

Catch Me If You Can

by Terra

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Three Different Times They Might've Caught Each Other

Chapter 1 of 1

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Wrong

She wraps a hand around the lamp post, swinging around towards him. Parting red-smudged lips, she asks, "What do you want, Malfoy?"

"I don't know." The answer rolls off his tongue with vulgar ease, twisting his mouth into a familiar grimace. "I didn't like seeing you in there. Like that."

Ginny laughs with rancor. "Who are you *tonot like* anything I do?"

"I don't know," he repeats. "But pounding tequila's not going to change anything."

"How do you know?" she says scornfully.

"I know," he says.

"Sage advice and good intentions? What's got into you, Malfoy?"

Draco tucks his hands into trouser pockets to keep from reaching out as she loops around the post, dangling over the ground. "I don't know," he says again.

"*You don't know*," she imitates. "When you were doing nightly suicide dives, did you see me trying to stop you? You've no right to interfere."

"You're right." He's surprised at the evenness of his tone.

She laughs again. "Tell me something you do know. Because now that Harry's married, nothing in the world makes any goddamn sense anymore."

There's a time and place for confessions; this isn't – a dark Muggle alley at two in the morning. But as she makes another revolution around the rusted pole, breaths from the concrete, he decides that times and places don't matter. "Maybe you didn't stop me, Ginny, but you didn't let me alone, either. And I... don't want to leave you alone. We — everyone says we're wrong. Maybe, probably they're right. But so what? If we're a bloody disaster or an impending train wreck, if we're wrong, I don't give a damn about being right."

Slowly, she stops and lets go; he darts forward with the unerring instinct of a Seeker. In his arms, she says, "Hm, good catch."

Caught

When Fiendfyre licked up their walls, streaking tar and ash in its wake, she ran for her treasure box under the bed. He ran for her.

There wasn't time for paralyzing flashes of screams or vanishing childhood friends. Draco ignored priceless artwork, heirlooms in the safe, anything, everything; he saw only *her*. "Ginny!" he yelled, soot and desperation rubbing his throat hoarse.

She stood in their bedroom, levitating her battered trunk to the window. "Leave it!"

"Fred's things are in there!" she shouted over crackling flames.

He tore out his wand. "Accio broom!"

Two broomsticks burst into the room; he yanked one from midair. As the trunk punched through the window, she cried in pain, fire curling around them. He caught her and they pitched into the sky, hurtling at wind-slicing speeds until the Manor's burning carcass disappeared behind them. "Draco, stop! We have to report this!"

"We can't. I've been singled out as a blood traitor. Or maybe Crabbe blames me for Greg's death... Fiendfyre's his signature."

"All the more reason to contact the Aurors—"

"Not until I get you to Potter's. They'll never look for me there."

Draco didn't slacken their pace until they touched down at number twelve, Grimmauld Place. He pounded on the door. "What happened—?" sputtered Potter, gaping at their singed robes and dark faces.

"They attacked the Manor."

When Ginny nodded, Potter sprang into motion, darting through the Floo to sound the alarm. Left alone, they trailed silently to the loo. Ginny startling to a halt when she caught her reflection in the mirror. She reached a trembling hand to the burnt ends of her grimy red hair, fingering the unintended layers. "Maybe homeless and grungy will be in this year."

He laughed, a raspy, relieved sound. "You've already converted me. That's one down."

Scars

She didn't want to watch him, but she did.

His eyes always lingered on her for a beat, a hard slash of gray, when he sat across the table before turning to face their editor – almost reluctantly, she fantasized. In three years at the *Daily Prophet*, they'd never spoken except as Quidditch correspondent Weasley and political columnist Malfoy, their lives intersecting in flinchingly brief seconds in the break room.

She didn't want to know him, but she did.

Her first day on the sports beat, she met hastily averted eyes and people speaking determinedly to her face, murmuring condolences that tapered into half-coughs the longer she stared. His desk stood sandwiched between filing cabinets at the back of the newsroom. He walked past her that first morning, paused and gave her a clipped nod. "Good catch," he said, swiping an unhurried glance at her mangled, bent, limping leg and then kept going.

She didn't want to want him, but she did.

She thought of her cane as another wand, an extension of herself, not weakness but another form of strength. At home, Harry spent every waking moment reminding her of what she had been; he took her arm, opened doors, carried everything and kept repeating that her leg didn't bother him when they were alone at night. Ron stopped talking about Quidditch; Hermione stared at her ruined leg with a too-bright smile to prove to all and sundry how unaffected, how *nonjudgmental* she was.

But after work, when she unbuttoned Draco's shirt, made him hold still while she traced the blistered, jagged scar on his chest with her mouth, and he didn't close his eyes, didn't tilt his head, didn't do anything but breathe and look at her, she knew that she didn't want to love him, but she did.