

The Inheritance

by drojsnider

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1-Jan

Chapter 1 of 1

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Scorpius crouched behind a rain barrel as a hex flew over his head. He was out of breath and exhausted but also relieved because it was only Stunners being hurled at him. That probably meant he was currently being pursued by the Ministry rather than Death Eaters.

He peeked around the side of the barrel and saw two Aurors at the other end of the alley. There was a good chance he could slip around the corner of the building and Disapparate, if he left immediately. The only problem was he didn't know where to go. He needed help, but it had to be help from someone without ties to either Voldemort's former supporters or the Ministry. Moreover, he couldn't risk going to his friends or family because those would be the first places the people pursuing him would look.

Scorpius racked his brain for the name of someone who wasn't a friend, who had no connection to the Dark Arts, and yet had a strong enough sense of justice to let him into his home. He quirked his mouth as a face flashed through his mind. It wasn't ideal, but it was the best he could do under the circumstances.

Standing, he cast a shield spell and took off at a run for the back of the building. As soon as he cleared the corner, he turned, concentrated on his destination, and disappeared with a loud 'pop.'

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As Rose Weasley walked to her flat from her desk at the *Daily Prophet*, she found herself feeling frustrated with her job. She'd been working the society section of the paper for the last three years, covering weddings, engagements, charity events, and other social activities of the wizarding elite. It had been an okay gig when she started. She had the name and connections to get into almost any party or festivity no matter how exclusive; therefore, her articles had attracted a lot of attention. She also had a real knack for asking the questions that readers wanted to know while at the same time being scrupulously accurate in reporting answers, which kept her on many of the top guest lists.

Ironically, her success hindered her advancement at the *Prophet*. When she'd approached her editor a year ago about moving into political reporting, he'd refused her request. He argued that Rose's stories were one of the reasons why paper subscriptions were at an all time high and that he would never be able to hire anyone else who had the same type of entrée into society as did she.

Rose had bitten her lip to keep from raging at her boss and instead complained to her parents about the unjustness of the situation. Rather than leaping to her defense, however, they had replied that it was up to her to prove that she would be just as valuable covering "real news" as she was in the society section. She sometimes wished her parents weren't so determined to be unbiased and impartial about every situation.

Nevertheless, their advice had left her with at the least the beginnings of plan to move into serious reporting. She needed to break a story. A story that was so significant and important to the wizarding world that her editor would have no choice but to move her into a more serious section of the paper. Unfortunately, breaking a 'hot' news

story was a lot easier said than done. Even though she'd taken to spending her lunch hours at the Ministry's commissary and walking home through Diagon Alley every evening, she'd still not stumbled across *the* story that would change her career.

Sighing heavily, Rose climbed up the two flights of stairs leading her flat. She barely stifled a scream when a Disillusioned hand grasped her wrist. "*Finite Incantatem*," she hissed and then gaped as Scorpius Malfoy materialized in front of her.

"What the fuck, Malfoy?" she said in an overly loud voice, her heart still beating rapidly.

"Ah... hey, Rose. Long time no see," he stated more quietly, trying to look calm.

"Yeah, it's been about a year," she replied suspiciously, taking in his disheveled appearance. "I think we both attended the Squib Charity Auction. You were there with some brunette who had a pair of overly developed mammary glands."

"Sounds right," he said, giving her a nervous smile. "So, do you think I could come in for a spot of tea?"

Rose stood for several seconds just staring at him. It was obvious something strange was going on. She and Malfoy weren't friends, they had no business together, and he looked like he'd been run over by the Hogwart's Express, yet here he was on her doorstep, basically inviting himself inside her flat. All of her self-preservation instincts were yelling at her to turn him away, but something in her gut, the thing that made her a good reporter, was telling her to let him in and discover exactly what he was up to.

"Sure," she said, pushing open the door and standing back so he could enter in front of her. "Come on inside."

Scorpius entered and quickly moved away from the open door. He glanced around, trying to figure out whether or not Rose lived by herself. Unfortunately, he didn't know her well enough to determine if the brown leather sofa or the cheap Jackson Pollock reproduction that hung over the fireplace were her style or the result of some roommate compromise. "Nice place," he lied with what he hoped was an ingratiating smile.

"It's home," she replied, shutting the door and staring at him like she was trying to read his mind with Legillimency.

"Um... do you mind if we, ah... lock that?" he asked, knowing he sounded creepy, but he worried that anyone could waltz right in and attack them.

Rose blinked several times, but her face remained otherwise impassive. She finally nodded and waved her wand at the door, casting a complicated locking charm to which Scorpius did not know the counter-spell.

When Rose turned back to him, her eyes raked him from head to foot, taking in his muddy trainers, his ripped jeans, and his robe that desperately needed to be pressed. "Would you like to tidy up while I put the water on?"

Scorpius nodded, feeling a strange rush of gratitude that she hadn't launched into interrogation mode. Merlin knew there wasn't another woman of his acquaintance who wouldn't have asked a million questions by now.

"It's down the hall, first door on the right."

As Scorpius walked down the hallway, Rose shook her head and stepped into the kitchen to start the tea. Her curiosity was raging, but she'd learned early in her career that it was often easier to get your questions answered when people were relaxed and at ease. She could afford to wait.

She couldn't help, however, but chuckle softly at Scorpius' appearance. She'd never seem him so unkempt. Even back at school he'd always looked immaculate with his expensive robes and his professionally cut hair. Although a number of her classmates had gushed over his style, Rose, who'd struggled to control her hair and seemed to be constantly too tall for her robes, had found his flawless good looks annoying.

The few times she'd seen him since Hogwarts had done little to change her opinion. He still dressed obscenely well, still wore his hair in a fashionable cut, and still managed to annoy her just from his designer existence. Of course, now she'd be willing to forget her petty dislike should he provide her with a big enough story to get her into reporting *real* news.

Just as the tea kettle began to steam, Scorpius stepped into the kitchen. "Have a seat," she told him, filling two cups with hot water.

"I, uh... really appreciate this, Rose."

"It's just tea," she replied setting a cup in front on him.

Scorpius looked down into his cup and tried to stifle a yawn. He wished it was just tea. This was the first time in a week that he'd been able to sit and relax without looking over his shoulder and worrying that someone was closing in on him.

He glanced up to see Rose watching him thoughtfully. *Merlin, she's attractive*. Of course, she wasn't the typical type of bird he dated. He tended to get involved with women who were always well put together, never a hair out of place or a loose thread hanging from their robes. Francesco Zabini once described Scorpius' "type" as blond, pale, and cold. Rose Weasley was their complete opposite in every way with her fiery hair and personality. It was the reason he'd never pursued her, half afraid that her strong character would unravel him completely.

"So how is your family handling Lucius' death?"

Scorpius started. Although Rose's question sounded sincerely sympathetic, he hadn't anticipated it. Given that it was his grandfather's passing that landed Scorpius in his current trouble, answering her truthfully would force him to lay bare his real reason for showing up on her doorstep.

"They're managing. I was surprised you didn't cover his funeral for the *Prophet*."

Rose shrugged. "Conflict of interest." In reality, she had wanted to write the story of Lucius' death and turn it into a big retrospective of the elder Malfoy's involvement in the last two wizarding wars. A reporter from financial section, however, had pulled rank and written an obituary about the impact Lucius' death would have on Malfoy Industries and the wizarding economy. Rose had been so frustrated with the situation that on the day of the funeral, she'd called in sick, Apparated to the Burrow, and ended up getting pissed with her grandparents as they celebrated Lucius' passing with shots of Firewhiskey.

"Your grandmum must be devastated."

"Yeah, she was taking it pretty hard last time I saw her," he said, taking a sip of tea.

Something in his tone suggested that he hadn't spoken with her recently. "How long has it been since you've contacted her?" Rose inquired, having heard from Albus that Scorpius was very close to this grandmother.

"I haven't seen her since the funeral," he admitted, feeling frustrated that he'd been unable to help comfort his family.

"But that was almost a week ago."

Scorpius frowned and wondered if Rose had taken some sort of guilt-trip lessons from his father. "I realize that. However, my time hasn't exactly been my own lately."

Rose didn't reply immediately, instead she fiddled with her cup. "Why are you here, Malfoy?"

"No special reason," he said. "I just wanted to catch up with you."

"You can't find time to visit your grieving grandmum, but you have no problem stopping by to chat up an acquaintance from Hogwarts?"

"I was in the neighborhood."

"Which I'm sure you've been over a hundred times since we left school. Why did you choose now to drop by?" she asked in full investigative mode. "It seems a bit... odd."

"It's not my fault you have a suspicious mind, Weasley."

Rose narrowed her eyes, determined to get Scorpius to spill his secret. After all, that was why she'd first invited him inside. Before she could launch another question, however, there was a knock at the door. She watched Malfoy visibly tense and finger his wand. "I'll just get that," she stated, watching his reaction closely.

He shook his head. "No, don't open it," he whispered.

"It's probably just Al. We usually go out for a pint on Fridays." The news that Rose's visitor was most likely his old Hogwarts' housemate did not lessen Scorpius' anxiety. He simply shook his head forcefully once more.

"Alright," she mouthed. She sipped her tea and sat silently, staring at him until the knocking stopped and they heard footsteps retreating down the hallway. Pulling out her wand, Rose cast a Silencing Charm on the room, so that anyone who might be listening at her door wouldn't hear them. "Now spill it," she demanded.

Scorpius took a deep breath and started talking.

Scorpius stood in the Manor's sunroom staring out at his grandmother's flower garden. The funeral was over and most of the guests had finally left. Although there were a few extended family members still mingling around trying to comfort the widow, Scorpius was desperate to leave. He hated the solicitude and concern on everyone's faces. It all appeared so forced.

His mother came up behind him and placed a hand on his shoulder. "The attorney wants us to assemble in your grandfather's study for the reading of the will."

"I don't think I can sit through anything else, Mum," Scorpius admitted.

"I know it's been difficult, dear, but do it for your father and grandmother."

Scorpius sighed. While he had loved his grandfather in a vague, obligatory way, they had never been close. Scorpius refused to accept Lucius' views on blood and had made a habit of leaving the room whenever the old man had started to denigrate Muggles or Muggle-borns. Although he felt like a bastard for thinking it, Scorpius was relieved that his grandfather's beliefs would no longer define what it meant to be a 'Malfoy.' At the same time, however, he wanted to be supportive of his father and grandmother, who were both deeply pained at Lucius' passing.

"Alright, I'll stay."

Scorpius had spent the next hour and a half in the study, sitting next to his grandmother, listening to the attorney drone on and on. Since the Malfoy estate was entailed, it wasn't a surprise that Draco inherited almost everything. Nevertheless, there had been some personal bequests, most of which Scorpius managed to tune out. When Narcissa placed a hand on his arm, he realized that the lawyer was now addressing him.

"For my grandson, Scorpius Hyperion Malfoy, I leave the entire contents of Gringotts' Vault 706. I hope that this inheritance will not only make up for any failure of mine to connect to him in the way a grandfather should but also provide some insight into what it means to be a Malfoy."

The next day Scorpius had gone to Gringotts and visited the vault. It had contained several thousand galleons, a portrait of Lucius with a young Draco at his knee, and a necklace with what appeared to be a silver Pensieve charm. He was clueless to what these items had to do with being a Malfoy. As he turned to leave, his grandfather's portrait spoke to him. "Take the necklace."

"Why?"

"It will help you understand things."

"Why can't you just explain it to me?"

The painted Lucius' arched an eyebrow in a way that reminded Scorpius of his father when disappointed. "You didn't listen to me when I was alive, I don't know why you would want to listen to me now."

Scorpius felt fourteen again and thought about leaving the necklace behind out of spite, but in the end, he shoved it into his pocket before returning to his flat. It wasn't until after he'd eaten and opened a bottle of wine that he examined the necklace and charm closely. He cast several diagnostic spells on them, but they revealed little more than that the items were highly magical. He was just about to call it a night, when he noticed there was writing on the clasp of the necklace. He cast an Engorgement Charm on it and not only did the writing become legible but also the silver charm expanded into a full-size Pensieve packed with memories.

"Impossible!" Rose exclaimed interrupting him. "It is the 24th Law of Memoriola Theory that neither memories, nor the objects that hold them, can change in size or mass."

"I know, Rose. I was in magical theory with you, but that is exactly what happened," Scorpius told her calmly.

When she still looked skeptical, he unbuttoned his shirt and pulled out the necklace in question. He cast a silent Engorgio and touched the charm with his wand. He watched Rose's eyes widen in shock as the tiny Pensieve increased to normal size.

"Blimey."

"Yeah. Anyways, like an idiot, the moment I realized what had happened, I plunged my head inside."

Rose visibly swallowed. "Was it bad?"

He nodded. "At first it was just my grandfather as a young man in school, learning about Muggles, taunting Muggle-borns, and lording it over Grandmother when her sister ran off with Ted Tonks. There were also meetings between him, other pure-bloods, and Voldemort where they discussed how to fix the problems facing the wizarding world by limiting the influence of Muggleborns and asserting control over the Muggles. Really, it was all just a bunch of rubbish until the initiation ceremony where Grandfather took the Dark Mark. I needed a break after that."

Rose glanced at him and thought he looked paler than normal. She then looked into the Pensieve. "Is there a lot more in there?"

"I think so. That's the other weird thing. I can't sort through the memories and I can't watch them out of order. I assume there are memories inside covering the Second Wizarding War and beyond, but they must be under some sort of ward that doesn't allow them to be viewed out of their original timeline. I haven't been able to watch any after Grandfather's initiation."

"Why not?" Rose asked, unable to imagine anything she'd find more important than watching those memories. "Too many important social engagements to attend?"

"No," he replied with a glare. "I've been on the run. Two men wearing Death Eater masks and robes broke into my flat as I was preparing for bed that evening. I barely had time to grab the Pensieve and Apparate away before they aimed an Unforgivable at me."

Rose licked her lips. He could tell her mind was rapidly processing all the information he'd just told her. "Why haven't you gone to the Ministry? They could protect you and use your grandfather's memories as evidence against those who have never faced justice for their part during the wars."

Scorpius rose and began to pace the kitchen. He knew his next words would be important. If he didn't convince her of his reasoning for not contacting the Ministry, he would be back to square one. Actually, he might be in worse shape now than he had been before coming to her. If Rose didn't agree with him, she could easily get in touch with her father or uncle and let them know Scorpius' whereabouts. "It's my father," he finally admitted.

Rose didn't say anything; she just raised her eyebrows in surprise.

"I know he was a Death Eater. I know he tried to kill Dumbledore in his sixth year. I know he was at Malfoy Manor when your mum was tortured during the war. But I don't want him to go to Azkaban." Scorpius chanced a glance at Rose and saw that her cheeks were flushed with emotion and that she was clutching her empty tea cup tightly.

"Even before I attended Hogwarts, I knew what the Malfoys had done during the war; I knew which side they'd been on. I was ashamed of my father and grandfather, ashamed of being related to the Lestranges, and ashamed that the place I think of as home had once served as the headquarters of Voldemort. Throughout my first five years of school, I had a hard time even looking my father in the eye when we discussed anything other than Quidditch or my grades.

"But in sixth year, everything changed. I was sitting by the lake one afternoon, lazing in the sun and laughing with my friends, when I suddenly realized that I was the same age my father had been when he was ordered to kill his headmaster. He was just sixteen years old when the most powerful Dark wizard in history threatened to kill his mother if he didn't succeed in murdering Dumbledore. And while I like to think that I would have behaved differently, that I would not have succumbed to Voldemort's intimidation, I'm not positive I could have been that strong.

"That day I forgave my father for becoming a Death Eater. I don't want him to go to Azkaban now for the actions he took twenty-five years ago while in school."

Rose looked at him steadily, and he had no clue whether or not she agreed or understood his situation. "So what are you going to do now?" she asked.

"I just need a safe place to watch the rest of Grandfather's memories," he said, trying not to sound desperate. "Once I've seen them all, I can make a decision."

"Why come here? Why not just go to one of your friends?"

"I don't know exactly what or who is in here," he reminded her, pointing at the Pensieve. "I can't risk seeking help from someone whose father or grandfather had any connection to the Dark Arts. You came to mind primarily because I knew there wasn't a chance in hell that any of your family had been involved with Death Eaters."

"You could say the same of Al," she replied. "And you know him much better than me."

He gave her a sly grin, as if she had caught him in a half-truth. "Yeah, well, there have been so many Unforgivables cast in my general vicinity lately that now the Ministry is after me too."

Rose was silent for several seconds as she mulled over his situation. "Please, Rose. I want to do the right thing, but I need to know exactly what memories are in the Pensieve first."

She still didn't respond. Just when he began to think that his cause was hopeless, that she would either throw him out or contact an Auror, she told him that he could stay. "There is one condition, however."

"Anything."

"I want to watch the memories beside you."

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Scorpius tried to dissuade Rose from watching, partly because the memories were truly horrific and partly because he wasn't sure whether or not he could trust her. In the end, not having much of a choice, he agreed to her demand.

Rose had then made him shower, given him a pillow and a blanket, and sent him to sleep on her couch. He'd been so exhausted and so grateful to get some rest without having to worry about being attacked in his sleep that he hadn't argued with her. He slipped off his trainers and shirt, unbuttoned the waistband of his jeans, and fell quickly asleep. He was jolted awake several hours later by a loud cry.

He leapt to his feet, fumbling for his wand and facing the door in case someone was about to bring down the wards. Scorpius had just gained his bearings, when he heard retching coming from the kitchen. When he entered the brightly lit room, he saw Rose sitting at the table with her head between her knees, a small pool of vomit on the floor, and his grandfather's Pensieve on the table.

With a wordless *Evanescio*, Scorpius vanished the sick from the floor. "Dinner not sit well?" he mocked, trying to ignore the fact that Rose was wearing a paper-thin, Chudley Cannons t-shirt that barely reached the middle of her thighs.

Rose glared at him as she wiped her mouth with the back of her hand. "You could have given me a *bit* more warning about Lucius' initiation ceremony."

Scorpius' stomach clenched as thoughts of the old Muggle man he'd watched being tortured and then murdered by his grandfather. "I thought we were going to wait until tomorrow morning before beginning."

She straightened and shrugged, not looking at all repentant. "I needed to catch up with you."

"Fine, now you have," he replied, feeling a wave of shame wash over him simply for being a Malfoy. "Sleep well," he sneered before turning on his heel and heading back to the couch.

"Prick," Rose murmured to herself as she watched his broad, bare back leave the room. She stood at the sink and washed the sour taste out of her mouth. It had become clear to her just minutes into watching Lucius' memories that this was the break she needed to move out of social reporting and into serious reporting. At the same time, however, she knew that her determination to make public the contents of Lucius' Pensieve would most likely interfere with Scorpius' desire to keep his father out of the Ministry's clutches.

She felt slightly guilty about not being upfront with Scorpius about her intentions, but at the same time, she justified it by telling herself that she had come to her. He knew she was a reporter, and he'd still shown up on her doorstep. If he hadn't contemplated all the consequences of that decision, it was not her fault. Still, she had a hard time falling asleep that night.

The next morning, Rose was wakened by the smell of bacon. She threw on a dressing gown and dragged herself into the kitchen, plopping down at the table.

"How do you like your eggs?" Scorpius asked, turning from the counter with a broad smile on his face.

"I like them hot and on the table," she stated, making him chuckle. Rose summoned a cup of coffee and watched him turn back to the counter. She wondered idly if he made breakfast for all the women with whom he spent the night. As far as morning rituals went, it sure beat her last boyfriend's habit of farting and scratching his bollocks when he woke.

After eating, Rose showered and returned to the kitchen. Scorpius was already at the table looking a bit wary. She placed a hand on his shoulder and squeezed. "This all happened long before you were born."

He glanced at her, his eyes curiously bright. "Doesn't make me feel much better," he admitted.

She nodded and sat beside him. "We'll take breaks whenever it gets too bad."

Scorpius swallowed and placed his head into the Pensieve. Rose touched his arm and entered Lucius' memories alongside him. Luckily, most of the morning's memories were theoretical discussions about how Voldemort's supporters should go about gaining control of the Ministry. There were also lots of memories that included Lucius spouting off about the magical weaknesses of "Mudbloods" and his criticisms of how even half-bloods were weakening the wizarding world. Although the memories made Rose furious, it wasn't until she started to witness some of the actions taken by Death Eaters during the First War that she felt physically ill.

Lucius stood in a forest next to four other Death Eaters Rabastan and Rodolphus Lestrage, Antonin Dolohov, and John Dawlish. They were obviously waiting to ambush someone. None of them had pulled their masks over their faces yet. Dolohov and Dawlish were fairly bouncing on their heels to see action while the other members of the group appeared bored and tired.

"Do you know how long it's been since I've been able to spend a night in my own bed?" Lucius asked his brother-in-law. "Narcissa is eight months pregnant. She shouldn't be alone in the Manor so often."

Rodolphus just shrugged his shoulders. "It was stupid of you to get her pregnant now. If she was healthy, Bellatrix and her could be working together to carry out the Dark Lord's wishes."

Lucius looked like he would rather shave his hair off than see his wife doing anything of the sort.

"Shut the fuck up," Dawlish said, pulling his mask over his face. "Tonks and the Prewetts are coming."

It should have been an easy take-down, five against three, but the Prewett brothers were talented wizards. Even after Lucius stunned Ted Tonks, they just shoved a Portkey in his hand to whisk him away while they continued fighting. The redheads managed to stun the Lestranges before they were both incapacitated by binding spells.

"Let's Apparate them back to the Dark Lord," Lucius said, moving toward the nearest man.

"I don't think so," Dolohov replied with a sneer. "Avada Kedavra!"

"Bloody hell!" Lucius exclaimed angrily as he watched the first Prewett brother perish. "They are pure-bloods! We can turn them towards our cause."

"They're blood traitors, Malfoy. There is no point wasting our time with men like that," Dawlish coldly explained. He then turned toward the second bound man and cast the Killing Curse.

Scorpius felt himself being wrenched from the Pensieve. Rose's grip on his arm was painful, but when turned to tell her to ease up, he could see that something was terribly wrong. She was pale, tears were coursing down her face, and she didn't seem able to catch her breath. "Put your head down," he commanded, placing his free hand on the back of her neck and gently pushing until her forehead rested on her knees. "Take a deep breath."

He watched her shoulders shake as she tried to comply with his order. Scorpius moved to fetch a glass of water, but she refused to release him.

"Don't go," she whispered.

"Just to the sink."

Rose shook her head, so he sat down next to her and rubbed her back until she was calm enough to let go of his arm.

A short time later, as they both sat sipping tumblers of Firewhiskey, Scorpius asked what had upset her besides the obvious of watching two men being murdered.

"I know the people who were killed in that last memory."

Scorpius' brows furrowed. "Rose, they died before your parents were born. It's impossible for you to know them."

She frowned and took a large gulp of her drink. "I mean, I know who they were. Fabian and Gideon Prewett were my grandmum's brothers."

"Oh fuck," Scorpius sighed. "I'm so sorry. I didn't know." A wave of guilt washed over him. Three of the five men involved in the ambush had been his relatives. They may not have cast the final curses that had killed the Prewetts, but they were still responsible for the men's deaths.

Rose knocked sharply on the table in front of him. "Stop it. It's not your fault. Hell, your grandfather actually tried to stop it."

Scorpius shrugged.

Neither of them spoke for several minutes. "Did you recognize the bloke who cast that last Killing Curse? The big guy with the wiry hair?" Rose asked.

"No, should I have?"

"He's an Auror. He helped train my dad and my uncle Harry. He's come over to our house several times for dinner. The fucking bastard was a Death Eater and he's NEVER paid for what he did."

"Shite," Scorpius groaned, banging his head against the back of the kitchen chair. He wanted to curse his grandfather for leaving him these memories. Not only did they serve to reinforce just how fucked up his family had been but it also put him in an untenable position. How could he not turn the Pensieve over to the Ministry when it could put men like the John Dawlish in Azkaban? At the same time, how could he turn it in when it might mean the imprisonment of his own father?

They took a break for a couple of hours, had tea, and then finished watching Lucius' memories of the First War.

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For the second time in two days Scorpius was awakened by a cry. He knew immediately that it had come from Rose's room. He thought about ignoring it and going back to sleep, but then heard her call out, "No!"

Rising from the couch, he walked down the hall and knocked on the open door. "Rose?"

"Stop! Get away from them!" she called, sounding panicked.

Scorpius sighed and walked toward her bed. He placed a hand on her shoulder and gently shook her awake.

"What?!" she exclaimed sitting up quickly, her eyes flying wildly around the room. When she finally caught sight of him her face flooded with recognition and she plopped back against the bed. "Fuck, I hate your grandfather's memories," she said.

He sat down beside her, allowing himself to glance at her uncovered legs for just a moment. "Why are you putting yourself through all of this?" he asked. "I have to do it, but there is no reason for you to torture yourself."

Rose closed her eyes so she wouldn't have to look at his shirtless, well-defined chest. "Sure there is."

"Well, I don't know what it could possibly be."

"I'm going to write a story about Lucius' memories for the *Prophet*," she admitted.

"What?" Scorpius exclaimed heatedly, leaping off the bed. "There is no way in hell you are reporting on this! That would completely defeat my attempt to protect my father from the Ministry."

Rose opened her eyes, sat up, and spoke forcefully. "The public has a right to know about this, Malfoy. I'll try my best not to implicate your father in anything I write, but my responsibility is enlighten the readers of *Daily Prophet*, not to protect your family."

"This is shite! You have no right. The memories were left to me. I get to decide what happens to them," he growled, jabbing his finger at her.

Rose tensed, but she refused to back down. "The moment you stepped over my threshold those memories became my business too. Fuck, you know I'm a reporter."

He narrowed his eyes, and Rose felt at a distinct disadvantage still being in bed while he loomed over her. "You're a *society* reporter, Weasley. But why do I suspect that you aren't planning to use my grandfather's memories to write a historical retrospective of wartime fashion?"

"You owe me. Don't forget who is hiding you from both the Ministry and Death Eaters."

"If I knew what it was going to cost, I never would have shown up," he spat.

Scorpius turned to march out of the room, but Rose jumped out of bed and grabbed his arm. "Don't be stupid. Where are you going to go? If you run off half-cocked tonight, you could end up dead or with your grandfather's Pensieve in the Ministry's hands by tomorrow morning."

Scorpius looked outraged enough to tell her to sod off, but he wasn't stupid. He knew there was no safer place for him right now than Rose's flat. He shook free of her. "I'm going back to sleep."

He moved towards the hall when Rose's voice stopped him. "Scorpius, wait!"

"What now?" He was not in the mood to pretend politeness that he didn't feel.

"Could you... I mean, I know this is going to sound nutters considering everything, but could you stay with me tonight?"

He whipped his head around to look at her. Despite the fierceness of her stance, she seemed vulnerable. He raised an eyebrow and allowed his gaze to travel from the top of her unruly hair, to the curves of her breasts, to the tips of bare feet.

"Not like that!" she almost squeaked, tugging on the hem of her t-shirt. "I'm just hoping that I won't have any more nightmares if someone is in the room with me. I'll sleep under the sheet and you can sleep on top of it. We won't even have to touch."

"Fine," he stated briskly. Scorpius acted put out, but he was looking forward to sleeping in a real bed for the first time since his grandfather's funeral. "But this means our discussion about your story for the *Prophet* is not finished."

"Okay," she murmured, crawling into bed and turning her back on him.

Scorpius woke the next morning, comfortable and content. He felt like he was wrapped in a linen cocoon with his back being kept warm by a woman's curves. The realization made his eyes spring open. He soon recalled what had occurred the evening before and smiled remembering Rose's conviction that they could share a bed without touching. Obviously, at some point during the night, she had curled her sweet, little body around his.

If Scorpius had not been feeling so abused by Rose's betrayal, he might have behaved like a gentleman and gotten up without disturbing her. Instead, however, he turned in her arms so that they lay face to face. He rubbed his nose against hers, and when that made her snuggle even more tightly against him, he dipped his head down to nuzzle against her neck.

What started off as play quickly became serious. Rather than pulling back from him, Rose became more demonstrative as she began to wake up. She rubbed herself against Scorpius' morning erection. She trailed her fingers down his back and into the top of his boxers. She planted kisses along his collarbone, neck, and jaw.

Scorpius braced himself to push her away and maybe dodge whatever hex she would ultimately cast, but he lost control of the situation when she captured his lips and pushed her tongue deep into his mouth. Immediately, he was crazed with desire. Even half-asleep, Rose was more giving and more expressive than any other woman he'd ever been with. This was no cool and calculated seduction. It was pure emotion and sexual attraction.

As Rose grabbed his arse, Scorpius ground himself against her. He wanted nothing more than to pull off her knickers and plunge his cock into her wet entrance. She groaned deeply and wrapped her right leg around his waist, pressing their bodies closer together, rubbing her breasts and pelvis against his torso.

"Merlin, you taste good," she moaned, placing a hand on his chest to push him so that his back was against the mattress.

She was completely awake now, hovering above him, her eyes open and gazing into his. Scorpius braced himself for her cry of outrage. Instead, she gave him a brilliant smile and a quick kiss on the lips. "Unfortunately, the damn Pensieve waits," she said, rolling out of bed. "I got dibs on the shower."

Biting back an exasperated curse, Scorpius closed his eyes tightly. Before he could suggest that they conserve water by sharing the shower, Rose was gone and the bathroom door was locked.

0-0-0

Watching Lucius' memories of Voldemort's return shocked both Rose and Scorpius because neither had realized that the Malfoy family patriarch had tried to avoid serving the Dark Lord during the Second Wizarding War. They witnessed several discussions between Lucius and Narcissa about the possibility of abandoning the Manor, pulling Draco out of Hogwarts, and fleeing England. Even after getting dragged back into the ranks of the Death Eaters, Lucius had done as little as possible. He had actually allowed himself to be captured during the fight at the Ministry, hoping that if he was in Azkaban, Voldemort would have to leave his family alone. Instead, however, the Dark Lord had recruited Draco.

The Pensieve also revealed that although his Scorpius' father had not been an enthusiastic Death Eater, he had participated in several of their raids. Not only had he been part of the party that had gone after Harry when he left Privet Drive but he'd also cast Unforgivables against Muggles and Muggle-borns targeted by the Dark Lord.

The war-time memory that upset Scorpius and Rose the most, however, was the one in which Rose's parents and uncle were captured and brought to Malfoy Manor. Rose grasped Scorpius' hand and held it tightly as soon as her mother started screaming from the pain caused by the Cruciatius. By the time the chandelier fell, allowing Ron, Hermione, and Harry to escape, Scorpius had his arm wrapped tightly around the shaking girl. Although Rose eventually let go of him and pulled herself out of the memory, Scorpius did not leave the Pensieve until he watched his entire family being tortured by Voldemort for allowing Harry Potter to leave the Manor.

Once out of the memory, Scorpius' turned to Rose who was standing at her kitchen counter staring out the window. He placed a hand on her shoulder causing her to jerk away from him and wake from her daze. A pained look must have crossed his face because she was instantly contrite. "Scorpius, I'm sorry! It's not you."

"Well, it bloody well should be," he raged. "My family is comprised of monsters. They tortured innocents, spouted arrogant blood nonsense, and manipulated the Ministry to avoid paying their debt to society. Obviously Grandfather left me this Pensieve so I could embrace my legacy and join the family business of being a pure-blooded fiend!"

Rose grabbed him by the shoulders and then turned his face so he had to look at her. "That is *not* why he gave you these memories."

"How in the hell would you know?"

"Because I've been watching them as an outsider, watching them through the unbiased eyes of a reporter," she told him.

"Unbiased my arse," he sneered.

Rose hit him on the shoulder hard. "What is the common thread that holds all your grandfather's memories together?"

"How unworthy Muggles and Muggle-borns are?"

Rose crinkled her nose. "Yeah, we'll call that theme number two. What else linked all those memories?"

Scorpius shrugged.

"Come on, Malfoy. We went to Hogwarts together; I know you are brighter than you look."

"There was a lot in there about Lucius trying to protect my dad and grandmum," he admitted.

Rose nodded. "I think he left you those memories so you could see how important family is to the Malfoys. How they are willing to do whatever is necessary, no matter how unpleasant or dangerous, to protect their own. He probably also hoped to convince you to marry a pure-blooded girl, but not so you could stay connected to the remaining Death Eaters. It's most likely a lesson in upholding family traditions and maintaining family loyalty."

"It's ironic then, isn't it?"

"What is?"

"It's ironic that Grandfather left me these memories to teach me about family loyalty and I'm going to have to betray my family by turning the Pensieve over to the Ministry."

"You can still protect your father," Rose told him.

"Bugger it, Rose. You of all people should know that I have to turn it in. Those memories reveal at least a dozen people who never stood trial for their crimes during the Wizarding Wars. I can't just ignore that in order to keep my father out of Azkaban."

"You don't have to. You just need to make a deal with the Ministry to get your father immunity before you turn over the Pensieve."

"Why would the Ministry agree to that? How can I even negotiate such a deal without getting it confiscated?"

She smiled. "I've got it all planned out, we just need to get Al over here."

Scorpius looked skeptical, but as she explained her idea to him, he was forced to admit that it could possibly work. Having attained Scorpius' cooperation, Rose packed him a rucksack full of food, Muggle money, and a magical tent. She also gave him an old D.A. coin that she and Al had used to communicate while at Hogwarts and told him to turn it into a Portkey. After he returned it to her, she sent off an owl asking her cousin to stop by her flat before dinner.

As they waited for Al to show, Scorpius couldn't resist trying to figure out what Rose had thought of their morning encounter. "So what happens when this is all over?"

"Well... hopefully the bad guys go to Azkaban, your dad stays at the Manor, and I get a big time reporting position."

"No, I mean, what happens to us? Isn't this the point in our association when you confess that you've fancied me since Hogwarts?"

Rose laughed. "Sorry to squash your ego, Malfoy, but my interest you in is of a more recent vintage."

"Does that mean this morning was an aberration never to be repeated?" The types of girls he usually dated would have responded coyly to such a question. They would have acted like it hadn't been anything special or even pretended that nothing at all had occurred, but that wasn't Rose. She was neither a shrinking violet, nor frigid ice sculpture.

She smirked and stepped closer to him so that her lips just centimeters away from his ear. "Oh, we're going to finish that. When all of this over, you are coming back and we are going to see where all this attraction between us leads."

"You realize that it might take weeks before everything is settled?"

Rose nodded.

"That's a pretty long wait for a young, attractive, healthy bloke," he smirked.

Rose raised an eyebrow. "You had better not be asking my permission to muck around with other witches until we can get together again."

"Hell, no! What I want is a little something to tide me over until this is all done." Before she could respond, Scorpius reached for her, pulling her into his arms, and kissing her like he worried it might be the last time.

Rose responded enthusiastically. She pushed him onto the couch, crawled into his lap, and captured his face between her hands. Holding him still, she nibbled on his bottom lip, sucked on his tongue, and managed to demonstrate with just her mouth and hands how much she fancied him.

Al knocked on her door not even ten minutes later interrupting them. Disentangling herself from Scorpius, Rose stood, unlocked the door, and let Al inside.

"Hey, Rosie! How you feeling? We missed you at the *Leaky* Friday night. Matt Finnegan was asking about you again. I finally told him you were having 'woman trouble' just to get him to shut his trap. Of course...." Al's voice trailed off as he noticed Scorpius standing next to the couch.

"Hey, mate."

Al looked gobsmacked. "Malfoy? What? What are you doing here? The Magical Law Enforcement Department has issued a detention order for you. We are supposed to bring you to headquarters for questioning."

"What do they want him for?" Rose asked, never able to turn off her reporter's instincts.

"They think he's mixed up with a recent surge in Death Eater activity. Load of rubbish. Come with me to the Ministry, Malfoy. We'll get it all straightened out."

"As usual, the Ministry has it arse backwards," Rose exclaimed. "Death Eaters are chasing *him*. He's got something they want."

"What?"

Scorpius reached into the top of his shirt and withdrew his silver charm. "It's a Pensieve full of my grandfather's memories."

"Impossible. The 24th Law of Memoriola Theory states "

"We know," Rose interrupted. "But it works. I've seen the memories. They are horrible, Al. They even reveal connections between Death Eaters and some people who currently work for the Ministry."

Al shook his head, as if not believing what he was hearing. "Alright, we'd better get the Pensieve and Scorpius to the Ministry so that an investigation can commence."

"I'm afraid it's not going to be quite that simple," Scorpius replied, his face flushed slightly. "I need guaranteed immunity for my father before I'm turning over the Pensieve."

Al stood up straight, his mouth narrowing into a harsh line. For the first time, he looked like the Auror he was. "It's not open for negotiation, Malfoy. Let's go."

"He'll lose all his bargaining power if you take him to the Ministry before an immunity deal is reached," Rose argued.

"This is none of your concern, Rose. Just stay out of it. Come on, Malfoy," Al stated forcefully, reaching for his wand.

"Wait!" Rose called out. When Al glanced at her, she had just enough time to toss Scorpius her D.A. coin. Before Al could do more than blink, Scorpius had been whisked away.

"Damn it, Rose! Where did he go?"

She shrugged. "He didn't tell me and I didn't ask."

"How am I supposed to get in contact with him now?" Al asked angrily.

"Use your D.A. coin and he'll reply using mine. As soon as he gets immunity for his father, he'll be back."

"If he's using a D.A. coin for communication, we'll be able to track him."

"It will take you at least a week to find him that way," Rose said.

"Trust me, the Ministry has the patience to wait this out," Al scoffed. "We can wait seven days, get the Pensieve, throw Draco Malfoy in Azkaban, and then arrest Scorpius for unlawfully making a Portkey. Hell, we could wait a month, a year, if we had to. The Ministry is the most patient organization in wizarding history."

"Maybe," Rose replied. "But I doubt the public has the same fortitude. The moment they realize you are playing a game of chicken with Scorpius instead of spending your time arresting Death Eaters all hell will break loose."

Al rolled his eyes. "And how exactly is the public going to find out? I don't see Scorpius walking around Diagon Alley shouting it from the street corners."

Rose stood silently several seconds just staring at him until he caught on.

"You are *not* writing about this!"

"Try and stop me and the next story I'll write will be about the Ministry's interference with freedom of the press."

Al glared at her. "I have to go report this to my supervisors. Don't be surprised if Dad and Uncle Ron show up for a visit later tonight."

Rose nodded. She knew he was furious with her, but it couldn't be helped. He did, however, need to be warned. "Al, make sure and keep Auror Dawlish out of your discussions about Lucius Malfoy's memories."

He gave her a probing look, but eventually agreed and Disapparated away.

0-0-0

Rose closed the door to her hotel room, kicked off her shoes, and dropped her robes at the end of her bed. She'd been sent to The Hague to cover the founding of the first ever Wizarding Confederation of Nations. While she found her new job as an international political reporter much more satisfying than doing fluff pieces on London society, she often felt lonely and at loose ends in the evenings.

Her five part series on the wizards and witches who'd avoided detection as Death Eaters for almost four decades had swept wizarding England like wildfire. It had prompted arrests, a series of high-profile confessions, and the establishment of a 'Truth and Reconciliation Tribunal.' Moreover, as soon as her story hit the newsstands, the Ministry had been forced to make a deal with Scorpius, granting his father immunity in exchange for the Pensieve. They'd also kept Scorpius in protective custody for two weeks to make sure that all the Death Eaters implicated in Lucius' memories had been picked up and were awaiting trial.

According to Al, Scorpius had been released six days ago. No one was positive where he'd gone, but most assumed that he'd holed up in Malfoy Manor with his parents and grandmother. Rose hadn't heard from him in all that time. She told herself that she really didn't care. It had just been the situation they'd been placed in that accounted for any attraction between the two of them.

She considered slipping into a pair of jeans and heading down to the bar to drink away her bad mood when her musings were interrupted by a knock at her door. When she opened it, standing in the hall looking cocky, smug, and delicious was Scorpius Malfoy. "I heard," he grinned, stepping into her room, "that there was an ambitious young reporter staying here in search of a story."

Rose licked her lips. "You must have me confused with someone else. I no longer write about pretty-boy, trust-fund, lay-a-bouts." She shut the door and pressed her back against it.

"Well, isn't that a shame," he stated softly, reaching around her to lock the door.

Rose trembled at his nearness, not realizing until now how she ached to finish what they had started in her flat three weeks ago. "I sincerely hope this doesn't mean you are going to run off in search of a reporter more likely to publish a story that discusses your sexy eyes and broad shoulders."

He reached out to trail a finger down the side of her face. "You might be able to convince me to stay."

With that small inducement, Rose threw herself into his arms and pressed her mouth forcefully against his.

"Merlin," he said against her lips. "I've been thinking about you non-stop since I took the Portkey that Sunday night."

She smiled and began pushing him back towards the bed. "Thinking only good stuff, I hope."

He laughed and sat down hard as his knees hit the back of the bed. He gripped her waist with his hand, keeping her standing directly in front of him. "I've been thinking about how you are the most stubborn, contrary, bossy, brilliant, and beautiful woman I know."

"Bossy?"

"And beautiful. Don't forget beautiful," he replied smiling up at her.

"Oh, I won't," she said, leaning down to kiss him.

Scorpius drew her into his lap and began to unbutton her blouse as his tongue probed deep within her mouth. Rose groaned as he palmed one of her breasts and shifted so that she now lay on the bed, her legs hanging off the side. Breaking their kiss, he looked at her, his index finger running down her cleavage. "So many possibilities."

"Not that many," Rose retorted, arching her eyebrows in suspicion.

"Ah, Weasley. You have so little imagination," Scorpius said, sliding off the bed to tug down her trousers.

Whatever retort Rose considered flew out of her mind as the Scorpius began to kiss his way up the inside of her thighs. He licked, nipped, and nibbled until Rose was moaning in anticipation. When he finally pulled down her knickers and brushed his fingers across her, she almost lost her mind. His warm breath against her wetness pushed her to the edge, and when he finally pressed his tongue into her center, she bucked her hips off the bed and let loose a strangled cry.

Scorpius didn't pull back until Rose had stilled and stopped breathing hard. "Kind of quick on the trigger, aren't you, Weasley?"

She laughed. "Stuff it and get up here."

Scorpius stood and smiled before quickly shedding his clothing. Rose sat up and pulled off her blouse and bra, throwing them toward him. He dodged and sat on the bed next her. "You really are the most amazing woman," he said.

She rose to her knees, placed a hand on his chest, and pushed him back onto the bed. "Prepare to be even more amazed," she winked, straddling him.

Scorpius closed his eyes and Rose's hands and lips began to explore his body running up his arms, down his neck, and across his nipples. Finally, she touched his cock and began to slowly wring groans from his throat as her fingers stroked and tormented his shaft.

"Fuck, Rose," he ground out, grabbing her hand and flipping them over so she was now on her back and he was braced above her. "I should make you pay for that torment, however, I'm desperate to have you," he said, pushing himself into her hard and fast.

"Oh, sweet Circe!" she cried out, arching against him. They quickly settled into a rhythm of long, firm thrusts that drove them both higher and higher. Whipping her head back against the pillow, Rose wrapped a leg around one of his thighs and dug her heel into his arse until the pressure inside her exploded.

As Scorpius felt her clench and tighten around him, he too let go driving and pounding until he came with a shout.

Collapsing beside her, Scorpius pulled the vivacious, red-headed girl toward him and trailed kisses along the back of her neck and spine. "Merlin, I'm going to enjoy doing this every night," he told her in a soft voice.

"Excuse me?" she said, trying to sound offended at his presumption but too satisfied to successfully pull it off.

He chuckled and she enjoyed the sensation of it against her back. "You aren't going to chuck me out after I just spent a week convincing my father that Malfoy Industries needed someone to travel around Europe monitoring the international economic situation, are you?"

She smiled sleepily. It felt good really good to know that he'd made an effort to figure out some way for them to be together. "I suppose since you went to all that trouble, we could give it a go," she murmured, snuggling into him and the blankets.

"That's my girl," he whispered, kissing her hair and holding her, as she drifted off to sleep.

The End