

## Safe House

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# Safe House

by [MelDarley](#)

## Summary

Harry Potter had died, the resistance had lost the war, many of them had fled and gone into hiding, but for the few who hadn't died in the ruins of Hogwarts, they had been 'saved' by those now marked as traitors.

Hermione Granger finds herself battling the urge to research and help Draco Malfoy whilst he tries to figure out a way to single-handedly kill The Dark Lord whilst simultaneously pretending to be a loyal Death Eater.

## Notes

Hello and thank you for Choosing to read my story.

This story takes place in an alternate time line to the films and books where Harry Potter is killed during the battle of Hogwarts.

I DO NOT own any of these characters.

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# Chapter 1

## \* Prologue \*

Ron Weasley was latched onto Hermione's bony, pale hand, dragging her through the castle in a desperate attempt to find an exit that hadn't already been blocked off by Death Eaters.

Over the past year herself, Ron and Harry had been hunting Horcruxes in a long awaited attempt to defeat Voldemort, however the stress, lack of money and lack of food and taken its toll on the three both mentally and physically.

But that didn't matter now.

Harry Potter was dead.

Suddenly, the last year of their lives seemed like a waist.

Hermione would always remember how Harry's body had hung lifelessly in Hagrid's arms, it stung Hermione's heart to see her best friend like that although she knew it was going to happen. She had figured out that Harry was a horcrux when he told her and Ron that he was off into the forbidden forest to see Voldemort and give him what he wanted, she knew that had Harry not have had to die, he would have continued fighting, Harry was the face of the resistance, he was what they all fought for, the last shred of hope, but once everyone saw his dead body, the life that had been dragged out of him seemed to drag the hope out of everyone else.

"Kill the snake," Harry instructed, "the snake is the last horcrux," he lied, what he had meant to say was, "the snake *will be* the last horcrux," and Neville had tried to kill her, in front of everyone, he dragged the sword of Gryffindor out of the sorting hat and charged for the snake who rested at Voldemort's feet, but Voldemort was quicker than him, more ambitious, with his life on the line he pointed his wand at Neville and hit him with The Cruciatus Curse.

Hermione flinched as she watched her friend scream in pain, his body wriggled on the stone floor like a worm, she knew exactly what he was going through after Bellatrix Lestrange did the same thing to her in Malfoy Manor, that pain was unlike any other and most definitely a pain one would never forget.

She watched as Neville cried out in pain, and she listened over the laughter coming from the herd of Death Eater's stood behind Voldemort, to Neville's voice break as he begged Voldemort to stop, she wanted to save him, she wanted to pull out her wand and use that same curse on Voldemort, she wanted to make him suffer the way he and his followers had made others suffer. She looked over at her dead best friend as the dark thoughts plagued her mind, she thought about how much he would hate her thinking the way she was, she prayed for a moment that he would take a deep breath and leap up from Hagrid's arms saving the day like he always did, but he never did, The Boy Who Lived was dead.

Neville took a deep breath as Voldemort lowered his wand and stopped the curse, even Hermione herself let out a sigh of relief knowing that his pain had -for the most part- ended. But that relief was short lived as Voldemort looked at Nagini and gave her a small nod, the python slithered forward a little before pouncing on Neville's worn out pale body. Hermione had to force herself to look away, she squeezed her eyes shut and forced her head into the crook of Ron's neck, however Ron didn't take time to comfort her, his only thought at this precise moment was getting his girlfriend out of there.

Everyone was running around the building in search of a way out but The Death Eaters had taken over the school, they were outnumbered so fighting was hardly an option, the only thing Ron could think to do was escape, he had attempted to grab his families attention but a giant abruptly stormed in their way separating the yet to be formed group. Ron had convinced himself that this would be for the best, a bigger group would easily grab more attention and would most likely get them killed, in his head he developed a plan, it was; to find and get past the new apparation point that The Death Eater's had evidently put up and go back to the burrow, wait for an hour in the hopes that someone showed up and then leave with Hermione and whoever else, get out of Europe and never look back.

Hermione and Ron only had one more exit that they could try, after that their only hope of escape would be to attempt fighting their way out, however Hermione was growing tired, after being on her feet all day and having had very little to eat her legs were starting to feel like jelly. Herself and Ron came across an empty hallway, it certainly hadn't been untouched by the battle but the odd few pillars were still standing and most of the roof was still above their heads.

The two ducked into an alcove and Ron watched as Hermione tried to catch her breath.

"You know the plan, get her out of here and *don't* be seen, Winky is already at the safe house ready to help the injured," a masculine voice spoke. Ron and Hermione peaked their heads around the edge of the alcove and saw Blaise Zabini, Theodore Nott and Draco Malfoy stood having a conversation in the middle of the empty hallway.

It hadn't been long since the two watched Draco walk to the other side of the courtyard and join his father who had practically begged his son to walk to the '*right*' side. "Don't be like your mother," Lucius pleaded confusing most of the crowd and painting an obvious scowl on Voldemort's face, "join us Draco, if you know what is good for you then you will fight for the right side," Lucius continued. Draco had hesitated for a moment and looked towards Harry's dull body, but when he realised that Harry was truly dead he began to take small, slow steps towards Voldemort's side where he was pulled into an awkward hug.

Ron pulled his wand out and held it tightly at his side, ready to attack, but Hermione grabbed his wrist and shook her head at him, she wanted to know what they were talking about.

"And what about her boyfriend Malfoy? She's not going to want to leave him," Blaise stated, "bring him if you have to, I don't care! Just get her out of here, safely! I won't let The Dark Lord take her! You know his plans Zabini!" Draco snapped at the boy, "ah yes, because her precious boyfriend is *known* for trusting Slytherins," Theodore laughed "I'm sure he will *gladly* come with us," sarcasm dripped from his tongue like venom. "Bind him, stun him,

stun them both! I don't care! Just don't fucking hurt her!" Draco snapped as he began to pace back and fourth between his two friends.

"It's rather funny don't you think?" Blaise laughed "you've spent years bullying the poor girl, denying your feelings and now you're about to risk yours and *our* lives to get her out of here and she doesn't see you as more than a pompous Death Eater with daddy issues who got Dumbledore-"

"*Don't you dare* finish that fucking sentence Zabini!" Draco seethed.

Both Hermione and Ron had let their guards down as they listened intently to a conversation they were clearly not welcomed in. Yet Hermione couldn't help but wonder who this girl was that Draco Malfoy was so *desperate* to protect.

Draco let out a harsh groan and gripped his left forearm "he's calling me," he grunted, "get her out of here! I don't care about the others! She is a priority!" Draco yelled as he began to run the opposite way down the hallway.

"Guess we better get looking then," Blaise sighed.

"Avada kadavra!"

A bright green light hit Ron directly in the back, he let out a piercing scream before falling, lifeless to the ground. Hermione's heart stopped as she stared at her boyfriends unmoving body.

She looked up to the person who cast the curse, and there stood Antonin Dolohov dressed in his Death Eater robes with a proud smirk and his wand firmly in his grasp.

Hermione quickly rose hers but the shock made her reflexes slower and Antonin was quick to disarm her, shooting her wand out of her hand and allowing it to fly somewhere down the hallway. "Well if it isn't Potter's Mudblood," he laughed taking long strides towards her.

Hermione wanted to run, or fight, or summon her wand, but she knew it would be pointless, with one flick of his wand she would be dead, all she had to do was flinch and Antonin wouldn't hesitate to end her life.

"That was quite the memory charm you performed on me that night in the muggle cafe," he continued, "oh how I have dreamed of repaying you," he muttered now less than an inch away from her, he raised his hand to brush her cheek and Hermione squeezed her eyes shut tightly, hoping that it would soon be over, that he would just kill her. Have it over with.

"Well you're going to have to keep dreaming Dolohov," a voice spoke.

Antonin snapped back and turned to face Blaise Zabini and Theodore Nott who both had their wands pointed at him "*what are you two doing?*" Antonin seethed "step away from her Dolohov," Theodore instructed calmly.

A look of confusion washed over Hermione's face as she watched the two boys '*save*' her.

"And what is going on here?" Another voice spoke, they all turned to see two masked Death Eaters head their way, "I have caught Potters Mudblood and these two seem to be threatening me," Antonin explained. One of the Death Eater's removed their mask revealing Mr Nott, "son, lower your wand," Theodore's father instructed.

Theodore rolled his head in frustration knowing that he would come to regret his next words "I'm sorry father, but I cannot do that," he stated "and why is that?" Mr Nott questioned.

Hermione still stood there silently, confused and scared. Her eyes wandered to Ron's dead body and she began to tear up.

"Because I can't let you do this," Theodore spoke "I can't let you harm the Mudblood."

All of the men were clearly becoming agitated, their wands were shaking in their hands as they restrained themselves.

"And why is that?" Mr Nott asked "because we can't let him win, don't you see what you have become father? So hateful, and why? Because of blood supremacy? You're like *him* like that monster out there. I won't be like you father, and you don't have to be like him."

"And yet you throw about the term '*Mudblood*' so effortlessly," Mr Nott retorted "because of you!" Theodore yelled back, "Blaise, what would your father say about this?" Mr Nott asked drawing his attention to Blaise "fuck all, he's dead," Blaise responded bluntly, rolling his eyes at the question.

Mr Nott ignored his comment and once again drew his attention to Theodore "please son, join us, The Dark Lord needn't know about your treachery, we can hand over Potter's Mudblood and we shall be praised-"

"No!" Antonin yelled "she is mine!"

"Your obsession with the Mudblood is becoming concerning Antonin," the masked Death Eater spoke.

Hermione shivered at the word '*obsession*'.

"Enough of this!" Antonin yelled as he grabbed Hermione's arm and dragged her closer to him forcing a yelp to escape Hermione's mouth "I *will* be taking her to The Dark Lord and I *will* be keeping her!" He stated matter-of-factly.

He went to pull her away but before he could begin both him and Hermione were hit by a stupify cast by Blaise. The blast shot the two back and due to how tired Hermione was and the lack of food she had consumed, she was knocked out.

## chapter 2

### Chapter Summary

Hermione wakes up and finds herself surrounded by Slytherins she doesn't trust in a place she doesn't recognise.

### Chapter Notes

I DO NOT own any of these characters!

!!!Explicit comments!!!

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Hermione was conscious but her body ached, her stomach was empty, her muscles were sore and her bones felt like glass, she was desperate for food, water and a hot bubble bath, but she more desperately craved answers.

She had awoken to the sound of voices and instantly her blood ran cold.

*Had The Death Eater's taken her?*

*Why was she still alive?*

*Where was she?*

*Who was in the room with her?*

*How long had she been out?*

"She still hasn't woken up," one of the voices stated. It was a man's voice which was familiar to Hermione but she couldn't figure out who it was however she could tell that he was tired, his voice sounded drained and dull, "well I just tried speaking to the Weasley girl, she's struggling to come to terms with the fact that Pansy saved her after Bellatrix killed her mother. *Ungrateful bitch*," another male voice spoke, again, his voice was also familiar, but not one Hermione knew well.

"*So Ginny is here*," Hermione thought to herself, she wanted to let a sigh of relief escape her mouth but she chose to stay quiet as to not alert the two people in the room that she was awake, she wanted to listen longer and learn more about where she was before making her

consciousness known. "Pansy had saved her? Pansy Parkinson?" She wondered "and Molly is dead?" Hermione wanted to cry.

"Yeah, I heard most of the Gryffindor's we saved are being difficult. Typical," one of the men scoffed.

"Saved?" Hermione questioned "am I safe? Where am I?"

"None of them will listen to Narcissa either," the second man spoke.

"Narcissa? As in Narcissa Malfoy?" Hermione's thoughts continued.

Suddenly the door opened and Hermione heard a third man's voice - yet another familiar one that Hermione couldn't place, she assumed that having spent so long away from Hogwarts and the people she knew that her memories had become clouded.

"I just got done talking to Hannah Abbot, she seemed to listen and believe that she was safe - typical Hufflepuff - no one else seems to believe the word of a *Death Eater* though," the voice scoffed. Small chuckles came from the men before a moment of silence and a sigh, "she's still not awake then?" The third man spoke "no, I might have shot my stupidity I bit too hard..."

"So one of the men is Blaise," Hermione confirmed.

"You think?! She's been out cold for two fucking days!" One of the two remaining mystery men yelled.

"So I've been unconscious for two days!" Hermione concluded.

"How many times do I have to say I'm sorry until you stop bringing it up!" Blaise snapped back "how many times do I have to tell you to get someone out safely until you successfully do so?!" The man responded harshly.

"Was this Malfoy?" Hermione questioned as she recalled him instructing Theodore and Blaise to get someone out of the castle safely, someone who had a boyfriend "no, he couldn't have meant me," she convinced herself.

"Easier said than done mate," the other mysterious man spoke "Dolohov had her cornered with no wand, then my father and Goyle's father showed up, it was three to two! We were lucky to make it out with her!"

"So the third man is Theodore Nott," she confirmed "and the third Death Eater was Gregory Goyle's dad."

"Not to mention that The Dark Lord now knows we're traitors!" Theodore continued. A harsh sigh escaped from one of the men "listen Malfoy-"

"So it is Malfoy, but why would he want me safe?"



"Most of the people here don't have wands, including the brightest witch of our age," Blaise stated.

"They didn't get my wand?!" She mentally shouted.

"Everyone is grieving, no one trusts us, so what is your plan here? Keep them all in this fucking safe house and hope that The Dark Lord dies of old age?" Blaise asked "look I don't know okay?! I haven't figured that out yet, and I don't know why you're talking like you're not trapped here too because as Theodore *just* said, The Dark Lord knows that you're traitors, it's not safe for you two out there either," Draco snapped.

Hermione had tuned out of the men's conversation and began thinking everything over in her head.

*Ginny was there.*

*Hannah Abbot was there.*

*Narcissa Malfoy was there.*

*Blaise and Theodore had saved her.*

*She had been unconscious for two days.*

*Draco Malfoy wanted her saved.*

*She was supposedly safe.*

*Harry was dead.*

*Ron was dead.*

*Molly was dead.*

*Fred was dead* - which Hermione knew prior to herself and Ron trying to escape Hogwarts.

*Voldemort had won.*

The answers Hermione had are ones she would have wanted, but they weren't enough and she knew that she couldn't simply reply on pretending to be asleep and hoping that people would come into, wherever she was, and spill all of their facts and secrets. She chose to end her ruse.

Hermione's eyes began to flutter open, they were slightly sticky and hard to pry open but once they were she was forced to turn in order to shield herself from the bright light that infested the room that she was in. A harsh groan escaped Hermione's dry throat as pain sprinted through her body due to the sudden movement and then she felt a hand rest gently on her bicep and a soft 'hush' breeze through her ears. "Hey Granger, you're alright, you're safe, are you in any pain?"

When Hermione's eyes had focused she had realised that it was Blaise who was speaking to her, he was crouched down beside her and had his hand still on her bicep in some attempt to comfort her.

"Should I call Winky?" Theodore asked, "no, she's still attending to that Dean Thomas bloke," Blaise answered.

*Dean was alive.*

"What about Kreacher?" Theodore asked again, "have you hit your head Nott?!" Draco snapped "the foul bastard has been spitting all sorts of shit about helping Mudblood's since we brought him here."

Hermione pushed herself up but couldn't help but wince as she did so, she looked around the room and saw that she was in a bedroom. It wasn't the nicest bedroom she had ever seen but it wasn't a dungeon either. The walls were light blue and the wallpaper was peeling off a little by the ceiling, the floor was made from oak wood and in the middle laid an off-white rug. Hermione was sat on a Mahogany wood single bed which was pushed against the wall and at the opposite end of the room was a pine wood wardrobe and set of drawers along with a dark blue chair which was currently occupied by Theodore Nott. Letting light into the room was an open window shielded by white floral curtains.

"Where am I?" Hermione's voice croaked tiredly, "why don't we get you something to eat and drink and a bit of pain potion and then we will explain everything," Blaise suggested. Hermione looked around the room once more and saw all three men staring at her curiously, Draco Malfoy was stood the furthest away, his eyes were flicking between her Blaise and his body was clearly tense.

It was then that Hermione noticed Draco was wearing black Death Eater robes. She quickly jumped off of the bed in a panic but the moment her second foot hit the floor her weak legs gave out and she collapsed, hitting the floor with a thud.

"Granger, please don't make this any harder than it has to be, you're safe here," Theodore sighed as he pulled himself out of the chair in the corner of the room, "then why is *he* wearing that?" She snapped, pointing her finger at Draco who was still stood stiffly by the wall.

Both Blaise and Theodore looked to Draco and noticed what had scared Hermione, "Malfoy, perhaps you should leave," Blaise suggested. Draco's face dropped and he almost looked hurt for a second, but he quickly resumed his emotionless expression and headed out of the room, not so much as a sigh leaving his mouth.

Blaise stood and helped Hermione back onto the bed, she had no energy to fight him off so she let him.

Wandless, in pain, hungry, thirsty. She knew that she had no hope of escape at this moment in time, she also knew that somewhere in, where ever she was, Ginny was there. Ginny, her best friend who had lost so much, who had allegedly been saved by Pansy Parkinson - although,

Hermione would prefer to hear that from Ginny herself and she was glad that Pansy wasn't in the room she was in at that moment.

"Granger, I understand you have no reason to trust us-" Blaise began but Hermione was quick to cut him off, "no reason to trust you?! Oh I wonder why!" She sarcastically laughed, although her words didn't come out as strongly as she would have liked, "you and your friends only bullied me almost everyday throughout our time at school! Your parents are only Death Eaters! *You* are only Death Eaters!" She yelled, "actually, Blaise and I never took the mark," Theodore corrected, "you are not helping," Blaise snapped at him.

Truth-be-told, Blaise and Theodore were never quite as bad as some of the other Slytherins, alone, they would never bother Hermione, and even with their friends they would only laugh at the insults thrown at her. Blaise had only ever called Hermione a mudblood once when he was with Daphne Greengrass, and Theodore had barley spoken a word to her. But nevertheless, they were still guilty by association in Hermione's eyes.

Her mum used to say "you will never change the world if you just sit and watch others ruin it," and she was right. But Hermione had stood and watched these boys and their families take her world and destroy it, trusting them was more than a lot to ask and proving to her that they weren't the same people who wanted her and people of her kind dead would take more than just 'saving' her and putting on a soft smile and kind tone.

Blaise sucked in a deep breath before drawing his attention back to Hermione, "yes, what we did was wrong, and no amount of apologising and saving you will ever make up for that, but please trust us Granger, you don't have to trust *us* entirely, but please trust that you are safe," he pleaded.

"Where am I?" Was all Hermione could respond with, "you're at a safe house, secretly owned by Narcissa Malfoy, she bought it just after the fourth year when The Dark- when You-Know-Who returned and Lucius allowed him to live at their manor. This place was a fail safe, for in case Harry didn't win- which clearly was a good idea on her part," Blaise explained.

"Who else is here?" Hermione asked calmly, she found her curiosity overwhelming and her need for answers like a drug addiction "well there's you, us," Blaise started and pointed to himself and Theodore, "Draco, Narcissa, two house elves, Winky and Kreacher - and I know that you're against house elves being enslaved but believe me when I say this Granger, with The Dark- with You-Know-Who back in power, they're safer here than running around 'free'- there's Hannah Abbot, Ernie Macmillan, Susan Bones, James Tuckett, Dora Williams, Luna Lovegood, Marcus Belby, Terry Boot, Myrtle Warren, Michael Corner, Adrian Pucey, Professor Slughorn, Millicent Bulstrode, Ginny Weasley, Dean Thomas, Parvati Patil, Colin Creevy and Cormac McLaggen."

"Only one Professor?" Hermione questioned, "we grabbed who we could using the limited portkeys we had, Narcissa would have preferred we gathered bigger groups but most people didn't trust us and when you have to stun people to get them somewhere via portkey it's easier to send them alone. Besides most of the professors were already dead, beyond help, or were evacuating the younger years," Blaise explained, "had we not been caught saving you, we would have used the last portkey on you alone and gone about our business pretending to be

loyal to The- You-Know-Who,"

"Yeah well we were caught, and we're not undercover so you're going to have to work on that 'Dark Lord - You-Know-Who' crap, it's bad enough that everyone thinks we're going to kill them in their sleep, no need for them to assume we're loyal to that bastard," Theodore laughed.

"What do you mean, '*undercover*'?" Hermione asked, "I'll get to that in a bit," Blaise stated cocking a brow.

Hermione found herself hesitant to ask her next question but she knew that her mind would scare her into thinking the worst, "what of those who's names you didn't mention?" She asked, "well we don't know for sure, some escaped, some died and others were-" Blaise was hesitant to finish the sentence but Theodore was generous enough to finish it for him, "captured. Quite frankly I'd rather be dead than captured."

A shiver ran down Hermione's spine, she didn't dare to imagine what would happen to the people who had been captured by Voldemort and The Death Eaters. She recalled Antonin Dolohov saying that he planned to take her to Voldemort and keep her for his own. She recalled hoping he would just kill her because the alternatives deemed much worse.

"So, what are the conditions of living here?" She asked quickly changing the subject, "well, the original plan was to give people the option to leave, fend for themselves or search for the remaining members of the order, but seen as this is a safe house, if anyone was caught then the rest of us would be in danger. There's also the issue that most people here don't have wands and a few of the people who did - primarily you Gryffindors - tried attacking us when they first arrived so we were forced to take them. Again, the whole point of the safe house, is to keep people safe, besides if we allowed anyone to leave without a wand then we wouldn't be doing our job, would we?" Blaise explained, "a job that you gave yourself," Hermione stated matter-of-factly "no one asked you to help us."

"And where would you be if we hadn't? Hm? Probably in Dolohov's bedroom right now, stunned so you couldn't fight back, but still able to speak because he would *love* to hear your screams, listen to you begging him to stop, your involuntary cries as he fucks you over, and over again. Tell me Granger, would he have been your first?" Theodore taunted wearing a sly smirk as he stared directly into Hermione's golden brown eyes. Pools of water glazed over to them and the sun reflected off of them, it had become clear what would happen to most of the girls captured and what would have happened to her had it not been for Blaise and Theodore.

"That's enough Nott!" Blaise snapped, he opened his mouth to speak again but a small '*pop*' sound occurred and in the middle of the room stood a small house elf wearing nothing but an old pillow case and holding a black plastic tray filled with food, drinks and a black vial - a potion of some sort.

Hermione having met Kreacher before, knew that this was not him. This house elf was not as old as Kreacher and it's arms and legs weren't as bony. "Master Draco said I is to bring miss Granger foods, waters and pain potions Miss," the small elf squeaked, her eyes raked over Hermione as if to get a good look at her before she smiled approvingly and placed the tray at the end of the bed, "do not worry Miss, Winky did not poison the foods or the waters or the potions, I only wish to helps you," she squeaked.

Hermione looked uncertainly towards Blaise who had quietly chuckled to himself, "most people here have refused to eat and drink because they assume that we are trying to kill them," he explained, "yeah, as if we would do it in such a menial way," Theodore scoffed. Hermione had begun to appreciate the fact that they hadn't had many encounters back at school.

"Right! Get out!" Blaise snapped angrily, "what?! Why?! I was only joking!" Theodore defended "ah yes because your jokes have all gone down so well!" Blaise snapped again. Rage burned in Blaise's eyes as he had clearly had enough of Theodore's snarky remarks. "There's a time and a place Nott, you've never been very good at spotting either. Go down to Narcissa and tell her *exactly* what you've said to Granger, I'll make sure to correct her of any parts you miss out," he instructed, "you can't just tell me what to do!" Theodore yelled, his face turned red with rage and embarrassment as he was now suddenly very aware of Hermione's presence in the room as Blaise bossed him around like a Hogwarts professor.

"No, you're right, *I* can't, but I'm sure Malfoy would love to deal with you," Blaise said smugly with a malicious smirk painted across his face. Theodore opened his mouth to respond but instead chose to restrain himself. Clenching his fists at his side he did as Blaise instructed and stormed out of the bedroom.

"Winky, please tell Draco I will be down to meet him and Narcissa once I'm done with Granger, I'll make sure she eats and drinks her potion," Blaise said to the small elf who still stood with a smile on her face.

During Blaise and Theodore's row Hermione had been scanning Winky for any sign of abuse, but the elf had no cuts, bruises or bandages, her arms and legs were full and plump, and unlike how Harry had described Dobby when he had first met him, the elf was not skittish or shaking, she hadn't attempted to punish herself for speaking to a mudblood, nor had she hit her head on anything. The elf seemed perfectly happy and healthy.

This almost brought a smile to Hermione's face.

The small elf nodded but said no more before in the blink of an eye a small '*pop*' sound occurred once again and Winky was gone.

Blaise turned his attention back to Hermione who was still sat weakly on the bed, "I'm sorry about him, he's been rather crude to all of the Gryffindors here seen as Pansy was captured saving one," he explained, "what do you mean?" Hermione asked, the question wasn't only to fill the silence but also to feed Hermione's new curiosity.

She assumed that Pansy was in the safe house somewhere seen as she had supposedly saved Ginny, yet Hermione was grateful that the witch hadn't made an appearance, but now her stomach twisted at the horrifying thought of her being held captive by Death Eaters.

"Well I wasn't there to see it, me and Theo were a little busy saving you, but after Bellatrix Lestrange killed Molly Weasley, she attempted to kill or capture Ginny afterwards, from what I heard she was a goner, but Pansy has been working for Narcissa for almost a year and she saw Ginny about to loose the fight, she stepped in and saved her, but she was no match for Bellatrix, when she realised she wasn't going to win, she threw a portkey to Ginny and

seconds after Ginny disappeared, she was stunned. We haven't seen her since," Blaise explained, "but I don't understand why Nott is taking it out on the rest of us."

"Theo and Pansy were- are together, he loves her, but he never managed to tell her, he's blaming it on Ginny and taking it out on the rest of you."

Hermione sat still for a second and tried to file every piece of new information she had been given neatly inside her brain, but she still didn't have enough, she needed more.

"Granger," Blaise spoke, dragging Hermione back to reality, "please eat, I promise if you do then I will take you to see Weasley," he sighed. Hermione opened her mouth to speak, her brain was infested with questions, but Blaise stopped her before she could breathe a word, "now that you're awake, tomorrow we will hold a house meeting explaining everything, where you can ask all the questions you want, but for now, you'll need your strength, there're a few people who are waiting to see you," Blaise pushed the tray closer to Hermione gesturing for her to eat, she reluctantly grabbed it and pulled it onto her lap.

The tray had a plate in the middle of it, the plate contained a small salad, a small bowl of melted cheese and panera bread.

*Her favourite.*

The tray also held a glass of water and a steaming cup of coffee.

*She loved a coffee first thing after getting out of bed.*

And lastly the tray held a small vial which Hermione assumed was a pain potion.

Without a second thought Hermione grabbed the vial and pulled the cork out, less than a second later, she had swallowed the full thing. It didn't taste different to any other pain potion she had drank in the past, and despite not stopping to smell the substance she hadn't picked up anything unusual when she brought the vial close to her face. She was pleasantly surprised when she felt the pain coursing through her body disappear as though it had been lifted off of her like a blanket.

She picked up the fork that laid beside the plate and stabbed a piece of lettuce and a tomato with it, she brought the fork up to her lips and let it hover before she moved her eyes to Blaise who was staring directly at her, watching intently. Placing the fork back onto the tray she took a deep breath and watched as Blaise's body went tense, "I'll eat, but I need you to answer one more question," she began, "Nott said something about going 'undercover' what did he mean?" She asked.

Blaise took a deep breath and closed his eyes for a moment as if to prepare himself, "Malfoy was wearing his Death Eater robes for that exact reason, later tonight he and Adrian Pucey are leaving and they will be pretending to be loyal to The Dar- You-Know-Who. The original plan was for myself, Theodore, Adrian, Pansy, Draco and Narcissa to work for You-Know-Who until we managed to kill him, try save and protect people if we could, but Pansy is missing, Theodore and I were caught saving you, Narcissa was caught trying to save Potter, so that leaves Draco and Adrian," he told her.

"Wait, Mrs Malfoy saved Harry?" Hermione questioned, "when You-Know-Who first shot the killing curse at Potter, Narcissa was asked to check that he was actually dead, but she felt his pulse and asked if Draco was still alive, Potter nodded and Narcissa turned back to The-You-Know-Who, but before she could lie for him, it turned out that Bellatrix had heard the full thing and she didn't hesitate to expose her sister to You-Know-Who. He shot another killing curse at Potter and Narcissa was forced to portkey out," he explained.

Letting out a quick sigh Blaise sat up straight "right, I just answered two of your questions and you will find out more tomorrow. Now, eat," he instructed picking up the fork and placing it in her hand.

## chapter 3

### Chapter Summary

The house meeting takes place!

### Chapter Notes

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Blaise had offered Hermione a tour before taking her to Ginny but she declined. She decided she would rather figure out what she planned to do after the meeting before becoming accustomed to the house.

Inside the wardrobe in her room were a few selections of clothes that Blaise had to charm to fit her, he explained that they had to guess sizes when stocking up and they assumed Hermione was a few sizes larger. This didn't upset Hermione as before she left with Harry and Ron on their Horcrux Hunt she was bigger, looking at her reflection now she could count each of her bones.

The wardrobe hadn't been equipped with many muggle items of clothing -which didn't surprise her- she was lucky to find two pairs of jeans which were both navy blue straight legs. She picked up one pair and grabbed a creme cotton jumper caring more about being comfortable than looking good. Once on, Blaise performed the charm to make the clothes fit her better and the two then made their way down to Ginny's room -which was conveniently down the hall from Hermione's.

Blaise knocked on the door twice but there was no answer, shifting uncomfortably Blaise knocked again "go away!" Ginny finally shouted, "I think you'd like to see the person at the other end of this door," he said back.

When the door opened Blaise and Hermione saw Ginny stood with a snapped coat hanger pointed towards them but once Ginny caught sight of Hermione she dropped it and ran towards her, tying Hermione tightly in her arms. "It's you! You're alright!" Ginny squealed, "yes it's me, I'm fine," Hermione wheezed.

Once Ginny's grip loosened Hermione pulled away slightly, their eyes both glistened with tears of both joy and sadness, "oh Ginny I am so sorry about Fred and your mum and Ron,



I'm-"

"Ron?" Ginny repeated.

A moment of silence hit the room as Ginny looked to Blaise for an explanation "we tried to tell you but you've spent the last two days threatening us, we didn't think telling you that another of your siblings had died would be a good idea," Blaise mumbled his eyes never meeting hers.

"No..." Ginny mumbled, her legs went limp and she backed towards her bed before allowing her body to fall onto it.

"Ginny, I'm sorry, it was Dolohov, there was nothing I could have done," Hermione told her as tears began spilling from her eyes.

Hermione had, had no time to grieve yet but suddenly every death had hit her and she fell to the floor like a bag of bricks, tears raced down her face as sobs broke from her mouth, "I'm so sorry, I'm so so sorry," she cried.

She was sorry for the people who had lost their lives, the people she couldn't save, she was sorry for how much everyone had lost, she was sorry for those who were captured.

She was so sorry.

"Do you need anything?" Blaise spoke softly, "just get out!" Ginny screamed "just get out..." she mumbled again through sobs.

A moment later the door was shut and Blaise left Hermione and Ginny to grieve.

"What do we do Hermione?" Ginny asked, "I don't know. He won Ginny, Voldemort won, we don't have anywhere to go, we don't know who's alive and who's dead. It's not safe out there but how safe is it here?" Replied Hermione through sobs.

Ginny not knowing how to respond simply cried, she knew Hermione was right and that leaving would be stupid but staying probably would be as well.

Blaise was forced to take Ginny's wand after she tried to hex him and Theodore, they said she would get it back when she stopped trying to attack them, the first day and a half she had been there Kreacher had brought her food which she refused to eat, he came in mumbling about how he should not be serving blood traitors but never said a word directly to Ginny. It wasn't until Winky came and brought Dean that Ginny decided to eat.

Ginny was relieved when Blaise told her that Hermione was there but furious when Draco wouldn't let her see her. He said that she needed to rest.

There were many people Ginny hadn't been allowed to see, apparently many of the people who had been brought to the safe house were injured and healing.

Narcissa Malfoy attempted to speak to Ginny but Ginny wouldn't have any of it, she accused her of readying her to take to Voldemort for whatever he and his Death Eaters would want her for.

"I say we go to the meeting tomorrow and weigh out our options afterwards," Hermione spoke after her breathing had returned to normal, once again Ginny didn't speak, she just nodded.

Inside her head she was mulling over the news of the death of another of her brothers, a harsh thought that hit her like a bludger.

Before long Ginny had silently cried herself to sleep on her bed whilst Hermione had done the same on the floor.



Hermione woke up the next morning but not on the cold hard floor she had fallen asleep on, she was back in her room under the covers of her single bed.

She had no bedside table but she noticed a tray of food on the chest of drawers at the other end of her room. On the tray was water, coffee, scrambled eggs, toast, beans and a small alarm clock with a note stuck to it.

"

*Meeting is at 11 am*

"

The note was not signed but Hermione assumed it was from Blaise, despite their differences, since she had woken up Blaise had been the kindest to her, as if the past seven years never happened, Hermione was of course grateful but that didn't help her to trust him.

The small alarm clock read half past ten giving Hermione only half an hour to eat and change. She was grateful that she woke up in the same clothes she had fallen asleep in, despite them not being entirely comfortable.

When eating Hermione decided no matter the outcome of the meeting she would request a shower and a toothbrush, she felt disgusting and dirty, of course she was used to the feeling as she hadn't had the pleasure of such necessities over the past year, but rather than being stuck around Harry and Ron, her best friends, she was around people she hardly knew and people who had bullied her for years, she had no intentions of giving anyone any sort of ammunition.

Once she had finished eating Hermione didn't have much time left to change her outfit but she sought to anyway. She opted for the second pair of jeans in her wardrobe along with a plain black t-shirt which were both too big for her forcing her to call Winky and have her bring Blaise to her room, however Blaise didn't come.

Draco did.

He stood in Hermione's doorway with his wand at the ready, this time he wasn't wearing his Death Eater robes, he was wearing plain black trousers and a navy blue jumper that was a little too big for him.

"Blaise is dealing with something so sent me instead, what's up?" He asked Hermione bluntly, no emotion showed on his face, no smile, no scowl, nothing, it was just blank making his intentions hard for Hermione to read.

"My clothes, they're a little too big, I just need a quick charm performed please," Hermione mumbled as she gestured to the baggy clothes that her slim figure was drowning in. Draco chuckled to himself before performing the spell wordlessly.

"Meeting starts soon, I trust you remember the way down?" Draco asked "um, no..." Hermione answered shyly, "what, didn't Blaise show you around yesterday?" He asked, this time his expression seemed angry, his brows were furrowed, his lips bent and the lines on his forehead became more defined -not the expression Hermione would have wanted but it was an expression at that.

"No, I wanted to see Ginny," Hermione explained, however she purposely left out the part where she had chosen not to become accustomed with a place she wasn't sure she was staying in. "Well there's no use in you living here if you don't know the place, I'll have someone show you around after the meeting," Draco said bluntly, looking again Hermione noticed that Draco's face had returned to its same blank expression, one that was starting to crawl under her skin.

Hermione didn't think herself intrusive for simply wanting to know how someone was feeling or wanting to predict their intentions, in fact she thought - considering her current predicament - that it would be smart to do so, yet Draco's facial features remained stiff and blank like a statue, she was under the impression that he was perhaps occluding but she couldn't figure out why, Hermione was a wandless witch with zero skills in legilimency.

Draco began to walk out of the room before abruptly stopping and turning back to face her, "are you coming or not?" Draco asked cocking a brow, but Hermione did not reply verbally, she simply began to follow him.

When silently following Draco, Hermione discovered that she was on the second floor, all the walls of the house were old but brightly painted a soft orange, the colour reminded Hermione of her favourite sweet from a muggle selection called Starburst, both herself and her dad loved the orange flavour whereas her mum preferred purple. Until recently, that was a simple memory that Hermione was rather fond of.

On their way down Draco had made a comment about everyone's distaste for the colour but Hermione was too lost in thought to respond.

As Hermione and Draco neared the ground floor the sound of voices began to ring through their ears, it was clear that there was multiple people which brought a sense of warmth to Hermione but as the two got closer to their destination it became apparent that the voices were angry and aggressive, this only made Hermione become nervous and she could feel the palms of her hands become increasingly sweaty.

Draco led Hermione into a rather large room where the walls were painted mint green, the room had four mismatched chairs, three mismatched love seats and two three seater leather sofas - that surprisingly matched - dotted around the room, some were placed nicely so that

people were able to converse, whereas some were dotted around in corners of the room where one could sit alone. At the front of the room there was a large wooden fire place that once upon a time was painted white but the paint had started to chip off showing the dark brown base underneath.

The room was filled with people that Hermione recognised but not one happy face was in sight, everyone either looked scared or angry.

Apparently the most angry in the room was Cormac McLaggen who was having an argument at the front of the room with Theodore Nott.

"Why don't you go find Weaslette whilst I deal with this," Draco whispered into Hermione's ear, she turned to scold him for the nickname he still used to refer to Ginny but when she had Draco was already walking towards Theodore and Cormac with his wand at the ready. Hermione hoped that he just had it out as a precaution.

She made her way through the crowd of people and watched as they all stared at her in disbelief.

She was the last of The Golden Trio.

She was like a rare animal.

Or a collectors prize.

The last of her kind.

And she hated it.

Even in her first year at Hogwarts she stood out too much for her liking, she was a muggle born with bad teeth and a lions mane for hair, hiding in the library behind stacks of books in solitude was the only place she truly felt comfortable.

But right now she wasn't in a library.

There were no stacks of books.

And despite everyone's hushed tones she could just about hear people whispering over the argument going on at the front of the room.

Looking up she saw a flash of orange and made a B-line for the three seater sofa that sat Ginny, Luna and Dean. Hermione was shocked as she came into closer view of the three to see that Luna was missing her right forearm, her heart had sunk to see the blonde in such condition, the last time she had seen her during the battle she was sure Luna had all of her limbs, and now she felt partially responsible as it wouldn't have happened had Harry won.

Maybe she could have done something more to help her friends. But no. She tried to run and in the process, she lost Ron.

Blinking quickly to push back the tears Hermione rushed closer to the group who soon noticed her presence and she was pulled into a tight hug once again by Ginny.

"I'm so sorry about last night," she said "I was tired and stressed and the news of Ron, it just-

"Don't worry, it's fine," Hermione ensured her as she pulled away from her embrace. She turned to Luna and despite already seeing her condition she still stared too long, "don't worry Hermione, I'm fine, I'm ambidextrous anyway," she told her with a smile.

Hermione had always admired Luna's ability to see the best in a bad situation, it was a trait Hermione wished she had, but rather than do so, or get mad, or grieve, she would find solutions, hide herself in the pages of a book until a bad situation got better or she figured out a way to fix it herself.

After a brief and uncomfortable hug with Luna she was pulled into Dean's arms, the two had never been close, she barely classed him as a friend but the hug was needed and almost reassuring. "Merlin! I'm so glad you're alright Hermione, well alive at least, how are you doing? I heard you were unconscious for two days! And I barely had chance to speak to you at Hogwarts! Did Potter find the Diadem? Shit- sorry I shouldn't have-

"Dean, calm down, I'm fine I promise and I will tell you everything but I'm not sure right now is a great time..." Hermione spoke as she turned to face the front of the room where Draco, Theodore and Cormac stood yelling over each other. "Oh look, Malfoy's come to *help*," Ginny muttered rolling her eyes "I don't care what he has to say, or any of them for that matter, I don't trust them, for all we know this meeting is just one big ruse and next thing you know You-Know-Who is going to stroll in with a big smile on his face followed by his army of Death Eaters who will probably be wearing coats made from puppies and they'll kill us all," she threw herself onto the sofa and brushed her fingers through her hair but did not take her eyes off of the blaring group at the front of the room "I don't trust them either," Dean growled as he sat down next to her "of course you don't," Luna chirped. All three lions stared at her in confusion wondering if they had heard her wrong. "You Gryffindors are so stubborn, I mean it's a lot of effort to go through just to trick us, maybe you don't have to trust them, but you could at least listen to them instead of assuming the worst. If what they're saying is true how are we ever supposed to move forwards if we're too busy watching our backs?"

Luna was right, Hermione hated it but she was right. She had come to this meeting to hear Narcissa and the others out but there was no point in being there if she didn't have an open mind.

The arguing at the front of the room became louder and louder until there was a sudden silence.

Narcissa had walked into the room with her wand in hand, she shot a scowl at her son before returning her face to a neutral state, "this will be a lot harder for everyone if we choose to spend our time arguing," Narcissa said to the three boys, "if you promise to keep quiet, I will remove the silencing charm," she said calmly. All three boys reluctantly nodded and Narcissa removed the charm she had just placed. Once lifted all three remained quiet.

Narcissa took -what seemed to be her place - at the front of the room and sucked in a deep breath, "welcome everyone, I'm glad that you all managed to join us," she greeted, "I would like for us all to be able to reside peacefully together," she began whilst sending a harsh glare towards Draco, Theodore and Cormac, "and I fear that won't happen unless we all talk and get our opinions out in the open."

"And how are we supposed to '*reside peacefully*' whilst we're living with *them*? And you for that matter!" Ginny spat, several 'yeahs' and hums of agreement chorused throughout the room, but Hermione just sat silently, she felt as though all of the fight she had left had been dragged out of her the moment she saw Harry's cold, dead body.

"Well hopefully this meeting will help to resolve that problem," Narcissa spoke calmly again.

Draco scoffed quietly assuming it would go unnoticed but Hermione's eyes kept subconsciously drawing themselves in his direction, the roll of his eyes and scoff he released annoyed her less than expected.

"And how are we supposed to trust you lot without our wands?!" Ernie Macmillan shouted "how are we supposed to trust you with them when you've tried to attack us?" Theodore yelled back, "please we don't need our wands to beat the crap out of you! All I need is my hands!" Cormac interrupted "oh yeah let's go Mclaggen!" Blaise joined as he defensively stepped towards him.

"Silencio!" Narcissa yelled and all four boys were silenced, "you will get your ability to speak back when you have the ability to have a civilised conversation," she spoke calmly, "I understand that none of you have any reason to trust us, but we don't want to hurt you and I trust that in time you will all realise that. I bought this safe house when my husband allowed Voldemort-"

Gasps sounded all around the room.

"To live in our house. I no longer fear that monster of a man but I do know what he is capable of and I won't allow him to torture people because of their beliefs or blood. I was raised to follow my families opinions but when my late cousin Sirius Black followed his own beliefs I opened my eyes, yet unlike him, I kept my mouth shut. There is *nothing* I regret more.

Until the matter of Voldemorts rule has been resolved by my son - Draco - and Adrian Pucey, will be working undercover as Death Eaters, for the time being, I hope we can all work together to keep ourselves safe."

"So we're just supposed to sit and hide until their two combined brain cells can figure out a way to kill the bastard?!" Ginny yelled, "unless any of you have any way to help Draco and Adrian then yes, that is exactly what you should do, unless of course, your life means so little to you, then you will be obliviated, your wand returned - provided you came with one - and you will be dropped off some where," Narcissa stated calmly, however the threat of obliviation caused an uproar.

Everyone began yelling curse words, and a threat was made to burn the safe house to the ground. After a minute of ongoing yelling Narcissa rolled her eyes and muttered under her breath, with a flick of her wand, everyone went silent.

"In order to keep everyone else safe, this is what we have to do, you are all welcome to stay here until this is all over, however when that will be, I'm not sure. Winky and Kreacher are happy to help with all of your needs however there is the small issue of money, when I was found to be a traitor, I was cut off from the Malfoy funds, I have a spare Gringots account but with the amount of people we have here it will only last around a year or so, Draco on the other hand, whilst still having access, only receives a certain amount a month and until he marries he will not gain free reign of any money," Narcissa explained. Draco shifted uncomfortably in his spot and propped himself up against the wall glaring at everyone he caught staring, all except Hermione.

"I understand however, that Miss Granger has some experience in trying to kill Voldemort," she began as her gaze turned to Hermione who was sat quietly on the arm of the leather sofa "perhaps you could give Adrian and my son some-"

"No!" Draco interrupted - evidently he had not been silenced again, "me and Adrian will do this *alone*," he stated matter-of-factly, "Draco, surly she could-"

"I said *no*!" He yelled.

"I need to change, me and Pucey have to leave soon," he mumbled "and don't worry! I won't bring back any other Death Eaters so don't bother running around frantically and stressing out my mother!" He yelled before storming upstairs closely followed by Adrian.

Hermione glanced over to Blaise who was clearly attempting to silently laugh but unable to properly due to the the silencing charm so he had resorted to a snide smirk.

# Chapter 4

## Chapter Summary

The next morning after Draco stormed out of the house meeting.

## Chapter Notes

I DO NOT OWN ANY OF THESE CHARACTERS!

This chapter is a little shorter than the others but I got it up in a day....

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

The meeting ended with many private discussions but in the end everyone had chosen to stay as so far it seemed like the safest option and no one fancied the idea of being obliterated and sent out into the world helpless.

Hermione herself spent half an hour trying to convince Ginny to stay, however her plan was to find her wand and fight her way out, but Hermione - being the logical person she is - convinced her to stay.

Narcissa did however inform everyone that once herself and the others were sure that everyone in the house wouldn't attack them, they would each have their wands returned to them and that they were looking for a way to acquire wands for those who were wandless which gave Hermione a sense of warmth and security. Despite being muggle born, Hermione had become rather accustomed to having a wand, especially when it came to defending herself. She had hardly any muscle, and wasn't very quick either, she couldn't even fight off Ginny let alone a Death Eater if she needed to.

Draco and Adrian weren't seen since for the rest of the day but Winky was sent to show Hermione around - Ginny ended up joining the two as well seen as she had been too stubborn to leave her room before Hermione visited her.

The house was a large one surrounded by fields, the only thing leading to the house was an old dirt road but despite the unlikeliness of someone stumbling across it Winky assured the two that Narcissa and Draco had put up protection charms and wards all around the house and two miles ahead so that they would be aware and prepared if anyone was to find them, however this still didn't convince Ginny that she was safe.



The house was four floors in total it had been owned by an old muggle man who had passed away - unfortunately somewhere inside of the house - all of the walls were oddly coloured - most disgusting or too bright - and all of the furniture was mismatched. The ground floor held the kitchen, living room, dining room, common room and downstairs bathroom. The second and third floor held bedrooms - only two with an en suit - and two bathrooms meaning everyone - aside from Narcissa and Draco - had to share. The fourth floor held Hermione's favourite part of the house.

The library.

It wasn't as well stocked as the one at Hogwarts, even the restricted section contained more books, it was mainly fictional reads to occupy people, but towards the back of the library Hermione had found a section filled with non fiction books - conveniently next to a small sitting area.

The library was also not brightly coloured like all of the other rooms, it was very much like an attic. The walls were wooden, the roof was slanted at either side and wooden beams came down from the ceiling like party streamers. There were two small windows at either end of the room and three on each side of the slanted ceiling allowing light to enter, yet due to the beams and rows of book shelves the light was blocked in many places so candles had been placed strategically around the room.

Unfortunately there was no working electricity in the house but Hermione had made a mental note to figure out how to work the backup generator in the shed to keep herself occupied.

~°☆°~

The next day Hermione was woken up at 9 am by a knock on her door, however the person didn't wait for a response in order to invite themselves in, although Hermione didn't mind as it was only Ginny.

"Morning," she hummed with a smile, "morning," Hermione replied uncertainly as she was confused by her best friends apparent mood swing. "How come you're in such a good mood?" "Well Luna visited me this morning and told me to drink some draught of peace, so I did, after half an hour of telling her what a stupid idea that would be, but she insisted and honestly, I think she might have been right because I feel so much better," Ginny explained.

Oddly enough the idea of Ginny taking a draught of peace potion comforted Hermione and made her feel a tad calmer, she knew this meant that Ginny wouldn't be on edge and jumpy all day therefore giving Hermione a chance to properly check out the library.

The two decided to join everyone for breakfast as they assumed that they would probably be in the safe house for a while.

Hermione pulled herself out of bed and quickly threw on a white blouse with a black skirt and tights, however once again Hermione needed the help of someone with a wand. She called for Winky and had her send for Blaise who conveniently appeared in the room seconds later.

"Ah Granger, Weasley, what can I help you with?" Blaise asked with a playful smile on his face, "Mione's clothes don't fit," Ginny giggled, "well I can soon fix that!" He replied pulling out his wand. He looked over at Ginny half expecting her to flinch or snap another coat hanger but instead she stood calmly and waited for Blaise to perform the spell.

"That looks much better on you Mione," Ginny praised once Blaise had cast the charm, "thanks Gin," Hermione laughed.

She laughed.

Genuinely.

She couldn't remember the last time she'd done that.

"Now lets go downstairs! I'm starving!" Ginny laughed jokingly "So what's put you in such a good mood Weasley?" Blaise asked as the three made their way out of Hermione's bedroom, "oh just a little draught of peace, I feel much better now," she chirped, "well, I must say, I do prefer you when you aren't trying to kill me with a coat hanger," he laughed to which she did too.



The dining room was dark purple and had one very long table in it surrounded by mismatched chairs. Sat around the table they found Narcissa Malfoy at the head of it - who seemed to be deep in an uncomfortable conversation with Horace Slughorn - Hannah Abbot, Susan Bones, James Tuckett, Luna Lovegood, Myrtle Warren, Terry Boot, Michael Corner, Parvati Patil and Colin Creevy. Hermione presumed that those who weren't already down were either sleeping or choosing to eat in their rooms.

The three sat down at the opposite end of the table to everyone else in order to avoid awkward conversations that they didn't fancy having, seconds after taking their seats their breakfast and drinks appeared in front of them. This morning Hermione had been given a full English with her usual coffee, whereas Ginny was only given water despite her love for hot chocolate.

"When did you tell the elves that you like coffee?" Ginny asked as she eyed Hermione's cup, "I didn't, I never really thought much of it," Hermione replied.

Ginny went to speak again but the dining room door opened and in walked Theodore Nott and Millicent Bulstrode "Blaise, Granger, Weasley," Millicent nodded as she pulled out a chair beside Blaise, Hermione gave her curt smile whereas Ginny stared blankly at her plate. Theodore pulled out the chair on the other side of Blaise forcing him to sit across from Ginny, he didn't say a word about the seating arrangement but Hermione didn't miss the glare that he shot her friend.

Their side of the table began to tuck into their food quietly as they listened to the conversations going on at the other end of it.

A few minutes in the door opened and in walked Dean and Cormac.

Cormac's eyes ran up and down the table scanning every person until his eyes landed on the little group formed at the far end away from everyone else. A vicious scowl was carved into his face as he made his way over to the group, "I see Malfoy and Pucey still haven't returned," he stated as his eyes stared daggers into the back of Theodore's head, "they have a job to do Mc'n'cheese. Trust me, if we wanted rid of you, you'd already be gone," Blaise responded bluntly, not moving his eyes from his plate.

Everyone at the other end of the table had clearly sensed the tension and ended their conversations in order to listen in. Whilst they all looked mildly entertained Narcissa looked like a disappointed teacher, an expression Hermione had received from McGonagall a few too many times.

"And you two-" Cormac began as he drew his attention to Ginny and Hermione, "what the fuck do you think you're doing sat with them?! They could turn on you any day now and take you to their nose-less master!" He snapped "and if they were going to do that, why would they have wasted their time saving me when they could have just handed me over and been done with it?" Hermione asked calmly as she placed her fork back on the table.

Cormac let out an arrogant scoff and his eyes grew dark, "of course you would defend them wouldn't you?" He laughed, "what's that supposed to mean?!" She yelled back placing her hands on the table and shoving her chair back till it tipped and landed on the back rest, Ginny - seeing where this was going - stood up as well, closely followed by Blaise.

"That now Potter and Weasley are dead Gryffindors *Shut* is ready to drop her pants for anyone to work her way up in a place!" He stated.

"How dare you!"

"Shut The fuck up Mclaggen!"

"Watch your tounge!" Hermione, Ginny and Blaise shouted in unison. Small gasps sounded around the room and even Theodore was now out of his seat.

"I always wondered Granger, which one of them did you loose it to? Potter? Or Weasley? Or was it Krum?" he goaded. Hermione's fists were clenched tightly at her side and her cheeks were flushed bright red due to how humiliated she felt.

"Tell me, when your cherry popped did you get your *mud*-blood all over their-" but before he could finish his sentence he was knocked to the ground.

Hermione looked around her and everyone was exactly where they were the last time she had looked around the room, except Narcissa was stood from her seat and Adrian Pucey was stood in the doorway leaning on the frame.

Hermione peered over the table and saw the familiar bright blonde head of hair that had left the house meeting in a fit of rage the night before.

It was Draco.

He was straddling Cormac and profusely hitting him. His legs were strategically placed on top of his arms so he couldn't get a hit in. Draco was not pulled off of Cormac until he had stopped moving, everyone had just stared with their jaws agape apart from Narcissa who

looked furious yet it wasn't until Cormac was clearly unconscious that both Blaise and Theodore pulled Draco off probably to avoid Draco beating him to death.

"With me, *now*," Draco growled to both of the boys who were still latched onto his arms. He quickly shook them off and marched out of the dining room with Blaise and Theodore quickly following him out like shadows.

The room was deadly silent for a moment, everyone was frozen not knowing what to do.

"Kreacher!" Narcissa suddenly yelled and in a second the old House Elf was in the room, This was the first Hermione had seen of the elf since she had come here but it was safe to say that despite her love for House Elves, she hadn't particularly missed him. "Please take Mr Mclaggen to his room and treat his wounds," she sighed, "yes mistress, Kreacher lives to serve Miss Black and her Blood Traitor, Mudblood friends," The House Elf said proudly.

Narcissa slapped her hand on her forehead and dragged it down her face as if she was already prepared to give up on the safe house all together. Hermione understood her frustration and felt as though she may have been beginning to trust the house and *some* of its residents.

## Chapter End Notes

This story is not finished but as I don't really use A03 I'm not sure how to change it.

# Chapter 5

## Chapter Summary

Hermione and Draco's first argument!

## Chapter Notes

I DO NOT own any of these characters!

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Once the elf had levitated Cormac out of the dining room, his face swollen and covered in blood most of the people in the room had sat back down and returned to eating their breakfast, however they were less talkative than when Hermione had first entered the room.

Hermione had been so used to being called a 'mudblood' Draco and his friends had done it for years, but Cormac had never said it before, no one in Gryffindor had, her Hogwarts house had always been a safe place for her, but she wasn't at Hogwarts anymore.

She couldn't help but replay the image of Draco tackling Cormac to the ground and beating him senseless over in her mind, something about it made her heart skip a beat and her stomach feel funny, a sort of funny she hadn't felt since Viktor Krum had taken her to The Yule Ball in the fourth year. Yet she didn't like this feeling. Especially towards Draco.

Hermione could no longer say she hated the boy, with everything going on in the world she had no room in her heart to hate someone for things that now seemed petty, but that didn't mean she had to like him. Draco had been the first person to call her a mudblood, he and his friends called her other names when she walked by in the hallway, they had thrown things at her when she studied in the library or was working in lessons, and despite never actually laying a hand on her himself, Draco had never stopped Vincent Crabbe or Gregory Goyle from tripping her in the hallways or shoving her as they walked by. Not only did he and his friends hurt and pick on her but they did the same to her friends.

No Hermione did not plan to throw old grudges at the people she now shared a home with, nor did she hate them for their wrong doings, but that did not mean she had to befriend them or seek any sort of comfort from them. Funny feelings would have to wait.

Hermione's plan was to stay at the safe house, help where she could until the time came where she could leave, perhaps she would move into a flat and get a job working for the ministry, or, she could always leave the wizarding world, move somewhere far away and live amongst muggles, get a job in muggle healing, or perhaps in a muggle school, maybe meet a muggle man, get married, have children. She could start a whole new life and forget about all she had lost.

That would be easy.

But when did Hermione ever choose easy?

Hermione didn't know how long she had been sat in a trance just staring at her half full plate but it had been long enough to draw Ginny's attention who slightly nudged Hermione with her elbow. Hermione shook her head and turned to face her friend who looked rather concerned, "Are you alright Hermione? Mclaggen had no right saying what he said and we all know that-

"I'm fine Ginny, seriously, but I think I would like to be alone for a little bit," Hermione quickly responded.

Before Ginny could say anything else Hermione pushed her chair back and stood ready to walk out of the room and hopefully have a relaxing shower to calm herself down, but before she could take her first step Narcissa spoke.

"Actually, Hermione I was hoping I could speak to you in my room," she worded as if it was a request but said as if it was an instruction, not wanting to be involved in anymore arguments Hermione nodded quietly and then followed Narcissa out of the dining room and up to the first floor where her bedroom was.

Narcissa opened the door revealing a rather large room - at least double the size of Hermione's - with old mismatched furniture placed spaciouly around making the room appear almost empty. Narcissa led Hermione to a set of blue velvet chairs by the window and gestured for her to sit, "Winky!" She called softly and the small elf popped into the room with a smile. Hermione had come to realise that whenever she was around people tended to ask Winky for assistance rather than Kreacher. "Would you please bring me and Miss Granger some tea and biscuits?" She asked the elf, Hermione couldn't help but release a small smile at the use of her manners "how does Miss Granger be liking her tea?" The elf squeaked, "three spoons of honey please- uh if we have it," Hermione said shyly.

Narcissa chuckled slightly and shook her head a little, "that is the same as Master Draco has his tea Miss," the small elf said like a small child telling a secret, "no need to discuss my son and his drinking habits Winky, please just bring the tea," Narcissa pushed, clearly the elf had spoken out of term. "Yes Miss, sorry Miss," Winky said quickly before disappearing in the blink of an eye.

"Miss Granger, I would like to apologise to you for how my son acted last night and this morning, I would also like to apologise to you for the way Mr Mclaggen spoke to you and when he wakes up I will speak to him and remind him that this safe house was created to fight against opinions like the ones he shared today and if he says anything so derogatory

again, he will be obliterated and made to leave," Narcissa spoke softly, "there's no need to apologise Mrs Malfoy-"

"Please call me Narcissa dear," she interrupted, "alright then, please call me Hermione," she nodded, "but the actions of your son and Cormac are not your fault."

Once Hermione had finished her sentence a small '*pop*' sound was heard and Winky appeared carrying a tray with their tea on it, "your teas are heres," she squeaked, "thank you Winky, that will be all," Narcissa said and once again, the elf was gone.

"Hermione, if it wasn't already apparent, my son can be rather stubborn, he doesn't trust easily and believes he's a lot stronger than he really is, he likes to do things by himself but that doesn't mean he should, I would very much appreciate if you could help him find a way to destroy the monster who now governs England."

"I'm sorry? Governs?" Hermione questioned, "it's only been three days since he- defeated Harry," she choked out forcefully "yes well Voldemort likes to work quickly and get things over and done with, the day after he killed Mr Potter he declared himself Minister of Magic, and the Royal family ruling over England were killed, publicly. I understand you won't have read The Daily Prophet since you came here but Voldemort has not hidden any of the executions he has performed. Most of them were muggles and the odd muggle born, no Hogwarts students or staff however. Although a few of us have our assumptions as to why," Narcissa explained.

Narcissa wasn't wrong, it had been some time since Hermione had held the newspaper in her hands, but the thought of reading about death repulsed her so much she didn't want to touch another paper again.

"Voldemort is desperate for power, he is working quickly and each day we wait is a day his forces grow stronger," Narcissa said as she brought her cup of tea up to her lips and took a sip, "I have been trying to contact any remaining members of The Order but they're hard to find, specifically my sister, Andromeda, perhaps you know her?"

"I know of her, but I've never met her no, only her daughter, Nymphadora, she died three days ago, her and Profess- Remus Lupin had a son, Teddy, Harry's God son, I suspect Andromeda is taking care of him now," Hermione babbled sadly but she did not allow the tears to fall from her eyes that were fighting to break out. Despite trying to fight it Narcissa noticed the change in Hermione's expression and waved her wand conjuring up a tissue which she then passed to her.

"I heard a lot about my Niece, it's such a shame I never had the chance to meet her," Narcissa said as Hermione wiped her eyes and then then reaching for her cup of tea "me and my sisters were close when we were younger, always stuck together, but when Andromeda was disowned for marrying a muggle born my family stopped speaking of her, even Bellatrix, they all pretended she didn't exist, she was a disgrace in their eyes and no longer our problem, I however tried to stay in contact with her, I went to the wedding, and spoke to her for as long as I could until it became too risky, I wasn't brave like her or my cousin Sirius, I hid my beliefs and followed everyone else like a Unicorn," she scoffed, "I wanted to see my sister, but there was never a good time, I wanted her to meet Draco, so he would have better influences than I and his father," she confessed "but it's too late now," she said regretfully. Hermione didn't know how to respond so she stayed quiet.

"I never understood blood supremacy, it never made sense to me, but I was scared of my parents, I only knew one life and unlike my sister I wasn't brave enough to loose it. I relied on my families money and I've never had to work a day in my life. Not a real job anyway. I had hoped Lucius would share my beliefs, that blood was just blood, but it was quite the opposite, he hated anyone less than purebloods and despised the idea of people so pure procreating with anything less. So once again I was silenced by my own fear of being disowned and being on my own," she sighed. Hermione could tell she was disappointed in herself but she couldn't give her words of encouragement because she knew that Narcissa could have done better and been stronger, such a hateful mind set, but they were not living in a time where things needed to be sugar coated.

"When Draco was six I took him to the park where he made friends with a young halfblood boy named Elliott, of course he didn't know what blood status meant so he never asked, the boy would come over and play with Draco frequently, one time he came with his parents, his mother pureblood and his father muggle born, and Lucius was home, the moment he found out about their blood status he kicked them out and beat me for letting Draco play with *scum*, of course I tried to explain that I didn't know but he told me I should have asked sooner, he beat me black and blue with his cane and wouldn't let me take Draco to the park anymore. He won't remember, when he had asked about Elliott Lucius obliviaded him, after that the pureblood lessons started and Lucius's beliefs were inflicted on Draco, until Draco was made to torture muggle borns, halfbloods and blood traitors by Voldemort and Bellatrix, he held those same beliefs, but I assume you're already aware of that."

Hermione nodded in agreement but still didn't speak.

She was beginning to pity Narcissa and Malfoy, both abused and brain washed.

Noticing that Hermione was struggling to come up with the words to reply Narcissa took another sip of her tea and continued, "I want Voldemort gone, dead, and forever this time. That monster came into my home, tortured me and my son, forced my son to take his mark and become one of his delusional slaves, and then ordered my son to kill a man that even *he* could not kill," she ranted, continuously referring to Draco as her son as if she needed reminding, "I had hoped that Harry would have been able to get the job done but as he did not, Draco seems to have made it his responsibility.

I love my son Hermione, but he cannot take on this task alone, I doubt that he even knows where to start. I understand you have put years of effort into ridding the world of Voldemort, but I beg of you Hermione, please, I know Draco can be stubborn, and mean, and sometimes you just want his face to be against the back end of your hand - he gets it from his father - but we will all be stuck here for much longer than we would all like if you don't help him."

Narcissa's bright blue eyes had gone wide and glistened with the tears that she was pushing back, Hermione felt as though she could see right into her soul.

Hermione gave a deep frustrated sigh but that alone told Narcissa what Hermione's answer would be and she had to suppress a smile before Hermione continued as to not throw her off of her decision. "I will help, but it will take time, planning and privacy. I will need the library, and the newspaper every morning. Quills and note pads if possible," Hermione listed, "anything you need," Narcissa pushed.



"Lastly, you will need to try your hardest to contact any remaining members of The Order, Ginny might be able to help you there. Many of us don't have our wands and if there is another battle we won't do well with other peoples, there's also not enough of us who are able to fight. If you really want- Voldemort dead, then we need numbers."



Narcissa had agreed to all of Hermione's terms and after they had both finished their tea Hermione left to finally shower.

The bathroom was shared by everyone on her floor except Draco who had the bedroom with the second en suite. It was small and painted turquoise - a disgusting colour for a bathroom Hermione had thought, but its oddly coloured walls matched the rest of the house - it had an old peach coloured bath with a shower inside and a matching coloured toilet and sink, all equally unappealing to the eye, and above the sink was a mirror with a large crack down the middle.

Hermione stared at her reflection properly for the first time in over a year, her face was angular and bony, her skin was pale and her hair had returned to its bushy state that she had kept it in until the third year when she had finally managed to tame it.

Once out of the shower she called Winky - who appeared to be in a rush - and requested a toothbrush and hair bobble. Fifteen minutes later the items were brought to her by Kreacher who had been muttering about how ashamed the black family would be if they knew he had been helping a mudblood. Nevertheless Hermione brushed off the comment and readied herself, throwing back on the clothes she had chosen that morning and tying her hair into a high pony tail. Her plan was to go to the library for a long day of research, she had no plans on keeping anyone in the safe house longer than they had to be.

Hermione made her way into the library which at first glance appeared to be empty, it wasn't until she had made her way towards the back sitting area that she found Draco Malfoy surrounded by stacks of books, three news papers, two note pads, a pot of ink and a pot of expensive looking quills. He was no longer in the Death Eater robes that he had been wearing that morning when he tackled and beat Cormac, he was now wearing a plain white t-shirt and a pair of grey tracksuit bottoms. Hermione found it rather odd to see Draco wearing such a muggle outfit.

"Is something the matter Granger? Or am I just so good looking that you would rather stare at me than bury your nose inside one of the many books inside this room?" Asked Draco suddenly with his eyes still staring intently at the book in his hands and his expression completely blank. "Oh- um no, sorry," she stuttered, "I- um- I just wanted to thank you, for this morning- with Cormac I mean," she mumbled.

She couldn't help but wonder why she was so nervous.

She had of course had many unpleasant interactions with Draco over the years, but this wasn't usually how they went.

"He deserved it, he shouldn't have said any of those things to you. I hear he's still breathing though. *Lucky sod*," Draco mumbled, still not removing his eyes from the book.

Hermione - who could clearly tell that Draco was in no mood to talk - shifted her body and began to look at one of the bookshelves nearest to her, it was stocked with many non fiction reads.

*Hogwarts: A history.*

*Healing And Surviving Death.*

*Godric Gryffindors History.*

*The Darkest Wizards.*

The books all seemed to lead back to Voldemort in a way and Hermione assumed that Draco probably had the most useful ones on the table in front of him.

Hermione picked up two books about Gryffindor - hoping that they would have some information about The Sword Of Gryffindor inside - and then she reached for Healing and Surviving Death, "the fiction books are at the front end of the library Granger, I am almost certain you don't have a book report due on anything over here," Draco said blankly before Hermione's hand had even managed to graze the spine of the book she was reaching for.

"I don't fancy reading fiction," she replied bluntly as she pulled Healing And Surviving Death off of the shelf. Hermione heard Draco slam his book shut and listened to the rustle of his clothes as he left the chair he was sat in and then listened to his shoes hit the wooden floor as he strode towards her.

Hermione turned her body slightly and looked to see Draco less than an inch away from her, his back bent slightly so he could hover over her. Suddenly Hermione was extremely aware of his muscles that were pushing through the tight fabric of his t-shirt, his shoulders were big and broad and his arms were thick and veiny. His face was sharp and slim, but not in the malnourished way hers was, and his eyes were blue like his mothers. This was not the sickly ghost of a boy she went to school with in the sixth year.

"Has he always been this attractive?" She wondered.

"Has he always been this intimidating?"

Draco snatched the book Hermione had just grabbed out of her hand and twisted his wrist slightly so he could get a better look, "and why might I ask, are *you*, reading *this*?" He asked cocking a brow, Hermione - suddenly feeling rather small - shifted her gaze and stared at the floor as she mumbled her next words, "just- research."

A low growl escaped Draco's mouth and he took a step forward forcing Hermione to take a step back and resulting in her dropping the other two books she was carrying which Draco absentmindedly kicked to the side. "Research for what?" He seethed but when she didn't answer he let his anger get the better of him and pushed her small frame against the bookcase

and cornered her there using his arms, a small gasp escaped Hermione's mouth in shock and she placed one hand on his chest and the other gripped a shelf behind her for balance. "Did my mother put you up to this Granger? Did she tell you that I needed help or some shit?" He questioned aggressively, "I just thought that things would be over sooner if i help-"

"If you helped?! I don't need your help Granger!" His voice roared, "I have spent the last year of my life working out how to kill him! If you just let me help-"

"Oh what a surprise! Gryffindors very own Golden Girl wanting to put her brain to good use!" He yelled in an over exaggerated tone, "you've been here three fucking days Granger! Two of them you weren't even conscious for and you're already trying to stick that annoyingly big brain of yours where it doesn't belong!"

"Doesn't belong?! Doesn't fucking belong?! How dare you Malfoy! I spent the last *year* helping Harry so that he could kill Voldemort and we were so fucking close! So don't you dare tell me where my brain does and doesn't belong Malfoy!" She yelled back.

Hermione hadn't missed the change in Draco's expression as it went from neutral to angry, but despite her wanting to drag an emotion out of him, this was not quite what she wanted.

"Oh yeah? And how did the last year work out for you Granger? Hm? How many times were you nearly caught? How many times *were* you caught? You were brought to my manor for fuck sake! And tortured right there on my drawing room floor! In front of me! And there was nothing I could do to stop it! I even gave up my fucking wand and let Potter take it just so you could escape and my aunt crucioed me for hours because I let that happen!"

"That's why you wont let me help? Because I might screw up your *working undercover* and let that result in you being tortured?"

"I never said that," Draco seethed, his face noticeably turning red in anger, a stage in his usual fits Hermione had only seen once or twice during their time at Hogwarts.

"Well that's good because I don't think that's *really* why you don't want my help."

"Do tell me then Granger, what is the reason I don't want your help? You know, seen as you're *so* smart, of course you would know the answer to that," Draco stated as he took a small step back from Hermione, "I think that you don't want me doing research because this is some sort of battery farm-"

"Battery what?"

"I think the reason that there have been no public executions of Hogwarts students and staff is because you're keeping us all here for some sick reason that Voldemort-"

"How dare you! How fucking dare you!" Draco's voice roared again as he pushed Hermione back up against the bookcase, his face now glowing red and his eyes bloodshot with rage.

"Do you really think that's what this is? Some sick twisted way of leading you all to your deaths? You really think that's the man I am?!"

"If not then why wont you let me help?! Why wont you let me do research?! I can help you Malfoy! Please! At least let me tell you what I already know," Hermione begged.

Suddenly Draco pulled away from Hermione and released her from his human cage, "get out," he mumbled "what?"

"I said get the fuck out!" His voice roared as he punched the bookcase beside Hermione's head. She let out a small yelp as she began to edge away from him.

Draco closed his eyes and his once angry expression was once again neutral. Once he opened his eyes he stared directly at Hermione but said nothing before turning around and going back to his table. Hermione quickly pulled herself together and left the library without saying another word.

# Chapter 6

## Chapter Summary

Hermione, Blaise, Ginny and Theodore help each other out to find a way to kill Voldemort.

## Chapter Notes

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After Hermione left the library she ran to her room and hid out there until dinner where she found herself trapped between Colin Creevy and Horace Slughorn - who had apparently made it his mission to talk her ears off. Ginny and Blaise sat across from her as they silently laughed at the unfortunate situation Hermione had found herself in, however when Blaise had sniggered a little too loudly Horace assumed that he was listening in on their conversation about his time at Hogwarts and assumed he was intrigued, therefore his entertainment was short lived as Horace began to bore him with his stories as well.

Hermione had not failed to notice that since she had left Ginny that morning she seemed to have warmed up to Blaise, she wondered if the calming draught was still in her system or if Ginny had begun to see the reality of the situation and chosen to accept her fate.

*Their fate.*

Despite Horace's constant blabbering dinner had started off nicely and the tension was low, maybe not even there at all. Cormac McLaggen hadn't turned up and Hermione was grateful, she assumed that he was either still unconscious or was choosing to eat in his room after the events that had taken place that morning.

Everything was nice and almost reminded Hermione of dinners at Hogwarts.

Well that was until Draco and Adrian entered wearing their Death Eater uniforms.

Suddenly everyone went quiet - as if they had remembered where they were - and the air seemed to thicken. Hermione didn't stare at Draco long enough to make eye contact with him as she watched his blue eyes scan the table, his eyes never successfully landing on a specific

person, almost as if he was searching for the right person. Hermione turned her head back to face Horace and quickly drew his attention back to her with a simple "you were saying," and once again the old man continued to tell his stories.

This however did not go unnoticed, Ginny had watched as her friend quickly averted her gaze and egged Horace on to continue, and she instantly knew something was wrong.

As Draco and Adrian walked past Hermione she felt the goosebumps form on her skin and tried to hide her involuntary shiver as Horace continued to speak to her obliviously.

She had spent the rest of dinner hardly touching her food and keeping her eyes on Horace - although barely listening to his constant babble - and every so often she would nod her head so to pretend she was actually listening.

It wasn't until Draco and Adrian stood and announced that they would be gone till later that night that an idea had hit Hermione, she kept her head down and pondered the new thought in her mind. She had concluded that Draco couldn't stop her from doing research or kick her out of the library if he wasn't there to do so.

Once Draco and Adrian had left the dining room Hermione waited exactly three minutes - which she had counted tiredly in her head - and then quietly excused herself from the table, cutting Horace off as she did so. The old professor smiled and suggested that they speak more later before he turned fully towards Ginny and Blaise who wore bored expressions.

Hermione made her way to the library and noticed that the back shelves had more books on than they did that morning, and the small table that Draco had been using was now empty except for two candles that were placed in the centre.

"Winky!" Hermione shouted, but there was no reply, "Winky!" She called again, but still no elf appeared. Realising she must be busy Hermione let out a breathy and frustrated sigh before then calling for Kreacher who appeared in a matter of seconds, a obvious scowl was painted on his face. "Mudblood called?" He said in his usual croaky voice, Hermione brushed off the insult knowing fully that this was just how the elf had been brought up and ideals like that were harder to knock out of older elves, "could you please fetch me some quills, parchment and some ink?" Hermione requested in a soft tone, "of course," Kreacher replied in an eerie voice.

The old elf popped out and was back seconds later with all of the things Hermione had asked for. The parchment was old and ripped on the edges, clearly a supply that Narcissa was finding hard to come by and the ink pot was barely half full. Hermione had concluded that she might have to rely on her memory more than she had hoped.

"One last thing," Hermione began before the elf could pop back out, "I need as many newspapers from the last few days, as many you can get. Since Voldemort won preferably but even just today's will do," she instructed, "ah yes, my Mistress has kept them all since you have arrived," the elf stated before abruptly leaving the room and popping back in with a stack of four newspapers. Kreacher placed them on the table by the other things he had brought her and left seconds after her telling him that she had everything she needed.

The first paper Hermione picked up was published the day after The Battle Of Hogwarts, the paper had clearly been used and scrunched up, it had been absentmindedly thrown in a bin after coffee had been spilt on it by the looks of it as the picture of Voldemort who was stood proudly in front of the ruins of Hogwarts, Harry's dead body laid behind him carelessly thrown on the ground, was covered in a coffee stain and the paper was stiff and dry.

*3rd May 1998*

### **The Dark Lord Triumphs!**

***Years after The Dark Lord had fallen he redeems himself and kills the famous Harry Potter, once known as 'The Boy Who Lived'.***

***After winning The Battle Of Hogwarts he very generously offered the students and staff who dared to fight against him a chance at redemption offering them a place in his Pure World, the few who stepped forward and accepted his offer have allegedly been forgiven however no reporters have had the opportunity to speak to these few witches and wizards. As for the others who refused his offer, most are presumed to have been killed however it has been hard to decipher who was killed in the partaking of the battle and who was killed afterwards. Others who travelled up from the near-by village, Hogsmeade, claim that they saw a group of Death Eaters - lead by Bellatrix Lestrange - forcefully dragging a large group of people away from the school grounds, some even claim to have seen smaller groups of people running into The Forbidden Forest.***

***Due to these claims it has been presumed that a number of traitors have escaped but fear not! There are already people who are in the works of finding out who the escapee's are, Corban Yaxley - who worked for The Ministry Of Magic before The Dark Lord's miraculous victory, as head of the department of Magical Law Enforcement - said to one of our reporters "I have the very best witches and wizards in my department identifying bodies, arrested traitors, and new recruits whilst going through the Hogwarts and Ministry files to figure out who the escapee's are, we should have them all listed and their names and faces plastered over every wall in the country by the end of the week. These people are filthy and polluted which makes them dangerous, but rest assured, we will arrest them all and justice will be served!"***

***No word as-of-yet as to who will be the new Minister For Magic but for the time being Delores Umbridge has taken her "right full" and "hard earned" place in the previous Ministers office.***

***More on The Dark Lords plans tomorrow.***

***~Rita Skeeter.***

The use of the words 'arrest' and 'arrested' - among other things in the article - made Hermione's blood boil, the words were so *sophisticated* and *official*, as if their 'arrests' were justified. Hermione found herself tearing the corners of the pages, something Hermione had never dared to do to a book, paper or magazine before, she had always taken care of whatever she had been reading, she believed that no matter how little you agreed with a persons words you should always have at least a little respect for how they were written.

**4th May 1998**

**Our new Minister For Magic!**

Read the next paper that Hermione had picked up. Underneath the headline was a picture of Voldemort stood in front of the 'Magic Is Might' statue that was in the centre of the Ministry Of Magic.

*This morning The Dark Lord claimed his place as Minister For Magic and has quickly set himself up in The Ministers office, after boldly announcing himself to the public today he made several promises; "I promise you all, my loyal subjects, I will rid our world of Muggles, Mudblood's and Blood Traitors alike, we will have domain over the world again and rid it of the pests that have infested it! There was once a time when witches and wizards ruled this world until the Muggles invented their weapons. Afraid of our power they hunted and killed us for sport! And what have we become now?! We hide in the shadows as if we are lesser than them! But we shall hide no more!" The public responded well to his promises and many cheered, however The Dark lord was not finished there; "I must warn those of you who seek to betray myself and therefore, The Wizarding World, if you dare to do so, you will be found, and you will be severely punished." This was no threat, it was a promise.*

*Delores Umbridge was quickly moved out of The Ministers office and back into her previous one, when questioned about the situation she simply said she was happy that The Wizarding World finally had a firm head leading it and was sure that The Dark Lord would lead us to greatness. When asked if she thought she could do a better job she made no comment.*

*No word yet as to what happened to those who were arrested after The Battle Of Hogwarts.*

*Come back tomorrow to find out more.*

*~Rita Skeeter.*

**5th May 1998**

**Muggle Royal Family Dead!**

Underneath the headline was a picture of the Royal family stood stiffly in a line in front of Buckingham Palace, the picture was still until a bright light flickerd in front of the camera and then the picture replayed. Despite the picture being colourless Hermione was no fool and knew exactly which spell was cast, it was because of this that she had to push herself to continue reading.

*Last night after The Dark Lord took his place as Minister For Magic, he bravely made his mark upon The Muggles and killed their Royal Family before taking his rightful place as King Of England.*

Hermione chuckled to herself darkly, finding it hard to believe how the Daily Prophet was painting this to be a good thing, the murder of innocent muggles made no sense to her, nor



did making it public.

*The Dark Lord moved into the palace last night and executed all of the muggle workers this morning where their Royal Family had died the night before. Whilst he wouldn't allow any of the reporters gathered to interview him he did say this; "Muggles, traitors, and any who aren't pure can make this easy and turn themselves in willingly, or you can run and hide, my followers do love a good chase."*

*The Dark Lord has been held up inside his palace ever since, but Bellatrix Lestrange, along with her husband Rodolphus Lestrange and his brother Rastaban Lestrange have been seen holding people at wand point and leading them into the palace. A few witnesses claim to have seen several tortured and killed if they had attempted an escape, no one who isn't a Death Eater, nor any bodies have been seen leaving the palace. It is possible that if any have been killed they were disposed of using the floo network or by apperation in order to avoid panicking The Wizarding World.*

As Hermione was finishing the article she heard the Library door open and quickly shoved the newspapers under the table. In her panic she was not quiet and very nearly knocked over the pot of ink that sat untouched on the table, this near accident caused her to move slower and in the corner of her eye she could see the shadow of a person grow larger under the flicker of the candle light.

Hermione was worried that the person would be Draco and she was not prepared for another argument but she wasn't sure whether to feel worse or relived when she heard multiple sets of shoes hit the wooden floor and saw a second shadow appear from behind the first.

It wasn't until Blaise stepped into sight from behind the bookcase closely followed by Theodore, Luna and Ginny that Hermione could finally release the breath that she had been absentmindedly holding in anticipation and fear.

"See she's here, we can go now," Theodore groaned as he folded his arms over his chest, "ah ah, what ya' doing Granger?" Blaise asked cocking a brow. Hermione pushed the papers further under the table under the impression that Blaise and Theodore would know about what had happened between Draco and Hermione earlier that day and would either tell her she had to leave or would just go straight to Draco. She really didn't see his problem but she didn't need to create more for herself, whilst Draco and Adrian were out doing their 'duties' it was the perfect opportunity for Hermione to figure out how best to kill Voldemort and it wouldn't help her out in the slightest if she had to avoid Theodore and Blaise as well.

As the last remaining member of The Golden Trio, she couldn't help but feel like she had to figure out how to kill Voldemort, she wanted to be the one to do it, she didn't want the last seven years to have been for nothing.

"Just- um- doing a little- reading," she stuttered, her eyes never meeting Blaise's "reading?" Blaise began as he took a step closer to Hermione, "so you're reading a blank piece of parchment?" He asked as his eyes moved over to the only piece of paper on the table that Hermione hadn't thought to hide. She bit the inside of her cheek nervously, not sure how to respond, her eyes met his and all she could think was "bloody Slytherin."

"Hermione is reading a newspaper," Luna chirped innocently, everyone curiously turned their heads towards the blonde girl who stood obliviously smiling like a little girl, "see, she's holding a few under the table, rather tightly, I'd be careful Hermione you'll struggle to read them if they're all crumpled," she continued when she realised no one knew what she was talking about. The palms of Hermione's hands were growing increasingly sweaty as she watched Blaise, Theodore and Ginny look under the table, "why are you hiding the papers Granger?" Blaise asked, "what are you up to?" Theodore followed.

Hermione released a frustrated sigh and dragged the newspapers out from under the table, "I'm trying to get us all out of here as soon as possible!" She yelled, "I shouldn't have to be treading on bloody eggshells around everyone in this house for doing what I have been doing for the past seven years! My best friends are both dead because of Voldemort and I refuse to sit in this fucking safe house staring at the walls that just make we want to be sick, doing nothing because for whatever reason Malfoy thinks he can do it by himself!"

Hermione cursed her eyes for beginning to water and she desperately fought to not cry but she found it harder not to do so as everyone stared at her in shock. No one spoke. No one blinked. Hermione couldn't even be sure that any of them were breathing.

"Malfoy spoke to you then," Blaise finally spoke after a moment of uncomfortable silence.

"Yes," Hermione mumbled in response "he doesn't want me helping," she hissed "wait what?!" Ginny exclaimed "but you know more than anyone! Doesn't that Jack-ass know that?!"

"Well it's probably because-" Blaise began but Theodore was quick to cut him off "it *doesn't* matter why he doesn't want her helping, if he said she can't then she shouldn't be." "Actually, I think she should," Blaise stated before Ginny had the chance to speak.

Everyone turned to face Blaise with a look of confusion but he stood straight with a smirk painted onto his face, "she's right, no one wants to be here longer than they have to be, and Weasley is right, Granger knows more than anyone in this bloody house. I guess what I'm saying is, what can we do to help?"

Hermione sat with her jaw dropped in shock, her biggest fear had been that Blaise and Theodore would tell her she couldn't do her research, that she couldn't plan and help out, that they would kick her out of the library and tell Draco, but Blaise had surprised her. From what she remembered at Hogwarts, Blaise was one of Draco's closest friends, she expected his loyalties to be set, but this had surprised her so much that she was speechless.

"Are you kidding?!" Theodore snapped "if he finds out about this he will kill us! Hand us to You-Know-Who right away!"

"Then he better not find out," Blaise laughed, "so Granger what can we do to help?"

Hermione pondered for a moment before walking over to the bookshelves and picking out a series of books that she had read herself or that seemed to show more relevance to the situation, "if you're serious about helping then you can do research on Horcruxes and Goblin made weapons, I need to figure out Voldemort's plans and work out the best way to get to him and the snake."



The paper didn't lie, by the end of the week Corban Yaxley had figured out who the missing people were and their faces were always at the end of every newspaper, however Hermione was glad to see all of the names that she saw that didn't belong to the people already in the safe house.

George Weasley.

Aurthur Weasley.

Percy Weasley.

Kingsley Shacklebolt.

Minerva McGonagall.

Seamus Finnigan.

Justin Finch-Fetchley.

Pomona Sprout.

Fleur Delacour.

Angelina Johnson.

All of the names both reassured and scared Hermione, the names she couldn't find terrified her, she re-read the paper six times before she was able to put it down.

The next two weeks were spent with Hermione, Ginny, Blaise and sometimes even Theodore doing research, Theodore would occasionally make a comment about what would happen if Draco caught them but Hermione found that Theodore was actually rather smart and absorbed knowledge very well.

Blaise, Ginny and Theodore had spent the two weeks learning about the things Hermione had instructed them to - they had even taken to calling her Professor Granger - Ginny and Theodore caught on quickly and needed little explaining to them, Blaise on the other hand, had to ask a question every two minutes, after the first week Ginny was able to answer them all, Theodore on the other hand would grow frustrated and leave without saying a word.

Hermione spent each day reading The Daily Prophet and learning more about what Voldemort was doing, over two weeks he had held ten public executions, forty seven muggles, muggle borns and blood traitors had been tortured and killed via killing curse in front of Buckingham Palace, always with a crowd and it would always end up in the paper the next day, Hermione had noticed that none of the people who were killed took part in The Battle Of Hogwarts though.

Voldemort had taken Scotland, Wales, France, Spain and Italy in two weeks, Ireland had been proving more stubborn than he had expected - so the paper said - and rumour had started to

stir that Voldemort was planning on taking it by force.

Theodore had also been reading the papers frantically for any mention of what had happened to the people who were captured during or after the battle, more specifically, he had been looking for any mention of Pansy.

Hermione had spoken to Narcissa about getting her any muggle books on Buckingham Palace so she could search for a possible way in, she had also been sending the elves to the black market - that had opened up since Voldemort took control - to see if they could get hold of Basilisk venom or Goblin made weapons, but so far they had, had no such luck.

Neither Draco or Adrian gave any indication as to when they would return to the safe house so Hermione, Ginny, Blaise and Theodore would have Luna keep an eye out and have her tell them if they had returned but over the last two weeks there had been no close encounters so the four had began to become more comfortable when they were doing their research which was a good thing seen as they were taking in more information rather than flinching whenever they heard a noise.

On this particular night Theodore had gone to bed after dinner and Ginny and Blaise had left an hour before but Hermione insisted on staying and finishing her book on the layout of Buckingham Palace, however the book was useless and was more or less just facts about who had lived there and special events that had been held in each of the rooms, it was because of this that Hermione's eyes had gone incredibly heavy and she had decided to let her eyes rest for just a second.

This second led to two hours, two hours with all of their notes, books and news papers carelessly splayed across the small table. The candles each had enchantments placed on them so they wouldn't go out so all of the work was on full display for anyone to see, but the flicker of candle light wasn't what woke Hermione.

No.

That was the rustle of papers.

She slowly pried her eyes open and blinked a few times before she caught sight of a blurry figure dressed in all black, Hermione knew it was a man due to his build and height, her eyes raked up him slowly and her heart stopped when she saw the mop of white where the black ended.

She closed her eyes and shook her head hoping that perhaps she was just seeing things but when she opened her eyes again she could see Draco Malfoy, stood frowning at a piece of parchment that Hermione had left out.

"What are you doing?!" She snapped as she threw herself out of the chair she had woken up in "I could ask you the same question," he hissed, his eyes still scanning the parchment, "that's mine!" She yelled and made an attempt to grab for the parchment, but Draco just moved it further out of her reach, "actually, I think you will find that myself and my mother paid for these, so it is mine," he stated.

Once he had read everything on the parchment his eyes moved to hers, his bold stare made her nervous and weak in the knees, but Hermione still stood, deciding she would not let him scare her away.

"Who's been helping you?" He asked her, "no one-"

"Don't lie to me!" His voice roared "most of this hand writing doesn't match!"

His eyes were turning red in anger and the piece of parchment in this hand had been scrunched into a ball.

"No one as been helping me!"

She lied.

"I just have bipolar hand writing!"

She lied again.

"That's bull shit Granger and you know it! Hermione Granger, so called '*Brightest Witch Of Our Age*' and she can't even keep her hand writing the same?!"

"Brightest Witch Of Our Age means that I'm smart not OCD!" She yelled.

And lied.

Again.

Actually, despite appearances, Hermione quite liked her work to be neat and organised, she had often prided herself on it.

"Brightest Witch Of Our Age and you can't even listen to a simple instruction, aren't you Gryffindor's supposed to be goody-goodies?" He scoffed "oh *please*," Hermione laughed "I probably broke more rules than you did when we were at school."

"Bull shit! You don't know me!"

"Oh I'm sorry, I forgot how bad you were, hooking up with random girls in broom closets, *how terrible, what a rebble*," she mocked "oh yeah because sneaking into the restricted section to do the best on your Defence Against The Dark Arts homework is so much worse than having a social life!" He yelled back.

Hermione simply burst into a laughing fit causing her to fall back into her chair "I don't see what's so funny Granger," Draco seethed as he took a step forward bringing him closer to Hermione but her eyes were filled with tears of laughter, so many that she didn't notice how close he was to her. "You, thinking you know anything about me, you don't know half the things me, Harry and Ron did in Hogwarts."

Hermione was in a loud laughing fit, struggling to catch her breath before she mentioned their names, but then it hit her that her friends were dead. Gone. Never coming back. There would be no more rule breaking for them.

And her face simply, dropped.

"Ah yes, The Golden Trio. You were given that name for a reason you know, because you got away with every-fucking-thing, if anyone else did some of the shit you did they would have been booted out of Hogwarts faster than you could say 'sorry Professor Dumbledore.'"

Albus Dumbledore.

Also dead.

Because of him.

And yet he said it like he didn't have a care in the world.

"Now tell me who the fuck has been helping you," he seethed. Suddenly Hermione realised how close he was to her, if she stood up their chests would touch and she would be able to feel his breath on her nose.

"Why don't you tell me why you don't want me helping you?" She responded calmly. Draco drew a sharp breath and ran his hand through his hair, "I don't have to explain anything to you," he stated bluntly, "then I don't have to listen to you!" She yelled back.

Hermione stood from the chair forcing Draco to take a step back. She felt powerful and knew that even wandless, she had the upper hand.

"Like hell you don't!" He yelled "tell me Malfoy! Why can't I help?! I know more than you do! I know where to look! I can help! We can get out of here!"

"No-"

"For Merlin sake Draco just tell me!"

"Because what if you get—"

But then he stopped.

His eyes bulged like he had nearly said something he shouldn't have.

He took another step back and let out a frustrated sigh "because you might fuck this all up!" He snarled.

"Fuck this all up?! I have been—" but before she could finish her sentence Draco pulled his wand out, pointed it at the table and said "incendio." The newspapers and pieces of parchment burst into flames and were seconds away from hitting the books before Draco muttered "aguamenti," and the flames were gone. Nothing was left of the papers or notes, just ash and a burn mark on the table.

Luckily for Hermione she remembered enough to not *need* her notes, but they certainly would have helped, and watching him do it stung too.

No one had ever ruined her work - not beyond repair anyway - but without her wand, she had no chance.

"Winky!" Draco shouted suddenly, and the small elf appeared in the room with a familiar 'pop'. "Master called?" She squeaked "take all the books from the table and this back shelf

and put them in my room," he instructed, "yes Master Draco, I's will do's that right now," she squeaked.

When Winky called Draco 'Master' a look of shame appeared on his face but he said nothing. The elf clicked her fingers and all the books disappeared, "is that's all Master Draco?" Winky asked, "yes, now go," Draco snapped.

A moment later Winky was gone and Hermione was left alone with Draco once again.

"If you had just done as you were told it wouldn't have had to come to this," he said bluntly before turning and walking away. Hermione simply stood and stared at the table as she listened to the sound of Draco's shoes hit the floor.

# Chapter 7

## Chapter Summary

The stress of researching and getting no where is finally getting to Hermione, will Draco finally come to his senses and accept her help?

## Chapter Notes

AN: Sorry this took so long to publish I haven't been in a great place mentally.  
Hopefully the next chapter will be out sooner.  
NOT MY CHARACTERS

The next morning Hermione tried to go to the library to see if Draco had put any of the books back but the second she grabbed the metal door handle it glowed a fiery red and scolded her hand. She knew immediately why.

Draco had placed a charm on the door to stop her from entering the library.

Hermione skipped breakfast, she skipped lunch and she skipped dinner.

Ginny had come up twice with a plate of food for Hermione but she said had no appetite. Blaise and Theodore had even tried but Hermione simply said she didn't feel well.

However Blaise and Theodore had worked out what had happened when Draco was acting odd as well. They decided to go to the library where they saw the burn marks on the table however all of the books were back on the shelves so the two boys grabbed all of the ones they had been reading and went to Narcissa for the morning paper before going to Hermione's room.

Theodore reached to open the door but Blaise was quick to grab his arm with his free hand that wasn't carrying a stack of books and stopped him. "The fuck?"

"I get that you're still pissed about Pansy, and I get you can't be arsed with anymore of Draco's shit, but you need to be nice to her, she's trying to help us all and I bet you fifty galleons that Draco will thank us for this later," Blaise said, his tone was serious and not mood lightening whatsoever. Theodore took a step back from the door and scowled at his friend "I wasn't planning on being a dick but I've never been a *fan* of Gryffindor's and you know that. I hope you're right about Granger because it seems to me that she's a lot more trouble than she's worth," Theodore hissed. Blaise opened his mouth to respond but Theodore cut him off "ah- if I were you, I'd focus on your own behaviour."



Before Blaise had the time to respond Theodore pushed Hermione's door open without so much as knocking, revealing Hermione curled in a ball under her bed sheet facing the wall, her hair was a birds nest behind her and a plate filled with food was on the floor beside her bed.

"Granger, are you alright?" Blaise asked cautiously "I'm fine, go away," she mumbled. Both boys rolled their eyes and made their way further into the bedroom shutting the door behind them. Blaise cast a silencing charm under his breath as to avoid any eavesdroppers and then sat on the edge of Hermione's bed whilst Theodore leaned up against the wall at the other end of the room. "We saw the burn marks on the table in the library. You want to tell us what happened?" Blaise began, but Hermione stayed quiet, unmoving, with her eyes fixed on the wall.

"Well I suppose we could always ask Draco..." Blaise sighed, but the second the mattress shifted from his weight leaving it Hermione bolted up and yelled for him not to. "Well then Granger, I suppose you better start explaining," Theodore said with a smirk.

With a sigh and a shuffle Hermione braced herself. Her hair was inflated behind her head and the jumper she borrowed from Ginny was sliding off of her shoulder. Not even when she was on the run with Harry and Ron had she ever let anyone see her this way.

"After you all left, I fell asleep, when I woke up Malfoy was stood there flicking through our notes," at this comment Hermione noticed Theodore shift anxiously and he was clearly holding back from speaking, "he got mad at me for doing research and burnt all of our notes," she said weakly, "does he know that we were helping you?" Theodore finally asked, a hint of worry behind his agitated tone, "no, he noticed that the hand writing was different but I told him that I have bipolar hand writing," she half laughed, "and he believed that?!" Theodore exclaimed, "well no, but he doesn't know that you two and Ginny were helping me. That's what you're worried about right?" She asked cocking a brow, but Theodore didn't reply, he simply breathed heavily and shifted onto his other leg.

"When has someone telling you that you that you that you *can't* do something ever stopped you Granger?" Blaise chimed "I mean how many rules did you break at Hogwarts huh? How many times did *you* prove us all wrong when people said that muggle borns could never be as powerful as a pureblood? *You* are Hermione fucking Granger, The Brightest Witch Of Our Age, after everything you have done for us- for the whole Wizarding World, are you seriously going to let that blonde pillock stop you from kicking You-Know-Who's sorry arse?"

Once Blaise had finished his inspiring speech the room laid quiet for a while, Hermione sat for a moment and pondered her response before taking a deep breath, "he's locked me out of the library," was all she replied.

"Granger, I know you didn't know us very well back a school, but how many times did you ever see me and Blaise walking round those corridors with stacks of books and newspapers?" Theodore laughed, something he didn't do much - or at all really - in Hermione's presence, "we will bring you everything you need, now we won't be much help but I can personally guarantee that you working with whatever crap we bring you will be ten times better than whatever Draco is wasting his time on," he told her, "that's not what you were saying earlier," Blaise hummed.

Theodore pushed himself off of the wall and put everything he was carrying -aside from the newspaper - on top of Hermione's draws before walking over to Blaise and hitting him on the back of his head with it.



Ginny was finally told about everything that had happened between Hermione and Draco and she found herself absolutely furious, she had even threatened to wandlessly hex him into oblivion but Blaise was quick to calm her down, insisting that it would only waist time and that You-Know-Who would find it a tad-bit-suspicious when Draco showed up to the next Death Eater meeting with limbs missing.

Yet another week went by with the four studying and taking notes.

Each day the next newspaper would be brought, always crumpled and usually with something spilt on it due to the fact that the elves had to search for one each day - usually in rubbish bins - because now in order to buy something as simple as a morning coffee a witch or wizard had to have ID. This was one of Voldemort's new ways of trying to find Undesirables. Unless bought by Draco or Adrian, all of the food in the house was stolen by Winky and Kreacher.

Each day there had been at least one public execution, but none of them were anyone who had fought in the battle and there was still no mention of those who had been 'arrested', it did mention who was assigned to search for any Undesirables and amongst the long list of Death Eaters was Draco Malfoy and Adrian Pucey.

Over the last week Ginny had seen a little of Draco and Adrian but she spent more time rushing down food and then taking some up for Hermione than she did paying any attention to the two. Since the article came out about the two being "top searchers" they were almost always in their Death Eater robes and almost never in the house. Hermione however had hardly been eating, she had been obsessing over doing research, Ginny had even had to persuade her to take a break and have a shower.

Hermione's bedroom was harder to work in than the library, there was no seating area or anywhere to rest on for taking notes so Hermione and Ginny had been sitting on Hermione's single bed whilst Blaise and Theodore sat on the hardwood floor using the wall to keep themselves upright and each of them would have a book on their laps which they would rest on if they needed to take notes. Theodore complained the most out of the four, mainly about his back pains but also about the fact that he felt as though he was back in school.

Whilst neither Theodore or Blaise had said anything, Ginny had noticed that Hermione wasn't putting any weight back on and she was becoming paler.

So Ginny decided to pay Narcissa a visit.

Narcissa could normally be found in her bedroom, she would appear if a problem had occurred and for meals but for the rest of the day she would not be seen. Draco was often seen entering and leaving her room but other than Hermione he had been the only person to go in.

Ginny walked boldly to the door and knocked three times, less than a second later Narcissa's voice could be heard telling her to come in. Ginny opened up the door quickly and found Narcissa sat in an armchair facing the window.

"You're back early, is everything alright-" she began until she turned and saw that her guest was Ginny, "Miss Weasley, is everything alright? The elves should be around here somewhere if there is something you need," she said softly, "actually no, I'm here to speak to you about your son and Hermione," Ginny stated, her tone coming across a tad more aggressive than it should have.

"Oh," Narcissa said, tilting her head slightly in confusion, "Malfoy has locked Hermione out of the library! He has been down right horrible to her and he's saying he just doesn't want her helping because she might mess things up but if you ask me he probably still has a problem with her blood status which is ridiculous considering what this safe house is here for-"

"I can assure you Miss Weasley, my son is past his old prejudices, but I agree, he has no right to stop her from helping, in fact, I also asked her to help out. I should've known that he would act this way," Narcissa stated, "but you don't understand, she's hardly eating, she never leaves her room, at least when she could go to the library she had an excuse to shower!" Ginny cried.



Draco had arrived back early as Voldemort was holding another execution of muggles that he had captured. He had been assigned to work with his father and Bellatrix in order to search a village in Leeds for 'traitors', he hated the task when he was grouped because he couldn't just let people go as he wanted. Death Eaters were only grouped when they were searching a new area in order to capture more 'Traitors', and this meant that Draco had to go against his mother's wishes and if he captured someone he would be forced to take them back to the palace.

Voldemort had been torturing those who were captured to try and find any information on those who went missing after the battle, Hermione Granger had been top of his list for some time.

Whilst no murmur of The Safe House was uttered to Draco's knowledge, those who Draco hadn't gotten to first had let slip about having seen Arthur Weasley, Kingsley Shacklebolt and a younger red haired boy who people were assuming was George Weasley. Anyone that Draco had caught when separated from whatever group he was searching with, he made sure to obliviate before taking them back to the palace. The way he saw it they were going to die either way and it was better to keep everyone else safe than risk them being caught because of someone who was trying to save their own skin.

Lucius had spent the entire mission complaining about how he should not be tasked with such a low-class job, but since Narcissa's betrayal Voldemort had not been as trusting of the family. Bellatrix on the other hand did not complain and she had spent every day since Narcissa 'went missing' sucking up to Voldemort and trying to regain his trust.

As soon as Draco arrived in the house he would always go straight to see his mother. On this Day Adrian was out on a mission, the same as Draco's, however he was just re checking a local village so he was allowed to go alone.

Draco made his way straight to his mother's room and found himself fortunate enough not to run into any of the other house members. He knew none of them trusted him and the way they all looked at him made his stomach twist, despite growing up not caring about other people's opinions he found it more unsettling when he was forced to live with them, he had even noticed that Blaise and Theodore had become more distant.

He approached his mother's door and was half a second away from walking straight in until he heard a voice that did not belong to Narcissa.

"Malfoy has locked Hermione out of the library! He has been down right horrible to her and he's saying he just doesn't want her helping because she might mess things up but if you ask me he probably still has a problem with her blood status-" Draco felt his blood begin to boil, the accusation that he was still faithful to his old prejudices was outrageous.

"If she only knew what I had done to help Muggle borns and halfblood's already!" He had thought to himself despite his thoughts being a little over dramatic. In all honesty the most he had been able to do was help the odd few people escape during searches.

"I can assure you Miss Weasley, my son is past his old prejudices, but I agree, he has no right to stop her from helping," his mother's voice spoke softly.

"How dare she!" He thought "she is completely aware that I'm trying to protect her!"

"In fact, I also asked her to help out."

The realisation that his own mother had gone against his wishes and set the idea in Hermione's head that she had to research hit him like a Hypogriff - which he knew from experience - he began to question whether or not he could trust anyone anymore.

"But you don't understand, she's hardly eating, she never leaves her room, at least when she could go to the library she had an excuse to shower!" Ginny Weasley's voice cried.

Draco's body went stiff and his heart stopped beating for a moment at the sickening thought of what he was doing to Hermione.

He inhaled a deep breath before turning and marching down the hallway not daring to listen to the rest of the conversation.



Hermione was the only one in her bedroom, she was clutching a book in her hand that she had read several times already, the book was one on Goblin made weapons, it told her everything she already knew however she was trying to figure out a place where the elves could get some.

Frustrated, tired, dehydrated and hungry.

She was slowly driving herself insane.

Her room was covered in pieces of parchment, newspapers with Death all over them and the odd ink spill on her bed sheets and the hardwood floor.

It was depressing.

There was a knock on her door and she jolted up in shock, assuming it was Blaise or Theodore - who had both learned to knock before entering - she called for the person to come in, however it was a complete shock to her when Draco Malfoy entered her room.

"What do you want?" She snapped, Draco took a deep breath and took a step further into the room closing the door behind him. "I've come to- I've come to ask for your help," he stated. Hermione let out a loud laugh and placed the book she had been reading to the side "and where has this come from? It was only one week ago that you burnt all of my research and locked me out of the library!" She retorted, "well clearly that didn't stop you did it?" Draco snapped as he looked around the room and noted all of the books, newspapers and pieces of parchment scattered around "I knew someone was helping you, I presume it was Weaslette although I didn't think that Weasley's had enough brain cells to do this amount of work," he laughed, "ah yes, snide remarks are sure to make me want to help you," Hermione spat.

Draco could see that his usual self was no way to go about this situation and was only making Hermione more angry. He inhaled deeply through his nose and brushed his hand through his hair, "Granger, I *need* your help," he sighed, "well I could have told you that, in fact, I did tell you that."

"You-Know-Who is growing stronger by the day, my position in his ranks is low but from what I know his number of followers is growing larger by the second. I have been researching every possible reason as to why he cannot die and I've got nothing," he half lied, "two weeks ago a prisoner stabbed him right in the chest and he survived! I'm guessing that he must be taking something to help him heal quickly and possibly make him immortal but other than the Philosophers Stone there is nothing that could have such powers, but we were all told that the stone was destroyed seven years ago-"

Suddenly Hermione began to laugh hysterically, it was a cackle, almost similar to one Bellatrix possessed. "What's so funny?" He asked her, "I know how he's alive! I know how to kill him! There is no issue there, it is getting the things we need and getting to him and his bloody snake that is the problem," she explained almost out of breath "what has any of this got to do with Nagini?" He questioned.

"Voldemort split his soul into seven pieces and put it inside seven objects, one of them he did by accident, those objects were then called Horcruxes. It is an object where one hides their soul and it essentially makes them immortal. They can only be destroyed using Basilisk Venom, Fiendfyre and- well apparently the Killing Curse. Over the last year myself, Harry and Ron set out to find and destroy all of them, we managed to destroy six, Nagini is the last one," Hermione explained.

Draco stood still, a baffled look stained on his face, his jaw hung slightly and his eyelids seemed to be glued open. Hermione pulled herself from her bed but due to her lack of food

and drink her legs suddenly turned to jelly and fell from beneath her. Draco jolted forward and caught her just before she hit the floor, one hand grasped her arm and the other her waist. It was once he had pulled her up and steadied her that he had really realised how pale she was.

Her skin was white as paper and he could almost see the bone structure of her face so clearly that her skin needn't be there, it was then that he had realised what Ginny had been talking about to his mother, it was clear that she had been missing meals and he also knew that stress made people loose weight quicker as well, the fact that he had kept her away from what she was good at and what she clearly felt that she needed to do, probably wasn't good for her mental health.

He should've known that keeping Hermione Granger away from books wouldn't be good for her.

His stomach turned horrifically at the thought that he had done this to her.

Suddenly Hermione cleared her throat dragging Draco out of his thoughts and back to reality, "if it's my help you want then fine, but we won't get anywhere if we argue all of the time Malfoy. I want to get out of here just as much as you do, and I have a feeling that together we have a fighting chance of winning this war and killing Voldemort," she stated matter-of-factly.

"I bet you didn't ever think you'd hear me say this Granger but, you're right," Draco stated, a proud smirk painted onto his face, "I'll send Winky up with something for you to eat and drink, get ready and meet me in the library," he instructed.

Before giving Hermione the chance to respond he helped her back onto her bed, turned around and left her room.

# Chapter 8

## Chapter Summary

Cormac visits Hermione.

## Chapter Notes

This is only a short chapter but it is important for later on in the story.  
I DO NOT OWN ANY OF THESE CHARACTERS!!

One week had gone by and Hermione and Draco had worked together everyday. Whilst Draco and Adrian would go to do their duties for Voldemort, Blaise, Theodore and Ginny would continue to help Hermione in her research - however it was still mainly Hermione teaching them everything she already knew - and when Draco returned he would head straight to the Library and research with Hermione.

Over the last week Hermione and Draco made a plan; he was to work his way higher up in Voldemort's ranks and figure out Voldemort's routine, map out the palace and figure out a way to separate Voldemort and Nagini. Hermione's job was to come up with a safe way of killing Nagini without anyone else having to die for it, this of course was Hermione's idea, after what she had witnessed with Neville she wanted to avoid anything else like that.

She refused to lose anyone else.

This of course would take time and Draco would have to step greatly out of his comfort zone which Hermione wasn't certain he would be capable of but this was their only plan that wouldn't put too much at stake.

An added extra to the plan was that Draco was to figure out what had happened to the remaining members of The Order. None of those who had sided with him had been seen and none of the captured had been publicly executed either. It had been weeks since The Battle Of Hogwarts and even the daily prophet had gotten bored of mentioning the peculiar disappearances.

Despite all of Hermione's doubts, she was however confident in Draco's ability to occlude seen as she had caught him doing it several times in the last week, he was getting better at hiding it but Hermione couldn't help but feel uncomfortable as to how much he had been doing so.

Only one candle was lit in their corner of the library that evening, it cast a dark shadow over Draco's face but when the candle light flickered just right Hermione could tell that he was trying to occlude. Another uneasy feeling that made her stomach twist.

She couldn't help wonder why he was occluding so much.

Hermione placed the book she had been attempting to read under the minimal light, onto the table and then shifted slightly so she was facing Draco. He was sat on the chair beside hers with a book open in one hand, a quill in the other and a piece of parchment on his lap that he had been taking notes on since he had gotten home.

"Uh- Malfoy-" Hermione began but she was abruptly interrupted by the sound of Draco's harsh groan. He was gripping his forearm so hard Hermione was afraid that he would cut off circulation. "Draco, what's wrong?" Hermione gasped as she shot up from her seat and rushed over to him, "it's The Dark Lord, he's calling me," he hissed. Draco pushed himself up from his seat - still clutching his arm tightly - almost knocking Hermione over in the process. "I have to go, *stay here*," he said as he ran out of the library.

Once the door slammed shut behind him Hermione sat and stared blankly, this had been the first time that Hermione had seen anyone's mark burn or really the first time she had really acknowledged what Draco and Adrian were really having to do for the sake of everyone in the safe house.

After a few minutes of analysing the situation that they were in Hermione shook her head and decided to continue trying to figure out what would be the best way to kill Nagini. She picked up her book and sat closer to the lit candle so that she could see the words clearer and began rereading the book she had already read three times before hand.



An hour after Draco had left Hermione was still sat alone in the library, nothing odd in the slightest had happened up until there was a knock at the door.

"Come in!" Hermione called. The door opened and in walked Cormac McLaggen. His face had fully healed after his ordeal with Draco however since it had been announced that he was well enough to leave his room, Hermione had tried her hardest to avoid him at all costs.

"I should've known that I would find you in here," he laughed, "what do you want?" She hissed, Cormac took a steady step forward but knew to stop when Hermione leapt out of her seat, "listen Granger," he spoke quickly with his arms in the air as if to surrender, "I wanted to apologise, what I said was completely out of order and I had no right, I was just angry about the situation and I couldn't tell how you were being so civil headed, I took it out on you, but you should know that I didn't mean any of it!" He spoke.

Despite his words sounding sincere Hermione couldn't be sure that his intentions were.

Since she had arrived at The Safe House, Hermione had made herself a strict rule not to trust anyone that she didn't fully trust before arriving there, this included; Narcissa, Blaise, Theodore, Winky, Kreacher and Draco - among others. Despite the fact that none of them had



given her *much* of a reason for her not to trust them, not one of them had given her a *real* reason to do otherwise.

These were dark times and not ones where Hermione was willing to give things as simple and mundane as trust, out so easily.

Hermione hadn't realised how long she had taken to mull over what Cormac had just said until she noticed him take a step forward and open his mouth. "Please Granger, lets start over," he suggested as he tilted his head slightly to the side. "Fine," she replied bluntly deciding it best to keep things civil. Cormac took yet another step forward - almost making Hermione want to take a step back - and stretched out his arm towards her, "friends?"

Hermione took his hand in hers and said "acquaintances."

Straight to the point and simple.

Just the way she liked things.

"I suppose I will take what I can get," Cormac laughed. He pulled his hand out of hers and took an opportunity to glance around the library, "I can see that you're busy so I'll leave you to - well - whatever it is that you're doing."

"Thank you," Hermione replied.

Cormac turned around and made his way towards the door leaving with a simple "see you around Granger," and then exiting, making sure that he closed the door behind him.

Once again Hermione was the only person in the library. She liked it that way, peaceful, quite, easy to work in.

With a soft sigh Hermione sat back in her chair and opted on staying an extra hour before heading down to bed.

# Chapter 9

## Chapter Summary

Hermione is woken up by a loud crash downstairs after falling asleep in the library once again and as the only one awake in the house, she must be the one to check it out.

## Chapter Notes

NOT MY CHARACTERS!!

A loud crash from down stairs was what woke Hermione up.

She had fallen asleep - yet again - in the library. Her back ached from her uncomfortable position in the chair and her eyelids felt heavy.

Once pried open she looked up at the clock that Draco had brought back that week, only to notice that it was two o'clock in the morning. With a loud groan Hermione pulled herself from the chair and began putting away the books and pieces of parchment that had been left out. Once she had finished Hermione picked one book to take down with her and read until she fell back asleep.

The book was large and heavy but was one that the elves had found on the black market. The book was entitled 'The Darkest Magic Known To Witches And Wizards'. So far the book had only contained a few spells and potions but Hermione had hoped that further through its pages, it may contain some information on Horcruxes.

Hermione made her way out of the library and back to her bedroom. The hallways were pitch black, not a flicker of light was in sight, it was now that Hermione really wished that she had her wand.

Almost every step she took startled her, the old floorboards in the house had a tendency to make a loud creaking sound when stepped on, a sound that reminded Hermione of Bellatrix.

When Hermione, Harry and Ron were searching for Horcruxes they had found themselves captured by a group of Snatchers after they paid Xenophilius Lovegood a visit and he sold them out in some attempt to have Luna brought home. It was then that they were taken to Malfoy Manor.

When Bellatrix saw The Sword Of Gryffindor that was pulled from Hermione's bag she accused her of stealing from her vault at Gringots, when Hermione denied the allegation Bellatrix tortured her using The Cruciatus curse and then carved the word 'Mudblood' into her arm.

The scar still burned from time-to-time, when it did Hermione would pull a brave face and excuse herself so she could run it under some cold water, the pain wouldn't vanish completely but it would fade which was enough to sooth her.

Hermione would never forget the vicious laugh that escaped Bellatrix's mouth as she tortured her and she doubted that there would ever be a day again that she wouldn't be terrified of hearing it.

Despite knowing other Witches since she was eleven, up until her first time meeting Bellatrix - in The Department Of Mysteries during her fifth year at Hogwarts - she had never heard such a Muggle-stereotypical cackle.

It was like one that her mum would do when she read Hermione a book before bed, or one heard in films, but never had they sounded to scary.

It was truly a sound that would shake Salazar Slytherin himself, right through to his core.

Draco had been there the day Hermione was tortured. He had been in the room. Stood and watched as Hermione wriggled around the floor, screaming in pain, tears drowning her face.

She often wondered how he felt about that day or if he even cared.

Despite her curiosities she didn't dare ask. They had only just started getting along and working together and she had decided that things were going too well for her to be the one to ruin it.

Hermione was almost at her bedroom door when she heard another crash from downstairs.

Her heart almost stopped.

She wondered if perhaps someone was awake but despite the fact it could be a possibility she knew it would be safer to check.

She knew checking without a wand was dangerous, but she also didn't want to wake anyone up if was just nothing, so instead her grip tightened on the book she was holding and she slowly made her way downstairs.

As Hermione made her way closer to the ground floor it became clear that someone was awake in the house and they were in the kitchen.

As she got closer the sounds of moving and the odd crash, it all became louder and Hermione's heartbeat felt as though it was racing one hundred miles a minute, so much so that she was beginning to sweat and amongst all the noise she could hear and feel it.

Now the door was directly in front of her, the clear sounds of movement banged in her ears like drums.

Hermione took a deep breath to brace herself and gripped the book even tighter.

"Three... Two... One," she whispered under her breath before pushing the kitchen door open and walking in boldly.

It was then that she saw Draco with his robes off, completely shirtless covered in blood with gashes all over his chest and back.

"Oh my God!" She yelled. Draco turned quickly, too quickly. As he did he almost yelled in pain and he grabbed onto the kitchen counter in order to steady himself.

Hermione rushed closer to him yet stayed weary of how close. "What happened to you?" She asked, her voice shaking slightly, "The- The- Voldemort, he crucio'd me- a- and used Snape's spell- *fuck* - Snape's spell on me that Potter used o- on me la- last year," he groaned.

"What?! Why?!" Hermione exclaimed "because- I- I haven't- brought back any un-Undesirables."

Whilst Draco croaked out his answer Hermione had thought quickly and cleared the small wooden table in the kitchen. It was a little smaller than him so Dracos legs would hang over the edge but Hermione was forced to work with what she had.

"Lay down on the table," she instructed as she started searching through draws for anything that would help to stop the bleeding, "Hermione you- you don't have t- to. J- just go back to bed," he groaned, "and leave you like this? I don't think so. Now lie down on the table. Winky! Kreacher!"

Upon first call neither of the elves popped up, so Hermione yelled a second time whilst she helped Draco onto the table, but still neither of the elves showed up. It wasn't until Hermione shouted at her loudest the third time that the elves finally appeared.

"What's it be that Miss Granger be's needing?" Winky squeaked tiredly as she rubbed her eyes roughly Kreacher on the other hand, had noticed Draco straight away and began eyeing him as he laid, hardly moving, on the table.

"Winky do we have any Essence Of Dittany in the house?" Hermione asked as calmly as she could "no Miss, we'z has not been ablez to find anys on the market since everyone arrived ats The Safe House," Winky told her.

"That- that won't work," Draco spoke. Hermione turned back around to face Draco and saw him pressed up on his elbows staring at her "S- S- Snape, w- when he healed me the ffffirf first time, he- he used a- a spell, Vulnera Sanentur," he told her, pronouncing the spell as clearly as he could before then falling back onto his back.

"Crap!" Hermione exclaimed, "I don't have a wand! Winky, Kreacher, wake Narcissa-" "No!" Draco yelled before Winky and Kreacher had the chance to pop out of the room

"Hermione, you'll have to- to do it," he said, though his voice was hardly there anymore.

"Malfoy, I don't even have a wand!"

"Use mine, it- it's in my robes, on that chair," he told her weakly.

Hermione didn't even stop to question his request, she rushed over to his robes and instantly began to rummage through them. Her hands practically clobbered his robes until she felt the long wooden stick hidden away inside of them, and then it was only a matter of staying calm whilst she tried to find the pocket. That however, was easier said than done.

Hermione's hands felt clammy and the room felt like it was closing in on her. The thought of someone's life being in her hands and her not even having her own wand to save them was vomit inducing, even if the person was Draco Malfoy. Nevertheless, Hermione swallowed the bile at the back of her throat, took a deep breath and within seconds pulled Draco's wand out of his pocket.

This wand was not the wand he had gone through Hogwarts with, Harry had taken that before escaping Malfoy Manor. It was clear to Hermione that this was a new wand. Unlike his last wand this one was clearly made from apple-wood, it was thin and pointy at the top and slightly thicker towards the bottom, and carved into the wood towards the centre of the wand, was two lines with little dots evenly placed in between them.

Hermione rushed back over to Draco's side, a small puddle of blood had formed on the floor beside her foot which only worsened Hermione's current anxiety.

"The spell. What did you say the spell was?!" Hermione asked frantically, "Vulnera Sanentur," he answered breathlessly.

"Vulnera Sanentur?" She questioned, but Draco did not answer. Hermione looked towards his face but Draco's eyes were closed and his head was limp to the side.

"Should we be getting Narcissa now Miss?" Winky spoke "yes!" Hermione accidentally snapped, but before she had the chance to apologise, both of the elves had left.

Hermione held Draco's wand in her hand, she could feel the magic coursing through her and it felt exhilarating. It almost upset her that this would probably be the only time for the next few months that she would be able to perform Magic. She hovered his wand directly over his chest where the first open wound was and began chanting the spell almost rhythmically.

"Vulnera Sanentur, Vulnera Sanentur, Vulnera Sanentur," she continued to mutter.

Suddenly Hermione noticed underneath the blood, the gashes were starting to close. Her heart skipped a beat and her cheeks flushed with colour when she had realised the spell was working, even with another wizard's wand.

Hermione kept her movements soft and slow and repeated them up and down his front until all of the wounds had closed. She then lifted up his shoulder to check his back but the marks there had healed too, all that was left were scars, scars that matched his previous ones gifted to him by Harry.

The second Hermione placed his wand back on the table, the kitchen door burst open and Narcissa ran into the room and towards the table with Winky and Kreacher following closely behind her.

"My boy! Oh Merlin is my boy okay?! Please be okay? Oh Draco please!" She cried, her hands were wrapped around his lifeless face, caressing his pale cheeks.

Hermione took two fingers and placed them under his jaw line and was pleasantly relived when she found his pulse straight away, "he's okay Mrs- uh- Narcissa, still breathing," Hermione said softly, "oh thank you my dear," Narcissa cried, "I don't know what I would have done if I had lost him."



The time was quarter past four in the morning, the sun could just be seen popping up from the horizon turning the sky a dark shade of purple, the birds were beginning to sing their songs and Draco was finally beginning to stir.

Since Hermione had healed him, she had re-checked his wounds at least five times and had the elves look him over, despite how much they insisted that he would be fine Hermione couldn't help but worry that he wouldn't be.

She had also attempted to clean the kitchen but the elves stopped her and did it themselves even though she had insisted countless times that she could do it. If anything she would have preferred to do it herself rather than sit in awkward silence with Narcissa whilst her thoughts ran a muck.

Draco's face screwed up and a soft groan escaped his lips, Narcissa instantly shot up from the chair she had placed beside him, Hermione on the other hand, held herself together and kept her sudden feeling of relief contained.

"Draco? Draco it's me," Narcissa hummed softly, "mother?" Draco groaned as he began to tear open his eyes. "Are you in pain?" Narcissa asked, "are you hungry? Thirsty? Uncomfortable?" The mother overloaded her son with questions, each one sounding more anxious than the last.

Hermione suddenly felt a warm feeling in her stomach as she watched Narcissa coddle and fuss over Draco, however, she almost felt jealous at the same time. It was unlikely that she would ever feel the love of her own mother again, since Hermione had arrived at The Safe House, she tried to limit herself to how much she thought about her parents or her friends and she tried to stay focused on the present, to do anything else would surly tear her apart.

Draco suddenly began to push himself up onto his elbows, it clearly hurt to do so but it was also clear that he was trying to hide the pain. "Winky, we need some pain potion right away," Narcissa instructed, "but we're all out," the small elf said quickly, "then go to The Black Market and scour the entire place until you find some," she demanded "go now!" She yelled taking Hermione by surprise.

The next thing that was heard was two '*pop's*' and when Hermione looked back, both of the elves were gone.

"You didn't have to speak to them like that," Draco suddenly snapped, "you promised that if they joined us here that they would be treated *with respect*!" He seethed. Hermione was taken back as she listened to Draco defend the elves, him and his friends used to take a lot of joy in making fun of her SPEW posters when she put them around the school and yet now, he was defending Winky and Kreacher.

"I know, you're right," Narcissa sighed, "I will apologise when they return.

Draco what happened to you?" Narcissa asked softly, "Voldemort, he had noticed that me and Adrian hadn't brought back any Undesirables when we went on searches alone. He used legilimency on both of us. Fortunately I am skilled enough in occlumency to have been able to stop him from finding anything, but Adrian, well he wasn't. Voldemort, he- he found out that Adrian wasn't loyal to him and he, he killed him."

"What?!" Narcissa exclaimed, "we need to get everyone out of here *now*!" She said frantically. She was ready to turn and begin waking everyone in the house up until Draco quickly grabbed her shoulder, "no mother, he doesn't know about the Safe House, just that Adrian was letting people go," he told her, "oh," she replied.

"Mother, go back to bed, please, get some sleep, I'm fine," he assured her, "but-"  
"*Now*."

Narcissa gave a harsh sigh but then kissed her son on his forehead before leaving Hermione and Draco on their own.

Draco shifted on the table and began to pull himself off, it was then that Hermione shot up and attempted to help him. "No no, it's fine, I'm fine Granger, but thank you for helping me."

Hermione didn't miss Draco calling her 'Granger,' in fact it almost hurt her that he had gone back to calling her by her surname, whilst she was helping to heal him, Draco had called her by her first name several times and to Hermione, it felt almost reassuring, but she felt that, the use of her surname put a barrier between the two.

And it stung.

"I only did what anyone else would have done," she replied softly, but Draco released a harsh scoff in response, "I'm not too sure about that," he laughed sarcastically, "most people here still think I want to hand them over to The Dark Lord."

A moment of silence fell on the two, Hermione didn't know how to respond, he was probably right, but nevertheless she never would have let him die.

Draco grabbed his wand off of the table and walked over to the chair where his robes and shirt had been tossed and retrieved his things, "you should go to sleep as well," he breathed.

Hermione didn't protest the way Narcissa had tried to, she was exhausted and even whilst she was waiting for Draco to wake up she had almost dozed off in the chair beside him.

"Goodnight D- Malfoy," she muttered before making her way towards the kitchen door.

Before she left the room she glanced back at Draco who was watching her, they made eye contact for a brief second before Draco abruptly broke it, "goodnight Granger," he replied bluntly.

Hermione took a deep breath and then left the kitchen and made her way back to her bedroom, she didn't even change her clothes before climbing into bed and falling into a deep sleep.



# Chapter 10

## Chapter Summary

A new plan has been created and Antonin Dolohov grows suspicious of Draco.

## Chapter Notes

I DO NOT OWN ANY OF THESE CHARACTERS!

It was now July 5th, one month after Voldemort had tortured Draco and killed Adrian.

The day after Hermione had healed Draco, he and Narcissa were forced to tell the house members what had happened to Adrian, Millicent Bulstrode broke out into a fit of tears, it turned out that herself and Adrian had a budding romance that would now never blossom.

After the house meeting, Hermione, Draco, Narcissa, Blaise, Theodore and Ginny discussed a plan in order to better protect Draco from being found out.

The plan was for the elves to go to The Black Market and get all of the ingredients - that Hermione had written down for them - needed to make Polyjuice potion. Each member of the house would give up one of their hairs so Draco could then use it on a dead snatcher and fake the death of an Undesirable. The plan was a good one, after his executions Voldemort would usually have the bodies fed to Nagini, so if they were lucky the Polyjuice potion wouldn't have worn off before then and as far as Voldemort would be aware, there would be one less missing Undesirable that needed searching for.

Of course Hermione wasn't too thrilled about the fact that people had to die in order for the plan to work, but both Ginny and Blaise had argued that they were bad people who were in league with Voldemort and - as The Daily Prophet had recently told the public - they had been handing Muggles in to Voldemort for weeks.

Over the next month Draco had the chance to use the plan twice and luckily both times were successful. Both Hermione and Ginny made the front cover of The Daily Prophet those weeks. Draco used Hermione's hair first and dragged her 'dead body' into Buckingham Palace, the next day an article was released entitled "***Potter's Mudblood killed by Draco Malfoy!***" Underneath the article was a picture of Draco stood over her body, however he did not look victorious in the slightest, if anything he looked sad. It was because of this that Hermione, Narcissa, Blaise and Theodore felt the need to show him how to pose for a picture.

Draco grew frustrated as he watched Hermione pretend to be dead and Blaise stand over her with a wide grin on his face, he grew even more frustrated when Theodore attempted to best him and put his foot on Hermione's stomach, and by the time Ginny and Luna joined them and turned the lesson into a joke, Draco looked as though steam would begin spewing from his ears.

Narcissa on the other hand was disappointed in her son and the fact that he couldn't remember all of his Pureblood lessons that he was made to take when he was younger. Despite not caring about blood status, she did not feel like a proud mother knowing that her son had taken in nothing that he was taught and she began to wonder if he had even absorbed any knowledge from his time at Hogwarts.

Nevertheless, the lessons couldn't have been a waste of time because when Draco took 'Ginny's body' a few weeks later he wore a proud smirk in the photograph that was used in The Daily Prophet the next day.

Due to Draco bringing in Hermione and Ginny's bodies he was finally moved up in Voldemort's ranks, this meant that he was now able to attend the Death Eater meetings and gather more information.

Voldemort's current right-hand-man was Antonin Dolohov.

When Voldemort wasn't in the meetings - which he often wasn't - it was Antonin that directed them, and, Antonin also had some input in who moved up in the ranks, however Draco had heard that Antonin had tried to stop Draco's 'promotion' due to Blaise and Theodore being Traitors. Apparently Antonin had a suspicion that Draco was still in league with his friends.

This meant that Draco would have to be more careful.

One thing Draco had noticed was that there was still no sign of anyone who fought for Harry during The Battle Of Hogwarts.

There was no one who had joined his side sat around the table or even walking around the palace and nor was there any mention of any prisoners. This of course confused Draco, but with Antonin on his back he had to be careful with the questions he asked.

When Draco brought in Hermione's body Draco couldn't help but notice a look of disappointment on Antonin's face, but it wasn't until Draco moved up in the ranks that he started asking questions.

It was after Draco had attended his first Death Eater meeting that Antonin had cornered him.

He was in Buckingham Palace. It wasn't how the books described it, it was dark and gloomy, hardly any light was allowed into palace, it was almost as if a sickness lied upon it. It reminded Draco of Malfoy Manor. A place he hated to think about. A place he could no longer call home.

"So, you killed Potters Mudblood then?" Antonin questioned, he - like everyone who was else in the meeting - was wearing his Death Eater robes and almost blended in with the room.

"Yes," Draco responded bluntly, he then began to walk in some attempt to get out of the situation but Antonin was quick to grab his arm and pull him back, "get your filthy hand off of me," Draco seethed, he could feel his blood beginning to boil.

"You know, some may find it odd that you get tortured for not bringing back any Undesirables and then suddenly you bring back the two that were closest to Potter," Antonin stated, completely ignoring Dracos demand for him to release him, "I suppose that it just *motivated* me to work a little harder," Draco replied harshly, his frustration coursing through his tone.

"Tell me, where was it that you found her again?" Antonin asked, "the edge of Brighton," Draco responded quickly.

"You know, she's only a small girl, it's too bad you weren't strong enough to get her here alive-"

"She's smart as well," Draco replied aggressively "it was easier to just kill her," he continued, "well, it's too bad, I quite would have liked to get my hands on her," Antonin stated all too proudly. Draco could feel his blood begin to get hotter and hotter and it was taking all of his strength not to reach for his wand, "what's that supposed to mean?" Draco almost hissed.

Antonin suddenly laughed darkly, "The Dark Lord has decided to trust you Malfoy, but *I don't*, I'll be keeping my eye on you," he stated matter-of-factly. He then shoved Draco using his shoulder and made his way out of the room leaving Draco to ponder what he could have meant.



Over the last month everyone who had come to The Safe House with a wand had it returned, this included Cormac.

Ultimately this was Narcissa's decision but that didn't stop Draco from arguing that he couldn't be trusted.

Despite most of her friends receiving their wands back, Hermione was still left wandless. The earlier promise that Narcissa made of trying to get wands for those who came without, was yet to be fulfilled, however getting new wands was almost impossible without a permit, this was at fault of Voldemort, yet another new law he had passed in some attempt to catch Undesirables.

# Chapter 11

## Chapter Summary

Things begin to take a turn for the worst for those in the safe house.

## Chapter Notes

I DO NOT OWN ANY OF THESE CHARACTERS!

Draco was right.

This wasn't usually something Draco wouldn't enjoy boasting about, but this wasn't the good kind of right.

The night after everyone had their wands returned to them, Cormac went missing. He had taken his belongings, food, drinks and a little money.

This of course set the entire house on edge including Draco. If Cormac was captured alive then there would be a high chance in Voldemort and his Death Eaters finding out about The Safe House and then everything that everyone in the house, had worked so hard to create and discover, would have been pointless.

It was because of Cormac's disappearance that Draco had made it a *point* to spend as much time in the Palace as possible, this way he would know if Cormac was captured and he would be able to rush back to The Safe House and get everyone out, hopefully before any Death Eaters showed up.

And because of this, it meant that Hermione had to research on her own. Occasionally Blaise, Theodore and Ginny would join her but these days it just annoyed her. It meant that she would spend more of her time trying to teach them and less time retrieving the information that she needed.

Draco had also created new house rules that almost started a riot when the house members were told them.

His rules stated that The House Elves were to take a register both morning and night to confirm that everyone was still in the house. This was not the rule that bothered people.

The rule that almost made Dean Thomas burn the place down, Ginny Weasley hex Draco to death, Hermione search for Cormac and drag him back to The Safe House herself and actually made Luna Lovegood cuss, was the rule that from eleven o'clock at night every member in the house - apart from Draco and Narcissa - were to be locked in their rooms.

When Theodore heard the rule he punched his fist straight through a wall. Blaise on the other hand had attempted to use his 'charm' to persuade Draco into not enforcing his rules onto him, however Draco simply told him to "shove it" before storming out of the common room and leaving Narcissa to try and calm everyone down - which didn't happen until she threatened to take everyone's wands from them again. Draco had told Blaise and Theodore that it would only make everyone angrier if he favoured his friends over everyone else. Blaise understood and stayed calm unlike Theodore who wound up putting more holes in walls and doors. He did this for half an hour before Narcissa took his wand away, after that he locked himself in his room until he calmed down.

Whilst Hermione was locked in her room on a night, she dedicated her time to peaceful research where she read the book that Winky and Kreacher had brought her back from The Black Market one month before.

To her delight, the old book did in fact have information on Horcruxes.

*A Horcrux is created by using some of the darkest magic known to Witches And Wizards but is the perfect kind of magic for those who want to live forever.*

*In order to create a Horcrux a Witch or Wizard need only split their soul and put it into any object. Whilst the task seems simple enough, in order for one to split their soul they must take the life of another. Some may call it ironic that in order for one to live forever they must kill another, but it is actually the balance of nature.*

*For such an inhumane thing to occur, nature must find a balance, a life for a life some would call it.*

*It is also possible for a Witch or Wizard to split their soul multiple times and put it into multiple objects, but the consequences could be dire and permanent.*

*Despite the Witch or Wizard being immortal, they are not indestructible. Once the Horcrux has been made this does not mean that the Witch or Wizard will never die, they can in fact still be killed if their Horcrux has been destroyed. This can happen if the Witch or Wizard choose to destroy it themselves by use of the killing curse, or by anyone else using fiendfyre or Basilisk venom.*

*However if another person who's soul is not inside of the object attempts to destroy it using the killing curse, it will not work.*

This gave Hermione some hope and brought her one step closer to formulating a good plan. No she couldn't just run up to Nagini and shoot her with the killing curse but she had no wand anyway so she would have to risk someone who she cared for trying to kill the snake which was not an option for her.

What she really needed to do was sit down and discuss a proper plan with everyone else in the house.

The only way to kill Voldemort was with The Sword Of Gryffindor or to find a basilisk - which seemed highly unlikely - and the chances of Voldemort becoming bored and killing Nagini himself was about as likely as someone in The Safe House getting a proper permit and buying everyone a new wand which really left Hermione with only one option.

A few weeks prior Blaise had read that The Sword Of Gryffindor was missing and had allegedly been stolen after Neville had been eaten and it hadn't been seen since, this meant that their only hope was to find it, or get hold of the hat that was currently being held safe by Voldemort in a undisclosed location.



Two long, hot months went by.

There had still been no sign of Cormac so Draco had finally decided to ease the rules and stop locking people in their rooms, this definitely eased the tension throughout the house but it was clear to Hermione that Draco was still worried.

She wanted to speak to him about it. Find out what was going on inside his head, but on the rare occasion that she did see him it was obvious to her that he was occluding.

He was always occluding.

So much so that Hermione now thought that rather than him hiding things from everyone in the house, he was actually trying to hide things from himself.

# Chapter 12

## Chapter Summary

Cormac McLaggen has been found!

## Chapter Notes

I DO NOT OWN ANY OF THESE CHARACTERS!

Explicit content that some readers may not like

*Tw*

*\*Explicit content that some readers may not like\**

~°•☆•°~

It was now September 20th. As Draco had relaxed his house rules this meant that Hermione could work in Library alone at night once again and she had taken this opportunity to do so every night for the last two weeks.

She felt as though she was getting so close to ending all of this and avenging her friends.

Whilst Hermione had never been one for revenge, reading The Daily Prophet was beginning to make her more angry. Just knowing that the people she cared about had died just for Voldemort to destroy all that was good in the world made her blood boil. The war had changed everyone, even Hermione had found herself allowing the war to manipulate her fears and who she trusted whilst she was on the run with Harry and Ron, but that was to be expected. It was the aftermath that she didn't like the effects of. She could feel herself becoming angrier as each day passed, her temper was becoming shorter and her thoughts were becoming darker. Murder literally plagued her mind like a drug addiction. Not that she wanted to kill everyone. Just one man. One man who had taken everything from her.

These days the only thing that scared her was the fact that she felt as though she was turning into *him*.

On September 2nd The Daily Prophet had reported that Voldemort had finally taken control over all of Europe and even America and Canada. Rumour had it that his plan was to take Asia next.

Each day more and more muggles and blood traitors were publicly executed, however Blaise had pointed out that none of the 'blood traitors' were pureblood. When Hermione went back over the papers she had also noticed that they were all halfbloods.

Hermione found this odd as herself and many others were completely aware that purebloods like Pansy Parkinson had been missing since The Battle Of Hogwarts.

This drew the question as to what Voldemort was doing with Pureblood blood traitors.

Why had none of the missing turned up?

Why had none been executed?

Why had those who had sided with Voldemort after The Battle Of Hogwarts not been seen?

Not only did it frustrate Hermione that she couldn't find these answers but it was driving Theodore boarder-line insane. Every morning when the elves would bring back a paper they had found Theodore would make sure that he was the first to read it, he would scan the pages front and back frantically searching for any mention of Pansy, and when he couldn't find anything it was as if every member in the house could see his soul slowly chipping away.

This only made Hermione more determined to get answers.

In between trying to formulate a good plan to kill Voldemort without anyone else Hermione cared about having to die, she would also dedicate some of her time to researching old pureblood traditions to see if she could try and figure out what Voldemort's plan for them was.

This however, was not as easy as she thought it would be.

From marital traditions to pregnancy, to party, there were even several on pureblood families selling their daughters, the possibilities went on....

And on...

And on...

Many of them were similar to 18th century Muggle traditions, but others were far from similar, particularly the ones that included magic.

However Hermione found all of this quite fascinating, she would read and read till the late hours of the night and would usually end up falling asleep in her usual chair.

She did find strange on the odd mornings when she would wake up in her bed but not remember actually getting in it.

Despite staying in the Library so many nights before, this was not a night that anyone in the Safe House should have been alone.



"Everyone wake up now!" Draco yelled the moment he apparated into the house.

Cormac had been found.

Augustus Rookwood had found him and brought him back to the palace right before Draco was about to return to the safe house. Had Rookwood brought him in even a second later then Draco wouldn't have known and by morning everyone in the house would either be captured or dead.

But in some sense, Draco got lucky.

It was half past twelve in the morning and Draco was running around the house shouting at the top of his voice, "everyone wake the fuck up! We need to leave! Come on wake up! Hurry the fuck up!"

People groggily began to leave their rooms, each of them yawning or rubbing their eyes, "Draco, what's the matter?" Narcissa asked, "it's Mclaggen, they found him, and it won't be long until they find out about this place so we *need* to leave!" Gasps escaped every mouth in the hallway and suddenly everyone on the first floor was wide awake, "you all have three minutes, grab only what you need and meet my mother by the front door," Draco instructed.

Everyone quickly ran into their rooms and began slamming open their draws and wardrobes grabbing as many clothes as they could carry whilst Draco ran to the second floor to wake everyone else up.

"Come on! Wake up! Mclaggen has been found! We need to leave!" he yelled, "did you fuckers not hear me?! Cormac Mclaggen has been fucking found we need to get the fuck out of here! Grab only what you need and fucking hurry!" Suddenly Blaise and Theodore ran out of their rooms and into the hallway, "Mclaggen's been found? Are you sure?" Blaise asked "well I only fucking saw Rookwood bringing him in to the palace, so yeah, I'm pretty god-damn fucking sure!" He yelled sarcastically, "you have two minutes, grab your shit and get downstairs," he instructed.

The three boys split up and went into their rooms and began frantically grabbing their things, meanwhile Narcissa had sent the elves to make sure everyone was awake and packing.

Kreacher checked the first floor whilst Winky checked the second and to their relief almost everyone was. It wasn't until Winky checked Hermione's room that she realised Hermione wasn't there.

Winky quickly ran into the hallway where she bumped right into Theodore, "watch it *elf*," he spat, "Winky is terribly sorry sir," the small elf squeaked "but Winky must ask, has Mr Nott seen Miss Granger?" She asked, "what? No why?" Theodore asked, a hint of worry behind his tone, "well, she's is not in her rooms," she explained.

Suddenly the smashing of windows could be heard all around and thick clouds of smoke swarmed the building.

The Death Eaters had arrived.



Hermione jolted up when she heard the smash of glass down stairs.

She looked up at the clock on the wall and realised that it was only half past twelve. She giggled to herself amused by the fact that she had fallen asleep once again and had completely forgotten the sound that had woken her up from downstairs.

Still tired and ready to return to her room, Hermione began putting everything back where it belonged. Downstairs she could just about hear the sound of the chaos that was happening, yet her brain was too tired to really acknowledge any of it, so she continued to pass it off as background noise and put away the last of her things lazily, the only thing that was on her mind was the delightful thought of her head hitting her pillow.

Well, it was the only thing on her mind until she heard the sound of the door opening.

"Malfoy, is that you?" She asked, "not quite," a familiar masculine voice spoke.



Blaise's arms were full, he had grabbed as much as he could carry and rushed out of his room. Narcissa had a spare safe house just in case their current one was found, just after they had rescued everyone during The Battle Of Hogwarts she had shown it to Draco, Blaise, Theodore and Adrian. This meant that should anything happen, there would be enough of them to help evacuate everyone.

On the way out of his room Blaise heard the unmistakable sound of Ginny Weasley's voice followed closely by the nightmare inducing sound of Bellatrix Lestrange's laugh.

Blaise instantly dropped his things, whipped out his wand and ran towards their voices.

Both women were stood with their wands pointed at one another, "I can only imagine the look on Miss Parkinson's face when the blood traitor she saved and gave everything up for is dragged into The Dark Lords palace," the witch laughed, "Potter's filthy girlfriend, you'll be all over the front page of the paper."

Ginny quickly rose her wand and attempted to disarm Bellatrix, but she was quicker. In one swift movement she wordlessly sent Ginny's wand flying across the hallway, it was then that Blaise ran around the corner and disarmed Bellatrix. "How dare you disarm me! You Blood Traitor!" She yelled. Blaise moved quickly and protectively placed himself in front of Ginny whilst keeping his wand pointed straight at Bellatrix.

"Awe, how cute, little Blaise Zabini has himself a girlfriend," Bellatrix mocked as she began to walk towards them, swaying slightly in each step as though she were drunk, "*don't* take another fucking step Bellatrix or I swear to Merlin I will kill you," he seethed as he tried to keep his hand as still as possible, "oh but you wouldn't. You're just like your father. Weak. Pathetic-"

"My father wasn't weak!" He yelled in response, "your father couldn't even fight off your mother when she killed him!" The witch laughed. Blaise's face said it all. The word "shock" was graffiti-ed all over it.

Bellatrix released another high pitched cackle but Blaise didn't even flinch, "that's right Zabini, your mother killed your father and every man after him. Your mother kept on trying to convince The Dark Lord that you weren't weak like your father but we all knew-"

"*Stupify!*"

Bellatrix was knocked off of her feet and shot into the wall behind her, "come on!" Ginny yelled as she grabbed Blaise's hand and pulled him away.

Whilst Bellatrix had been goading him her attention hadn't been on Ginny. Slowly she had inched her way closer to her wand until she was close enough to grab it.

Blaise and Ginny quickly ran towards the stairs, behind them they could hear the ferocious yells of Bellatrix.

They were nearly to the top of the stairs was suddenly they crashed straight into Theodore. "Theo, we need to go, *now*," Blaise told him, "we can't, Granger is missing," he replied, "what?!" Ginny exclaimed, "she wasn't in her room?!"

"Not when Winky had checked," Theodore told her, "does Draco know?" Blaise asked, "who cares if Draco knows, we *need* to find her!" Ginny yelled, but both boys ignored her, "no, he'd be the most dangerous fucker in here if he did," Theodore half joked, "what are you on about?!" Ginny exclaimed.

Theodore turned to Ginny and grabbed her by the shoulders "think, where could she be?"

"You're not looking for her on your own-"

"This isn't the time to argue with me Weasley! Where could she be?!" He yelled "The library! She always falls asleep in the library," she told him. "Of course she does," Theodore sighed.

He let go of Ginny and took a step back from her, "you know what to do," he said to Blaise. He nodded and grabbed Ginny's hand. In less than a second, the two were gone.

Bellatrix was close, Theodore could hear her yells getting closer and closer, but he ignored them and made a B-line for the library in the hopes of getting to Hermione before anyone else did.



Hermione turned around and saw Antonin Dolohov dressed in his all black Death Eater robes that she had seen Draco wear a lot in the last few weeks. She could see his smirk poking through his thick beard as he took several steps closer to her.

"You're supposed to be dead," he said darkly, "but it is safe to say that I'm glad you're not," he told her, "I had spent months trying to find you after Zabini and Nott stole you from me, and I

almost snapped the neck of that brain-less blonde twat after he brought your dead body through those doors," he growled.

Whilst he had been speaking Antonin had been slowly making his way closer to Hermione, each step he took pushed her back like two of the same magnets trying to connect. It wasn't until Hermione's back hit a bookcase that she was forced to stand still and search the room for a way to fight her way out.

Whilst the room was filled books and candle sticks she doubted that any of them would be enough to defend herself and suddenly she began to panic. She had no idea what had happened to everyone else in the house and feared that there would be no rescue in her future.

Hermione didn't want to die.

She was scared.

Terrified.

Certainly not very *Gryffindor* of her, but that hardly mattered now. They weren't at Hogwarts anymore.

"You know, I never trusted Malfoy, and I told The Dark Lord so many times that he wasn't loyal, but he insisted that he was. Never once did he question why Draco didn't live with his father at the manor. Never once did he question why he and the Pucey boy were so close and almost always together. Never once did he even question how Draco and managed to bring in The Dark Lords two most wanted undesirables. But I did. I knew he was hiding something from us. And look, here you are, his dirty little secret."

By this point Antonin was stood right in front of Hermione, his warm breath tickled her forehead. She longed for the books behind her to literally swallow her whole rather than metaphorically as Professor McGonagall used to joke they did when she was younger.

Antonin reached into his pocket and pulled out Hermione's wand. She hadn't seen it since the day Blaise and Theodore had saved her, just the sight of it made her feel warm inside and filled her with hope of escape. "I've kept this since you were taken from me," he told her. He then leaned down so his mouth was right next to her ear making Hermione's entire body go uncomfortably stiff and whispered, "I've often dreamed of fucking you senseless with your own wand."

Hermione shook her head and brought herself back to reality, she attempted to grab her wand from his hand but Antonin moved back quickly bringing the wand out of her reach. Forgetting the wand Hermione saw an opening and ran straight towards the door, but she wasn't quick enough. Antonin grabbed Hermione by the hair and dragged her back towards him, "I don't think so, I'm not done with you yet pet," he said before dragging her over to the table in the library and shoving her onto it.

"Oh how I have longed to do this," he said with a smirk as his hand reached down towards his belt. "No! God Please no! Don't!" Hermione cried, her eyes clouded with her tears, "ah yes, scream for me," he growled.

Just as he was about to unbutton his trousers, the library door burst open. Antonin growled under his breath, grabbed Hermione once again, pulled out his wand and pointed it at her throat.

When Antonin turned around he saw the familiar sight of Theodore Nott with his wand pointed straight him. "Ah look who it is," Antonin began, "all we need is Zabini and we could have ourselves a little reunion, just with a different outcome," he sneered. "Let her go Dolohov!" Theodore demanded, "and why would I do that?" Antonin asked "I've got what I came for and I'm *not* leaving without it."

Antonin Dolohov had never been a patient man, he was determined and liked things done quickly. He removed his wand from Hermione's throat and pointed it straight at Theodore.

"Avada Ka-" but before he could finish Hermione headbutted Antonin's chin and knocked his arm out of the way. Once again she tried to run but Antonin was too quick for her, "you little bi-" but before he finished his sentence he apparated, taking Hermione with him.

"Oh shit," Theodore muttered under his breath.

# Chapter 13

## Chapter Summary

Hermione finds herself in a sticky situation whilst Draco's true feelings come out

## Chapter Notes

AN: I DO NOT OWN ANY OF THESE CHARACTERS

Tw: Dark things mentioned in this chapter, rape and abuse.

Theodore apparated out of the room the second Antonin left with Hermione and landed in the front room of the back-up safe house where he saw Narcissa taking a register to make sure everyone had arrived safely.

This Safe House was much smaller than the last it only had three floors and two bathrooms but it was the best Narcissa could find under such pressure. When she had purchased it, it was only meant to be used as a last resort but nonetheless, the last resort occurred and everyone had to flee their current home. This one was sure to be cramped and everyone was sure to feel more uncomfortable here having to share a room but they were about to feel a lot worse when Theodore announced the news that Hermione had been captured.

Ginny immediately noticed Theodore's presence in the room and ran out of the line up that everyone had formed closely followed by Blaise and quickly drawing the attention of everyone else in the room.

"Nott where is she?" Ginny yelled frantically "where is who?" Narcissa responded calmly. Draco who had been stood at Narcissa's side stepped forward and made his way towards the small group "Granger, she's not here," he stated anxiously.

Draco turned and scanned the room and when Hermione was no where to be found he started shouting her name whilst silently praying that she would pop out from behind someone and assure him that she was fine, but no such thing happened.

Ginny pulled her wand out of her pocket and pushed Theodore up against the wall pointing her wand at this throat, "where is she Nott?" She seethed "it's not my fault! I swear I tried to save her! I really did but-"

"But what Theo?! But fucking what?!" Draco shouted as he turned back around to face his friend. Draco shoved Ginny out of the way and replaced her wand with his "where the hell is she?" Draco seethed through gritted teeth "Dolohov got her..." Theodore murmured "he what?!" Draco, Ginny and Blaise yelled in unison, meanwhile everyone else stared at the argument in shock and fear.

"I swear mate-"

"I am not your fucking mate!" Draco interrupted.

"Enough!" Narcissa shouted over the two boys "Draco, put your wand down!" She demanded "will I fuck-"

"You will put your wand down this instant or you will have it taken from you!" Narcissa yelled. Draco reluctantly put his wand down and backed away from Theodore leaving him with no more than a deadly glare.

"Theodore, what happened to Hermione?" Narcissa asked calmly. After taking a breath and bracing himself Theodore began "Winky ran into me, told me that Granger wasn't in her room, I asked Weasley where she might be, she told me that she often falls asleep in the library when she's doing her research so I ran up to grab her, but it was too late, when I got there Antonin Dolohov had hold of her and left with her, there was nothing I could've done, believe me I tried!"

"So *he* has her?" Draco replied, "yes, but she could still be alive!" Theodore defended quickly "oh I know she's still alive and that's fucking worse!"

"What's that supposed to mean?!" Ginny yelled in response to Draco but he ignored her and turned to his mother whose face had turned from worried to a terrified expression, "we have to *find* her!" Draco demanded. His face had turned a bright shade of red and the vein in his forehead was sticking out like a sore thumb. His face told a ferocious story but his eyes told another. Tears gleamed over his blue orbs and his mother could see he was scared, worried, and heartbroken.

Ginny stood and watched Draco in confusion, she could tell he cared about Hermione but still couldn't understand why.

Dean stepped out of the broken line and slowly stepped towards Narcissa, eyeing her up and down with each step before coming to a halt directly in front of her, "you were supposed to protect us," he hissed "you should've protected her, she was the only one who could've helped us!"

Draco quickly placed himself in between Dean and his mother using his body as a thick wall "don't you dare speak to her like that!" His voice roared "do you think she meant for this to happen? It was your dumb arse friend who got himself captured and told You-Know-Who where we all were! I thought you Gryffindors were supposed to be brave and loyal kittens."

"It was *you* and your mum who couldn't even check every room in your own house! After all the time she has spent in that library trying to help us anyone would have thought that *you* at

the very least would have gone to check she wasn't up there and now You-Know-Who has Granger and now we're all fucked! You watch, first thing tomorrow morning The Daily Prophets headline will read '*Hermione Granger, Harry Potter's mudblood friend actually dead this time*' and that's on you."

A look so cold, so numb, so dark carved itself into Draco's face, a look that single handedly changed the atmosphere of the room.

Voldemort and his Death Eaters were suddenly the last thing anyone in that room had to worry about, the look on Draco's face however was even enough to shake Nagini to her core.

Draco lowered his head slightly so that Dean could feel Draco's warm breath enter his ear "mark my words Thomas, if I find out that anyone has laid so much as a finger on her, I will personally *cut it off*," he growled. Dean furrowed his brows and took a single step away from Draco and the rest of the crowd watched intently "why do you care so much Malfoy?" he asked suspiciously. Before he could answer Luna popped her head out from behind Horace Slughorn and answered for him "because he's in love with her obviously," she chimed.

Ginny and Dean turned to face the small blonde with an expression that said "she's finally lost the plot," whilst Theodore and Blaise showed an expression of bewilderment and Narcissa simply smiled along with Winky who stood idly beside the head of the house.

"In love with her? Luna, Draco Malfoy is not *in love* with Hermione," Ginny laughed, Draco on the other hand rose his head showing no emotion and just simply stared at Luna.

"How did you know?" Narcissa asked ignoring Ginny's previous comment and stepping past the two boys stood in front of her "well it's really quite obvious," Luna chirped "he's been rather protective over her since she arrived here, fighting Cormac, not allowing Kreacher near her, even when he didn't want her help when she first arrived, he clearly didn't want to risk putting her in any danger, I've also seen him carry her back to bedroom after falling asleep in the library and stare at her whenever they're in the same room no matter what is going on. He used to come down and talk to me whilst I stayed in your manors dungeon and would all too often mention her or ask me where I thought her and the other two might be, he occludes whenever they're together - presumably to stop himself from revealing his true feelings - and he seems more frightened right now than anyone else in this room, so he's either in love with her or has gained a severe hero complex."

Almost everyone in the room stared at Luna in disbelief apart from Draco who was still simply staring and Narcissa who was still smiling. "You truly are a very bright witch Miss Lovegood," Narcissa spoke softly.

"This is absurd!" Ginny yelled "Malfoy isn't in love with Hermione! That makes no sense!"

"I think you'll find she's not wrong," Blaise spoke with an awkward smile, "he's loved her for a long time, it started after she punched him in the third year I believe," he half laughed "oh please! He's done nothing but bully her for years and you're telling me that he was in love with her the whole time?!" Ginny yelled in response, "I'm not saying he's *always* been in love with her! I'm saying it started out as a little school boy crush and *then* he was in love with her.



God Ginny, anyone would think that you've never seen a lad pull a girls pigtails on the playground before!"

Draco was beginning to grow angry at the debate over his feelings for Hermione, nonetheless they were out now and they weren't going away anytime soon. Because Luna was right, he was in love with her.

"This is insane!" Dean shouted over the two arguing "I think you'll find that this isn't quite as insane as you would think Thomas, and I would appreciate it if you all didn't assume that you know my own feeling better than I," Draco seethed.

Everyone now stared at Draco, this was the closest they had gotten to a real confirmation from him since the truth had come out and everyone was shocked to say the least.

"So, it's true then? You love Hermione?" Ginny questioned hesitantly "yes, and I am going to get her back, if it's the last thing I do."



Hermione was laying on something cold and hard. It smelt damp and not like her room at all. She had hoped the night before had just been a bad dream but she already knew it wasn't.

Her head hurt and Hermione let out a low groan from a pain in her lower back - probably caused from the hard surface she had been sleeping on.

"You're awake," a girls voice spoke "unlucky."

Hermione opened her eyes and pushed herself up to get a better look of where she was. It was almost a dungeon of sorts. The walls were made of stone and were old and chipped in places with no windows so Hermione wasn't able to figure out where she could be. There was no bed, no sink, not even a toilet, just a bucket in the corner of the room and one single door with two slats that looked like they could only be opened from the other side - Hermione presumed that one was for checking on whoever was inside and the other was for passing food through - and the only light in the room was from a single candle that sat in the corner.

Sat across from Hermione was a girl, she was small and scrawny with dark hair that clearly hadn't been brushed in a while, she was wearing a Gryffindor robe which she was using to cover the rest of her body, but she was no Gryffindor.

"Pansy?" Hermione asked, although the girl was almost unrecognisable "so you remember me?" She croaked in response "how's Weasley?" She asked with a sly smirk, "she-she's fine. Pansy what are you doing here?! Theodore's been worried sick!" Hermione asked frantically. Her brain was clouded with so many questions and concerns and she had no idea where to start "ha, of course he has," she half laughed, although it seemed as though she hadn't done that in a while "after The Dark Lord won, he had all of those who were captured and who 'joined' him auctioned off as traitors and the buyers are allowed to do whatever they please with us. Dolohov bought me, but it wasn't me who he wanted," she told Hermione. There was a dark scary look in her eyes and anything she was helping Narcissa and the others fight for was long gone.

"He wanted you."

There was a brief moment of silence where Hermione felt sick to her stomach, but she couldn't help it, the question just slipped out "what did he do to you?"

She laughed again, a dark laugh which did not lighten the mood at all "oh Granger, I don't think you want to know, but it's what he has in store for you soon."

"Pansy, tell me, please" Hermione pleaded. She was scared, terrified even, but she wanted to know what was coming to her before it happened. She needed to know. She needed to be prepared.

"Fine, but don't say I didn't warn you. He raped me, tortured me when I didn't comply, but worst of all, he did it all whilst he was pretending I was you."

A shiver ran down Hermione's spine and bile rose to the back of throat and burned like acid.

"He makes me wear a wig that looks like your hair and this stupid robe, he calls me Hermione, and tells me he loves me, and touches me, uses your old wand to caress me, but he won't actually use it, he said he's saving it for the real thing. He chants your name when he fucks me. I used to fight back but I gave up long ago... You're going to wish he killed you Granger, because that's what he's going to do to me now he has who he really wants."

Hermione wanted to ask more questions but she couldn't speak, she couldn't breathe she couldn't move, she thought that things couldn't get any worse until the cell door opened.

# Chapter 14

## Chapter Summary

No word of Hermione's actual capture and Hermione is greeted by an all too familiar face

## Chapter Notes

I DO NOT OWN ANY OF THESE CHARACTERS!

\*TW Sexual assault\*

Winky popped into the small, slightly crowded front room closely followed by Kreacher. Narcissa, Draco, Ginny and Theodore had been awake all night riddled in guilt, fear and anticipation whilst Blaise, Luna and Dean fell asleep beside them after growing tired of trying to comfort the group and themselves. The rest of the house were sent to their rooms to settle in and calm down after being instructed to do so by Narcissa who thought it best to leave as many people out of the situation unless needed.

Clutched tightly in Winky's hand was a dirty Newspaper reading today's date, Draco however didn't care for the date, he had sent the two elves out of the house thirty minutes after the Daily Prophets release -despite his mothers argument on the idea- determined to see any mentions of Hermione's name and what was set to happen to her. He snatched the paper out of Winky's hand and began reading the front page - completely ignoring the gathering of people forming over his shoulder.

### *Undesirables escaped!*

*Yesterday afternoon at around thirteen hundred hours Undesirable Cormac Mclaggen was found and arrested by none other than Augustus Rookwood and brought immediately to the palace. Augustus stated that he and his group were doing their rounds of a small town in Manchester when they came across Mclaggen curled up on a back alley street alone. Mclaggen looked as though he hadn't eaten in almost a week at the least and seemed to have been caught in an altercation within the last few days judging by the cuts and bruises covering his body, "it was almost pitiful really," Augustus told us.*

*Their team further searched the area but no other undesirables were found and it is believed that Cormac Mclaggen was in fact alone.*

*Bellatrix Lestrange was later sent to interrogate Mclaggen but the interrogation was short and sweet after Mclaggen offered information in exchange for his life.*

*Mclaggen told Bellatrix Lestrange that her very own sister was living in a Safe House she had bought before the battle of Hogwarts with her son Draco Malfoy and twenty-three other Undesirables plus two house elves. Immediately Bellatrix Lestrange gathered a team to raid the house and capture the criminals but upon hearing about Mclaggen's capture; accomplice, traitor and now officially Undesirable Draco Malfoy fled the palace minutes before the raid and warned them all just before Bellatrix and her team arrived. Absolutely no Undesirables were captured and there're no leads as to where they might have gone.*

*As for Cormac Mclaggen he is being held under lock and key until The Dark Lord returns from France.*

*~Rita Skeeta*

"No Undesirables were captured?" Draco questioned, "Don't spoil the ending I haven't finished yet," Blaise snapped as he rubbed the sleep from his eyes. Ginny and Theodore both rolled their eyes and smacked Blaise round the back of his head simultaneously. "So, she's not at The Palace," Draco mumbled to himself as he began to pace the room.

Ginny snatched the newspaper from Draco's hand and began to re-read the article frantically "maybe this is a good thing," she said "she might have escaped!"

"Or they might not want to tell the public that she isn't actually dead and that You-Know-Who himself was fooled by the people most of the country are already scared of," Theodore stated smacking the glimpse of hope out of Ginny's eyes.

"Don't talk like that Theodore," Narcissa snapped as she stepped forward "there is still hope, Hermione is strong," she said confidently as she walked towards Draco and rested her hand on his shoulder as though to comfort him, but Draco shook her off and backed away, his hands were in tight fists and his eyes were filled with rage, "no, I know where she is," he growled. Everyone in the room stared at Draco in confusion and Luna grabbed the paper with her one hand to see if she missed something in the article "Dolohov has her..." he seethed. Everyone but Theodore looked at each other in bewilderment, and Luna once again read through the article.

"Malfoy that makes no sense-" Ginny started before being abruptly cut off by Theodore "no, he might be onto something here," he stated "how can you be so sure?" Narcissa asked the boy "I- I didn't want to say anything, or worry any of you anymore than you already are, but when I walked into the library last night, well Dolohov, he was- he was undoing his belt," he confessed uncomfortably.

Everyone's eyes bulged and their jaws dropped whilst Draco ran towards Theodore, grabbing him by the collar of his shirt and pinning him to the wall "do you realize what you've done?!" His voice roared "he's had her all fucking night because *you* let him take her!" Draco's eyes

filled with tears as he imagined the endless possibilities of what Hermione could possibly be going through at the very second, and what she could have gone through during the night. He released Theodore and started running his hands through his hair as his breathing became heavier, at the other end of the room Ginny slowly slid down the wall and curled into a ball only for Blaise to run over and blanket her with his arms, Dean picked up an old coffee table in the room and through it at a wall in a fit of rage almost hitting Winky and Kreacher as he did so.

"Petrificus Totalus!" Narcissa yelled freezing everyone in the room "this is enough from all of you! If we are correct in our thinking and Antonin has Hermione then that means she is at his manor, and considering he isn't in The Dark Lords inner circle I'm willing to bet he doesn't expect to be on anyone's hit-list right now and that his defense's are minimal. Saving Hermione can be done but not whilst you're in such a panic, we need clear heads, we need to be quick, and we need to be smart. So here's what we're going to do."



Hermione was being dragged through Antonin's manor by her arm, the last thing she saw before she left her cell was a sympathetic look on Pany's face before all she was seeing was stone walls, red carpet and hardwood floors.

Antonin hadn't said a word to Hermione as he dragged her through his home, he simply walked into the cell, grabbed her and stormed out.

So much was racing through Hermione's mind as her weak legs tried to keep up with the man, so many questions and worries, so much fear, so little hope, nothing happy in sight. She almost hoped that these thoughts were due to a dementor in her presence but even the escape of the dementors kiss couldn't help her now.

Antonin dragged Hermione through a set of large wooden doors and into a room where a fire was lit but the brief feeling of warmth on her skin was quickly ended when she was thrown onto a large double bed dressed in black and silver velvet sheets.

The room was large but almost empty, one king sized canopy bed sat in the middle with a grey rug at the end of it, a fireplace at one end of the room with two grey arm chairs in front of it, and at the other side of the room was a chest of draws and a door that Hermione assumed led to an en suite, but there were no family photos, no books, no desk, this was a room purely meant for one thing, and she was sure she wasn't going to like it.

Antonin stood at the end of the bed and pulled his wand out of his Death Eater robe -that Hermione was used to seeing after seeing Draco in them so many times- and she instantly flinched, but no spell was cast on her. A dark laugh came from the man before he conjured a glass filled with whiskey and ice, "a personal favorite spell of mine, and given the circumstances, this is the closest you'll ever get to using it," he chuckled "though back when you had the chance you were very good with your wand as I now recall."

Hermione didn't know what to do with herself, if she tried to run he would just catch her, if she backed up from him on the bed she would be right where he wanted her, so she just sat as

still as she could and hoped that her brief attempts of occluding in the past would help her stay calm and distance herself from the situation.

"I never had the chance to tell you what happened after you and your friends left the café, and whilst you're good with your little charms you weren't good enough," he began "you erased our memories of us seeing you in the muggle world but not of the reason we were there in the first place."

*So many questions, so many questions.*

*Keep quiet.*

*Occlude.*

*Please occlude.*

"Voldemort placed a taboo on his name, 'Voldemort this' 'Voldemort that' you might as well have sent us an owl with your return address," he laughed.

*But why doesn't it still work?*

*Why didn't you find us before?*

*Narcissa said his name at least a hundred times and you never came.*

*Don't get curious.*

*Occlude.*

*Just occlude.*

*Please occlude*

"Not speaking I see. That's fine, it's not your words that I intend to be hearing tonight," he stated, the dark shadow from the fire only making his dangerous smirk all the more terrifying. "The taboo stopped working after Potter died, no one knows why and The-Dark-Lord deemed pointless to do it again, but nonetheless, when we woke up we knew why we arrived at the muggle café and we saw that the place had been destroyed and we didn't know how, needless to say it didn't take us long to figure out what had happened, and after all, Potter's little mudblood's powers are legend. Brightest Witch Of Her Age, isn't that what they used to call you?"

*How does he know that?*

*Why is he telling me all of this?*

*Occlude god dammit!*

*Occlude, occlude, occlude!*

*It's easy enough for Draco to do it.*

*Draco...*

*Please occlude.*

Antonin had finished his whisky and began walking over to his chest of drawers where he set his glass down and pulled something out of the top drawer. As he made his way back over to the bed it became clear to Hermione what it was.

*My wand!*

*"I've often dreamed of fucking you senseless with your own wand."*

*Please occlude.*

"It's such a pity that you're a mudblood, the things you could have done for us with this," he said as he twiddled the wand between his fingers "never mind, there's always other uses for it."

*Please occlude.*

Antonin was right next to the bed when in one sudden move he had Hermione pinned underneath him.

*Please occlude.*

He smiled as he slowly dragged her wand up and down her body.

*Think of anything, put yourself anywhere else.*

*Please occlude.*

His body was pressed so closely to hers.

*Please save me.*

*Please occlude.*

He pressed his chin into the crook of her neck as he sniffed her hair.

*Please, not like this.*

*Please occlude.*

He pressed his lips onto her skin and began kissing, nipping and running his tongue up to her jaw.

*Not to him please.*

*Please occlude.*

"You taste so good," he growled into her ear.

*I won't let this happen.*

*Please occlude.*

Hermione started to kick her legs and hit his chest, but that only made him like it more.

*Get off of me!*

*Please occlude.*

With one hand Antonin grabbed both of Hermione's and pinned them above her head.

*Please, someone, anyone.*

*Please occlude.*

"You, are going to feel so good mudblood."

*I'm so sorry mum.*

*Please occlude.*

"Will this be your first time?"

*I love you dad.*

*Please occlude.*

A single tear rolled down Hermione's cheek.

*I don't want to feel this.*

*Please take me anywhere else.*

*Please get me out of here.*

*Please occlude.*

Suddenly the door shot open and Antonin let go of Hermione's hands

Just as Hermione was ready to push him off of her someone else grabbed him and threw him to the floor.

"Don't you dare fucking move Dolohov," a familiar voice seethed.

So many footsteps filled Hermione's ears but she wasn't yet sure whether to be relived or terrified.

"Hermione!" someone yelled.



She knew that voice, she needed that voice.

Someone lifted Hermione's back from the bed and her eyes met his.

Relived.

It was Draco.

"Fuck Hermione, are you okay? What did he do to you? Are you hurt?" He asked frantically "I-I'm fine. Draco, you saved me," she responded with a smile. Draco wrapped his hand into her hair and rested his forehead against hers "I thought I'd lost you," he whispered.

"Oi love birds, there's a time and a place," someone laughed and it was a laugh she knew all too well, one that didn't strike fear but brought joy. Hermione pulled her head away from Draco's and looked around the room only to see Blaise, Theodore, Ginny and Dean stood with their wands pointed at Antonin who was on the floor with a nasty cut on his head and over by the door was Narcissa, Luna and Winky.

"You alright Granger?" Theodore asked with his wand still firmly pointed at Antonin "yes I'm fine, but Theo, Pansy, she's downstairs, locked in a cell!" Hermione told him. Theodore's head shot up from the man on the floor and straight towards Hermione "go, get her quick!" She told him.

Draco stood up from in front of Hermione and made his way over to the group "It's fine Theo, we've got this, go get her."

Theodore turned and ran from the room in no more than a second, Draco sent a knowing nod to Blaise who quickly ran after the boy before turning all of his attention back to Antonin.

"What did you do to her?" Draco seethed "Well no thanks to you, but nothing," he responded "not Hermione, Pansy, what did you do to her?! I swear to god if you harmed her in anyway you'll be fucking sorry."

Hermione's eyes filled with tears as as recalled all of the things Pansy had told her in their cell.

"Just practiced," Antonin laughed as he turned his head to look at Hermione "it was hardly like I did anything to her at all."

"Crucio!" Draco yelled. Antonin started screaming in pain and suddenly all Hermione could feel was how she felt when Bellatrix did the same to her, all she could see was Neville when Voldemort did the same to him.

"Stop! Draco please stop!" Hermione cried. Draco lowered his wand and Ginny ran over to Hermione in an instant and pulled her into her arms, "I-I can't listen to those screams," she muttered "not again..."

Draco could see what this was doing to Hermione and looked to his mother "take her and Pansy home, get them settled, Ginny, Luna, Winky go with them. I won't be long." He

instructed. None of them said a word in response, the simple nod from the four was enough to let Draco know that Hermione and Pansy would be well cared for.

Narcissa walked over to the bed and helped Hermione up, "come along dear, lets get you some tea," she said softly. "Wait!" Hermione said quickly and everyone stopped. She looked around the room until she saw her wand that had clearly been dropped when Antonin was dragged from on top of her. She quickly ran towards it and felt every source of her magic flow right through her, she smiled and turned back to Narcissa, Ginny, Luna and Winky refusing to so much as glance at the monster on the floor.

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