

Amber Oblivion

by kumydabookworm

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Ginny was doing her Head Girl patrols when she smelled bitterness in the air. Images of Christmas Eve last year appeared in her head.

George had tottered up to her and toasted her with bitter humor in his voice and tears shining in his eyes, "Merry Christmas, Ginny." The glass of whiskey in his hand shook and she had to put him to bed.

She tried to forget that memory before she fell apart, but no matter how she tried, she couldn't forget the acrid smell that wafted from his cup, whiskey. The smell here was reminding her of times out of reach and regret burned in her stomach. Someone, a student, was drinking whiskey and by the smell, lots of it. She followed the tang through the corridors and kept walking until she realized that she was now walking away from the smell. It was fading. She hadn't passed any drunks in the corridors...

She sighed, frustrated. It would be nearly impossible to find the source in all these corridors. The smell wasn't strong in more than a corridor or two, but it had permeated everywhere on the floor if you were looking for it. Still, she decided to walk back one last time. It was better than staying in her dormitory, alone, with only the memories of the past surrounding her.

She made her way back through the hallways and froze. Here. This was where the whiskey smell was vivid, nearly burning her eyes with its harshness. She looked around carefully...nothing.

Finally, she spotted a dim light peeking through a crack between a portrait and the stone walls; the portrait was a door!

She slipped her wand through the crack and whispered, "Stupefy!"

Now she wouldn't have to sneak in, trying not to alert the person inside. She swung the portrait open to reveal a slumped figure sitting in the corner of a shadowy room.

She walked up to the figure and said quietly, "Reenervate."

His eyes cleared and he looked up at her. She couldn't see a thing in the dark, couldn't read his face. The boy shielded his face from the light of the corridor and tried to scramble away from her.

She grabbed his clammy arm to keep him with her. "The Headmistress " She felt stickiness coating her fingers, and she looked down at her hand in shock.

She said quietly, "Lumos." The small area around her lit up, but the boy quickly moved out of the reach of the illumination. She still held onto his arm. That wasn't sweat on his arm...it was blood.

"Never mind," Ginny said quickly.

The boy pulled away in horror. "No! You don't tell anyone about this! Just forget it! All of it!"

She looked at the boy with pity. "I can't. A secret room, whiskey on the premises...all this breaks a thousand rules and stretches the limits of a hundred more. I can't just forget about this. I have to tell McGonagall."

He snarled, "That's right, perfect little Weasley. Have to follow every rule...can't just leave well enough alone."

She recoiled. "Not always. Not every rule." She changed the subject before the memories overwhelmed her. "Let me take you to the nurse. This arm needs to be seen to."

The boy pulled out his wand. "NO! No one else!"

Ginny held up her hands defensively. "Okay, okay, no one else. Let me see the arm, then."

He held out a pale, too-thin arm for her to examine. As she looked at it, she couldn't find the cut.

"I can't see anything," she muttered distractedly.

"Lumos," she spoke, just as the boy raised his hand in protest. She gasped at what the light revealed.

"The cuts...they're everywhere! How did you do this?" she asked incredulously.

The boy grimaced. "I didn't."

She looked at him again. "Why the whiskey?"

He grimaced again. "It's the only way to numb the pain. I can't tell anyone about this."

Ginny shook her head and bent back down to her work. She could ask questions later, but this boy was in danger. The pulse in his wrist beat rapidly and weakly against her fingers. His hands were cold and clammy...she wasn't sure what that was from, but she couldn't risk waiting. She needed to heal him first.

She supposed that this would be realistic training for what she meant to do after Hogwarts, anyways. They had just finished learning how to heal minor cuts in Advanced Healing, but maybe they would work here as well, if applied. There was no other choice.

Slowly, she healed: the arms, the face, the head cuts, the back, the legs...even the gut. Fury raged within her. Who would do this to a fellow human being?

She tried to see his face in the darkness, but he relentlessly avoided the light. Suspicion panged deep in her stomach or maybe fear but she knew she couldn't let him die because of her.

"Was someone trying to kill you? These gut wounds...a hair to the left and they would have opened your intestines. You would have been dead within days," she said quietly.

The boy laughed, a terrible sound. "Something like that. But they wouldn't expect me to find help."

She poked him a bit harder that she needed to in order to test the extent of the damage, and he winced.

"You're an idiot for not finding help. You're cut up pretty badly, and as far as I could see, I might have healed some cuts on your organs. I've only had basic training because it's required for my N.E.W.T. If I missed any wounds, you'll die."

She finished the last of the cuts on his back. "Come on. You need to see the Headmistress."

He resisted now, finally. "I can't." She looked at him hard.

"Why not?" she said biting.

He shrugged uneasily, looking at her Head Girl badge.

"I'm not exactly a student here." Ginny stared at him in shock.

The boy continued more slowly, more desperately, "Please...don't tell anyone. If anyone finds out about me - about this..."

She asked a simple question. "Who are you?"

He peered up at her through the darkness. "You don't want to know...trust me."

She sighed resignedly. "I need to know."

He looked away and whispered, "Malfoy. Draco Malfoy." Ginny's eyes lit up and she grabbed his arm in a furious vice. She moved her glowing wand closer to him and finally saw his face. He was tired and gaunt, but still, this was Draco Malfoy.

Damn him. Draco had left the school after her fifth year, presumably to join Voldemort. She had never expected to see his face ever again, except when hidden behind a Death Eater mask. She couldn't believe she had helped the man who had killed her family.

"Malfoy! I helped a Malfoy!" her voice was full of self-disgust and bitter sorrow.

Draco was limp in her grasp. Hopeless, he still attempted to reach her. "Please...you don't understand..."

Ginny's knuckles grew white as her grip tightened, and she hissed, "What? What exactly do I not understand about you? I found their bodies, Malfoy. You killed my family in cold blood, and you couldn't even do that properly. You left me here to mourn them. You left me. What don't I understand?"

Tears streamed from Ginny's burning eyes. Memories swept her away. Malfoy was unable to speak. But what she didn't see, blinded by tears, was that his eyes were nearly as torn as hers. His eyes shined with sorrow as well.

He didn't run away while he could; her grip had slipped as she crumpled before him. He merely stayed and waited. She...she needed to understand.

Meanwhile, Ginny remembered. The memories she had tried to hide from overwhelmed her in sweeping waves.

The first death had been her father. He had died as he took the force of a spell meant for Harry Potter. That Christmas Eve, just after her fifth year, George had greeted her with a stagger in his walk and tears in his eyes. He drowned his sorrow in amber oblivion. Her mother had locked herself in her room.

She had been alone, had thought she was alone that night. That was the first day she found the smell of sorrow: the bitterness of whiskey, the saltiness of tears, the sweet smell of Christmas candles.

But, on that Christmas Eve, she hadn't been alone. Her family had still been there to share her sorrow, make the burden easier. They were merely grieving, but she never appreciated them for simply being there. Three days after Christmas, she returned from a trip to Grimmauld Place to find them - every one of the Weasleys - lying on the floor of the kitchen. George's clothes smelled of whiskey, and the sweet smell of Christmas cookies filled the air. Her mother had been baking, she thought blindly as tears inundated her vision. They had slowly been healing, but someone had taken that all away from them in a single instant.

In a little while, the smell of sorrow returned as salty tears dripped onto their lifeless forms.

Ginny sat there shaking, trying to fight off the grief that threatened to overwhelm her. She was alone now, and there was no one left to fall back on if she fell apart. She was alone because of him. Her thoughts were finally interrupted.

Draco said vehemently, "I did NOT kill your family. I protested against it! That's why I'm bleeding all over the floor. That's why I'm here hiding in a room that is the size of my CLOSET! You you and your family are the reason for my reality! If I had just killed them, I could have accomplished what I never had with Dumbledore. Voldemort would have finally accepted me into the upper ranks, and I would never have to kill again myself. I could order someone else to do it for me. After all, that's what the Dark Lord does every day."

Ginny sat there, stunned at his outburst.

Draco was oblivious in his indignant rant. "I should have remained silent, done what was expected. But everything was getting out of hand. Father had told me that we only killed Muggles. Wizards helping the Order would just be captured and used for our plans. He had told me that Dumbledore overly exaggerated all the stuff about Death Eaters over the years. We were being ordered to kill everyone though." His voice was incredulous. He seemed to see nothing in front of him, eyes glazed over as he sunk into himself.

He rambled on, "I mean, Muggles dilute the magic of our world with their blood; they should leave us well enough alone or we should get rid of them. But your family - despite their social views - is one of the oldest and purest magical families in Britain. Watch how the Dark Lord really works, beyond the façade of blood purification, and you see why they are called Death Eaters. They kill for pleasure. Death really is what they eat and breathe. It makes them feel alive to take life away."

Draco visibly shuddered. Ginny finally slipped out of her shock at this noticeably human reaction from Draco Malfoy.

She said incredulously, "You didn't kill my family?" Draco shook his head.

She asked again, "You aren't a Death Eater?"

Draco said sarcastically, "You saw my Dark Mark, Weasley. I'm not currently serving the Dark Lord, though. He just tried to kill me. That soured our relationship just a bit."

She smirked. "One would think you could come up with better lies," she said as she grabbed his arm and pulled his sleeve up to reveal a Dark Mark, "seeing as you're a Death Eater and all."

She pulled out her wand and found, to her surprise, that her hand was trembling. Her voice cold, she hissed, "Get up. I need to get you to McGonagall before I rip you apart. You deserve it, but I'm better than that." Her jaw clenched as she fought away both tears and fury. She didn't know how to feel, really.

Draco stood up and grimaced. "The Dark Lord has sentenced me to death for treason. To be malicious, the Death Eater who killed your family Polyjuiced himself to look like me. You really think the Dark Arts couldn't tell us that your house was being watched? They knew, and they exploited that. Now the Order is after me as well. Hogwarts is the only place that the Dark Lord does not know well in the magical world and the only place where the Order thinks there can be no mistakes...thinks that they have secured."

Ginny looked at him skeptically.

"It's the only place where no one would look for me...at least," Draco said, glancing at her with grudging respect, "most of the Order. I should've known a Weasley would be different. All of you have been cut from a different cloth, so to speak. Most of the time, that isn't a compliment. However, seeing how you saved my life "

Ginny's voice burned with fury. "Flattery doesn't work on a girl like me, not after I lost my parents because of you. I don't believe you. There's no reason to believe you."

Draco shrugged. "If you take me to McGonagall, it's as good as killing me. The Dark Lord has a way of finding out what goes on at Hogwarts. If you are determined to kill me, then just do it yourself, rather than taking the coward's way of blaming it on someone in authority."

Ginny flinched. "It's not like you did that with Dumbledore."

Draco showed no reaction. "I was a boy, then. Now, I'll kill when I have to."

Ginny looked at him suspiciously. Draco smirked. Before she could register what was going on, Draco had spun her around into a headlock and had a knife pressed against the pulse in her throat.

"I don't need a wand to kill someone." His voice was a hot whisper against her ear. "I don't even need a weapon," he said as he threw the knife away. "I could snap your neck with my bare hands."

Ginny stood for long moments there, not daring to move. Abruptly, he let her go and stepped back to his position against the wall. She looked at him with defiance in her eyes, nearly managing to hide her fear.

He said softly, "But I won't. You have the right to doubt me. You saved me from death a few moments ago, and I suppose I owe you my life. That gives you the right to kill me. But if you try to take me to McGonagall, I will escape. I'm perfectly capable, now that you've healed me."

Ginny struggled to find her composure. Suddenly, the thought occurred to her: she could just Stun him. But somehow, her hand refused to direct the wand at his silhouette. She wanted so desperately for him not to be the killer. She didn't want to have to live with the idea that she had helped save the man who murdered her family.

"Why should I believe you?"

Draco looked at her for a moment, and then shrugged. "I don't know. Besides the fact that you're a Gryffindor, which means that you like to take risks without knowing the costs, you also wear your heart on your face. I can tell that you're about to give me a chance. All I can say is that I think I deserve a chance to prove myself. It's not as though I can harm anyone from here, without a wand or weapon."

Draco looked at her dubious expression. "Okay, I guess I can hurt someone, but only if they're within arm's length, and you can lock the portrait-door behind you so I'm perfectly secure." His voice held traces of sarcasm.

He looked at her for a minute, then added, "Thank you for helping me, even if you didn't realize exactly who you were helping. But just because I don't think you should be killed doesn't mean I like you. Just so we're clear."

Ginny said, "You should try harder to be civil...your life is in my hands right now. But no love lost, just so we're clear. To be honest, I wasn't really looking for a man-in-hiding, just a drunk student. I was hoping it was a Slytherin. I like taking points off that House in particular, but taking points is good in general as well," Ginny said, smirking a Draco-like smirk.

She pushed away the nagging questions ringing in her head. Was she giving into her own need for redemption too much? Was this undeserving trust a reflection of her own desperation or of Draco's explanations? Was she endangering Hogwarts? Would this be another one of her fatal mistakes?

Draco relaxed slightly, but noticed Ginny had her wand out. She didn't trust him that far not by much. "It's like losing a Knut and finding a Galleon."

Ginny pouted playfully, strangely at ease with a man she should hate, and retorted, "One that I can't spend. No one knows about you, right?"

Hell, she thought, if I am letting him stay, I might as well admit that for some reason, I feel comfortable around him. I'm not quite sure how safe that is but I've made enough mistakes. I think that if I make another one, I'll be able to rectify it before anyone comes to harm. I will fix it. I will not have more blood on my hands.

Draco's eyes lit up with hope. Her breath was snatched away. She never noticed how dead his eyes were when he was attending Hogwarts. Now they glowed like the rising moon, filling her with their light.

"So you won't tell?" he questioned.

She sighed dramatically. "I kind of wished that I had found that Knut, you know."

He chuckled, saying, "You wish."

As she left, she didn't seal the door behind her. Without a wand, Draco couldn't do much harm. She pushed away the feeling that her trust in him was unreasonable. The man did need to get food, after all. She wasn't going to get up in the middle of the night to open the portrait so he could get something to eat from the kitchens without being seen.

Before she went to bed, she dropped by the kitchens and talked to Dobby the house-elf. Dobby agreed, reluctantly, to let his old Master get food at night. In hushed tones, Dobby told her that Draco had been a sweet boy before his father had begun his training. Dobby thought that he could be trusted, when his father was not near him.

That was enough to reassure Ginny. She went to bed and slept soundly, untroubled by nightmares for the first time in months.

Several Months Later

Ginny was making her evening patrols when she crossed the now-familiar corridor. Looking quickly to see if anyone was watching her, she slipped down it and behind the portrait door to meet the bitter smell of whiskey.

"Draco, you really shouldn't drink this much," she said warningly.

Draco looked at her with bloodshot eyes. "Damn it, wench! The pain, woman!"

Ginny looked at the man in front of her. He was a mess. Nearly eight months of hiding in this tiny dusty room had changed Draco Malfoy. He was a broken man, one she hoped could pick up the pieces when all this was over.

He wanted to help the Order defeat the Dark Lord so that he could get out of this place. Every week she took his little bits of information, from what he could remember, to McGonagall. Draco swore she was loyal to the Order. He had been ordered to kill her nearly a year ago just before the 'Weasley Mission'. Ginny revealed the information and concealed Draco's identity, by merely saying she had 'contacts' within the Dark Side.

She supposed it wasn't really lying, since Draco had been part of the Dark Side once...and as long as it helped the Order. At first, she had distrusted his tips, and checked every single one, but every tip had checked out. He really was helping the Order.

He had been telling the truth about her parents. She had tested him with several Truth spells. When she found a piece of black hair on the floor of the Burrow's kitchen, she had used it as an excuse to ask the Aurors assigned to the case to check for Polyjuice traces.

They found them, and Draco Malfoy had been cleared of all charges. Technically, he could come out of hiding.

But both Draco and Ginny knew that as soon as he did that, he would be dead. The Dark Lord had infiltrated the Order and would find him no matter how he was hidden. He remained in the dusty room, and she kept helping him...She just wasn't sure whether her help was enough anymore. But anyone else could kill him; anyone could be allied with the Dark Lord. She didn't know who to trust. She was alone, except for Draco, of course.

Even if it was for his own benefit, the action counted for something, didn't it?

Anyways, Draco was a sick, sick man. All the wounds she had healed had been physical, but someone had thrown some Dark magic at him that affected his soul in somewhat the same way as Dementors did. Instead of leaching away his happiness, it leached away his energy, his life.

She wasn't quite sure what to call it, but she could see the changes in him. Slowly, the emotion began to leave his voice and his sarcasm began to fade. His eyes were dull, and he barely responded to conversation. He was becoming more machine and less...well, Draco...every day.

While before she would have thought this a blessing, now she regretted it. Because even though Draco Malfoy was an arrogant pureblood Slytherin on the surface...and even some layers deeper down as well...he still genuinely cared about some things.

He was a spectacular person, she thought. He fought his way through his father's corporal punishment and brainwashing sessions, and obstinately chose not to follow the Dark Lord blindly, to be his own advisor. He fought his way up into the favor of the Dark Lord until he was high enough to stop him from killing needlessly (at least sometimes). He fought to stay out of the Dark Arts once he realized that he had no control over what he did while he was loyal to it. Now, he was fighting to survive in a room "the size of his closet" (although if this was a closet, she wondered how big his bedroom was).

He had told her, with a haunted look in his eyes, that he could not feel emotions anymore. Many midnight conversations had revealed the one thing that had kept him sane throughout all of this. He had known others were worse off; he could feel their pain and know that he would be all right. But now he was losing his ability to feel anything.

He was drowning the loss in amber oblivion...just like George had nearly two years ago. The bitter smell of whiskey...the smell of sorrow permeated this room in a thick aroma. Draco Malfoy needed help, and she couldn't give it to him.

He asked her weakly, "Find anything?"

She sighed, frustrated, "Not a single book in the entire library has a book about the curse Felis Definati. I even searched the shelves with a book-finding spell, and there is nothing. There is not even a mention of the spell in any of the texts here, even in the Restricted Section. I can't take anything from there, but Pomfrey lets all the Healer trainees in so we can get advanced Healing books. I searched those shelves yesterday. This Dark magic must be ancient, older than Hogwarts."

Draco sighed. "God, Ginny, I don't feel anything. I'm hollow. But my soul's still there, feeling my loss, feeling the fact that I can't feel. Does that make any sense? In a way this is worse than the Dementor's Kiss. They don't have to live after that...they're as good as dead. But I'm a living, feeling dead person. I can feel my death second by second."

His voice had fallen to a whisper by the end of it. She shuddered softly.

He looked up at her again. "Maybe you are looking in the wrong place. Felis means love, right. The Dark Arts doesn't believe in Love...so any spell that has to do with love couldn't have anything to do with the Dark Arts."

Ginny shook her head adamantly. "No good person of the Light would create a spell that takes life away from someone, at least not like that. The purpose of this spell seems to be to create misery for the victim. If anyone that served the Light had to kill, he or she would do it quickly and mercifully, if possible."

Draco took a breath in, a rattling, horrible sound. The bones seemed to jut out his face, his skin waxy and too cool. His eyes burned even brighter from their sunken position in his skull. His hair was slowly falling out. He wasn't getting enough food, even after she had begun sneaking in some for him. Or maybe it was the spell, but he was dying, pure and simple.

Softly he spoke, his energy nearly spent, "Maybe that wasn't the purpose of the spell...maybe just an unexpected side effect. Maybe that's why the Light doesn't use it anymore, and why the Dark Arts picked it up. Even if they don't believe it, if it works, they will use it...if you know what I mean."

Ginny looked at him quietly. "I'll check it out, Draco. Promise."

He didn't hear her, his eyes already shut. He got tired very easily nowadays. She was getting tired of watching him fade away. She would look at the books tonight. After all, neither of them had anything to lose.

That evening, she found it...a book on Felis Definati...well, not really. It was a book on Felis Semperus, a strange phenomenon that occurred rarely in the magical world. Felis Semperus meant love forever.

When two lovers were destined to be, they were bound by the Felis Semperus bond. They could not separate afterwards. They could not leave each other's side for indefinite periods of time without a guarantee of their return. They would, consciously or subconsciously, always seek each others' presence.

In a time of great danger, their individual magics would combine to make a stronger force. The problem was, once that happened, one or both usually died, because that combination was never supposed to naturally occur in the magical world. Your magic was your magic...having someone else's magic in your being could permanently corrupt your magic and could kill you. You just weren't supposed to deal with anyone's powers but your own.

Theoretically, everyone had someone they could have a Felis Semperus bond to, but they never found them in this world. Most preferred simply to be content with a strong love...destiny was what you made it, after all, for some people.

The last Felis Semperus bond known to the magical world was Rowena Ravenclaw and Salazar Slytherin. When Slytherin left the school and forced the bond to stretch (it never breaks), both managed to live only three months without each other. However, their wills were stronger than their hearts, and they managed to stay apart until their souls gave up and fled to the Other Side. It is said they both died in the same instant, even though they were apart, because their souls couldn't last another moment without each other.

Ginny wiped away a tear. She had always been a hopeless romantic.

She continued reading to help Draco. One slightly insane wizard hundreds of years ago had thought that the world wasn't complete without a Felis Semperus bond...so he had decided to literally force people to find their pair. That was how Felis Definati came to be...Felis Definati means Love Defines You.

A person would not be able to stop looking until they found their Felis Semperus...or destined love. However, the wizard did not calculate in an added side effect...that if they did not find their pair, they would begin losing their humanity.

The Light did not use Felis Definati any longer. But it was becoming obvious that the Dark Arts had found it and was using it to their advantage.

Draco needed to find his Felis Semperus out of the millions of people in the magical world...his love might not even live in Britain! She rushed down to the Closet, as she now called it, to tell him.

Draco was alert for the first time in a month as he said slowly, "So you mean I have to find my...destined love...or I'm dead? He paused. "My destined love?" he asked even more incredulously.

Ginny glared at him. "Well, you obviously have one, because if you didn't, you wouldn't be dying."

He laughed, "I'm not dying, Ginny."

Tears filled her eyes. "Yes, you are! You can't feel, Draco, and that's as good as dead!"

He winced, "Point taken."

She smiled hesitantly. "Well, you did say it yourself a few days ago."

He grimaced. "Hearing it from someone else is much worse. I can't convince myself that you're crazy, as well...so what do I do?"

She sighed. "Find your destined love...and hope that the feeling comes back, I guess."

Draco said wryly, "I'm not exactly in shape to go hunting across the world for my true love."

Ginny snapped, "The spell doesn't take anything away physically. That's all poor nutrition and no exercise."

Draco retorted, "I didn't mean that." Ginny looked at him quizzically.

He continued in a softer tone, "Ginny, I can't stop drinking. It pushes away the emptiness, makes me numb to it..."

Ginny looked at him pleadingly. "Draco...the hollowness will go away if you find her...and you need to stop drinking to do that."

"I'm addicted now."

Now Ginny was angry at his apathy. "WELL, THEN FIGHT IT, DRACO! Do you even remember what it was like to fight for what you believed? To fight to survive? Or has sitting in this room made you forget what the real world is like? I've been fighting for you for a long time. You needed the rest. I didn't deny you. But now you need to start fighting for yourself because no one else can do it but you."

He looked at her for a moment and then looked at the whiskey surrounding him. "Take it all."

Ginny was taken aback. "Draco, you'll go into withdrawal...I don't have medicine to reduce the reactions; I don't even know exactly what could go wrong. They tried to stop George from drinking at St. Mungo's a few days before Christmas Eve the year he died. All I know is they had to stop because his heart went out of control. You can't go cold turkey like this."

Draco looked at her determinedly. "I'm going to do this my way."

Ginny retorted, "Even if it kills you?"

Draco smiled, "I'm already dead."

Ginny recoiled and winced all in the same movement. Draco merely looked at her unsympathetically. "You were right. I am. And I am going to fix it. So take them. And don't give them back...whatever I say or do."

Ginny snapped at him, fear making her panic, "Please don't, Draco. Let me help; take it slowly. You don't need to do this all at once. If you cut back on the amount you drink, I don't think the reaction will be as severe when you cut off your supply. Please trust me."

Draco took it without another word. He understood what fear was like. Even if he couldn't quite remember what it felt like.

Three days later, Draco was shivering uncontrollably. His temperature was down to 96.7° Fahrenheit. He was dangerously close to death. Ginny was in a panic.

She didn't have anything to give him, no substitution drugs to make it easier. She went down to the corridor...the whiskey smell had not faded. It clung to her clothes, her being, reminding her of the sorrow she held every day. The smell of sorrow reminded her of Draco, of her family...of all the victims of this War.

She slipped through the door to face a lucid, at last, Draco...with bloodshot eyes and a clammy face. She turned to greet him, and he slammed her against the wall, clenching her wrists in a bruising grip.

"Tell me, Ginny! I need...I need a break! Where is it? Where did you hide the bottles?" he gasped.

She stuttered, "Draco, they're gone. I threw them out...like you asked, remember?"

He threw her to the ground. He had no idea how strong he was. "You're lying! They're here, somewhere! Tell me the damn truth!"

Ginny was genuinely scared of him now. He wasn't the man she knew...the addiction had changed him. But she knew that if she gave it to him, these days of torture would be wasted. Knowing the man that Draco really was, he would do it all over again. She had to find a way out. She couldn't be responsible for him going through this a second time.

She spoke, her body tense with fear, "All right, Draco...okay. Let me go; I'll go get them. You can't be seen around Hogwarts, remember?"

He looked at her with his unreal, gaping eyes. "All right. Go."

He stepped out of the doorway, and she scrambled up and out of the door, slamming it shut behind her. "Scellia Ginevra."

The sealing spell was attuned to her magic now, and would open for no one but her...even Draco. She walked away quickly, ignoring the frantic pounding from the other side of the door.

The addiction should fully break in another four or five days. She would check on him then...the Healing spells she put on him earlier would do to keep his body fueled. He would be ready to find his humanity.

She pushed away the feeling of disappointment; she wondered in the back of her head why she felt this way...

It couldn't be because she wanted him to stay...could it?

Five Days Later

Draco was all right now; thin, and a bit weak, but free. It showed. His eyes had brightened, his voice firmed. He knew he had a chance now...and he was going to take full advantage of it.

"So my Felis Semper...Do you know how I find her?"

Ginny shrugged. "That's the problem...no. But when you start feeling again...I guess you've found her. Right?"

Draco shrugged in response. "If you say so..."

Ginny smiled. "So, when are you leaving?"

Draco looked at her determinedly. "Right now."

Ginny stared. "What?"

"Well, I'll die if I don't. So...the sooner the better."

Ginny pushed away the feelings storming her. She couldn't feel this way. She had no right. She gazed at his mouth. She couldn't look him in the eye. She hurt too much.

She whispered, "Draco, good luck."

He looked at her, his eyes shining. "Thank you, Ginny. For everything...believing me, keeping my secret,*everything*."

Ginny smiled, holding back tears with all her strength. "Draco, come back. I will tell the Order about you. You won't be an enemy. I will be happy to see you."

Draco said wryly, "As happy as you are to see me leave?"

Ginny whispered, looking at her feet, "I'm not happy." Tears dripped onto the floor.

Draco sighed and wrapped his arms around her. She buried her face in his chest, trying to forget that this would be the only time they ever did this...trying to forget that she wanted it to last forever. They just weren't meant to be, literally and figuratively.

He whispered into her hair, "I'm sorry. I meant it as a joke, but I guess this isn't a time for humor. I - Ginny, without you, I wouldn't be here. You saved me from myself. Thank you, but I don't think I will be coming back at least not until the war ends."

She recoiled from him and looked at him with pleading eyes.

He smiled wistfully. "Ginny, you know as well as I do that the Order would not accept me as their own. As a tool, yes, but not as a person. And I don't deserve that. I will do what I need to do...and help the Cause, but I will not come back to this place."

Ginny turned away to hide her face. That was it. He would never have decided to leave if he felt the way she did.

She said, her back to him, "I will miss you, Draco."

He didn't respond, instead saying, "Goodbye Ginny, and thank you."

He walked out of the door...and she turned just in time to see the door closing behind him.

He was gone, and she would love him forever. She wished that he could have felt the same way, but he was off to find his destined love. Maybe she would find hers someday...maybe. She pushed away the hunch that maybe she was destined to love someone that would never love her back, but that would be impossible...Right?

A/N - There will be a sequel. It is already posted under several other sites, but is getting worked on by my beta. I will post it here when it is done. :)