

A Malfoy's Ruminations

by Southern_Witch_69

Lucius has to make changes in his life after the final battle. Hermione Granger is part of that, but however will he cope?

One Shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I'm not making any Galleons by writing this, so I hope Jo allows me to indulge in a bit of fun. Prompt information at the end. Thanks to my lovely beta, ladyinthecloak.

22 June 1998

I hate having to keep a journal. How dare the Ministry think they know what's best to "rehabilitate" me? A journal? It's demeaning. And if a week passes that I've not written a "sizable" journal entry, I shall have to go in for counseling instead? Five years of this? It's ridiculous.

Meddling arses.

Still. Things could be worse. I could be tossed back into Azkaban. Thank Merlin Cissy seized that opportunity to help Potter. If it weren't for that, I might be there again. So, yes, I shall grudgingly keep a journal, but that does not mean I have to like it or that I approve of it.

What shall I start off with? I suppose I should mention that today was the longest Monday of my life. The trial ended early this morning, but I was kept alone in a chamber to await the Wizengamot's decision...which took hours.

Potter testified that I'd not raised a wand at the battle, and he told all about Cissy's deed. He even mentioned that Draco seemed reluctant to identify them when caught. However, that did nothing to keep me from imagining the horror awaiting me with their decision.

To my surprise, I am under house arrest for six months, have to pay a sizable fine, which shall go towards Hogwarts' rebuilding, and have to keep this journal for five years.

What I don't like is that a court appointed liaison shall have access to my entries and will check that I am doing as instructed whenever he or she pleases! Nor do I appreciate the spell placed on this journal that disallows me to write anything false! This same liaison will meet with me monthly for a "chat" on how life's going.

I'm angry. I'm indignant. I'm a Malfoy. I don't like being told what to do or when to do it. My word should be good enough...as long as I take a Wizard's Oath with it. That should do.

I do not plan to do any harm to anyone... Shite! I do not plan to do anything that shall land me in Azkaban ever again. That's my guarantee to you, whomever you are, reading my private words.

29 June 1998

Imagine my surprise when I heard something buzzing and looked around to see that it was this journal. So, they've got it charmed to vibrate and buzz when my weekly deadline is nearly up. That's good to know. What would happen if my deadline passed? Would it turn into an Auror and cart me off?

What shall I divulge, hmm?

Ah, I know. I allowed Cissy to have a shopping spree. She feels the need to get new things since she's being seen as a heroine of sorts for helping out Potter. I must admit that I am annoyed with the attention she's getting. Can't the public leave us alone? And why can't she wear one of the hundreds of robes she has in her wardrobes that have never been worn?

It makes no sense.

Not one owl was sent this week with a request to visit, nor any invites for tea. The public is not aware that I'm under house arrest, so that's not an excuse. All of these invitations have been sent to Narcissa. I suppose I should be thankful to have the lot of them mention me as an afterthought and extend an invite to me that way. It's as though I'm a pariah. Do these people not realize how many of my Galleons are going towards the rebuilding effort? Do they not know the sacrifices I have made? I would refuse to go if I were able of course...it's the principle of it...though I insist that Draco join her.

I wonder what someone would do if it were known that to not do someone's bidding would mean the death of his family? I could not allow it. Ever. Draco means far too much to me... as does Cissy.

What would you do, pesky Ministry liaison, if you were told that your wife would be murdered before your eyes if you didn't put the Imperius on someone?

5 July 1998

I know I am a day early, but I feel the need to vent my frustration. I've just been informed via owl that I should be certain to be home tomorrow, as the Wizengamot's liaison will be stopping by at some point for our first appointment.

No specific time was given!

"Be home between the hours of eight o'clock and five o'clock."

I'm under house arrest. Where do they expect me to be?

Am I supposed to be at this person's beck and call all the time? That's preposterous! I had plans tomorrow, as an owl finally came for me with an invite to tea. I was to meet with someone very influential at the Ministry, someone I've had ties with in the past. I replied and asked him to join me in my home instead (not divulging that I am not allowed to leave my grounds).

And now I have to rudely cancel. What will Doddhopper think of me now? (Damn it! I didn't mean to spell out his name!) Will he spread the word that I've broken a meeting? If so, will my other associates think I've decided against renewing friendships?

I have a mind to let him come anyway. It's not likely the liaison will just happen to come at tea time. Surely he has a life. If it weren't for a possibly humiliating run-in, I certainly would. How would it look to have someone from the Ministry see me kowtowing to one of his colleagues?

Hang on. How is it that others at the Ministry don't know of my situation? Why would Doddhopper have invited me to tea in the first place if he knew I was under house arrest? I simply assumed he didn't know, but surely he must. Had he hoped to keep up the pretense of friendship by inviting me out, knowing I couldn't go?

That's something to ponder.

6 July 1998

To borrow from Severus' interesting vocabulary...UNFUCKINGBELIEVABLE!

Do you know what showed up at my home today?

An eighteen-year-old girl.

A MUDBLOOD!

I need a glassbottle of brandy.

And something to smoke.

12 July 1998

I am finally able to sit down and write something. This past week has been quite dreadful. Narcissa has gone to France for a holiday with her blood traitor sister and the woman's changeling grandson. I wonder why Cissy is so intent on reacquainting with Andromeda after all these years? I think she's taking this "new leaf" thing too far.

The Malfoy family has always wanted respect, and in fact, we feel it is entitled, but Narcissa is going too far these days. Hosting luncheons with people who've never set foot in our manor before? Going out to help those still begging on Diagon Alley?

While I pity wish the lot would get off the streets there, I don't think she should be one of those helping them along. And to make this week even worse, Draco announced that he needs time to himself and has left the manor. We have no clue as to where he's gone.

I can commiserate with him. It's probably his mother who's confusing him. I shall have a long talk with my dear wife upon her return.

Now to discuss what happened last week when my court-appointed liaison visited.

Could they find no better intermediary?

Hermione Granger?

She's not even taken her NEWTs, yet they've already offered her a job at the Ministry? They're just giving the bloody jobs away these days! It makes no sense! And THIS is her job no less? I've never liked this girl. Draco told me too many things about her that I extremely dislike. Yet here she is, barging into my home, privy to my private thoughts.

I will never accept this.

Ever.

Oh, I'll bide my time, write in my pathetic journal and meet with her, but I'll not lift a finger to do anything more (like making her feel welcome in my home).

That reminds me. Boszy still needs to scrub my office again. I'm sure that the first dozen cleanings were not enough.

It's better to be safe than sorry.

And for her to pretend as though I'm anything less than what I am...a Malfoy, a pureblood, her superior in all ways! Most women are in awe of me, especially when we are alone. This bint had the nerve to look down her nose at me and to patronize me as if I were some misguided first-year student at Hogwarts.

I'll not have it.

And if you are reading this, it serves you right to see yourself as you are in my eyes. Nothing. Filth. A meddling girl who has no right to be given such a job without credentials.

I had to work flaunt my family name and pay my way up... What? I didn't want to write that. This journal is making things up. No more will I write in it.

20 July 1998

I have just returned home from a night at the Ministry. I must admit the chamber I had to sleep in was much more comfortable than any I've had the privilege horror of staying in before. I suppose I'll not ignore my journal again, else I'll be forced to go there again. I had to endure Granger's appearance once more and listen to her stress how important it is for me to reform and accept change.

Bugger that.

Narcissa is now home and is disgruntled that she had to return home early. When she'd decided to extend her stay, I have no idea, for she hadn't sent an owl to inform me. It's been nearly two months since the fall of the Dark Lord, and in those two months so much has changed.

Am I the bitter man she claims me to be? Am I ungrateful for all that she's doing? I laughed in her face when she said this.

Yes, indeed, our row was spectacular. I wonder if her horrid sister hasn't influenced her. She gushed about the little brat afterward...says he's just like her niece had been, a Metamorphmagus. Grand. Next I'll be seeing a photo in the *Prophet* with Cissy holding the child as her sister looks on fondly.

I'm sure Granger would approve, the harpy.

It seems all women are not to be tolerated be they purebloods or Mudbloods.

25 July 1998

Draco returned home today. He seems to be in better spirits. I'm happy about this. It's been a long time since I've seen that type of smile on his face. Too many years.

30 July 1998

I've had another owl from Granger. She says that I can expect her in my home on the third. I've replied to tell her that I insist that she gives me a particular time, but I've not heard anything yet. But I expect she will send something soon.

Narcissa has decided to stay with her sister for a few days to look after "dear little Teddy," and she wants Draco to join her as well, feeling it would be good to have him mingle with family. I don't understand why she can't see my side of things?

Why should we put aside our beliefs just because the Dark Lord failed? We had these beliefs before he came and commanded our loyalty. She was always disappointed in her sister's choice. And now? She's spending time in the woman's home? Embracing that little half-breed of a child?

She's going too far to keep up appearances. No matter how much she denies her change of heart, I simply can't believe it. I won't.

1 August 1998

No return owl from Granger yet.

If you are reading this, you bitch, I expect a reply to my owl.

3 August 1998

Granger never replied to my owl, and she showed up here as if she'd done nothing wrong. I explained that I didn't appreciate being ignored. I even asked if reading my entries gave her great pleasure.

She claims that she doesn't read what I say but only looks to make sure I'm writing something. I don't know that I believe that, no matter how earnest she tried to appear. Supposedly, she uses a charm that reassures her I am typing real words that are not gibberish or redundant.

And the questions she kept asking me today! I told her to mind her own business several times. That didn't work of course. She seemed to take pleasure in pointing out that my life was her business, and if I didn't answer her questions, she'd have to report that back to the Wizengamot.

7 August 1998

Teddy Lupin is a right little pest. Can you believe Narcissa had the nerve to invite Andromeda and the brat here for dinner? Then they stayed the night. I don't remember Draco crying so much during the night at that age.

15 August 1998

Dodghopper has just left. It seems he wants to include me in an investment. I am thinking about it. What better way to show I'm a changed man buy my way back into the thick of things. Damn journal.

18 August 1998

Draco wants to move out.

I won't allow it.

22 August 1998

Draco is gone. He's got a flat in London.

Nothing I threatened him with said kept him here. I feel very abandoned. He knows how much I need him, yet it seems he's taking a page out of his mother's book and thinking only of himself. I am the one who cannot leave this manor for all these months. I'm the one who's taking the blame for most of what happened.

Yes, I did some most of the... I hate this journal. Can't a man write what he wants?

Are you reading this, Granger? How do you feel about my misery? Does it excite you? Does it make you feel as though you are better than me? That you are important?

29 August 1998

Have a meeting with my endearing pesky mediator in four days.

2 September 1998

Granger just left. She feels that I've not been writing as much as I should and said that the word counts have been down lately. I just don't bloody feel like writing. There's not much to say that won't be redundant. I'm still disappointed that Draco's moved out, and he's only sent one owl.

One owl in ten days.

Narcissa's been able to visit him, and she says his flat is quaint.

I like having my son where I can keep an eye on him. I miss my son when he is away.

3 September 1998

Look, Granger, two days in a row. This should go towards my word count, right? Oh, yes, that's true. You don't really read these. Then let me just say that I find you completely infuriating, and I still don't appreciate the way you look at me...as if I am nothing.

You know deep down that I am an impressive man.

8 September 1998

I received an owl today from Harry Potter.

Can you believe it? He wants to meet with me. I've replied and told him that I will have to check my schedule. Naturally, that's not true. I don't have a damn thing lined up. It's times like these that I miss Severus and his wit.

If he had lived, he'd have come to see me and wouldn't have expected anything in return.

9 September 1998

Potter has just left. He took it upon himself to simply show up unannounced. I told him as much when I saw him, but the information he gave me was quite helpful.

It seems that he got wind of an investigation of Ministry employees. Doddhopper happens to be one of them. It seems the little venture he wanted me to invest in was illegal. I had no idea my suspicions.

I asked him why he thought to inform me. He said so I could cut ties with the man and that it was the least he could do for the help Narcissa gave him. He didn't want to see our family go through any more trouble that was unwarranted. He fully believed that I didn't know Doddhopper's full plans and asked that I tell no one about his warning.

Yes, this means I'm grateful to Potter, but that doesn't mean I'll be inviting him over for tea anytime soon. It's bad enough his friend Granger has access to me and my home once a month.

And so, this is what it feels like to be used. Interesting. Doddhopper will pay for this. Er, by legal means of course if that's all I can get away with.

14 September 1998

Ha! I received an owl from Doddhopper asking me to reconsider my decision to not give him any Galleons for investment in his project. I replied that I would not change my mind.

If he gets caught and sent to Azkaban for his little scheme, I expect that will be revenge enough for me. He'll think twice before using a Malfoy again.

18 September 1998

Doddhopper's been arrested.

Ah, what a great way to start the day. Now to call my house-elf. I think I'll have a full breakfast in celebration.

24 September 1998

Draco came by to visit today, and he told me that he's been using his time away from home to rethink his life. I can appreciate that, as I've been doing some of that myself. He said that he understands what I went through and forgives me for things that have happened in the past. He hopes we can build a better relationship in the future and leave the past where it belongs.

I don't recall asking for his forgiveness.

What was so bad in our relationship that he feels we need to start a new one?

I've never once done anything without considering my family first. Narcissa now acts as though she's been the one making sacrifices and handling things for the past twenty years. And here's my son saying this to me.

I don't know what to think. I was so shocked, I simply stood and left the room.

1 October 1998

I think I may owl Draco. He's not been back since, nor has he sent any owls (not even to his mother). That's not like him.

3 October 1998

Cissy blames me for Draco's estrangement.

Just something else to add to my list of fuck-ups. My, I sound more like Severus every day. Shall I become dour as well?

Am I already?

9 October 1998

I've owled Draco and told him that I want very much to have him in my life.

16 October 1998

Well, Granger has just left. I was unprepared for her visit, as she sent me no owl. She claims she did, of course, but I never saw any letter from her. Imagine my surprise when she strolled into my office bright and early... with me still in my nightclothes.

And she wouldn't allow me to change either. Said she had another appointment and was in a hurry. It appears Potter let slip to her that I made "an excellent decision" that could have been bad for my family if I'd gone another way. It also seems like he left out the fact that he warned me about it. She says that this goes a long way in proving that I am attempting to be a "reformed citizen."

If that's what she'd like to think, so be it. If it gets the Ministry out of my hair soon, I'll be grateful. It's been what? Four months now?

Only two more to go before I will be able to leave my home?

Excellent.

23 October 1998

Draco came for dinner tonight, and I can't remember the last time I've ever been this happy. It seemed as though we were a real family again, like those years when the Dark Lord remained in hiding. Pansy and Draco have decided that the relationship they were working on will not work out. I'm sad to see that it won't. She's from a good family, but I want my son to have a happy marriage.

I remember back when I began courting Narcissa. Our families were pushing the issue, and I wanted to dislike her because of it. However, it only took one evening with her to realize that it was a match I also approved of...most readily. She was just as lovely then as she is now.

1 November 1998

When I said I wanted to get out of my house, I didn't mean that I wanted to be escorted back to the bloody Ministry and tossed into that damn chamber again for violating my parole agreement. I hadn't realized that I'd missed my weekly journal update. And I heard no buzzing or saw any vibrations of warning from the book either! They say that this is my last chance and only because Granger showed up...hours later than necessary by the way...and asked them to be lenient this one last time.

They've added more time to my house arrest because of this. Damn it! I won't be able to leave for Christmas as we'd planned. Narcissa is disappointed and is threatening to go without me. I'll be damned if I'll spend Christmas alone with only the house-elves for company.

Anyway, I've given Granger my oath that I'll not forget again. She was quite adamant about it and seemed annoyed that I'd interrupted her evening. It seems surreal that a Muggle-born can act so haughty. I do think my inconvenience amounts to more than hers!

5 November 1998

Narcissa wants a divorce.

8 November 1998

She still wants to leave me.

10 November 1998

How can any woman want to leave a Malfoy? I don't understand. I've asked if it's another man, and she says that there is no one else, but these last few months "cooped up" in the house with me has shown her that she wants more out of life.

I pointed out that she's been anything but cooped up. She's rarely here and hasn't minded popping off to spend several days away at a time. She's serious about this though, and it seems she won't be deterred.

Draco came round today to see how I'm taking it. He says he doesn't want us to separate, but he can see that she's miserable...and that I am as well.

The only damn reason I'm miserable is because I am not allowed to leave my home (unless I'm being carted off to the Ministry), and I have to do things against my will (writing in this journal for one, meeting with Granger for another). All this would change once the restrictions are lifted.

Neither seem to understand that.

Cissy will be moving in with her sister as of this weekend.

I guess I shall be alone for Christmas after all...unless Draco spends some of the day with me at least.

16 November 1998

As luck would have it, Granger appeared for our monthly meeting just as Narcissa opened the door to leave our home for the last time...unplanned once again. The women were cordial to each other, and it sickened me to watch Narcissa "make nice" with the Mudblood.

Was it not only year before last that she had called the girl scum and had refused to shop any place the girl had been in?

I remember that outing well, for Cissy came directly to Azkaban to rant about the disrespect Potter and his friends had shown her.

After Cissy left, with a cool wave of her fingers and nothing more, I was alone with Granger, and the bint had the audacity to look at me with pity. I told her as much and told her to get the hell out of my house.

She left, saying she understood that I might need time, but she pointed out that she'd be back in a few days. I slammed the door in her face.

19 November 1998

I had dinner with Parkinson tonight. He said that Draco told Pansy about Narcissa's leaving, so he thought he'd come over to make sure I was all right. Right nice of him. I'm glad to know that I still have some friends in this world. He told me something interesting. He said he'd owled me several times but had never received a reply. He said others mentioned my not replying to them either.

Maybe Granger was telling the truth about owling to let me know of her appointment times. Why would I not be getting my owls? Is the Ministry going through them?

There's one person I feel I can ask who may give me an honest answer, though I can't believe I'm going to owl him for a favor. However, I believe that Potter will be in the know if someone's monitoring me.

And if they are, how thick can they get? Wouldn't they think that I'd catch on to not getting owls? I've always received letters and invitations...until now. Here I thought I was being avoided, but that's obviously not the case.

22 November 1998

Potter has heard nothing but will find out.

27 November 1998

Bozzy admitted today...accidentally...that he has a drawer full of letters that are addressed to me. After he hit himself with a lamp a few times, I demanded that he explain. It seems that the Ministry wasn't involved with intercepting my mail at all. My dear lovely bitch of a wife, Narcissa, instructed Bozzy to do so and to hide them from me. I've sent her an owl insisting that she come at once and answer my questions. Why would she do this to me after all I've done for her and my son? I'd felt quite low and thought that my old friends wanted nothing to do with me. I thought Granger had been purposely showing up without writing. I thought a lot of things. There are several inquiries as to my health, many invitations and requests to see me... Why?

3 December 1998

I thought I might write something before I get carted off to Azkaban again and then landed in counseling sessions. What shall I write?

Draco spent the day here yesterday and seemed reluctant to leave. I don't want his pity am touched that he seems to care so much. I am also secretly pleased that he is disappointed in what his mother has done.

Oh, that's right. I've not written about that yet.

Narcissa was behind my missing owls the entire time and claims she did so because she feared I would go back to my "old ways" and ruin the family image once again. She screened my owls at first, only letting certain ones through, but as she became busy, she hadn't the time. She thought it might humble me to think I'd been forgotten.

She's not the woman I thought her to be. My days of wishing for her return to the manor are gone. How dare she think to police my owls like some Auror? I am a grown man. I am a Malfoy. Of course I worry about my image and loathe that it was somewhat tarnished in all of this; however, I will not go through the lengths she is to be in the limelight and to mix with those beneath me.

Ever.

Granger will be here tomorrow, as per her latest owl.

Great. Bigger.

She annoys me. How can she be so positive all the time?

Come to that, why does she seem to believe in me when my own wife cannot?

Make that my Ex-wife. I've sent for my lawyer to meet with me later this week. We'll come to some agreement, I'm sure, and I'll be a free man soon enough.

4 December 1998

Granger has just left, yet I can still smell the scent of her perfume lingering in the air here. She claims that she had a date to go to after our meeting. For a Mudblood, she's passable when made up very attractive.

I hate this journal.

Can't a man's thoughts not be twisted so?

Well, all right. I suppose if I'm to be honest, I do find her attractive: in a young, fresh sort of way. What man wouldn't? If only she would be a pureblood, I might woo her just to have something to flaunt in Narcissa's face.

Hmm. There's a thought. Once our divorce is final...and I'm out of this bloody house arrest...I'll be on the prowl for a replacement. I'll not get married again, but to be seen about doing "good deeds" in public with a fetching young witch on my arm?

Indeed.

8 December 1998

Things are in order.

10 December 1998

Draco keeps popping round to check in on me. I do play it up some when he's about.

14 December 1998

I'm glad the bitch is gone. I hate being alone.

15 December 1998

My divorce can be final within days since Cissy and I have lived apart for a month. We need only to settle on funds. I'm glad that she isn't wanting much from me, considering she has all the Black money...Bella's, hers, and Andromeda's share. Oh, that's right. She reimbursed her sister for her share. No matter.

21 December 1998

I am a free man. Pity I'm not allowed to leave my home, else I'd be out celebrating.

24 December 1998

Draco has promised to stop by to share Christmas luncheon with me before going to meet his mother and aunt.

25 December 1998

Granger has just left! She claims to have come by to warn me that I need to write more than little "one liners" as journal entries. If I didn't know better, I might be suspicious that she was here to check up on me for Christmas. Of course, she's one of those classic do-gooder types, always pitying and meddling in others' affairs.

She brought a tin of biscuits over however. I don't know that she does that for everyone.

In fact, does she mediate for anyone else? I've not asked.

Hmmm.

28 December 1998

Wouldn't Cissy be humiliated if she were replaced with a Mudblood? What a slap in the face that would be. I shall have to ponder on this. I don't want to sully myself, and yet, for someone like, say, Granger, I might be willing to do just that.

31 December 1998

I sent an owl to invite Granger over for champagne. She promptly replied to deny. Bitch. What other plans could be more important than visiting with a Malfoy?

2 January 1999

So, another year has come, has it? I do find it refreshing a little frightening, being on my own for the first time since I was a teenager. I've only a few more weeks of this house arrest rubbish, and then I can get back into the swing of things.

I had many visitors yesterday...all were eager to dine with me (except Granger, who again denied a visit with me).

Not that I really thought she'd accept, mind.

9 January 1999

Today would have been Severus' 40th birthday. I drank enough for the both of us.

Wherever you are, my friend, I hope you are happier than you were when you were with us.

Ah, an owl from Granger. She'll be joining me for my monthly chat tomorrow.

Excellent.

10 January 1999

I was very charming today...polite, dressed impeccably, a pleasant host...and did this impress her at all?

No.

How is she immune to me when so many others fall at my feet?

I won't worry on it any longer stop trying.

14 January 1999

Narcissa stopped by today with her sister and the little brat in tow. They took away more of her things, but I think that will about do it. Good riddance. She seemed curious as to what I might do once I am free to leave the house...even had the nerve to extend an invitation for tea.

I declined of course. She's chosen her life, so I think she needs to let me get on with mine. I do suppose it's somewhat comforting that she still cares, especially when I don't since I do as well.

19 January 1999

I'm still trying to work out this puzzle that is Granger. She remains unaffected by my charming ways. Surely I possess much more than that Weasley boy does. Why, those spots on his face make him look as though he's got some sort of pox. My complexion and face, on the other hand, is unblemished and smooth. His hair (in a multitude of red and orange hues) falls to his shoulders but is ragged and split while mine falls down my back in a smooth, silky sheet of pale blond. He's such a gangly fellow while my weight fits perfectly with my height.

What does she see in him?

Perhaps I shall question Draco again. Hopefully, he won't be suspicious. Not that there is much to be suspicious of, mind. I'm slightly curious, that's all I'm dying to know.

22 January 1999

So the way to gain Granger's eye is by doing good deeds. Maybe Cissy was on to something then. What could I do that would be considered a good deed? Something she would approve of?

Ah, I've just the thing.

24 January 1999

I've just owled Granger to pass an idea by her. I told her that in order to help make amends for my past deeds, I decided to create a fund at Gringotts for magical beings (house-elves, werewolves, half-giants, etc.). I can't wait to read her reply. I think house-elves should continue to work as they have been, but I suppose giving them a day off now and then wouldn't be amiss, nor would a Sickle or two here and there. Most won't accept that anyway. It's something she tried to champion at Hogwarts once.

Werewolves. Disgusting creatures. I'll never forget the stench of Fenrir's breath. I can admit, however, that some of them aren't as bitter as he. The man was a menace. I caught him leering at Draco more than once.

Hmmm. If memory serves me correctly, he wanted to have Miss Granger to himself after Bella finished questioning her. Perhaps this isn't a grand idea after all. Well, of course it is. It's MY idea. And besides, Lupin was a friend to Potter and Granger, and he was a werewolf. There. That'll be the kicker.

Draco did mention that she'd slapped him once when he'd made a crude comment about Hagrid that half-giant oaf at Hogwarts.

Yes, all things she cares for. All things I am aiming to help.

She'll be eating out of my hands soon enough.

25 January 1999

Granger herself came to the manor to say that my idea is splendid. She plans to bring "our" cause before the Ministry shortly.

Oh, and she smiled at me the entire time she was here (all ten minutes). While she denied the invite to take tea with me, I can still tell that I've won points in getting in her good graces.

Perhaps the little Mudblood witch is coming around after all.

Hang on. Why was that scratched out? Is it possible I've stopped seeing her as a Mudblood?

So I have.

Perhaps she is adopted. That would explain a lot. She's quite inventive. Very intriguing.

A Malfoy always gets what he wants. Look out, Miss Granger. I shall have you.

And I can't wait to see the look on Cissy's face when I do.

30 January 1999

Today is my second to last day of house arrest. I still have to write in my journal for the time being (four and a half more years), but at least I'll be able to get out of the manor. I've already got plans for 1 February. I'm meeting Parkinson at the Greengrass Pub. That should be an acceptable first outing.

31 January 1999

Interestingly enough, Granger stopped by tonight. She went on about how she's proud that I seem to be changing for the better and how excited she was to be heading the trust for lesser magical creatures. She finally agreed to have a drink of wine with me, though she only took one sip and then departed, saying she had other plans.

1 February 1999

How sweet freedom is! Parkinson surprised me by inviting many of our old friends to the pub to celebrate my freedom. It felt good to be back in the swing of things. Draco was there as well. How proud I am of him these days. He's really doing well for us and bringing respect back to our name.

Narcissa wasn't about, thankfully, but I'm sure she'll be seeing the photos in tonight's *Evening Prophet*.

I wonder what Granger will think when she sees them.

Granger. I will be meeting with her in just over a week...so she can check my progress in society now that I'm a free man again. I guarantee she'll find nothing to criticize, for I'm already making plans of my own.

6 February 1999

I've asked Draco for help. I haven't been open with him, but I did tell him that I wanted to know more about Granger's relationship with Weasley. He says he'll be able to find out something soon enough and expects to have answers of his own. I'll think up something to tell him. I just hope he doesn't suspect that I plan to seduce the girl.

For seduce her, I shall.

12 February 1999

Draco has told me that Granger is NOT seeing Weasley. He said that the boy is now seeing an old flame from Hogwarts while the girl is single and focusing on her work.

/am her work. Therefore, it seems that I am more important to her than Weasley...in a roundabout way.

This is encouraging.

14 February 1999

I sent Granger a singing owl to wish her a happy St. Valentine's Day...anonymously of course. I made sure to leave a few clues as to whom it was from, but I don't know that she'll draw the conclusions right away.

15 February 1999

What the deuce?

Narcissa sent me a letter today to say how proud of me she is and how she'd like to come round for tea soon to catch up.

I've replied that I have a full schedule.

21 February 1999

I had dinner at the Greengrass Pub tonight. Imagine my surprise when Draco walked in with young Astoria Greengrass on his arm. The girl is only a year younger than he (and still attending her last year at Hogwarts), but it was a shock all the same. Her older sister, Daphne, is his age.

She has a lovely smile, and I can see why he would skip over her sister to look at her instead, and she's made much more delicately than Pansy. I asked if he was serious about Astoria, and he claims that he is...something about her being there for him when he needed someone to talk to at Hogwarts while our past associates were there.

That can't have been pleasant for him.

I find that I am happy for him, and what has pleased me most is that Narcissa doesn't know about it yet. She always doted on Pansy and wanted a match between them, so he fears she may not take this well.

26 February 1999

Granger sent me an owl today. I think she's figured out that I am behind the card. And the anonymously sent roses.

I shouldn't have sent those. That was just an impulsive moment, nothing more something I thought she might like.

Damn.

3 March 1999

Draco has informed me that he ran into Granger at the Ministry. It seems that she asked about me.

Intriguing.

9 March 1999

I happened upon purposely ran into Granger tonight as she left Diagon Alley and went into Muggle London. Imagine her surprise upon seeing me there. I pretended a need to visit Harrods, and she readily believed it of me. I was allowed to escort her a few blocks and made small talk. I didn't want to appear too interested in her plans for the evening, and as such, she didn't explain anything more to me than I asked. I should have asked.

Will I ever let go of this pride?

Doubtful. Very doubtful.

It doesn't matter anyway. I want to seduce the girl. I want to have her on my arm at a Ministry function for all to see, especially Narcissa. And that is all.

15 March 1999

Granger invited me out to tea to discuss the funding for "our" project. The poor girl bored me with several feet of parchment, outlining ideas and plans for the funds. I told her she could have more funds when she needs them, and she seemed genuinely surprised.

I've told her that I have other ideas as well and that she should discuss them with me over dinner one night. She has agreed. Neither of us will be free for a week, so we've set the date for then.

All I need to do now is think up something that she might approve of. Shouldn't be too hard.

I again denied any knowledge of flowers being sent to her.

22 March 1999

I nearly laid all my cards out on the table tonight, but thankfully, self-preservation kicked in. What's got into me? Why am I so fascinated with her of all people? She ignores any flirtatious comment that I might give and boldly marches on with something else.

What I don't understand is why she wouldn't be attracted to me? Is it the age difference? I certainly don't look my age and won't for a long while.

I could have anyone.

Hmmm. There we are then.

I can't, can I?

I can't have her. That's why I want her. That's why she's so enticing.

How bloody frustrating!

Anonymous flowers don't work, and she's hinted that they cause more trouble than they are worth (nosey questions from others). I wonder if she would prefer gifts? What would be a perfect gift for this young woman who isn't interested in me sexually? What would sway her?

28 March 1999

Draco has come through again. I've got the answer to the Granger riddle.

Would you believe the answer is... drum roll please... my library?

I can feel the feral grin spreading on my face now. I shall have her exactly where I want her.

And soon.

3 April 1999

Do you know, I've not thought of Narcissa for days now? I believe the only reason I am doing so now is because I happened to notice the date on the calendar. It would have been our anniversary.

8 April 1999

There was an interesting article in the paper today... written by Rita Skeeter. It seems someone let it slip someone informed her that Granger has been spending some evenings here at the manor. She's speculating, of course, about a possible relationship between us.

Ah, here's an owl from my little bookworm now.

Oh, yes, she's quite indignant. Wants to Floo over to discuss this "rubbish" Rita is insinuating.

12 April 1999

Hermione has been interviewed by *The Quibbler*. Next month there will be a nice article about the work she and I are doing for the wizarding world and those less fortunate creatures.

I say this is working out better than I could have thought possible. Her annoyance at Skeeter's meddling has brought us even closer, and I do believe she flirted with me earlier.

That's right. I mentioned the blouse she had on was becoming, and she blushed quite nicely before saying something about "becoming" under her breath.

I'd prefer to think she made a sexual innuendo, but as she wouldn't repeat herself, I may never know.

15 April 1999

How does one describe a kiss?

Tonight in the library as I reached up for a book that she couldn't quite get her fingers on, I was presented with the perfect opportunity for a first kiss. She was pressed against the shelf with my chest against hers as I leaned into her to get the book.

As my fingers brushed the book's spine, I happened to look down into her wide eyes and noticed she was a little breathless. My lips migrated south, hers north. The kiss was light and teasing for a moment, but then my primal nature took over, and I had to have more of her.

My other hand came up to cradle her face in my palm while I positioned my lips and deepened the kiss, which was tantalizing. It's either been too long since I've been kissed or there's a true spark between us.

I wanted to do more exploring, but it seemed that I'd forgotten the book entirely. Once I removed my hand, it slipped off the shelf and onto my head, leaving me with a sizable knot.

Embarrassing, yes.

I believe, however, that it worked to my advantage, for she hurried me over to a nearby chair and fretted over it, using her wand to soothe me. It all happened very quickly,

and she fled as soon as she was certain I'd not pass out. It was quite awkward.

Have I frightened her off? I do hope not. I want to explore that mouth of hers again.

22 April 1999

It's been a week, and I've not seen Hermione. She owled to say she's been busy with work and will visit again soon.

Fuck.

27 April 1999

Draco suggested that I owl her and ask up front if I overstepped my boundaries. I may do so, but to ask such a thing it to admit to too much.

1 May 1999

I've done it. Sent the owl.

2 May 1999

Hermione hasn't replied yet. I'm no fool. I can tell when I'm being avoided. What am I doing sitting around waiting for her owl? This is ridiculous. I'm going to go out, have a few drinks, and possibly get shagged.

I think that's the whole problem, you know.

It's simply been too long that I've gone without. It's the only logical explanation as to why I'm so drawn to her.

3 May 1999

What an idiot I've been.

Yesterday was the one-year anniversary of the Dark Lord's death. There were parties abound last night. Some people actually glared at me for being what I am while others were more forgiving.

I left as quickly as I could. It's no wonder she's not been coming by. She's been with the Weasley family and Potter. They've been honoring those who've passed on.

No wonder I had so many invites over the past week.

This has got to stop. She's clouding my judgment. I'm not seeing the forest for the trees lately.

How has this happened?

9 May 1999

Hermione has just left. She came to ME for a shoulder to lean on. Encouraging, that. It seems the matriarch of the Weasley family has been leaning heavily on her. The young Weasley boy she used to be interested in is now trying to date her again, but she says she's moved past that point in her life, but Potter thinks it's a good idea.

Everyone is pressuring her.

So what did I do?

I offered a bit of pressuring of my own.

How so? I offered her an escape.

I asked if she'd like to leave England for a few days to get away from it all. She will send her reply to me in the morning.

14 May 1999

She declined my offer, using work as an excuse.

I must admit that I am let down. She has, however, asked for it to remain a possibility in the future.

That more than anything gives me hope.

Hope? What a sap I've turned into?

Next thing you know, I'll be pulling a Severus and pining away outside the girl's home.

20 May 1999

Draco wants to ask Astoria to marry him as soon as she gets out of school. I've told him not to rush. His mother, he says, has told him the same.

Speaking of his mother, he says that she's had a date with someone.

Interestingly enough, this does not bother me in the least.

I also no longer care what she thinks of my collaborating with Hermione, which the press enjoys printing rumors about.

26 May 1999

I kissed Hermione again.

Rather, she kissed me.

I don't know quite what to make of it. In one moment, we were debating issues dealing with vampires' rights, and the next moment, she was pushing me back against my chair and climbing up onto my lap to kiss me.

This kiss didn't end for eons it seemed.

And there was no book to fall and break us apart, thankfully.

But then she fled again.

What sort of schoolgirl rubbish is this? How can she turn a man on in such a way and then simply leave?

1 June 1999

I believe I've got her figured out.

She's never had a man of my caliber interested in her. Of course she would be worried about knowing how to please me. I'm sure anything kept Weasley occupied, but she's bright enough to know the difference between that boy and me.

So instead of staying and possibly failing, she flees.

Yes, that sounds about right.

I would hate to think that she's a tease.

6 June 1999

I have formally asked Hermione to dinner at the Greengrass Pub...as a real date, no misunderstanding my intentions, no pretenses of work, no mediator relationship... just us. A man and a woman having dinner.

She's agreed.

8 June 1999

She's placed all her cards on the table.

She is attracted to me. She doesn't want to be. Yet she does.

She's never been intimate with anyone...not completely anyway...but when she's alone with me, she thinks about it and it frightens her.

Bloody hell. She's never had sex.

I had no idea.

Apparently there still are nineteen-year-old virgins in England. In fact, she's nearly twenty.

Luckily for me she's been more interested in education and other things, eh?

Imagine what a gift she'll be giving me.

Or imagine the gift I shall give her.

I won't be some fumbling boy but a man who knows what to do with every inch of her body.

Good Lord, but I'm hard thinking about it. Tsk. Tsk.

This means my plans for taking her against the wall of the library where we spend most of our time is out for now. Oh, how I fantasized about that: passionate sex against the nearest wall, so needy and hot that our clothes are partially torn off.

15 June 1999

Hermione mentioned taking that small holiday with me. I've made plans for us to be gone next week.

22 June 1999

I've just realized that it's been a year since I first wrote in this journal. I've had quite a journey, haven't I? So many things in my life have changed. Perhaps this wasn't such a bad idea after all, for I can go back and read through my earlier entries and see how I've grown as a man, see how my feelings for Hermione have developed as well.

I care for her deeply, and I showed her just how much last night when I made love to her for the first time. This holiday was the best idea possible. I couldn't imagine a more perfect setting than to have a sea breeze blowing in through the windows of our rented cottage and hearing the waves slap against the shore noisily as we explored each other for the first time.

Life is good. That's a phrase that I can finally say and mean. Nothing is hovering over us. No one is pulling any strings.

Had anyone said I'd be right here a year ago, I'd have thought the person a nutter. As it is, I'm right where I want to be and where I belong.

With Hermione Granger.

This was written for midnight_birth during the LMHG exchange on Live Journal. Her requests were:

~ EWE (after Hogwarts and the war)

~ Keep Lucius as we know him (no poverty or Azkaban)

~ Make Lucius wants Hermione but have him not want to mix with a Mudblood

~ When he realizes she doesn't want him, he sheds his pride and pursues her with cunning (always getting what he wants in the end)

~ A grudgingly helpful Draco is a huge bonus