

Amistlemour

by Darkrivertempest

After receiving an enchanted Christmas present from Fred Weasley, Hermione thinks her life will never be the same. And she's right.

One

Chapter 1 of 1

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And she's right.

Written for the LJ community, Dramione_Advent. Prompt: Mistletoe. DISCLAIMER: JK Rowling owns it all; I make nada, nothing, zilch, zero. Ah, but Twiggys *ismine*, I tell you!

Shaking the knit cap she'd just finished making, Molly Weasley held it open in front of her guests. "Alright then, everyone come forward and pick a name out of the hat for our Santa exchange."

Hermione smiled thinly. "That's *Secret* Santa gift exchange, Mrs. Weasley."

"Really?" Molly looked perplexed. "Ah, well, then... that makes much more sense than what Arthur told me."

The frizzy brunette mentally groaned at the idea of Arthur Weasley describing a Secret Santa gift exchange to wizards. Knowing him, he'd probably told them that they'd have to kidnap Santa himself and present the jolly old man to whomever they chose from the hat.

"So what do I do with..." Ron looked at his slip of paper and made a face. "Luna Lovegood?"

"Ron!" Hermione hissed, glaring at him. "You're not supposed to tell! That's the whole point."

"It's okay," Luna said casually. "I'll pretend to be happy with whatever he gives me."

Snorting, Hermione pursed her lips to keep from outright laughing.

"Bloody hell!" Charlie wheezed. "I got..."

Quickly placing a hand over his mouth, Hermione shook her head. "Don't you dare, Charlie Weasley."

He narrowed his eyes and forced her to remove her palm by licking her flesh, causing her to squeal and wipe his slobber off on her jeans. He then smiled unrepentantly and meandered off into a corner of the room, shaking his head as he looked at the name he'd retrieved from his mother's haberdashery.

It'd been Arthur's idea he'd heard about it from his Muggle contacts in London and implemented it after a long discussion with Hermione a couple of weeks ago. He'd even

convinced his wife that the tradition required a hat all its own, so he'd set her to knitting the most garish looking cap she'd ever made to date.

As the evening progressed, Hermione kept to herself mostly, watching the Weasley clan with Luna and Neville included, pick names for their gift exchange. She automatically incorporated Harry into the Weasley household, as he'd recently asked Ginny to marry him, and though she'd thought she and Ron might finally be where they should once the war had ended, what had been between them fizzled to nothing. Now, after turning twenty-two and seeing her best friends settle into their lives, she wondered where it left her.

"Hermione, dear? It's your turn," Molly prodded, interrupting her woolgathering.

Easing herself from her seat next to Luna, Hermione approached the matriarch and stuck her hand in the hat, realizing there was only one scrap of paper left. Closing her fingers around the parchment, she pulled it out and quickly retreated to her seat, opening it once she sat. She mentally groaned.

Molly Weasley.

Well, there was nothing for it, she supposed. A nice Muggle cookbook or something kitchen-related would work in a pinch if she didn't have time to search for a gift, and with the business meeting regarding the merger of her company and Malfoy, Inc., it was highly unlikely she'd have any to spare. Rubbing her temples to relieve the slight headache she could feel coming on, Hermione glanced around the room to see everyone animatedly talking about their upcoming plans for Christmas.

She conveniently missed the expression on Fred Weasley's face.

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Hermione stared at her reflection in her bathroom mirror, willing herself not to cry.

"Get a grip, Granger!" she hissed, swiping at the stray tears fringing her lashes. "It was just a job."

Except that she'd been made redundant two weeks before Christmas as a consequence of the Malfoys' acquisition of her company.

"This is to be expected of those bastards!" She grit her teeth and closed her eyes.

As Junior Solicitor for Renaissance, a small company that began incorporating Muggle technology to work with Wizarding charms, she'd made a name for herself. *Herself*. Not as one-third of the Golden Trio, not as best friend of the Boy-Who-Saved-Them-All, but as Miss Hermione Granger. In two years, she alone had made the company grow at least fifteen percent by providing sound business advice and acting as liaison to Muggle society in order for the technology to be procured. It wasn't lucrative work on her end the merger of Muggle and Wizarding worlds was its own reward so when profits had begun to slide due to rhetoric spewed forth from Wizarding purists, Hermione had held out hope that the society as a whole could form an opinion of their own and not rely on Old-World tradition. Apparently she'd been mistaken.

After she'd heard the office gossip about the corporate big-wigs in talks with a larger company to buy them out, she'd been somewhat relieved, expecting a financially stable company to keep Renaissance together and not dismantle it. The relief had quickly turned to apprehension when she'd learned that Malfoy, Inc. had been the company in heated discussions. In retrospect, she had to admit it'd been a savvy business move by the nefarious blonds. Though small, her business was cutting edge, and the Malfoys had always been opportunists, regardless if the prospect was a Muggle-oriented company or not.

"It is business, Miss Granger," Lucius drawled. "Not personal."

Not personal her arse!

"We already have the most prestigious Solicitors and Barristers available." He looked at his finely manicured nails. "I'm sure you won't have a problem securing another position."

Lucius had done all the talking while Draco sat off to his right, silently observing her. She hadn't accepted the façade of an uninterested party on his behalf, knowing how cunning the young man had been during their school years. And she'd been right. The moment Lucius had left the boardroom, Draco had remained behind, assessing her with narrowed eyes before smiling mischievously. He'd then nodded his head slightly and exited. His pointed evaluation of her person had made her spine tingle in a not-so-bad way, but she had shaken it off and left in desperate need of fresh air before she gave in and cried.

Pinning her long curls to the sides, she sighed heavily, the events of the previous day still lingering. Tonight was to be spent at the Burrow for the gift exchange, though Hermione heartedly wanted to remain safely ensconced in her flat, indulging in triple fudge delight ice cream and reading morose romance novels. With her last paycheck, she'd bought Molly an apron that was self-cleaning and touted the words, *"Don't make me poison your dinner!"* on it. She'd also confiscated one of her company's best selling products before leaving. The WizCooker a slow-cooker that added ingredients as needed throughout the day, allowing the witch or wizard to make a meal without really spending a great amount of time doing so would be a godsend with Bill and Fleur's child on the way. Both items had been wrapped in festive paper and set near the Floo so she wouldn't forget them.

Hermione hoped Molly liked her gifts, because she really couldn't be bothered otherwise.

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She looked at the square white box with trepidation.

"Go on then, Granger," Fred nudged Hermione. "It won't bite you... yet."

Arching a dubious brow, she looked at the prankster. "You don't inspire confidence with your words, you know."

He dramatically placed both hands over his heart. "You wound me, love!"

Snorting at his antics, she carefully lifted the lid and winced, waiting for something to explode in her face. Several moments passed and nothing happened, so she peered into the box, frowning.

"Mistletoe?"

"That's no ordinary mistletoe," George pointed out.

Plucking it from its nest within the package, she studied it, looking for the difference. She soon found out.

"Allo ma chérie!" the twig purred lasciviously in an overblown French accent, stroking her fingers with its leaves. "You and I will make beautiful music together, non?"

Her jaw dropped and she darted her gaze to Fred. "What is this?" she whispered harshly.

"Now, now, Granger," Fred said, backing away slowly from the ire he saw in her eyes. "Before you inflict bodily harm upon my ruggedly handsome self, you'd better listen to what I'm about to tell you."

Clenching and unclenching her fists, she breathed deeply and then smiled, too brightly for Fred's taste. "Do go on," she indicated with a sweep of her unoccupied hand. "I'd love to hear you explain this."

"Yeah, wise-guy, explain it to the little lady. You won't be able to weasel your way outta this one, I tell ya!" the mistletoe added in a decidedly fake American gangster accent, shaking one leaf at the redhead in outrage.

"Wicked!" Ron said in admiration.

The twig turned and glared if it could be called a glare at the youngest Weasley son with its two waxy, white berry eyes. "Shut your gob, orangutan!"

The silence was deafening.

"Fred Weasley!" Molly scolded. "That's not a proper gift!"

"You're gonna be a grandmum!" the greenery sing-songed, staring pointedly at Ginny.

"What?" several people shouted at once, while Ginny's face flamed red.

Ignoring the commotion her *gift* was making, Hermione returned her attention to Fred. "Well?"

"Someone's in trouble," the twig continued to sing, blowing a leaf raspberry in Fred's direction.

"Shut it, you!" he ordered.

"You can't make me, Walrus, goo goo g'joob."

Hermione looked at Fred in astonishment. "It knows Beatles songs?"

Before he could say anything, the mistletoe answered for itself. "Love, I know *lots* of things." It had the audacity to give her a leafy wink.

Except for George, everyone was staring at Fred, mostly in expectation, save Ginny who glowered at him with murder in her eyes.

Rubbing the back of his neck, he smiled hesitantly. "It's our latest product, and we needed a way to test it before we marketed it to the wrong audience," Fred clarified. "It's called *Amistlemour* and once you kiss your true love, it'll return to its non-spelled state."

Pressing her fingers against her eyelids, Hermione bit her lip to keep from sobbing. "And why did I get to be the lucky recipient of this..."

"Oh, yeah, baby... you're gonna get lucky with me!" the mistletoe interrupted.

"This lewd piece of shrubbery?" she continued, trying to drop the offending stick. Instead, it hovered next to her shoulder, as if an angel perched there. One that had horns holding up its halo, that is.

"Being the observant bloke that I am, I noticed you feeling out of sorts the day we chose names," Fred enlightened her. "And I heard about your job, and that Malfoy being such a..."

"Wait a minute," Hermione halted him, her hand raised. "How did you know about my job? I just found out yesterday."

"Uh oh," the mistletoe warned.

"Be quiet!" she hissed.

"Yes, ma'am," it replied meekly, to everyone's astonishment.

Making sure it remained silent, Hermione turned back to Fred. "Well?"

"What can I say?" he said with a shrug. "News travels fast in the Wizarding world."

"I see."

"No, I don't think you do."

Standing as straight as she could, she retrieved her cloak and moved towards the fireplace. "Oh, I see all too well," she told everyone. "Poor, pathetic Hermione can't keep a job and is a social leper." She grimaced with tears swimming in her eyes. "I see very clearly."

In a puff of green smoke, she was gone, along with her mistletoe pet.

~*~

"You look like death warmed over."

Startled, Hermione darted her eyes to the reflection of the floating leafy twig and berries next to her left shoulder. "You're still here."

The skimpy stick sidled up to her ear. "It's just you and me, kid."

Rolling her eyes, she batted the mistletoe away and squeezed the tube of toothpaste a little too hard, causing a large glob to cover the head of her brush. "Great," she muttered.

"It is, isn't it?"

Saying nothing to prompt it further, she began brushing her teeth, her mouth firmly closed over the brush.

"Is blue your favourite colour?" it asked, sounding like it was trying to make small talk.

Spitting out the foam, she narrowed her eyes. "Why do you ask?"

"I just noticed your toothbrush is blue, your décor is blue, and your mood is..."

"All right, I get it," she groused, rinsing out her mouth. "Do you ever go away?"

"Only after you plant one on your love, true love."

Growling in exasperation, she vowed to denude Fred Weasley of every bit of hair on his body. "I guess you'll be around a long time then, because I don't plan on kissing *anyone* just to get you to disappear." As an afterthought, she added, "I hope you're self-watering."

"You shouldn't be kissing just *anyone*," the twig admonished. "And I don't need water."

"Whatever." She unhooked her bra and flung it over a chair in her bedroom.

"Gazongas!"

Her eyes widened as she realised she'd just stripped in front of the plant and she slapped the mistletoe hard enough that it went flying against the wall. "Out!" she shouted, pointing towards her bedroom door with one hand and covering her chest with the other.

"What?" it whined, shaking its leafy head. "You've got great tits! They're really plump and..."

Whatever it was going to say was cut short, literally, as Hermione brandished a pair of scissors and snipped off the two leaves it was using to form a mouth. She was going for the twin berries when it fled her room in terror.

Locking the door, she thumped the wood in warning. "And don't try sneaking another peek, you manky mistletoe!"

"Prude!" she heard it shout from somewhere in her flat.

Apparently it started using other leaves to vocalize its comments and opinions. As long as it wasn't around when she was *sans* clothing, she could put up with it.

"You could use a good kiss!" it yelled.

Then again, maybe not.

~*~

If the previous day had been bad, the next week was sent from the underworld itself.

Filling out her fifth application for employment, Hermione Granger resisted the urge to write in the *SEX* field, "Yes, please, I'm desperate."

"You're not desperate, just lonely," Twiggy observed.

She'd taken to calling him Twiggy, tired of constantly referring to him as an 'it' because really, it had a personality all its own, and anything *that* twisted had to be male. He was totally random, even breaking into song at the most inappropriate times such as in the ladies room at the local bookstore where she'd just handed them her CV. When a suspicious *plop* echoed from one of the other stalls, Twiggy belted, "Love stinks! Yeah, yeah..."

Mortification did not even begin to cover her exact feeling in that moment.

"Dead," Hermione growled low when she heard a, "Well! I never!" from the stall where the sound had originated. "I'll kill them both dead."

Unable to shake the persistent greenery, she'd accepted the fact that she was going to have to lay a lip-lock on someone if she wanted to retain what little social life she had left. Keeping that in mind, she signed her name and handed the application to her long-time Gryffindor friend, Neville Longbottom. As the professor of Herbology at Hogwarts, Neville had learned of the imminent retirement of Madam Pince, the school librarian, and advised Hermione of the coveted position.

Eyeing the floating mistletoe off to her left, Neville smiled hesitantly and nodded. "Thanks, Hermione. I know Madam Pince will look it over and get back to you."

"Thanks," she murmured, shoving her quill back in her satchel. "I really appreciate this."

"It's not for you," Twiggy adamantly said. "You'll get bored."

Neville challenged the plant's suggestion. "I don't think you know Hermione, then."

Moving close to his face, Twiggy slapped Neville's nose in irritation. "I know her better than you, beaver boy."

"Twiggy!" Hermione shrieked. "Apologize, right now!"

"I'm sorry you look like the offspring of a beaver and Bassett hound mating."

"Oh, you!"

"It's okay, Hermione, really." Neville flushed and ducked out of sight.

Rounding on her *pet*, Hermione put her hands on her hips. "You're cruel, you know that?"

"No, I'm honest. There's a difference."

"Hardly," she snorted. "You like it too much."

The branch gave an approximation of a shrug. "Point being?"

"Ugh!" She threw up her hands in annoyance. "Fine. I'm getting rid of you... one way or another!"

Grabbing her purse and wand, she Apparated to Diagon Alley and set about to find any wizard to in Twiggy's crass words 'plant one on', planning to lock lips with the first male she could get a firm grip on.

This happened to be Dennis Creevey, standing in front of Flourish and Blotts.

"Hey, Hermione!" He waved to her fast-approaching figure, his smile fading when she wrapped her fingers around his robes and pulled him in for swift, chaste kiss.

"Wow!" he sighed dreamily. "That's a great hullo!"

"Seriously?" Twiggy sneered with disdain behind Hermione. "You think *that* is your true love?"

Panic entered Dennis' eyes as he caught a glimpse of the talking mistletoe. "Huh?"

Hermione stuck her nose up in the air with a harrumph.

"Obviously, you see that I'm still here."

She stomped her foot and huffed off, leaving behind an utterly bewildered Creevey.

"Some other time, then?" he called after her.

"And you said / was cruel?" Twiggy accused, following behind her rapid movements. "I'm not the one drooling on poor, defenceless wizards in a vain effort to fill my lonely

nights with any Tom, Dick, or wand."

Choosing not to comment, she spied another wizard, crept up behind the figure and roughly turned him around, pressing her lips against...

"Oi! What're you doing?" Gregory Goyle thundered, shoving Hermione backwards.

"Oh my God," she spluttered. "I'm so sorry!"

"Yeah, Granger," Twiggy snickered, rolling his white, berry eyes. "Sycophantic Neanderthal is just your type."

Both Goyle and Hermione turned their attention to the floating Christmas decoration so fast it caused a mutual crick in their necks. That voice! It sounded so familiar! She hadn't really paid any attention to the mistletoe's speech pattern and accent up until that moment because it was so random, but that lazy drawl of Twiggy's hit a nerve. After a few minutes of staring at the hovering sprig, Goyle meandered off to continue whatever it was that he was doing, while Hermione stood on the pavement near the main thoroughfare. Eyes narrowed, she studied her *gift*, as an ugly thought began to take root in her mind.

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Sipping her hot chocolate, Hermione glanced over the rim of her cup to see Twiggy still floating off to her left. They were in Fortescue's, which served warm treats during the winter months, and she was perusing the *Daily Prophet* for job advertisements. Seeing as there were few people around, it would be a perfect time to test her theory about the enchanted mistletoe.

Dipping her finger in the warm, sweet liquid, she brought the froth to her lips and sucked, wrapping her tongue around the digit.

"Oh, Merlin's hairy balls..."

"Excuse me?" Hermione asked, not quite hearing what Twiggy said.

Clearing his throat it had a throat to clear? he subtly corrected, "I said, oh, deck the halls."

"Ah," she agreed with a nod. "Thought so."

"Hey, 'Mione!" called a voice near the entrance to the cafe.

Looking up, Hermione broke into a genuine smile. "Ron!"

She stood and they embraced in a tight hug before he sat down at her table, ordering a hot chocolate as well. "See you've still got Mister Manky there."

Twiggy made rude noises that sounded suspiciously like ape grunts. "How's it hanging, numb nuts?"

While Hermione snorted with suppressed laughter, Ron tried grabbing the rude bit of shrubbery. "I'll hand you over to Snape and see how you like that!"

"Ooo, tall, dark and broody Potions master! Now there's the ticket to a kinky romp in the sack!"

Ron grimaced in disgust. "Eww, you're just disturbed."

"At least I don't have a unibrow, monkey-boy," Twiggy taunted. "Your eyebrows are thicker than your dunderheaded brain."

"I'll pluck off your berries," the redhead threatened, reaching for Twiggy once more.

The stick used several leaves to cover its nether regions. "If you do, I'll cry rape!"

Hermione could not hold her laughter at this point. "Behave," she reprimanded him unconvincingly.

"I don't see how Fred thought this *thing* was supposed to find your true love," Ron huffed, returning to his cocoa and ignoring the floating mistletoe.

"I don't think it's supposed to," Hermione said with a shrug. "Just to let me know when I've kissed my true love."

"Well," Ron hesitated. "We could kiss again, to see if it works."

"Desperate," Twiggy hummed, looking at Hermione, who scowled at him.

Twining his fingers with hers, Ron brought them to his lips and pressed a kiss to the back of her hand. "We could practice."

Gagging noises effectively broke the mood and Hermione withdrew her hand. "I don't think we'd work so well together, Ron."

"But, we could..."

"I wanna spank you with a sack of kidney beans while you cover yourself in whip cream and let a randy duck named Jeff lick it off you," Twiggy interrupted, totally flustering her best friend.

"What?" Ron spluttered. Hermione snickered.

"Given that true intellectual and emotional compatibility are at the very least difficult, if not impossible to find, you could always opt for the more temporal gratification of physical attraction, such as Lavender Brown over there giving you googly eyes. That would make you shallow, wouldn't it?" Twiggy posed, indicating the girl over by the window, who was batting her eyes at Weasley.

Turning her attention to the ditzzy girl on the other side of the room, Hermione lowered her eyes and sighed. "Figures."

Seeing that her confidence was waning, Twiggy pushed Ron further. "Brown's in heat, boy sic her! Maybe she'll let you do her doggy style?"

"That's it!" Ron shouted and jumped from his chair.

In a bout of pure luck, Ron snagged one of Twiggy's lower branches and held firm, yanking him to eye level. "You are about to end up in someone's salad," he seethed.

Twiggy tried squeezing one of the waxy berry eyes to produce moisture, hoping to coat Ron's fingers with it. "My danglies are toxic, you stupid nutter!"

As irritating as he'd been ever since she'd opened that box, Twiggy had grown on her, in the non-pun sort of way. So when Ron tried stripping Twiggy of his leaves, she had to step in. "Stop it!" Hermione screeched, pulling the enchanted sprig away from Ron's abuse. "You're hurting him!"

"You've gone mental, Hermione," Ron accused. "All that mistletoe has done is insult me, and I bet others as well."

"Are you a puffer?" Twiggy asked, once safely ensconced in Hermione's hands.

Ron pounced on her and tried wresting the mistletoe away, but a hearty shove sent him sprawling. "I'm pretty sure you're not my true love, Ronald Weasley," she spat. Gathering her things, she left Fortescue's quickly, uncaring of the spectacle she left behind.

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"Chin up, Granger," Twiggly softly cooed as he watched her turn a page in the book she was reading.

She breathed out evenly. "Go away," she murmured, never taking her eyes from the print.

They were sitting in a little-used section of Flourish and Blotts, Hermione in a huge overstuffed, leather chair, and Twiggly resting on the arm.

"If you tried to play tonsil Quidditch with that ignoramus, then *know* you weren't even trying to find your true love."

"Go away, please," she reiterated, sounding strangely on the verge of tears, shifting her body away from Twiggly.

"Hello, Granger."

"Twiggly," she growled through gritted teeth. "I said not..."

"I know I'm thin, but I'm not a twig."

Turning her head very slowly, Hermione came face to face with the voice that sounded so much like Twiggly's, though she never realised it until now. Draco Malfoy.

"Oh, now there's a piece of arse I'd tap myself!" Twiggly purred, making lewd gestures.

Draco's brows rose into his hairline. "Granger, is that mistletoe chatting me up?"

She covered her face with her hands in mortification. "Yes."

"Come on, white-haired wonder, pucker up!" The leaves forming a mouth made kissing noises in his direction.

Hiding a grin, Draco cleared his throat and asked sombrely, "Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes?"

Frowning for a moment, she then looked at Twiggly in comprehension and nodded. "I'm still trying to decide if it was a gag gift or a true Christmas present." She narrowed her eyes. "How do you know where it comes from?"

Summoning a book, Draco transfigured it into a low stool, sitting once it was to his liking, and faced Hermione. "Father's company owns a quarter of their stock," he explained easily. "Plus, I saw their new merchandise for Christmas about a week ago."

Her lips thinned. "Convenient."

"There you see her... sitting there across the way," Twiggly started singing. "She don't got a lot to say, but there's something about her." He shook his leafy hips. "And you don't know why, but you're dying to try, you wanna *kiss* the girl!"

"Ignore him," Hermione pleaded with a wan smile.

"Why?"

Blinking in confusion, she then stared at Draco. "Because it's not serious."

"Yes, I am!" Twiggly cried indignantly. "This is the one you *want* to whisper in your mouth."

Her jaw dropped. "What? No disparaging remarks about his manhood or some such nonsense?"

"Hey!" Draco grunted. "No talk of disparaging my manhood."

She glared at the blond. "As if you had any manhood, you egotistical prat!"

"Now wait a moment," he ground out. "I just came over here to talk to you, and now I'm getting sexually harassed by Yule greenery and snarled at by you. Tell me how I deserve this punishment."

Closing the book with a snap, she stood and towered over him. "You and your father gleefully tossed me out on my arse! Near Christmas, no less!"

Twiggly moved to position himself just below Hermione's navel. "How about kissing her *under* the mistletoe?" He waggled his eyebrows at Draco since he was eye level with him.

Smacking him away, she fumed. "Twiggly! Shut. Up!"

Draco stood, now nose to nose with her. "Let me disabuse you of a few notions, Granger," he hissed. "First of all, the second I found out that Father was buying out your company, I petitioned to have you on my team even though he protested. *My* team!" He inched closer. "Second, if I'd tried to go behind my father's back and hire you anyway, I couldn't have given you the salary you deserve." His eyes skimmed her face, landing on her lips. "And you deserve a lot."

"If you ever wondered about whether or not to kiss a pretty girl, give her the benefit of the doubt," Twiggly piped in.

Hermione's nostrils flared. "You're not helping."

"Yes, he is," Draco muttered and pressed his lips against hers.

She stiffened in surprise but became pliable within moments, returning his ardent exploration of her mouth. When they finally broke apart, he laid his forehead against hers and panted.

"A kiss is a lovely trick designed by nature to stop speech when words become superfluous," Twiggly sighed dreamily.

He then winked out of existence.

"You can let go of me, now," Hermione muttered, pulling away.

"No, I want to stay." He kept her within his embrace. "I know that was *Amistlemour* because I'm the one who bought it."

"What?" she shrieked, struggling to leave his arms.

"Settle, Hermione!" Draco bit out, locking his grasp around her so she couldn't move. "I bought it the day Father let you go." He nuzzled her crown. "I had to know if what I saw that day was real."

"What do you think you saw?" she grumbled, still not giving up on her freedom.

"My future," he whispered.

This effectively stilled her. "But, I'm dirty to you," she said softly. "There is no future."

Pulling back somewhat, he gazed into her eyes. "I haven't thought that way in years and you know it."

She did know it. Why else would Malfoy, Inc. have invested in her company? It might have been Lucius' business, but she didn't think anyone but Draco could've convinced him to risk their profits on it. And why would he do that if he was so anti-Muggle? No, Draco didn't have the same mindset he used to have, but could she trust him?

"I'm poor," she added with lowered eyes, trying to extricate herself once more.

"You won't be when you find out how much I'm going to be paying you," he countered, pressing a kiss to her forehead.

"What do you mean?"

"I want you to work on my team."

Frowning, she pointed out, "But, your father..."

"Can't run the company without me," Draco smirked. "I'll be returning to work on Monday on *my* terms."

She arched a brow. "Lucius hates me."

Sighing heavily, he gave her a stern look. "You know when you and I get old and our son or daughter comes up to me and says, 'Dad, how did you meet mum?' I'm going to have to tell him or her how quiet you were, or how difficult you were being."

Hermione rolled her eyes. "That's not how we met, and what makes you think I'd marry you?"

"Well, let's face it rejection can lead to emotional stress for both parties involved, and emotional stress can lead to physical complications such as headaches, ulcers, and even death! So for my health and yours, *just say yes!*"

"You make a convincing argument," Hermione agreed. "But I'm still not marrying you."

"We'll see," he said noncommittally. "After all, I did kiss you underneath the mistletoe."

"Like that means anything," she snorted.

He studied her. "Do you miss Twiggy?"

Narrowing her eyes, she pursed her lips. "Not that it's any of your business, but yes. He amused me."

"Good to know," he grinned with a wink.

Her earlier thoughts came to the forefront again and she gasped. "You imbued your personality upon the *Amistlemour!*"

His grin broke into a genuine smile. "You, Miss Granger, did not fully read the instructions."

"I didn't receive any," she corrected him.

Pulling her closer, he laid his cheek against hers. "There are two varieties of *Amistlemour*," Draco said softly. "One is just an enchanted sprig that says 'yes or no' to whomever you kiss." He punctuated this with a peck just below her earlobe. "The other is personalized as a specific gift to seek out its true love and will steer the giftee away from those that don't match."

"Twiggy," she replied fondly.

"Yes, Twiggy," he agreed.

"You didn't see anything... did you?" she asked hesitantly, knowing all the things she did around the charmed gift with the notion that it really couldn't see her.

"No, why?"

She smiled sweetly and shook her head. "No reason."

"Granger..."

"Nothing."

Draco's mouth hung open once he caught on. "Twiggy got to see you starkers, didn't he?"

"I'm not saying."

He mopped his face with his hand. "I can't believe I'm bloody jealous over a piece of foliage."

Smirking, she bit her lower lip. "He didn't see... much."

"Evil chit," he growled and lightly pinched her side.

Tempting fate, she leaned up and whispered in his ear, "You'll see more."

"Promise?" he breathed heavily, kissing the side of her mouth.

Threading her fingers through his blond locks, she smiled against his lips. "Promise."

"Best gift I ever bought," he murmured, closing the distance between them.