

At Long Last

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Hermione had to sigh when Orion's voice broke into another ill-timed reverie. Thinking of *him* never got her anywhere, after all.

"What was that, Ori?" she asked, smiling at her beautiful son. Sometimes, looking at him made her heart swell with pride, but other times, harder times... looking at him broke her heart, just a little.

"I *said* I wanna go to the park, Mother!" her three-year-old child announced. She rolled her eyes. She had no idea why he insisted on calling her 'Mother' instead of 'Mum' like she'd taught him, but he was much too bright for his own good and obviously more stubborn than she was, since she didn't correct him anymore.

"That's fine. Can you wait a minute for me to pack the bag, or do you want to help?"

Orion crossed his arms over his chest and actually tapped his tiny foot. Hermione laughed and packed some food and a tiny first-aid kit. The park was only a block away, but Auckland was very busy at this time of day, and she'd rather not eat out.

It had taken Hermione almost a year to adjust to New Zealand. Things were so different here. It was beautiful, that much was certain. She'd spent her pregnancy on the coast, enjoying the sea air and the time to herself. But she had become lonely, moving into the city so Orion could start at a more prestigious pre-school and she could get a better paying job. She worked as a financial consultant in a large bank. Going back to her Muggle roots was even harder than learning to be a witch in the first place, but she didn't regret leaving.

Not when it meant she didn't have to face *him*.

She helped Orion put his shoes on, with him trying to show her how he liked his laces to be tied. Smiling softly, she caressed his white-blond hair, marvelling, as always, at the stunning silkiness of it. Her son was handsome, there was no denying it...and that wasn't just a mother's pride. They were constantly stopped and complimented, and she'd even had people approach her to tell her to get him on television. His hair was slightly long, curling a little, and impossible to tame these days. He had *his* eyes. But his features were all Granger. He had a button nose that he might grow out of, sweet Cupid's bow lips, a soft brow and a strong jaw for someone so young. Like her father's.

At the park, she watched him vigilantly. He sometimes tried to take over whatever the other children were playing, but thankfully he was more diplomatic than he used to be. He'd been a holy terror at two, and though she had loved every moment of his development, she was thrilled to see that personality trait had been left behind. He had become a very determined and assured young man, and she couldn't be prouder.

When they arrived home, Hermione dutifully extracted and replicated the memory from his time at the park, placing it in the Travel Pensieve, which was a small vial, and placed it with the others. She mailed them monthly and was due to send this bunch the next day.

Draco Malfoy sat at his desk in the study. After going over yet another expansion proposal for his father's business, Draco had to wonder if his father was enjoying retirement. It was bad enough that Draco was busting his arse day and night for the businesses, but to see his father walk around in light linen suits, strolling the grounds at leisure, entertaining guests and having an all-around *ball* made his ire flare.

He didn't mind, not really. His father deserved to relax, and Draco had been raised to do this job. And there were many people willing to take over if he needed a break. So far, he never had. But he couldn't help but wonder what it might be like to actually settle down. He felt old beyond his years, but despite meeting several prospective brides his parents had introduced him to, he just couldn't see himself with any of them.

Something was always missing.

At times like this, Draco's mind often wandered back to a time four years ago. Just one night, but, in hindsight, the best night of his life. The night to which all others were inevitably compared. It was damn frustrating, especially since *she* was long gone, and even Potter had seen neither hide nor hair from the witch in years.

Her smooth skin, her burning eyes, her soft but demanding lips, her sweet taste... it was more than enough to drive a softer man mad.

Draco was thankfully distracted when an owl arrived with the day's mail. He sorted it into piles, as he did every day. There were two things for his parents: a letter from the Ministry for his father, hopefully regarding his pardon, and something addressed to both Lucius and Narcissa. It had come a long way, judging by the rather ragged appearance. He tossed them both aside, intending to bring them to his parents later. The letters both slipped off the edge of his desk thanks to his overzealous dismissal, and Draco cringed upon hearing the tinkling of broken glass when they hit the marble floor.

He went to see what could have broken and was surprised to see a silvery memory strand dancing among spilled water and broken glass. *Who would send my parents a memory?* He wondered, picking it up with his wand and leaving to find his personal Pensieve to store the memory until his parents returned.

He was about to walk away when he thought about the letter. The handwriting had seemed almost familiar. Draco stared back at the Pensieve before making up his mind. It wasn't as though his parents would ever know, and it couldn't be all that important if it was owed instead of given in person.

Without further preamble, Draco leant into the Pensieve and immediately fell into the memory.

It was warm, impossibly warm. Hot, even. Not England, obviously. He seemed to be sitting in a park, in front of a playground. Children were playing and roughhousing, but the memory seemed to be focused on one in particular.

Draco felt his stomach clench when he saw him. A little boy, maybe three years old, white-blond hair, striking grey eyes. It was unmistakable. *But how?*

The child was obviously a Malfoy. Had his father...? Draco's eyes widened. Of course. His father had had an affair, and this child was the result of that. And now the mother was sending memories... why? To guilt Lucius? Bribe him? Or perhaps just keep him informed of the child's development?

How could Lucius do this to his mother? He'd never even suspected them of having marital troubles. Theirs was the marriage to which all others were unfavourably compared.

But despite the obvious Malfoy in the boy, he seemed familiar in another way. He was currently going down the slide, screaming delightedly as he landed on the cushioned ground at the bottom. He raised himself up with dignity, brushed off his bottom and walked away, a small smile on his chubby face. Draco smiled in spite of himself. A true Malfoy.

Draco was ejected from the memory a few moments later. He didn't know what to think. It was clear beyond all doubt that this child was a Malfoy. Another heir. And obviously his mother knew because her name had been on the letter.

He had to talk to them. He deserved to know the truth.

Hermione's arms were being held over her head, a body pressing down on top of her. The weight was unfamiliar but not unwelcome. His fit thighs were between hers, he was inside her. He was holding her hands as he held them down, rocking into her body with gentle but strong movements. His kisses were branding her; each one was like fire on her sensitive skin. She tried to return the favour, but he only smiled at her, sometimes pulling back beyond her reach. He seemed to love teasing her. Finally, when she felt her body build toward that crescendo, he kissed her on the mouth. His kiss engulfed her, and she forgot everything. She forgot how he got into her bed in the first place, how he'd told her it was only this time, how his passion contradicted everything she thought she knew about him.

All that was left was the kiss, and then she fell over the edge. He followed her, crying her name, and she had to wonder how it could only be this one time, how he could punish them both by leaving.

But he had. She woke up alone and had not heard from him since. Her attempts at contact were ignored, and she had no choice. She left.

Hermione woke up angry. It was so rare that she felt like that these days. Usually Orion was all she needed to get through the day, all she wanted. But every now and then, when she had that horrible, wonderful dream, she felt angry at everything she was denied. But more than that, she was angry on behalf of her child. He deserved more, and she hated to think of the day she would have to tell him why he didn't have a daddy around like the other kids. And then when his magic began to surface, she would tell him the truth. And when it was time, she would take him to Hogwarts and he would go to school. She would stay here, in New Zealand, and he would return on the holidays, just as she had with her family.

It would be okay. But it should have been better.

"Mine?"

Lucius nodded. Narcissa had tears in her eyes.

"What are you talking about?" Draco's head was aching. His parents were trying to tell him that little blond imp *was* his, but there was no way.

"I'm sorry you had to be told like this, son. We promised her we would never tell you, if she only sent us the memories. We knew you didn't want her, and we didn't think you'd want him either," Lucius informed him.

"Who? Who didn't I want? And how *dare* you make a decision like that for me? I'm a grown man, I should have made the choice, I should have ~~known~~!" A son. He had a child. A beautiful, sweet son. *I want him.* He knew it like he knew his own name. But how?

"It was the Granger girl."

Draco's world collapsed. He sank into the seat from which he'd indignantly risen at the beginning of the revelation.

Hermione. The only girl who'd ever gotten to him. She'd had his child? *Why didn't she tell me?*

Draco gritted out, "Tell me everything."

And they did. From the way they'd pressured her for a blood test to prove his paternity, to the way they'd tried to bribe her to stay away, to the ways she'd tried to contact him over the years but each missive was intercepted. How they were trying to *protect him*. Draco sneered.

"Why did you want the memories if you didn't want the child in our lives?" he demanded.

Lucius curled a lip. "Your mother insisted. She wanted to make sure he wanted for nothing. I told her it was better to break all contact, but she wouldn't listen. I knew this would happen."

Draco bit out another question before he went to destroy a room or two. "Why did Hermione leave?"

Narcissa had the gall to sniff sadly. "We told her you didn't want to see her again. We told her it was better this way. We... we said you didn't want the baby."

"Why would you do this? I don't understand!"

Lucius fixed Draco with a condescending stare. "The heir to the Malfoy fortune cannot be a *Mudblood*," he spat. "You were to find a Pureblood witch and father a *legitimate* and *proper* son to carry on the Malfoy name."

Draco roared incoherently, and both his parents cringed at his rage.

Breathing deeply, Draco reined in his anger. They didn't matter. His voice quieted to a growl, and he said, "I am getting her back and we are going to be a family. And you will *not* be part of it!"

Draco stormed from the room. His heart was racing and felt fit to burst. He'd gotten her address and he had a trip to make. He only hoped his blood was enough to allow him access to her Floo, since most modern Floos were built to accept members of the family.

I have a family. For the first time in years, Draco genuinely smiled.

Orion was napping in his bedroom, the only time during the weekends that Hermione had the television on. She only watched the news, and only for an hour or so, to keep up with world events. She didn't like Orion watching television on the weekend, preferring to entertain him herself as often as possible. Luckily for her, he was easily entertained and generally fairly calm and amenable. They both enjoyed going to the coast to play in the sand and enjoy the ocean, but this weekend, Hermione was catching up on work.

Which explains why she was asleep at her desk when her Floo sounded in the next room. She jolted awake, a piece of parchment (one of the few throwbacks to the Wizarding World she permitted in her Muggle home, as well as quills and ink) stuck to her face.

Tearing it away, she immediately grabbed her wand from her purse and ran to her son's room. He was sleeping, as he should be. She locked and warded the door before running to the living room.

Her heart quite possibly failed upon her arrival.

Draco Malfoy, looking every bit as self-assured and arrogant as she remembered (and oh, she remembered), was standing in front of her hearth as though he had every right to do so.

She lowered her wand and shakily asked, "What are you doing here?"

He raised a silver eyebrow and returned, "And where, exactly, is here?"

"My living room! My *home*!" she expostulated.

"Well, I know that," he scoffed. He seemed to catch himself, and Hermione saw he had aged. He didn't look old, of course...even Lucius had looked thirty when fifty. But he looked... changed. Matured, maybe. Hopefully. Otherwise this conversation would be a monumental waste of time, since she had no intention of waking her son by raising her voice or allowing him to raise his. What was it about them that was always so volatile?

"I know about Orion," Draco said softly, stepping forward toward her and looking a little insulted when she took a half-step back.

She felt the blood in her very fingertips turn to ice. She'd always known this day would come when he would meet his son, but she'd always pictured it happening when Orion was eleven and starting Hogwarts. That thought had given her many years to get used to the idea that Orion wasn't really entirely hers.

"What do you think you know?" she bluffed, hoping he was as well.

Draco's next words disabused her of that notion. "My parents told me everything. Now, the question is... why didn't *you* tell me?"

Hermione knew she ought to feel cowed, but truthfully, she still believed she had done the right thing. When she and Draco had had their time together, he was wanted by *both* sides, and even though the war was technically over, there were many people who would have loved to see him meet his end. A child was not safe in that environment. And on top of that, Lucius and Narcissa told her time and again that Draco did not want them; Draco had been coward enough to get his parents to deliver that particularly nasty message.

"What do you mean? I did tell you! Your parents would never let me see you or talk to you. Then one day, Lucius sent me an owl saying you didn't want either of us. I wasn't going to wait around for an invitation into the life of Draco Malfoy. I spent a day there; it was enough." *Almost enough.*

"My parents were very, very wrong to tell you what they did. I didn't know *I didn't know*," he said, ending insistently.

"You didn't know what, exactly?" Hermione was confused and scared about what was happening. She could see her life changing all around her, and she was very worried.

"About him. Orion. Our son," he whispered, stepping closer to her.

She did not step away this time. *He didn't know? Oh, gods... what did they do? What have I done?*

"But I... I sent memories. They sent money, said it was from you... I put it all away for him, never even touched it." She didn't know why she was telling him that. Her heart was pounding and her fingertips felt numb. She had to sit down.

Apparently Draco saw her need, because he was leading her over to her own sofa. They sat together, each looking at the other, unable to believe how their lives had been orchestrated. She mourned how much Orion had lost in not knowing his father.

"So you... you didn't say you didn't want him?" she clarified, her voice shaking slightly.

"I did not even know he existed until a few hours ago. I don't know him, but I want him. Hermione, I'm so sorry for what my parents have done, but *will* make it up to him, to both of you. I...I looked for you, you know. After that night. After you left. No one knew where you were, except Potter, and he wouldn't tell me. I thought you never wanted to see me again."

"I didn't," she admitted. "But that was because I thought you were denying us."

"I would never... and I will never. From now on, we are a family. Is that okay?" He looked so earnest, suddenly young again. Hermione felt a tingling in her extremities that always preceded his touch. He placed a hand over hers, and suddenly she wasn't so cold anymore.

"I want him to know you, of course. That's all I ever wanted."

"But I mean more than that. I think you and I should..." he started, but she cut him off.

"No, Draco. We shouldn't try to make it work just because of Orion. He'll know if we're unhappy. It's better to leave things as is...that way, we won't fight, and you won't leave." Hermione knew all about parents staying together for the kids, and it never worked. Kids knew those things, and she would never try to fool Orion. Her happiness was important, too.

He looked at her intently, and not for the first time since she'd known him, she wondered what was going on behind his eyes.

"What if it's not just for our son?"

Hermione looked away, smiling tightly. How can a person cope with a man coming back into her life after four long years, saying all those things she'd never let herself believed she wanted? What kind of person said no in the face of everything that could make her happy?

"What would it be for, then?" she whispered. His eyes met hers, a pure silver-grey that told her absolutely nothing that he didn't want her to know. But for the first time, Draco dropped his barriers. He seemed to be showing her something, telling her something. In his eyes was hope: needy, grasping, desperate hope. She knew without having to check that it matched the look in her own eyes.

Draco placed a hand, ever so lightly, on her cheek. He smiled at the contact, stroking her smooth skin there and encouraging her to tilt her head into the touch. So she did. It felt so good to be touched without any walls up, to be touched in the knowledge that they somehow, after all these years, wanted the same thing.

He leaned forward and kissed her. At first, the kiss was nothing more than a confirmation of his presence, telling her that he was really *here*. But before long, the kiss grew enflamed between them, Draco moving his lips fervently against hers, demanding entrance to her warm mouth with an insistent tongue. She let him in...she *always* let him in, even when she probably shouldn't.

Hermione felt her wand vibrate against her leg, and she broke the kiss. The wards on Orion's door included Silencing Spells, meant to keep his existence a secret in case of a robbery or home invasion. Her wand was tuned as a baby monitor, and the vibrating meant he had begun to cry.

"I have to check on Orion," she told Draco, having broken the kiss and stood up.

"Can I see him?"

Hermione bit her kiss-swollen lip. Of course he had every right to ask that, but it made her nervous to find that was true. From now on, Orion was as much his as he was hers.

"Yes. Follow me." Hermione led him to her son's room, bringing down the wards with a series of complicated spells. Draco asked if he was always so well-guarded, and Hermione responded by saying she'd been surprised by the Floo activating and reacted accordingly.

"I promise not to barge in like that again. I realize now I should have given you warning."

She waved away his apology. Things would change between them...there was no point in pretending otherwise. She would just have to get used to his coming through the Floo to see Orion. *And me.*

Orion was sitting on the floor by the door. "What are you doing on the floor, love?" she asked, picking him up and wiping his tears away. Orion had stopped crying as soon as he saw a stranger enter his room. The child didn't like other people to see him in tears; even as a baby he'd rarely cried around anyone but Hermione.

"Who's that?" he demanded, not answering her question.

"Why were you on the floor?" she countered. She was the only one who could withstand her son's stubborn streak, though that was only about half the time.

He looked her in the eye for a long moment before whispering, "I tried to get out to see you but the door wouldn't open, no matter what I said or did. It's a very bad door, Mother. I think we should fire it and hire a new one."

Draco barked out a laugh, reminding Hermione of his presence. "He hears me talk like that about work," she explained. Draco smiled, tearing his eyes away from his son for a moment to meet hers.

Orion drew their attention back to him. "Now answer my question, please."

Hermione took a deep breath. She'd rehearsed this many times, but Orion had always been so much older in her thoughts. She'd never spoken down to him and she wouldn't start now.

"Orion, remember Mommy telling you about how children have a Mother and a Father, even if both don't live with together?" At his nod, she went on. "Good. Well, this is Draco Malfoy. He is your Father. Do you understand?"

Orion looked long and hard at Draco. All three were frozen for the entire length of the stare, and Hermione knew she wasn't imagining the fear of rejection that was written all over Draco's face.

"He looks like me," Orion stated matter-of-factly. He squirmed to be put down, and she obliged, watching him walk steadily over to Draco, who knelt down to speak with him face to face.

"I'm sorry I've never met you before, Orion."

Their son shrugged. "You're here now."

Hermione drew in a sharp breath. Everything she was afraid of, everything that used to matter was summed in those innocent words. Draco had missed so much, *bûte was here now*. Now they could be a real family. Her eyes were suspiciously shiny at that thought.

Orion continued, "Your name is Draco? My middle name is Draconis. Isn't that funny?"

Draco looked up to Hermione, something akin to pride in his features.

"It's a very good name."

"His last name is Granger," Hermione said softly. That was probably obvious, but it also spoke of her hesitation to change his name.

Draco only nodded. "Orion Draconis Granger. It's very nice to meet you."

Orion shook his father's hand firmly, and Draco laughed at the pseudo-grip.

"Can I take you both out for dinner?" Draco asked, looking to Hermione. "We have so much to talk about."

"I don't want him going back to Wizarding London so soon. I haven't explained everything to him yet."

Orion narrowed his eyes at his mother, letting her know he knew she was holding out on him.

"Here is perfect. Do you have a favourite place?"

"Mama Perla's!" Orion shouted, running to his dresser to get the sweater his mother would momentarily tell him to don.

"Italian. Do you mind?" Hermione asked, watching her son with a painfully full heart.

"I'd go anywhere with you."

Draco stayed with them in their small home for nearly a month. He Floo'd back occasionally for work, but was lucky enough to have a great team, therefore did not need to be there daily. He'd told Hermione all about what he'd said to his parents about not wanting them to be a part of his new life, and Hermione had bit her lip and told him not to make any rash decisions. She was right, of course; despite their hateful interference, they did seem to love their grandson, and while Draco did want to punish them, he also wanted Orion to know his family. He was of two minds about it, but for the moment, he was beyond furious with them and told Hermione to burn any letters they sent to her about him. At his behest, she did not send any more memories of Orion, though he knew she was still saving them.

Over the course of the month, Orion had been surprisingly adaptive. Draco remembered being a very stubborn child, almost afraid of change, but Orion was different. Though he had peculiar Malfoy affectations, his heart and soul seemed to come from his mother. He was forgiving and easygoing...most of the time. Draco quickly learned how best to deal with the little guy while still maintaining "cool dad" status.

Hermione allowed him to see the memories she'd been sending to his parents for years. He spent a few hours every day watching them, beginning with the moment after his son's birth. He wanted to ask Hermione for memories of when she was pregnant, but he wasn't sure if she would appreciate that; he also wasn't sure if he could handle seeing her, swollen with his child, knowing he was living in luxury, ignorant, while she was alone.

His favourite memory, one he always came back to, was Orion's first time feeding at his mother's breast. It was shortly after his birth, and Orion was obviously starving. He was red-faced and squalling, but he just wouldn't latch. After nearly ten minutes of presenting her nipple again and again, Draco saw frustrated tears in both their eyes. His heart broke when she lifted him to look him right in his cloudy blue eyes and said, "It's just you and me, Baby. We're in this together, now. We only have one another, so we have to try our hardest to make due, okay? Please?" Her voice broke and tears trailed down her cheeks. She looked so very alone. Breathing deeply, she showed Orion her nipple again, and he looked at it dubiously before finally latching. Her sigh of relief struck him somewhere deep inside him, and he had a vision of seeing her breastfeed, not just in a memory, but *again*. He wanted her pregnant with his child again, and he wanted to be there, with Orion and Hermione. He never wanted them to be alone again.

He would do anything to be a real family with them. He just had to make them see he deserved it.

Draco was putting Orion down for the night, when it hit him. *This was perfect*. Everything about the moment, from the sleepy, fluttering eyes of his son, his *son*, to the knowledge that Hermione was standing in the doorway, not checking up on him, just watching. Just *being* with him. It was a soft acceptance unlike anything he'd ever experienced. She didn't want or need anything from him, she didn't care that he still felt as though he might break Orion, she didn't hold against him all those years they'd spent alone. It was a life he didn't deserve, one he never even knew he wanted, but now that it was *his* he would *never* give it up.

With this knowledge in his mind, he turned to face Hermione, who blushed lightly at having been caught watching. He watched her cheeks fill with blood and felt pleasure that he caused that reaction in her.

"Hermione," he whispered, closing the space between them. It was time to stop playing games, time to stop skirting the issue. They both wanted to be a family; they'd each said as much. The only thing between them was *them*. But Draco knew they had to at least make an effort to be together if this picturesque image of a happy family could ever come to pass.

"I...I should get to bed," she whispered back, moving from the doorway so he could leave the room. She shut Orion's door behind her and set the spells for monitoring him.

Draco stood behind her, his hands on her upper arms, trailing lightly up and down. She seemed to be frozen in his embrace, her face turned slightly to the side and down. He wanted to think he could feel her trembling, but didn't believe himself to be so lucky that his mere touch could unravel her.

He pulled her firmly against his body, her back against his chest with his arms wrapped around her. Just standing there, looking at the bedroom door of their son, a newly drawn scribbled picture with both of their nearly discernable features on it, Draco could think of no place he'd rather be. Of no place where he better belonged.

The words on the drawing seemed suddenly blurry, as if underwater. "Mommy and Daddy and Me." Orion hadn't quite written it himself; Draco's hand had guided his son's, which had held the crayon.

Blinking, Draco turned Hermione so she was facing him, but his grip did not loosen and she was embraced almost bruisingly in his hold. He leaned down to bury his nose in her hair, inhaling her as if he could keep the smell inside him always.

"Draco..." Hermione whispered, her eyes searching his. He thought he saw fear there, certainly a little confusion. But desire, as well.

"Hermione, I know things have been hard for you. I know they've been difficult between us. There's so much I would have done differently. But I do want you. I want you as a friend, as a lover, as my son's mother, and everything else you are. I want it all, and I'm willing to make it a fair trade, too." He smiled wryly at her, and she laughed, a short, gasping laugh that sounded more like a cry.

But she didn't cry. She broke the embrace but took his hand, leading them down the hallway to where he knew her bedroom to be. It was on the same side as Orion's, across the hall from the spare room in which he'd been sleeping.

She led him through the open door and paused in front of the bed. She looked suddenly uncertain, meeting his eyes but with hesitation. He closed the door behind him, firmly, surely. Crossing the slight distance between them, he took her face in his hands and kissed her hard.

There was no slow-burning ember between them like last time. The kiss was immediately aflame, her fervour equalled by his own. Her hands travelled the expanse of his back, clenching and pulling at his clothing. He regretfully relinquished his hold on her to take off his blazer and shirt. She was hurriedly undressing as well, but he stilled her

movements with his hands.

He took over the task for her, lovingly unbuttoning her blouse, pushing it off her shoulders and grazing her heated skin with his fingertips. She shuddered under his touch, and he had to smile.

"Draco, it's been a while for me..." she whispered apologetically, and he didn't deign to answer, instead kissing her neck as he unclasped her pants. She seemed to be spurred into action, taking her time now. She trailed her hands over his chest, teasing and touching him until he groaned against her skin. Her hands slipped down to his waist, struggling and finally lowering his trousers at the same time he lowered hers.

In the low lamplight, it was as though she had not changed a day. Her body was tanned and smooth, beautiful and better than he remembered, now that he knew to savour it.

She smiled shyly and took his hand again, this time taking him to the bed. She sank back against the pillows, looking every bit the sacrifice on the altar.

"I want you, Draco," she told him softly as he lowered himself beside her, propping himself up on one arm and exploring her body with his other hand. His fingers caressed her collarbone and chest, pausing to give attention to her bra-covered breasts for a long moment before trailing down to her belly. Her stomach was flat but softer than he remembered, and three silver scars that only enhanced her perfection because they were the badges of honour for bearing *his* son. These scars were the evidence of her maternity, her love, her sacrifice and his bond with her. Leaning down, he kissed them each softly, smiling as she gently laughed.

"I was lucky it was only the three," she murmured, fingers carding through his hair as he moved lower.

"More might come, next time," he whispered up to her, watching her eyes to see her reaction. They widened, first in confusion and then in shock.

"Next... time?" she managed.

He nodded. He was lying between her raised knees, his head resting on one silky thigh. "I know most purebloods have only one or two children, but I want more. A lot more," he confessed. His mind was telling him this wasn't the right time for this conversation, but he'd promised to be honest, to himself and to her.

"With me?" Now her voice was a little sceptical.

Again, he dipped his head in the affirmative. "With you. I want Orion to have the biggest, most loving family in the world. I want that for me, too. I can make you both happy, I know it. And I want to *be* here this time, I want to see it all, help with it all."

Hermione's head fell back against the pillows, and while he was waiting for a response, he kissed a line from her knee to her hip and back, slowly, lovingly tasting her flesh with each soft brush of his lips.

"I want that, too," Hermione stated firmly but still breathlessly. "Gods, I want it, too."

Draco got to his knees between her thighs, pulling her toward him to kiss her again, hiding nothing and telling her each and every fear, desire, and hope he'd kept within him all his life.

He told her how he was scared he wouldn't be a good dad, or would fuck it all up like his own father had.

He told her how he'd wanted his own family from the time he'd been just a child and how he'd gone along with his father's pureblood posturing because it would secure him a family.

He told her how he wanted nothing more than to be everything she would ever need again.

All in a kiss.

And he knew she heard every sad, sorry, desperate word.

The last of their clothing was discarded in a fury, their kiss nearly wild with poorly restrained emotion. Unlike their first time, when the only thing between them had been mutual dislike but equally mutual attraction, now there was something bigger at stake, something important and beautiful and sublime and not a little scary, but something *worth it*. And maybe that meant Draco was worth it, too.

Settling between her thighs again was like coming home. Propped up on his elbows, he could see straight down into her whiskey eyes, into her heart.

Draco slowly entered her, not because he didn't want to take her hard, because he did. But he wanted to memorize each and every moment, each clenching of her walls and each soft gasp from her parted lips. Finally deep within her, Draco found permission in her eyes to take her as he'd wanted, and he kissed her lips as he began to move his body above her.

Her body took him in so tightly, so hotly, that he wondered how he would find the strength to hold back. But a sweet sound escaped her lips, and he knew he wanted nothing more than to hear that noise, and others, again and again.

For the rest of his life.

Their breath mingled together as Draco never left the vicinity of her lips, taking them again and again as he drove in her, becoming more and more impassioned as her movements became desperate. Locking her thighs at his hips and her ankles around his waist, Draco discovered new depths, moaning into her mouth as she took him impossibly deep. Her body was rocking his, and he let himself get taken away with her movements, only his hips moving in time with hers.

When she closed her eyes tightly, he could see her searching for release, and he moved a hand between their bodies to caress that hidden spot that he remembered made her respond so quickly. His memory served as only a few strokes on her clit made her body shake and clench before she cried out, kissing him fiercely and marking him with her fingernails.

He could hold off no longer, the pleasure on her face bringing him completion almost as quickly as the sudden grip on his cock.

He gritted his teeth against shouting her name, but it came out anyway, sounding like a plea and repeated with every wave that coursed through his body. Finally, he was able to move again and rose from Hermione's sated and lightly sweaty body to lie on the bed beside her.

She turned on her side to face him as well, and Draco felt honoured at how very open her face was. She was satisfied, but more than that, she looked happy. Draco felt an unaccustomed pride at making her feel that way. He was used to *pleasing* people, but he couldn't remember a time when he'd actually made them happy.

He suddenly remembered something rather important. "Did you... I mean... Are you on the potion?"

Hermione smiled, her eyes laughing at him, and nodded. He couldn't hide the disappointment that flitted over his features, and she looked surprised to see it.

"You wanted to try again already?"

He leaned in to kiss her softly, nibbling on her lower lip before meeting her eyes again. "I don't know. If it happened, I'd be thrilled. But it's probably best to get Orion used to me first, get you used to me." He smiled a little sardonically and she returned to it.

"I think I could get used to you very quickly, Draco Malfoy," she whispered.

As they settled down to sleep in the same bed for the second time, but really the first time, in their lives, Draco couldn't help but feel that everything in his life had led up to this point. Every disappointment, every missed opportunity had been so he could appreciate this, so he could *have* this.

And when Orion barged into the bedroom first thing in the morning and winded Draco by jumping right onto his gut, Draco couldn't think of a more beautiful noise than that of his son laughing with abandon.

Hermione awoke to that same sound, watching her two blond men play-wrestle before whispering conspiratorially while sneaking sidelong glances at her. She barely had time to raise an eyebrow before an attack was launched. Orion tackled her legs, pinning them together with his weight on top of them. Draco held her shoulders, kissing her softly and slowly.

"We've got you now, love. And we're never letting you go."

Fin.