his mind. Where was she? He inched in further and heard the drip of water coming from the loo, followed by squelching noises and whispers. Those damn, old pipes. It had to be

“They’re... fine.”

her

for the knowing gaze of the red-headed witch across from attempt at sounding nonchalant would have worked, if not

“So how are things with Cormac these days?” Pansy’s them, wine in hand.

ing the dishes clean before assuming a position across from attempting to plait her hair. Ginny had just finished charmsipping her second glass of wine. Pansy sat behind her, She sat on the floor with her back against the couch,

“Dinner would be lovely.”

fingers through his and leaned up to kiss him on the cheek. mind. Shaking the thought from her head, she laced her

She hesitated, an inkling of doubt in the back of her “Dinner?”

benefit and for that I am sorry. Let me make it up to you. this. You weren’t wrong, I did still use your name for our

“I know what you assumed, but please don’t overthink chin with a finger and gazed into her eyes, amused.

down as shame began to creep up her throat. He lifted her “I...I’m sorry, Cormac. I assumed that...” She looked

line the pockets of a cause you care for.”

edge to his voice. “However, having you here did help to ence with the performers.” He adjusted his collar, a slight

Hinkypunk



Three

Hermione

The smell of must and smoke was embedded into the walls of the auditorium, the echoes of past performances etched into the wood floors leading to the stage. Hermione stared in awe as the last chords were strung with Cormac applauding eagerly from the side stage.

“That was bloody brilliant,” Hermione praised, walking over to shake each of the musicians’ hands. “You’ll be absolutely smashing at Hinkypunk!”

The lead singer, Aster Kettleburn, came forward with a crooked grin. “Well, when Cormac asked us if we’d fancy the ‘Golden Girl’ getting a sneak peek at the set list, we couldn’t bloody well say no.”

“Oh gods, please call me Hermione.” She eyed Cormac with what was almost a look of disappointment. He was unfazed as he approached the group with an air of... confidence? Superiority? Hermione couldn’t decide which was more annoying, the fact that he name-dropped or that

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looked over to see Ginny gesturing towards Draco and her throat loudly and stared at Ron with wide eyes. Ron cleared his throat and said, "Brilliant. I'll join you lot at 'The Banshees'." Hermione agreed.

"I haven't gotten to see a live set from 'The Banshees' yet, so I'll probably head that way," Draco shrugged.

"Valkyrie Rite for me as well. If these two think that they aren't equally as liable to get lost, they're mad." Blaise sniggered as he eyed Pansy and Ginny.

"Not my fault that I got lost in these green eyes..." Theo nuzzled Harry's neck and he smiled, reaching an arm up to ruffle his curly hair.

"Well, we promised these gents we would supervise them at Valkyrie Rite since we almost lost them last time." Pansy gestured over to Theo and Harry.

"Oh, back to important matters. Who's going to 'The Banshees' and who's going to Valkyrie Rite?"

"I just knows how much you mean to me," her eyes caught Draco's. "And I think it just pushes him to act like a dolt." A hum of reluctant consent passed through the group.

"A bit?" Theo raised his eyebrows as he wrapped his arms around Harry.

"He does. It's just that he can be a bit insecure around you all."

"No, no, I know," Hermione hesitated. "He means well, PANSY!" Ginny scolded through clenched teeth.

Hinkypunk

ister said, it's time to do your part. Now run along." She dismissed him, annoyance clearly written on her face. Cormac glared, reaching for her hand again. Hermione's jaw tightened with surprise as she pulled away. The fact that he even considered volunteering the Golden Girl, without her consent had indignation coursing through her veins.

"Cormac, if you would be so kind." Kingsley gestured away from the group towards a huddle of wizards waiting in perfectly tailored dress robes, looking completely fascinated and out of place at the same time. "Lovely to see all of you here together. Enjoy the rest of the weekend!" And with that, he was gone in a blur of purple. Before he followed, Cormac reached for Hermione, and she let him draw her in. With his hand cupping her face, she dodged his attempt to kiss her, his lips meeting her cheek instead. He appeared confused by her reaction then turned to the group.

"Guess I'll catch up with you tossers after I've drained the pockets of these donors."

"Yeah, only to drain us of all our sanity." Ron mumbled. Harry elbowed him in the ribs.

As Cormac hurried after Kingsley, Hermione turned back to her friends apologetically.

"Don't even think about it, Granger." Theo pointed at her threateningly.

"I know you're not about to apologise for that bloody arseho—"

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Hermione wished she could feel the same towards her own ashamed he was to have his fading Dark Mark on display. Most surprising was how unceremonious or un- buttons at the top of his linen shirt hinted at his lean Seek- to his usual Ministry attire of black and grey. The undone casually dressed. His light trousers were a stark contrast coworker... former enemy? It was strange to see him this took a moment to let her own gaze roam over her friend...

As the group continued their walk to the pavilion, she ing daggers at the wizard beside her.

couldn't be sure, but she could sense those silver eyes star- Draco lowered his sunglasses from his head. Hermione of the stock of vials in their kits, should it happen again." a Pepper-Up potion couldn't fix. I reminded all employees a key was sloshed and did not handle the trip well. Nothing "All set. Turns out one of the wizards arriving by port- the group.

"All set, Malfoy?" Harry asked as Draco re-approached that —"

"I really think I should go help. If something is wrong with the portkey or apparition points, it's my job to ensure skin, distracting her for a moment from her thoughts.

ing a stray curl behind her ear. His hand lingered on her "What's got you worried, Dove?" He whispered, tuck- to smooth the furrow between her brows.

done the same thing. Cormac turned to her, lifting a finger in it. If it were anyone other than Draco, she would have

Hinkypunk

inflicted war scars instead of constantly glamouring them. She rubbed at her forearm absentmindedly.

"Alright, The Banshees and Valkyrie Rite have sets that start in half an hour. Boggart Dreams isn't until late afternoon so we can grab something to eat beforehand. Love Incendio's set starts at 7 p.m. so we'll want to get there early for prime viewing." Ron rattled off the group's itinerary while the others looked at him, eyebrows raised.

"You would be more detail oriented when planning a schedule for Hinkypunk than at work." Harry laughed incredulously.

"It's a matter of priority and I happen to take my leisure activities very seriously."

Hermione smiled at her best friends as they continued to rib each other in a way that brothers do. It reminded her of their early days in school when they found moments of peace to be children, before everything changed. Before lines were drawn between classmates and then to different sides of a battlefield. It seemed that time was ever changing as she looked between the boys she clung to during those years and to the man beside them. A man whom she clung to more and more these days. She chanced a glance back and found him letting his eyes wander over her. She could feel the burn of his gaze as it travelled over her face, down her neck and along her collarbone, like he too could see the war raging in her head. He always seemed to see what others didn't, knowing when she was lost in her own mind

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possibly pull her away from this to work! Like the Min-
 “Don’t be daft, McLaggen.” She snorted. “You can’t
 away.
 hand, but was conveniently thwarted as Ginny swatted him
 assistance in this endeavour.” He made for Hermione’s
 preach, “But certainly the Golden Girl would be of great
 Caught off guard by the rejection, he pivoted his ap-
 students.”
 must continue to provide for the incoming Muggleborn
 to do your part and secure funding for The Society. We
 he said, Adrian is the day-of coordinator. Today, it’s time
 is the result of his hard work these past few months and as
 “Nonsense.” Kingsley adjusted his sleeves. “Hinkypunk
 the top of his sunglasses, a smug grin on his face.
 for responsible for the event.” He eyed Draco from over
 Malfoy would be a more ideal volunteer as he is the direc-
 Cormac looked uneasy as he stepped forward. “Surely
 “That would be much appreciated, Draco.”
 my second in command and day-of coordinator.”
 nary Affairs to join you? I would be happy to send Adrian,
 need a representative from the Department of Extraordi-
 “Minister, thank you so much for coming. Would you
 the corded muscles of his arm.
 her hair in an effort to distract herself from the sight of
 out to shake Kingsley’s hand and she frantically toyed with
 her arms, despite the warmth of the day. Draco reached
 hers as he passed and gooseflesh bloomed up and down
Hinkypunk

Hinkypunk
 Hermione. He continued, confused. “...The Banshees”
 Ginny rolled her eyes and smacked him upside the head.
 Draco stifled a laugh as Ron rubbed his head glaring at his
 younger sister.

“Alright, we’ll meet up again for Boggart Dreams and
 Love Incendio tonight, yeah?” Theo said over his shoulder
 trailing after Harry.

“You two better wait up!” Pansy yelled.

“We should have put the tracer spell on them.” Ginny
 admonished as she linked her fingers with her girlfriend’s,
 pulling her to catch them before they lost the boys in the
 crowd. Blaise shook his head as he strolled after them.

As the five of them disappeared, Ron dashed ahead
 with Draco falling into step with Hermione. She looked
 over at him as he stared forward, hands in his pockets, his
 pace slowing slightly like he didn’t really mind getting left
 behind

“You’ve never seen The Banshees?”

“I’d never even heard of them until last year when
 I walked into your office and they were playing on that
 grandma-phone of yours.” He smiled to himself as he
 kicked at the ground. “Same with Love Incendio.”

She stopped in her tracks, shock written all over her
 face. “First off, it’s gramophone. Second, you hadn’t lis-
 tened to them before then?” Draco turned around to her,
 amusement colouring his face.

“I hate to be the one to break it to you, Granger, but

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Hermione could sense Draco’s presence as he ap-
 proached. When did she start doing that? His arm brushed
 busy.”
 seems as though you have plenty of company to keep you
 “You wouldn’t mind if I steal Cormac away, do you? It
 wizarding world thrived under his guided touch.
 the role as if he was always meant to hold the seat, and the
 other, but being Minister suited him. He had settled into
 old friend. It was weird at first to think of him as anything
 Hermione laughed as she walked over to embrace her
 Ms. Granger.”
 Kingsley smiled proudly at her. “I’m full of surprises,
 “Minister Shackbolt, was that a Muggle reference?”
 the man behind the curtain!”
 “The donors have arrived and are asking to speak with
 make the heat tolerable.
 the day was baffling. Then again, a cooling charm could
 in his wake. How he could be wearing them in the heat of
 Magic made his way towards them, purple robes billowing
 crowd. “Just the wizard I needed to see.” The Minister for
 “Cormac?” A deep, bellowing voice travelled over the
 she stop comparing them to each other?
 as she looked away before he could continue. Why couldn’t
 needed before letting them float away. Her breath hitched
 he knew they were important, that it was something she
 thoughts like Cormac did. He let her flush them out, like
 and not present. But he didn’t try to bring her out of those
Hinkypunk

Hinkypunk
 “Sod off, Weasley.” Draco sneered in faux annoyance.
 He could handle Ron’s playful taunting. It was McLaggen’s
 passive aggressivene tone hidden behind concern that
 irked him. Draco turned, walking away before he could
 say something that he would regret. Holding his cutting
 remarks was becoming increasingly more difficult. Glanc-
 ing back towards the group he glimpsed the wanker’s arm
 tighten around her waist. His eye twitched.



Hermione

“Was that really necessary, Cormac? There are plenty
 of other workers who could have handled the situation be-
 sides Malfoy.” Hermione eyed him disapprovingly.

“If something were to potentially go wrong with the
 wards, wouldn’t you want to be the one to check on them
 personally? I was only thinking of his pride and reputa-
 tion.” Cormac shrugged, slipping on his sunglasses not
 even looking at her as he spoke.

She sighed. He wasn’t wrong. But something about the
 whole interaction still left her uneasy. She felt an inkling of
 guilt that she was so eager to help Draco instead of staying
 with her boyfriend. But Hinkypunk was a result of their
 joint effort in planning. Of course, she would have a stake

This was going to be a long weekend. against it with a quiet sigh. be sure. After he closed the door, he leaned his forehead the room. Was that a sad smile on her face? He couldn't "Goodnight, Malfoy." She watched as he backed out of "Right. Good night, Granger." looking back down to her lap. It'll be a long day tomorrow." Her eyes darted to his before. "Oh...umm...it's fine. But, I probably should get to bed. She sat up in bed, crossing her arms over her stomach. He was not sorry at all.

her eyes. "Uh...sorry." He rubbed the back of his neck, avoiding their position, he quickly removed himself. the moment broke and she cleared her throat. Realising he could see the confusion in her eyes before. He stared into her eyes as his thumbs stroked her wrists, their laboured breaths, her chest heaving with every inhale. stalled when she looked up at him. The only sound was

thump

Five

Draco

"Theodore, must you wear the largest hat you own? No one can get around you, let alone see the stage if they have the misfortune of standing behind you." Pansy swatted at the floppy brim of his comically large hat.

"One can never be too careful with sun protection, love. I couldn't possibly put this face under any unnecessary stress before this one makes an honest man out of me." He winked over at Potter whose face was red from either embarrassment or the heat of the sun, hard to tell which.

Draco strolled between Pansy and Hermione, stealing casual glances at the curly-haired witch. The yellow mini-dress that hugged her curves and showed off her tanned skin was beyond distracting. His eyes danced over the dusting of freckles that made an appearance after spending most of yesterday morning setting up for the festival. Draco's gaze snagged on a cluster on her collarbone that,

of his friend. "And what of Zabini?" Draco looked around in search of the pavilion, were laughing hysterically. them back here." The drunken trio, still lying on the floor three sheets to the wind and it was all I could do to herd before Boggart Dreams and when I got back this lot was "Bloody hell." Harry shook his head. "I left to get food time taking Ginny and Theo with her. blitzed?" He cringed as Pansy slid off the bench again, this "What happened, Potter? How are you the only one not Harry ran his hand through his hair, exasperated. "What do we do with them now? They're all pissed!" scene before them.

from his glass, watching Hermione laugh at the drunken slid off the bench before Ginny grabbed her. Draco sipped ing the remaining whiskey on Pansy. She giggled and nearly "Another round?" Theo raised his glass in the air, spill-

Draco

Six

“If you two make me miss them playing Siren of the Lake, I will hex you both in the arse,” Ron called back to them.

“If you hex me, Weasel, I will lock you out of the wards at the chateau,” Ron laughed as he flipped him the bird.

The crowd thickened as the three of them got closer to the stage. A rowdy group of young wizards was pushing their way through and before she could react, a strong arm grabbed her around the waist and pulled her closer to avoid being trampled by the unruly crowd. The air left her lungs when she realised the closeness of the wizard behind her. His hands were splayed across her waist and she had to fight the urge to lean into him. She could feel his embrace lingered before releasing her. A warm buzzing trickled down her spine and she felt her stomach tighten in anticipation.

“Alright, Granger?” Draco cleared his throat, his voice husky and low.

“Mmm.” She quickly stepped away as the lights dimmed and the opening chords of Siren of the Lake rang out into the open air.

Hinkypunk

“Not sure. Last I saw, he was grafting a pretty witch at Valkyrie Rite. Haven’t seen him since.” He shrugged, eyes examining the faces around them. “Where’s Ron?”

Draco snapped his head up looking around them. “Shite. We’ve lost another one.”

“Who’s lost another one?” Hermione asked as she approached them, finishing her butterbeer. With the intensity of the sun and the many drinks warming her from the inside out, she ended up pinning her hair at the top of her head. Various tendrils of untamed curls framed her face and the setting sun created a halo effect that left him speechless.

“Ron’s gone.” Harry sighed as Hermione quickly assessed their surroundings.

“But he was just here a minute ago. I swear, next year we are going to use those tracer spells to —”

“Won Won!” Ginny called out, before falling into another fit of giggles. Ron walked up, floating a tray of drinks behind him.

“Absolutely not.” Harry stopped him before he could serve the belligerent fools. “I’m taking these three back to the chateau before I lose them again.”

“Harry, they can’t apparate or use a portkey in their condition.”

“I was planning to call a cab for us.” Harry grunted as he attempted to lift Theo off the ground. Draco could have reminded him about the feather light charm, but decided

Ron made to pinch his cheek before he swatted him away.

“We’ll save a big boy spot for you when you get back.”

artists pavilion when it’s sorted.”

elicited a snort from Ron. “I’ll meet you lot over at the

“Of course, not a problem at all.” His placating smile

audacity to smirk in his direction.

this issue on his own. Isn’t that right?” The wanker had the

“Nonsense, darling. He’s a big boy, he can take care of

I don’t mind —”

Hermione attempted to break the tension. “Oh, Malfoy

avoided making eye contact with both Draco and Cormac.

An awkward silence descended on the group as everyone

of all people, would want this event to run smoothly.”

at him and nodded towards the disturbance. “I’m sure you,

check-in tent?” The git readjusted his collar as he looked

fine festival, would you go and see what the racket is at the

“Malfoy, seeing as you are the event coordinator for this

stations.

them turning to see a crowd forming at one of the portkey

loved by loud, raised voices. The anger in the tones had

grounds, a sudden rush of air stirred behind them, fol-

made their way towards one of the many pavilions on the

looked away, irritation now marring his face. As the group

caught the lingering stare and his eyes narrowed. Draco

her arm, unfortunately, linked with McLaggen’s. Cormac

Her familiar velvet bag was slung over her shoulder while

if you looked closely enough, resembled a constellation.

Hinkypunk

Hermione, she just couldn’t hear him above the noise of the TV. He closed in on the door as the noises grew louder. Taking a deep breath he pushed it open. Immediately, the sounds stopped and he was greeted by an empty bathroom.

A dark figure with long wet hair jumped out of the tub towards him.

“AHHHH!” He shrieked and fell to the floor as the figure grabbed at him. Before he could push it off to make his escape, it rolled off in a fit of giggles. Draco reached for the light switch on the wall to find Hermione laughing hysterically on the floor.

“Fucking hell, Granger! What the fuck?!” She could barely catch her breath between laughs to acknowledge him.

“So...happy...to know...that...the horrors...persist.”

He ran his hands through his hair roughly while looking at the witch, tears streaming down her face, wheezing. Shaking his head, he lunged and threw her over his shoulder.

“Thought that was funny did you?” She fought back against his hold, thrashing around to break free, causing them both to fall onto the bed, laughing. He grabbed one of her pillows, smacking her in the face. Shocked at the attack, she crawled towards the head of the bed to grab a pillow of her own. Before she could make it, he grabbed her legs, flipping her and pulling her to him. He pinned her against the bed, hands above her head. Their laughter

of his hair tangled in her grasp as she brought him close door shut. There was only the heat, the taste, and the feel waist, Draco pulled her through the threshold, kicking the everything she had to give. Wrapping his arms around her only a moment before his lips responded, starved for ev- pulled Draco's face down, kissing him soundly. It took him She seized the moment of surprise and determinedly

Hermione



“Granger? What are you —”

stagger back, shock stalling the breath in his chest. scathed. He swung the door to his bedroom open, only to heart at her feet without hope of it returning to him un- Draco strode back to his door, determined to lay his ish, but fuck it all if he didn't deserve to be selfish for once. perate to be someone she couldn't be without. It was des- of her mind never ceased to amaze him, that he was des- that she never went unnoticed in a room, that the beauty end, he needed to tell her everything. He needed to tell her room as his heart warred with his mind. If this was the He roughly ran his hands through his hair, pacing the her laugh. Merlin, her laugh. And bet to honey brown when she is well and truly happy? And

Snuggly

Hinkypunk

this...”

Draco felt his heart drop. His chest caving in on him, stealing his breath. This was it. He was losing her. He should have stolen more moments at the festival, more moments this past year. He should have let her...no he couldn't. The guilt she would have carried with her if he let anything happen, he couldn't do that to her. Instead, he would carry this heartache, alone. Draco reached out, gently cradling the side of her neck, his thumb brushing back and forth over her pulse point to ground himself.

“Malfoy, I—”

He drew her towards him and placed a soft kiss on her forehead, daring to linger, pressure building behind his eyes. She stilled. “It's okay, Granger. It's okay.” He slowly dropped his hand from her neck, his eyes memorising every freckle, every curve, every curl. He backed away from her with a pained smile. With his head bowed and hands in his pockets, he made his way towards his room.

Draco's head fell against his door as it closed, attempting to shut out the devastation that threatened to drown him. His hands flexed at his side, fighting the urge to go back and beg her to forget what had happened between them tonight. He couldn't lose her, not now.

But what happens then? Do they go back to being friends? Back to being colleagues when he knows what it's like to feel the heat of her body pressed against his? When he can recognise the subtle shift in her eyes from deep am-

Making her way to a clearing, she looked to the sky, ing a look behind her as she went.

shoved past him through the horde of onlookers, not spar- “Piss off, Cormac,” she hissed. “We're done.” She his insolence to make her feel small.

so naive? She refused to stand there any longer and allow who she was not what she was. How could she have been whole relationship, she thought that she was wanted for The arse couldn't even be bothered to apologize. Their eyes, looking at the crowd that had gathered around them. “Oh don't be a bint, Hermione,” Cormac rolled his

” for my friends and I certainly didn't expect to do it for you than what people have labelled me. I never had to do that le around her. “All my life I've had to prove that I am more for the benefit of your ego.” Her magic continued to crack- your Golden Girl. I am not some trophy to be displayed am fully capable of making my own decisions. I am not mac.” Sparks of magic sizzled at the ends of her hair. “I “You don't have a say in what or who I choose, Cor- to calm the anger pulsing through her, to no avail.

burning through her veins. She closed her eyes in an effort flash of hurt in his face as she turned back to Cormac, fire step back, blending into the crowd. Hermione caught the him before she held up her hand, stopping him. He took a “Watch it, McLagen.” Draco made to move towards me.” He pointed menacingly at Draco.

Hinkypunk

Snuggly

exhaling a long breath in an effort to quell the pressure of tears behind her eyes. Had she really been so blind? Or did she know all along and choose to ignore it in exchange for the feeling of being wanted? She laughed in disbelief at her own foolishness. As she looked around, she spotted a head of familiar red hair approaching her.

“Mione! I heard there was some witch absolutely eviscerating a wizard over here and I thought maybe...” He paused looking behind her. “Oi! Malfoy! Did you catch the poor bloke getting his arse handed to him?”

She could feel Draco approaching them. She could always feel him when he was near, almost as if he had called to her. Slightly out of breath, he looked like he'd pushed through the throng just to reach her. She glanced at him briefly, before looking back at Ron.

“I'm actually quite knackered, Ronald. I think I'm going to pack it in for the night.”

Draco looked towards her, eyes searching. “Same, mate.” His fingers gently brushed hers and she nearly broke.

Ron shrugged as he wrapped an arm around her, giving a reassuring squeeze. “Suit yourselves. I'm gonna see if that witch or wizard needs a shoulder to cry on.” He smirked as he disappeared back into the crowd.

The two of them made their way towards the apparition point, not acknowledging the charged air between them. She hesitantly glanced over and found his wary eyes

already on her. They were always on her. She tore her gaze away as her chest tightened, guilt and embarrassment holding her back. He held out his arm for her and she took it. There was a crack of apparition and a twisting in her chest. She couldn't discern if it was from the pull of magic or the wizard that had been right there in front of her after all this time.

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ten in his features.

"I — I'm sorry, Malfoy. I don't know what that was." She avoided his imploring gaze. "I think I need... I think I —" As she turned to walk away, she collided with the last person she needed to see at that moment. Panic surged up her throat.

"Hermione, I've been looking all over for you." Cormac's eyes looked slightly unfocused, sweat beading at his hairline and the smell of pipe-weed wafting off him, the special blend that Draco had provided for the donor tents. He glanced behind her, eyes narrowing as he saw the tall wizard standing there, jaw clenched in frustration. "Just you two, then? Where are the others?" He examined the faces in the crowd before turning an accusatory glance at the two in front of him. "I think I've got her from here, Malfoy." He sneered, forcefully taking her hand and leading her towards the edge of the crowd.

"Cormac, wait... stop." She pulled back looking at Draco following close behind, a dullness now clouding his eyes and tension lining his posture. "The set isn't even finished yet —"

"Enough, Hermione!" He threw his hands up in frustration. "Are you trying to embarrass me?"

"Excuse me?" She gaped before stepping towards him in challenge.

"You're supposed to be my witch. My Golden Girl. I can't have you choosing your friends, least of all him, over

and toying with the ends of her hair. "Malfoy, about what happened back there..." Her apprehension was clear as her hands continued their restless dance with her curls, then at her sides and finally, her lips. "I... I don't know... umm... I think... ugh I'm ruining

They approached Hermione's bedroom door and paused, turning to each other. She was avoiding his eyes

their relationship? Did he push her too far?

The chateau was silent, save for their footsteps along the marble floor. The others must have either fallen asleep or returned to the festival, but he couldn't care less about anyone other than the witch walking next to him. When they arrived back, Hermione immediately dropped her arm from his and maintained a respectable distance. Her steps were unsure and he caught several nervous glances sent his way. He felt off balance, suspended in uncertainty not knowing if he was flying or falling. What did this mean for their relationship? Did he push her too far?

Draco



Hinkypunk

er still. Hermione's back hit the wall with a soft thud, his hands gripping her waist as if afraid to let go. Draco lifted her, her back scraping up the smooth wall. A gasp tore free as her legs curled around him on instinct. She panted against his swollen lips, steadying herself. The moment stilled as their eyes met, taking each other in.

"You didn't let me finish." She breathed, a cheeky grin on her face.

Draco laughed, resting his forehead in the crook of her neck, breathless. "Apologies. Please continue." He walked them over to the edge of the bed and sat with her straddling his lap.

Hermione's hands were clasped around his neck, her fingers dancing up and down his nape. "What happened tonight at the festival, it was wrong of me to carry on the way I did before it was officially over with Cormac. It wasn't fair to you. It wasn't fair to us."

"Us?" His eyes glinted with desire as he looked her over. Hermione bit her lip in an attempt to hide her smile.

"Yes. Us. I mean if that's what you —"

"Thank Merlin" Draco sighed as he flipped them, her back hitting the soft bedding as he pinned her to the bed. His hand travelled up her waist while his lips explored the dips and curves of her chest. He nipped at her neck, his thumb brushing over her breasts. Hermione's breath hitched and she brought his mouth back to hers, his tongue begging for entrance. She felt his fingers move towards

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the more she could take. Draco's pleased moans and the she'd be able to handle all of him. The more she relaxed, lips to him. Hermione took him slowly at first, unsure if and down. Draco strangled out a groan as she brought him then with both her hands creating a slow rhythm up widened at the sight, intimidated and aroused. She gripped towards his cock, his breathing turning ragged. Her eyes She dragged her hands down his chest as she moved "My turn."

over them, a curtain of privacy as she whispered in his ear. rolled over him, switching their positions. Her hair draped last barrier between them. As Draco readjusted, Hermione as she slid her hands into his trousers, pushing away the strong and soft parts as she went. His stomach tightened Her hands travelled down his body, appreciating the self on his tongue.

head down and kissed him slowly and deeply, tasting her- of them as he made his way back up to her. She pulled his body. He slowly removed his fingers, licking the release off "So beautiful," he praised, as her mind returned to her deeper still.

as he let her ride it out, thrusting her hips pushing him wave of pleasure wracked her body. Her thighs trembled then closed around her clit and she cried out as a fierce body was wound tight, desperate for release. His mouth maintained his rhythm, only increasing the pressure. Her ing as she tightened around him. Sensing she was close, he

Hinkypunk

ers. Her hands grasped the sheets around her in an effort to tether her excitement. His hand dipped below the soft fabric, fingertips grazing the wetness there, pulling a groan from his lips.

"Gods, you're so wet for me already." He dipped a finger in and her hips canted up towards him. Lips finding hers again, he slowly thrust his finger in and out. His mouth moved down towards her neck, nipping behind her ear as he added another finger.

"Please, Malfoy." Hermione whined as she writhed beneath him.

He let out a low laugh. "So impatient, my witch." His hand slid out from between her legs as his lips slowly pressed wet kisses down her chest and stomach, his tongue stealing tastes of her as he went. He settled between her thighs and looked up through hooded lids. She lifted her hips as he slid off the last piece of clothing, exposing herself to him. Draco laid a trail of kisses along her inner thigh stopping right before where she wanted him, only to switch to the other thigh. Her cunt throbbed with anticipation as she felt the heat of his breath below. His tongue then made a long, slow pass along her slit and she saw stars.

"Gods help me." She praised as her eyes rolled back.

With each pass of his tongue, he delved deeper and deeper. His fingers returned, matching the thrusts of his tongue and curling to hit the front walls of her cunt. Her hands were in his hair and she could feel the pleasure build-

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he would one day have the privilege of learning. its magic. A magic you couldn't master in school, but hoped weaving through her fingers as that brilliant mind worked she would hum as they worked together in silence, the quill office slowly made their way through him. It was the song miliar notes of a song he had heard many times in her The whole world spun around them as he waited. The fa- She gasped looking up at him, lips parted in surprise. "Dance with me, Granger."

leaned towards her, his lips grazing the shell of her ear. in reverence to the night. Before he could stop himself, he the music, singing along with her hands up in the air as if did he care. She had let loose her curts and was swaying to Draco didn't know when the band started playing, nor full.

happiest moments in the last year. Incandescently beauti- glow, as if she were a patronus created as a sum of all his The moon now cast her in an ethereal light that made her The confidence she had tonight had his head spinning. with his and led them to the main stage. "Come on, Malfoy." She giggled as she linked her arm rarely soothed the heat left between them.

appeared on the horizon and the cool evening air tempo- and saluting Draco before leaving them alone. The sun dis- just..." He backed away from them, grinning at Hermione ting with some witches on my way back here, so I think I'll "Right." He said awkwardly. "I think I saw Zabini chat-

Hinkypunk

Hermione turned to him, hesitating before placing her hands around his neck. He slowly moved his hands towards her waist, eyes searching hers for permission. She nodded and he drew her in closer.

He was playing a dangerous game, but he couldn't be bothered to care. He didn't stand a chance when the witch in front of him was blithely unaware of the effect she had on him. Her hair was wild and uninhibited, dancing around her, the wind twisting curls across her face. She smiled at him and he was done for. This brilliant, beautiful witch wouldn't dim the fire in her heart or her mind for anyone. He wanted them both and it was unfair. Unfair that she chose another.

His hands flexed on her waist, the remnants of his self control waning with each passing note and each breath they shared.



Hermione

She could feel the heat of his hands through her dress. The intoxicating rhythm of the song flowed through her as she let the smell of cedar, mint and sweat invade her senses. The line between what was right and wrong started to blur as her fingers slowly tangled with the hair at the nape of his neck. She couldn't find it in herself to feel guilty about

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Draco's fingers played with the waistband of her knicker-uninhibited, had her crying out, "Oh gods."

once again and the sudden sensation of his tongue on her, ing it aside. The heat of his mouth found the sensitive peak voice. He reached behind her, unclasping the bra and tossing it. "More." She hardly recognised the desperation in her through the lace of her bralette with his tongue.

minity to wrap his lips around her breasts, teasing her nipple-her back in frustration, pleading. Draco took the opportunity she needed him, but not close enough. Hermione arched up and down her thighs, inching closer and closer to where vour, desire flooding her veins. His warm hands caressed tangling. She met every thrust of his tongue with equal fer-ling to hide the beauty of the man before her. Her eyes travelled up to his face, seeing his darken as he watched her. She pulled his lips back down to meet hers, their tongues hint of a tan that enhanced the contours of his chest and abdomen. The jagged scars across his bare skin did nothing to hide the beauty of the man before her. Her eyes travelled up to his face, seeing his darken as he watched her. She pulled his lips back down to meet hers, their tongues hint of a tan that enhanced the contours of his chest and abdomen. The broad shoulders were lined with lean muscle. A her. The broad shoulders were lined with lean muscle. A buttons of his shirt. She paused, taking in the sight before in her belly. Her deft, impatient fingers moved to undo the Hermione let out a sigh of pleasure, heat settling low work of it.

"This fucking dress," he murmured as he made quick pulled down the top exposing the lace of her bralette.

His lips pressed reverent kisses along her collarbone as he the straps of her dress, pushing them off her shoulders.

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vulgar sounds of her ministrations only urged her to take him deeper, her arousal causing her to clench her thighs together, desperate for friction. Hermione nearly had all of him down her throat before she was pulled off him, her back returning to the mattress. She didn't have time to protest, his lips descended, devouring hers. Draco's fingers returned to her core, a delicious heat slowly building once again.

"I need this cunt around my cock. Now." He growled as he nipped at her ear. Hermione couldn't find her words and only nodded her head, lifting her hips to take more. His fingers left her as he aligned himself at her entrance. Draco searched her face for any sign of apprehension. Hermione smiled up at him, pushing her heels against the backs of his thighs, urging him forward.

"Fuck." Draco groaned as he slowly pushed inside of her. Hermione whimpered as his cock slowly stretched her, preparing her to take all of him. He paused once he had filled her to the hilt, allowing her time to adjust to his size. Her body found a rhythm of its own, moving against him. His lips sucked and bit at her neck as he took over and she whined for more. The tension wound tighter with each thrust, her nails scraped down his back, her body seeking release.

"Draco. Please." His eyes snapped to hers, surprise and adoration written on his face. He kissed her then, tongue exploring as if she held the answers to the questions he

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"No, don't—" Draco reached out for her, regret writ- she couldn't breathe.

herself. What was she doing? Shame seized her heart and she was with. She stepped back, hugging her arms around what she was doing. The reality of where she was and who Hermione stiffened, doused by the cold realisation of look on his face.

her eyes reluctantly only to find an apologetic and pained arms to remove them from around his neck. She opened "Ganger." Draco pleaded as he ran his hands up her her.

and she could only hope that he would be there to catch between them, but she couldn't stop. She was free-falling was selfish and reckless of her to give in to whatever it was drifting closed and everyone around them disappeared. It her cheek and she felt herself lean into the touch, eyes mione's ear and then cradled her face. His thumb caressed One of his hands drifted up to tuck a curl behind Her- ping to hers.

take. Their bodies moved closer still, his forehead drop- tighen and her heart stutter as Draco's hands travelled up his eyes sparkled as he looked at her. She felt her stomach "Hi." She breathed out quietly. The bright silver of describe as adoration.

his, she found him gazing at her with what she could only the wizard holding her. As her eyes lazily drifted up to find

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he would rather enjoy seeing the Chosen One frazzled.

"If you go past the wards behind the medical tent, you'll find a side road. The Muggle repelling charm should wear off about 100 yards down, near an old petrol station. You should be able to call a cab from there." Hermione rattled off the instructions, just as she rehearsed in preparation for moments like this.

"Thanks 'Mione. Come on, you lot." Harry gestured towards Theo who was struggling to get the clumsy witches off the ground. "I'm sorry to miss the headlining act, but I'm sure Ron and Malfoy will be good enough company. Maybe if you're lucky, you'll find Zabini too."

As Harry led their friends towards the medical tent, Ron passed the unclaimed drinks to Draco and Hermione.

"Cheers!" They clinked glasses and downed the fire-whiskey. Draco could feel the warmth of it burn his chest, giving him the nerve to track the bob of Hermione's throat as she swallowed her own. A pink hue covered her cheeks and her skin glistened with sweat. Draco followed a small droplet making its way down her temple, grazing the side of her face in a way he wished his fingers could. There was a lightness about her that wasn't there earlier. The tension in her expression was smoothed out, relaxed, and happy. He couldn't pull his gaze away. Her eyes found his and held, no sign of the apprehensiveness he usually saw there. Instead, he found mirth and a bit of mischief shining back at him. Ron cleared his throat, breaking the trance.

Draco

His breaths were ragged, the adrenaline fueling his rage as he stared at the bloody coward. Cormac scrambled to his feet and turned to leave. He nearly made it to the door before it was kicked open, setting him off balance and knocking him back on his arse. Weasley walked in with blood-shot eyes, fingers massaging his temple.

“Bloody hell, who’s got the Pepper-Up —” Ron jumped back, startled by the bleeding wizard at his feet. “Blimey, my bad McLaggen. Did I do that?” He looked up to Draco for confirmation as he helped Cormac off the floor.

“That insufferable git just called Hermione a Muggle-born slag.” Draco answered, his glare not leaving the whimpering arsehole. Cormac looked between them, panic stricken.

“Wai—” Ron’s fist struck his face, sending him back to the floor.

“FUCK!” Cormac howled as he rolled in pain. Ron flexed his fingers as he looked down at his shirt.

“Shite, Cormac. You got blood all over my new Ban-shees tee.” Ron groaned, his neck extended back, sporting what looked like a massive hickey, before walking over to the sink to examine the stains. Draco sauntered over to where Cormac lay and crouched down to his level.

“I’m not going to tell you again, McLaggen. Get out of my house.” He watched as the wanker got to his feet, fingers pinching his nose as he hurried out the door and

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Snuggly

When the door slammed, Draco turned around, realising Hermione was no longer there. Strolling to the window, he saw a head of brown curls sitting in front of the trellis in the estate’s gardens. A throat cleared behind him and he looked to the source.

“I know it goes without saying, Malfoy, but if you break her heart...” Weasley’s eyes glistened with mischief, “I’ll hex you beyond recognition.”

A small smile played across Draco’s lips as he nodded and headed out the door to his witch. The morning sun peeked through the clouds as Draco wandered towards the garden. Hermione sat slumped forward, shoulders tense, eyes downcast and her fingers absently pulling at the hem of her shorts. His footsteps on the cobblestone path caught her attention, halting her aimless task. She lifted her gaze and slid over on the bench making room for him. They sat in companionable silence as the laughs of their friends carried through the windows.

“He’s wrong, you know,” Hermione’s eyes drifted towards him at the sound of his voice and then back down to her feet.

“About what?”

Draco looked over to her, the sunlight dipping into the pools of amber in her eyes. There was a dullness where he usually found golden flecks glinting back at him. It made

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Hermione

“Oh come off it, Potter. I know she’s here! I just need

frazzled and irritated Cormac pacing in front of Harry and Theo. Pansy was sitting at the table sipping her tea as Ginny walked over with a cup of her own, the two witches

shared amused stares. “What are you doing here, Cormac?” Hermione looked at him tired and confused. His head whipped towards her, eyes a mix of panic and anger.

“What am I doing here? I’ve come looking for you, again!” He ran his hands roughly through his hair. “It seems it’s something I’ve had to do a lot this weekend. If I wasn’t so —” He was cut short as Draco walked in behind her. Cormac’s eyes narrowed as he glanced between the two of them.

“Ah, made it through the wards did you?” Draco mocked as he walked over grabbing two empty mugs and heading towards the coffee pot.

“Have you lost the plot, Malfoy? Or did all that Dark Magic addle that brain of yours? I’m here for my witch,” Cormac sneered, his words dripping with malice. Draco walked over to her, placing a perfectly made cup of coffee in her hands. His eyes examined the irate wizard as he took a sip from his cup.

“You sure about that, McLaggen?” Hermione’s head whipped towards Draco, exasperation written on her face.

Snuggly

Draco smirked, walking back to the counter with his coffee. She turned back to Cormac, his face red and jaw rolling in irritation.

“Oh, for fuck’s sake, Hermione.” He glared at her. “Don’t tell me The Golden Girl’s gone daft.”

“Oi!”

“Watch it!”

“Fuck off, McLaggen!”

A cacophony of cries from her friends filled the kitchen as they made their way towards them. Draco was the first to reach them, but Hermione obstructed his path with her hands on his chest. A fire raged behind his eyes.

“Stop, Draco.” He gazed down at her, eyes softening. “It’ll be fine.” Hermione turned to her friends, nodding at them. The couples took their leave in silence, save for the wizard in front of her who shook his head defiantly, refusing to leave. Taking a deep breath, she gathered whatever patience she could muster and turned towards Cormac.

“What are you doing? Why are you here?” There was a sadness in her voice as her mind replayed the events of the past few days, the past few months that led them to this point. How could she have been so oblivious? Hermione was mortified. She was blinded by Cormac’s interest and attention that she had ignored the beat of her own heart. She dropped her head, the threat of tears stinging her eyes. Cormac hesitantly took a step towards her.

“Hermione. Dove. Come home with me. We can work



“Or what, Malfoy?” he taunted him, lip curling as he looked back at Hermione. “If it weren’t for your name and titles, you wouldn’t have been able to accomplish nearly half the things you have without me.” He stepped towards her. “You flatter yourself, Hermione. Overcompensating for your fear of being inferior, hoping that you’ll be accepted and needed by the very people who saw you as less than,” he spat, looking towards Draco. “You know what, Malfoy? You can have her. Your reputation could use the help, Hermione Granger, The Golden Slag with a Golden Cup —”

Cormac was cut off as Draco’s fist collided with his face followed by a sickening crack.

“Fuck!” Cormac wailed as he fell to the floor clutching his face, blood gushing from his nose.

“I warned you, McLaggen. Now get the fuck out of my house.” He glowered down at him.

Hermione stepped back, her mental walls crumbling with the force of her conflicting emotions. She took in the scene before her, eyes darting between the two men, then made for the back door.

Hinkypunk

his chest ache.

“You’re not needed because you’re the Brightest Witch of our Age or the Golden Girl or whatever label they’ve chosen to give you to make you fit into a neat little box. You are so much more than that and they’re daft if they can’t be bothered to notice.” His voice intensified as he turned to face her. He wouldn’t tolerate another moment of her feeling small when she was always meant to be great. “You are the most incredible witch I have ever met. You don’t need me to tell you any of this, but it seems as though you have let the foolish opinions of simpletons plant doubt in your head, so let me remind you. You, Granger, have the incredible ability to elevate everyone around you by simply believing that they are worthy of your time and attention. Your intelligence is only rivalled by your endless compassion. There is no one in this world who has seen your mind and your heart that could deny it.”

The corner of Hermione’s lip twitched, hinting at a smile that urged him on.

“And not the least of these things is your beauty.” His hand reached out for her, lifting her chin. “Merlin, you’re beautiful.” Draco sighed as his eyes roved over her face, committing it to memory. “The shimmers of gold in your eyes that shine in the sun, the constellation of freckles that dance across your nose and the way your curls always seem to fall into place no matter how many times you try to tame them,” he smirked. “Unparalleled beauty. A beauty

“You better watch what words come out next, McLaggen.”

“No, what is it about me that you want? Beyond the titles, beyond my name, what is it you want?” Her eyes flared as she thought of all the times he had used their relationship to elevate his status in the Wizarding World. Cormac stepped back, shaking his head and scoffing.

“Unbelievable. Come off it, Hermione. I don’t need your name to get my foot in the door anywhere. I’m a McLaggen! My family runs one of the most successful charities in the world supporting Muggle-borns like you.” She staggered back as if struck. Draco moved to stand beside her.

“Why do I want you? You’re Hermione Granger. The Golden Girl. The Brightest Witch of our Age! With me at your side, there’s nothing we couldn’t do.” He confidently placed his hands on her shoulders squeezing them, urging her to believe him.

“What about us is perfect, Cormac? Why do you want me?”

“You can’t be serious, Hermione. We’re perfect together.”

“I told you last night, Cormac. We’re done. I don’t want this anymore.” She whispered as her eyes met his.

She stared down at it, feeling nothing.

let that all go?” His thumb stroked the back of her fingers. us. I think of all we’ve accomplished. You’re just going to this out,” he pleaded, reaching for her hand. “I think of

“Do we have to?” Her muffled voice vibrated through his chest.

“I’ll have you back in this bed before you know it, witch. That’s a promise.” Hermione lifted her head, nose brushing his. He leaned in and she sighed sweetly into the kiss before rolling off of him to grab her clothes.

As Draco buttoned up his shirt, he watched Hermione transfigure yesterday’s sundress into a matching set. A quick Scourgify and her makeup was wiped clean. She made multiple attempts to tame her curls before giving up and twisting them to the top of her head with her wand, curls falling perfectly to frame her face. Her hands were restless, constantly adjusting her clothes in the mirror. Letting out a distressed huff, she made her way to the door. Before she could reach the knob, Draco’s hand slid around her waist, pulling her to him. With reverent hands, he held her and kissed her gently, holding on to the last moments they had before taking on what awaited them outside this room. Hermione softened in his embrace, a quiet sigh escaping her lips as he withdrew. Resting his forehead on hers, his eyes closed, resigned.

“Shall we?”



neck and she knew nothing her dreams had in store for her tonight.

thinkypunk

Eight

Draco

The warmth of the sun spilling through the window was nothing compared to the heat of the curly haired witch asleep in Draco's bed. His arm lay beneath her, wrapped around her shoulders, fingers combing through the brown tendrils of her hair. Hermione's palm rested on his chest, legs tangled in his, her soft, shallow breaths tickling his neck. Draco couldn't remember the last time he slept so soundly and he guessed it had everything to do with her. The bedsheets were draped low around her waist, her bare chest pressed against his. It took the restraint of a saint for him not to wake her to repeat last night's exploits. His cock twitched and Draco swore under his breath as Hermione stirred.

Her breathing grew deeper as she began to wake, untangling her body from his to stretch her arms above her head. Her eyes fluttered open as she looked over to him.

"Good morning." There was a flicker of hesitation in

"If you're so worried your team will lose because of one point, Won Won, maybe your team isn't as good as you thought," Ginny teased as she slung her arm around Pansy. Hermione's gaze lifted to Draco walking towards her, drinks in hand. He offered her the wine glass, fingers

for a handful of crisps.

"This is complete bullshit," Ron huffed as he reached

urging him to sit.

"It's fine, Ron. We're still ahead of them. We can let

love?"

reclaimed his seat, looking at his fiancée. "Isn't that right,

brushing something off my face," Theo shrugged as he

"Don't get your knickers in a twist, Weasel. I was simply

act it out! You're meant to use one word!"

pointing at the other team. "This isn't charades, you can't

"Absolutely not allowed!" Ron jumped to his feet,

6 months later - Hermione

Epilogue

thinkypunk

Draco cupped her chin, guiding her attention back to him with a smirk. Her eyes fluttered shut as he leaned in, brushing his lips against hers. The world around them slowed as their breaths mingled, full of everything they no longer had to hide.

"Oi! Ferret! Can you please come back in here? Parkinson just threatened me with Veritaserum!"

"Come off it, Weasley. I was joking, your love life isn't that interesting."

"Stay away from me, witch!"

Draco laughed under his breath, shaking his head. Hermione looked up at him, her eyes a honey brown with golden flecks sparkling in the sunlight just for him. He kissed her once more before interlacing their fingers and heading towards the sound of their friends' laughter.

that you seem intent on denying.”
 Her eyes glistened as she let out a choked laugh. Draco stood, pulling her to her feet. “Draco, I—I don’t know—”
 “Hermione,” He cradled her head as he brought his eyes level with hers. “I will gladly spend the rest of my life showing you that you are more than any title anyone could ever give you.”
 She searched his eyes before roughly pulling him towards her and kissing him desperately. Relief and desire flowed between them with every brush of their lips, with every shared breath. Hermione reluctantly pulled back, smiling as she looked up at him.
 “The rest of your life, huh?” She teased as he swept a strand of hair from her face.
 “If that’s what it takes.”
 “Finallyyyy!” Pansy called from the window, snapping them back to reality. “Now if you two are quite finished, some of us are rather starved for breakfast.” Draco shook his head in feigned disbelief.
 “There’s a full pantry and a functional kitchen at your disposal, Parks. Be my guest.”
 “Nonsense! Me? In a kitchen? Shouldn’t a proper host see to it that his guests are fed? Honestly, Draco. Cissy would be so disappointed. Besides, we’re busy interrogating the Weasel about a rather large love bite on his neck.”
 Hermione’s mouth flew open as she turned towards the open window. “Wha—”

Hinkypunk

brushing hers while he placed a chaste kiss on her lips.

“No fraternising with the enemy, Malfoy!” Draco looked towards Ron, rolling his eyes.

He turned back to Hermione and whispered against her lips. “Hope you’re ready to lose, love.” His lips brushed against hers before returning to his teammates. A shiver travelled up her spine at the challenge and the promise of something more in his eyes.

It was their first time hosting game night since they moved into their flat a month ago. Not much had changed between them since Hinkypunk, which was a testament to the depth of their relationship. It was easy with Draco, effortless. They fit into each other’s lives seamlessly. They had only finished unpacking the last of their boxes that morning when Theo and Harry flooded over to announce their engagement. Hermione was overcome with joy for her best friends and insisted on having everyone over to celebrate.

“Speaking of fraternisation, we were thinking of a summer wedding.” Theo had walked over towards Harry taking a seat on his lap.

Ron huffed as he got up to get a drink. “No one is taking game night seriously anymore.”

“Summer? As in this summer?” Pansy asked, panic written on her face. “You expect me to find an outfit in just a few months?” Ginny grabbed her hand, kissing it to calm her breathing.

her voice and she pulled the sheets up to cover herself. Draco reached over to pull her against him. His lips found hers attempting to erase any lingering doubt. His tongue teased hers as she gave in to his coaxing. He could feel her smile against his lips. Hermione slowly pulled away, her eyes finding his, their breaths still entangled.
 “Morning, Granger.” Draco’s voice was rough and gravely from sleep.
 “Morning.” She blushed realising her mistake, her eyes downturned. Draco lifted her chin with two fingers, brushing her cheek with his thumb.
 “I could wake up to this every morning.” He closed the distance between them, lips kissing gently at first, then growing in urgency.
 Hermione rolled herself over him, legs straddling his hips. Draco held her waist as her mouth laid claim to his neck and chest. He rocked his hips towards her and she eagerly matched his rhythm. As he repositioned himself for her, the sound of banging at the door froze them in place.
 “Oi! Draco! You might want to get decent and come out here. We have a... situation.” Draco could hear the smirk in Theo’s voice. “Morning, Granger.”
 Hermione froze, eyes wide before burying her head in his chest, groaning. Draco chuckled, kissing the top of her hair.
 “Well, that’s shit timing,” he sighed as he stroked her back. “Guess we should get dressed.”

Hinkypunk

Jukjinx

was too afraid to ask. His pace quickened as one hand reached down, applying pressure to her clit matching the thrusts of his cock.

The band inside her was nearly stretched to its breaking point. A wave of pleasure and euphoria waiting to pull her under.

“Gods, Hermione.” Draco panted against her neck. The sound of her name on his lips threw her over the edge and she cried out in ecstasy. Wave after wave crashing over her as she took it all from him. Each press of his thumb against her clit sent her back under. Draco’s tempo grew erratic until he called out and let himself go with her name, a prayer on his lips.

Their laboured breaths were the only sounds she could hear as they stilled. Draco’s face was flushed, his hair sticking to his forehead and neck. It was one of the most beautiful things she had ever seen. His hand came up to caress her face as he bent down to kiss her. Hermione’s eyes fluttered closed and she giggled.

“What?” He eyed her curiously. Hermione bit her lip, smirking up at him.

“Thanks for letting me finish.”

Draco laughed as he pinched her arse. “Anytime.”

He slowly pulled out of her as he rolled to his side, pulling her back to him, his arm around her waist. Hermione couldn’t remember the last time she felt this content. As her eyes drifted closed, she felt Draco place a kiss on her

Hinkypunk

Julius

“That so?” He raised an eyebrow, pulling her close. “I thought we were through with titles.”

She tilted her head up, leaning towards him, lips grazing his ear as she whispered, “This would be a title that I choose. And I choose you.” She kissed his cheek before turning around to return to their friends.

He lingered a moment, watching her. She laughed then, head tipped back and face glowing. Her smile, her face, they were his undoing long before he even had a right to love her. He did plan to give this incredible woman a new title, if she let him. It wouldn’t be a label or a cage or a box meant to keep her small, but a promise. A promise to always see her, to always support her, to challenge her and to always love her. He exhaled slowly, patting his pocket ensuring that the small velvet box he’d been carrying around the past few months was still there. As he rejoined the party, Hermione glanced across the room, eyes finding his. All he could see was his love reflecting back at him. It was a love he couldn’t possibly deserve but it was his. It was theirs.

Blaise sighed, laying his head back on the couch while Ron continued to feign interest flipping through the books

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ders.

excitement. Draco looked at Harry, shrugging his shoulders.

“No fucking way?” Pansy grinned, catching on to her

ing his brow.

“Alright, Hermione?” Harry asked, confusion furrowing

and nearly knocking the drink out of his hands.

“Oh my gods!” She squealed, slapping Draco’s thigh

dawning on her.

brow as she looked between the two wizards, realisation

books lying on the coffee table. She raised a suspicious eye-

opposite side of the room, suddenly curious about the

into the couch. She glanced back at Ron who was on the

at Blaise. His face was growing increasingly red as he sank

Hermione sipped her wine as she giggled, looking back

“Good luck with that,” Ginny snorted.

embarrassing?” Harry offered.

“What if we promise to keep Ron from doing anything

avoiding eye contact with everyone in the room.

“Yeah, I’m tops.” Ron wiped his mouth using his sleeve,

cerned.

“You alright, Ron?” Harry looked over to him, con-

ing.

Ron coughed, choking on his Butterbeer, face reddening.

horrible that you won’t let us meet the witch?”

“Oh, come on, Blaise!” Pansy whined. “Are we really so

thinkpunk

on the table.

“Not a witch. A wizard.” Blaise admitted as he got up. Hermione clapped excitedly as he made his way to Ron, slipping the book out of his grasp and replacing it with his hand.

“You bloody wanker!” Theo gasped, betrayed. “You didn’t even have the decency of telling your best friend that you dabble?”

“Mate, you call everyone your best friend.” Blaise laughed. “Besides, we still don’t even know what this is or what we want it to be.” He looked over at Ron. “But we’re having fun.”

Hermione smiled at them then turned her gaze to her own wizard. He took her hand, kissing her fingers adoringly. Their friends continued to interrogate the new couple and she took advantage of the distraction, leading Draco to the kitchen. He leaned back against the island as she wrapped her hands around him.

“Can’t even wait until our friends leave, witch?” He smirked as he leaned down to kiss her.

“Keep it in your pants, Malfoy.” She teased as she backed away towards the fridge for the celebratory bottle of champagne. She levitated the flutes onto the counter and set a charm on the bottle to fill them. Warm hands gripped her hips from behind and she leaned into the wizard as he trailed kisses down her neck.

“Don’t start something you can’t finish, Granger.” His

Hermione stared up at him, eyes twinkling and a knowing smile on her face. "I think I can handle that." She winked as she turned towards the champagne flutes. "Besides, all this talk about weddings has me thinking I may be in the market for a new title. If you play your cards right, I may even let you do the honours." She levitated the glasses towards the living room before turning towards him.

Draco

"All good!" Hermione answered as she turned back to Draco, eyes bright with mischief and a hand over her mouth as she attempted to muffle her giggles. With an amused smile, Draco quickly vanished the mess and levitated a new set of flutes to be filled. "You're trouble, Granger." He smirked. "Careful with that or I may fall in love with you."

"Everything okay there?" Harry called from the next room. "Everything okay there?" Harry called from the next room. as she noticed the champagne flutes they had knocked off brought them out of their lustful haze. Hermione gasped further into the counter. The sound of breaking glass skin. Passion and alcohol fueled the fire as he pushed her. Their breaths grew more urgent as heat spread under her around in one fluid motion, claiming her lips with his. to bloom everywhere he touched. Draco then spun her deep voice vibrated through her causing goosebumps

thinky punk

"Seems a little ambitious don't you think?" Blaise added as he joined Ron at the bar cart. "The Chosen One is getting married and you don't think the Wizarding World will make this the wedding of the century?"

"First off, I find it offensive that you didn't clarify that The Chosen One is marrying The Theodore Nott, a devastatingly handsome wizard and heir apparent. Secondly, that's precisely why we plan on having the best when it comes to planning our wedding."

With the game night paused for the moment, Draco made his way back towards Hermione, perching himself on the arm of the couch. She smiled up at him, knowing what was coming next.

"Think there's any way you can squeeze in planning a wedding for your best friend in the next few months, Draco?" Theo looked over at him, pouting, his hands together as if in prayer.

Draco chuckled as he shook his head, downing the rest of his whiskey. "It'll cost you, Nott."

Theo clapped his hands together excitedly. "Excellent! We plan on it being a more intimate affair, but I am curious to know who Zabini has been sneaking off with several nights a week." Blaise's eyes snapped to Theo's, shocked. "So if our wedding is the only way for us to meet them, he gets a plus one."

Blaise cleared his throat as he returned to his seat. "Don't bother, I won't need one."