

Fancy Meeting You Here

by peppermint

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Chapter 1 of 1

Hermione runs into Narcissa at a used book shop.

Hermione staggered into the corner second-hand bookshop, weighed down with two shopping bags bulging with paperbacks. Blast the Muggle world! Fuck the Statute of Secrecy! She stumbled to the counter and heaved the bags up, blowing an errant curl out of her face, only to have it fall back across her eyes a second later.

The shop clerk peeked around the bags and smiled at Hermione. "Hi, Hermione! Back to feed your addiction, are you?"

Hermione sighed, leaning against the counter. "Yes, Imogen, I'm back. It could be worse; I'm only addicted to romance novels and Starbucks coffee."

Imogen laughed, starting to remove the books for sorting and pricing. "There are far worse addictions," she agreed, setting a few titles aside. "These ones here, there's another woman who's been looking for them. She seems to come in just after you do on Thursdays, and she always wants the books you've purchased."

"That's odd," said Hermione, looking out the shop window. "Maybe I'll stick around; my only other plans today were..."

"Starbucks!" interjected Imogen with a grin.

"Yes, Starbucks, and plowing my way through another fifty smutty books," Hermione agreed. "I'm going to browse."

She made her way into the close-spaced stacks in the bookshop, browsing for titles she hadn't read, or perhaps hadn't read in a long time. The shop's cat came to wind his way around her ankles in greeting, and she crouched down to properly attend to ear-scratching. She had settled into a cross-legged position on the floor ten minutes later, still engaged in protracted kitty-worship, when the door chime tinkled.

If Hermione hadn't been there, she never would have believed that she had actually seen Narcissa Malfoy - no, it was Narcissa Black these days - stagger through the door in much the same fashion as herself. Narcissa was far more nattily dressed, but she too had a large shopping tote of books to heave onto the counter.

Hermione scrambled to her feet, earning a rather annoyed hiss from her feline overlord. Peeking around the end of the aisle she had been in, she took in Narcissa's designer denim trousers, likely hand-tooled boots, and fashionable, wool swing coat. Her own Levis, warm cardi, and trainers had seemed all right when she had left her flat that afternoon, but now she just felt frumpy in the presence of the stately blonde. Maybe she could just leave and come back later. She zipped up her cardigan and headed for the door, but Imogen was too quick for her.

"Hermione! Come and meet Cissa; she's been after your books."

Caught, Hermione sighed and turned around, making her way back toward the counter. "Good afternoon, Ms. Black," she said politely.

Narcissa looked at Hermione with a puzzled expression, but soon enough, realization dawned on her face. "Miss Granger! Hermione. May I call you Hermione? And you must call me Cissy. Please," she asked with a genuine smile.

Hermione was taken aback, but nodded. "Please. Ah, Imogen tells me you also have a penchant for romance novels."

Narcissa nodded, gesturing to her tote full of books. "I do. And I read fast, much like yourself, I imagine?"

"Yes, I do. Imogen sees me just about every week, except when I've been busy at work. I like to take Thursday afternoons off, come here and shuffle my collection around, and spend a couple of hours reading over a caramel macchiato," Hermione rambled, her nerves getting the better of her.

Narcissa reached out and laid her hand on Hermione's arm. "I'm so sorry. It can't even begin to make up for the horrors you suffered in my home, but I think we have more in common than either of us would ever have believed. I'd appreciate it if you'd let me treat you to a coffee. There's a Starbucks just around the corner."

Hermione looked at the perfectly manicured hand on her arm and, instead of shoving her hand with its chipping polish into her pocket, covered Narcissa's hand with her own. "I'd like that."

Prompt from ladyinthecloak: Narcissa and Hermione share a love for Starbucks and Muggle romance novels. How do they find out about each other?