

Charming the Future

by silverdoe

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Lucius Malfoy had a secret. He secretly enjoyed 'Muggle Watching.' It was something he had started doing before attending Hogwarts. It all started one summer when his parents had taken him to the seaside in Spain for a holiday just before he started school. He supposed it had started as a mere curiosity. He was fascinated by the so called 'filthy creatures' his father had forbade him to associate with. He continued his hobby for years, all through his schooling and beyond. He had recently begun to tell himself that he did it to spy on the enemy.

When his father introduced him to some of his colleagues, he realized his little hobby was not something he should mention in polite company. So, he kept his secrets and every so often would slip off to a crowded place in the Muggle world.

Today he was at a university not too far from his home, but still far enough so no one would recognize him. It was a strange place. A mixture of old and modern architecture. His favorite place was the gardens near what seemed to be a residence for some of the students studying here. It was always a good place to view his prey. Students were often seen walking through the gardens, going about their daily business. It was here that his life would change forever.

He had been sitting on a bench for most of the morning, pretending to be absorbed in a book, when a young couple walked past him. They were obviously having some sort of heated argument, and Lucius could not stop himself from wondering what it was about, especially when the woman slapped the man across the face and stormed off. It was a shame they were too far away for an eavesdropping charm to work.

Fortunately, luck was on his side and the young man did not chase after the woman. Instead he took a seat next to Lucius. For a long time he sat quietly with his head in his hands. Lucius knew from past experiences with Muggles that given time the man would likely tell him what had happened. These Muggles always seemed to act as if everyone was interested in their lives.

He sat patiently, his eyes tracing the words in front of him. When the man sighed and leaned his head back against the bench, Lucius took the opportunity to act the part of a concerned friend.

"Troubles with your girlfriend?" he asked.

The man next to him jumped. Apparently he was so deep in thought, he did not see Lucius sitting on the bench.

"Not really my girlfriend, mate," the man replied. "Though I wouldn't say it is for lack of trying."

Lucius just raised an eyebrow. He knew from experience when someone needed to talk. After all, he had been doing this for more than ten years.

"I really like her. She just won't give me the time of day..." The man continued on for a bit, and Lucius made appropriate comments when necessary. He had never socialized with the people he watched. The new experience made him want to help the man.

Without thinking about the consequences, Lucius turned to man. "I think I may be able to help you get your girl."

"Oh, are you friends with her? Do you think you can talk to her for me?" the man asked.

"No, I don't know her, but I may still be able to help. Let's just say I have a way with women."

"That would be great, but why would you do this? I don't even know your name."

Lucius just waved away the man's concerns and began to speak again. "If I do help you, the girl will eventually become your wife. Does that suit you?"

The man was quiet for a few minutes, obviously thinking over Lucius' offer.

"I think I could see myself married to her. We share many of the same interests which is why I have been trying to get her attention. What's in it for you?"

"It's nothing really, but in order to do this I will have to give something of myself. There may come a time when I will want or need it back. If that happens, you will give me what I ask for," Lucius said, his tone leaving no room for negotiation. If the man wanted him to help with his girlfriend, he would agree to Lucius' demands.

The man wasn't sure what this stranger was talking about. All he could think about was getting the girl of his dreams. Without a thought to the future, he agreed. With his agreement, the young man would forever change the lives of his future family.

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"So, Hermione, any thoughts on what you will be researching for our Charms project?" Harry asked as he joined her at lunch.

Hermione looked up from her book and smiled at her friend. The two of them were among the few of their classmates to return to finish the N.E.W.T. year. The Ministry had decided that those students who were supposed to have finished last year could either come back or receive honorary N.E.W.T.s in the classes they had passed with O.W.L.s. Many of their fellow classmates had decided not to come back. For some, the memories of the last year here were just too much. For others, like Ron, they were just happy to receive the honorary grades.

"I think I found a very interesting one to do. Take a look," she said, passing her book to Harry.

Muggle-borns come about in one of two ways. The majority of Muggle-borns inherit their magic from a distant relative, most often a Squib who has left the Wizarding world. It may take several generations for magic to reappear in the family line. Siblings of Muggle-borns may or may not inherit magic. While studies have shown that most siblings of Muggle-borns will also develop magic, this is not always the case. In fact, siblings have a 70% chance of developing their own magic.

The other and lesser known way, also known as the Magical Benefactor Contract, occurs when a witch or wizard comes to the aid of a Muggle in need. It is a binding contract between a witch or wizard and a Muggle. With the acceptance of aid, the wizard agrees to help the Muggle in such a way that allows the magic to spread throughout the Muggle family once children are born. If there ever comes a time when the witch or wizard is in need of help, the magic imbedded in the Muggle child will aid him.

On occasion, the benefactor will take the child or children of a family for their own purposes. Known as the Rumpelstiltskin Phenomenon, it was seen many times during the Grindelwald wars. Many people in the Wizarding society felt it was wrong to use it in such a manner. For this reason the charm fell out of favor with most of the Wizarding society. There are currently no laws restricting its use.

"But that's slavery, isn't it?" Harry asked.

"I thought so at first too, Harry. But as I read more about the custom, I began to understand it better. It is more like an apprentice program. More often than not, the child is seen as an heir to a Magical Benefactor. Some witches and wizards who do not have children of their own use this as a way for their magic to live on," Hermione explained.

"I don't understand. How does their magic live on in a child who is unrelated to them?"

Hermione gave him a look and then took the book back from him.

"The witch or wizard performing the deed imbues some of their magic into the Muggle which is then passed down to their child. That is why the children are magical. And since it is the Benefactor's own magic, the child is legally seen as part of his or her family."

"So it's like adoption."

"No. Not at all. More like a transfusion of magic."

"I guess that makes more sense."

"What makes sense?" Draco asked as he sat down next to the duo. The three of them had recently become friends and were often seen studying together in the library. Once word had spread about the treatment of the Malfoys by Voldemort, most people felt they had been punished enough for their deeds. They were still fined heavily, but they were acquitted of their crimes. Draco and Mr. Malfoy had even helped to repair Hogwarts with the other survivors.

"Hermione was telling me about Magical Benefactors," Harry said.

"Ah, yes. Father explained it to me when I was younger. It's an interesting phenomenon. Not sure if I would do it myself, but Father was always curious about Muggles. What brought up this conversation?" Draco began helping himself to lunch as he chatted with the two Gryffindors.

"Hermione is thinking of using it for her research project," Harry replied. Hermione had already buried herself back into the book.

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The school year rolled on, and the Christmas holidays were fast approaching. Hermione had made plans to stay with her parents. Harry was going to spend some time at the Burrow with the Weasleys and then visit his godson. Draco had hoped to spend the holidays with his parents, but he had not heard from them in a few weeks.

In the past, it was common for them to disappear for a short holiday or two while he was at school, but they always informed him ahead of time. The lack of communication and the occasional threat his parents had to endure, as former Death Eaters, was worrying him.

Draco was returning to the castle from Herbology with Harry and Hermione one afternoon when movement from the front gates caught his attention. Arthur Weasley and a group of Aurors were heading their way.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Weasley," Harry called out before the man could reach them.

"Harry. Hermione. Hello. It is good to see both of you. If you don't mind, I would like to have a word with Draco."

"Of course, Mr. Weasley," Hermione responded. "We will just head in for lunch. See you in a bit, Draco."

Neither of the Gryffindors noticed that their friend had paled and began to chew his lip. He had not told them of his worries about his parents.

Mr. Weasley waited until they were through the castle doors before turning to speak to Draco.

"Mr. Malfoy," he began, "Draco. We need to discuss your parents. I'm afraid I may have bad news. Perhaps we can find someplace to talk."

Draco felt sick. He sat down on the stairs leading up to the main doors. Mr. Weasley knelt down next to him with a worried look on his face. Draco looked at the new Minister for a moment before speaking.

"Did someone attack them?" he asked.

"It's possible. Quite frankly, we have no idea if something did happen to them. You see, they were seen in Diagon Alley a few weeks ago. There were reports from several witnesses that they were having a heated discussion."

Arthur paused to look at the young man. He hated to be the one to tell Draco what the witnesses had said, but they were going on nearly a week with no word from either of the elder Malfoys.

"It seems several people heard your mother tell your father she wanted a divorce. That was the last anyone has seen or heard from them. Lucius has missed several important business meetings this week and was reported missing. When the Aurors went to your home to investigate, the elves informed them that the Mistress of the house had left on holiday and that Lucius was not home, nor do they know where he is. We were hoping you might know."

"I haven't heard from them. I was hoping to spend the holidays with them. I just... I don't know what to do."

Arthur could tell the boy was genuinely worried. His heart went out to the young man who was working hard to restore himself in the eyes of the Wizarding world.

"Is there someplace your mother would go on holiday? Maybe she knows what happened to Lucius."

"I'm not sure. She has never gone without contacting me. Are you sure it was them in Diagon Alley? It just doesn't seem like something they would do. They would never have a public argument. I mean, I know Mother has not been happy since the war, but this... I just don't know."

"That's alright, Draco. Why don't we get you inside? If we have any news, I will contact you."

Draco nodded at him and stood up.

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Harry and Hermione knew right away that something had happened when they saw Mr. Weasley escort Draco into the Great Hall. He left the young man with the two worried friends and went to speak to the headmaster.

"Draco, what's wrong? What is Mr. Weasley doing here?" Hermione asked.

Draco looked up at them and then over to where the Minister was now talking quietly with Severus Snape.

"My parents have disappeared," he responded, blinking back tears that were trying to form.

"Oh, Draco. I am so sorry. Do they know what happened?"

He just shook his head. When he felt a hand on his shoulder, he looked up to see his former head of house. Snape gestured for Draco to follow him. Draco gave a small smile to his friends and left with the headmaster.

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Another week had passed before there was any word on the missing Malfoys. At breakfast, just a few days before break, the school was surprised when an elegantly dressed Narcissa Malfoy made her way through the doors of the Great Hall. Draco was excited to see his mother. He had feared the worse after the Minister came and spoke with him.

He rushed over to her. Before he could hug her, she stopped him.

"Draco, we must speak about your father."

Her cold tone stopped him in his tracks. His mother, while appearing cold and indifferent to the public, had never used that tone with him. He looked at her and waited for her to continue. She turned and headed out to the entrance. Draco followed her. Over his shoulder, he noticed that the headmaster had also risen from his seat and was making his way towards them.

"There is no easy way to tell you this, and I believe you are adult enough to handle the truth. A few weeks ago, we decided to divorce. You father did not react well, and I believe he has taken his own life."

"What!"

This could not be happening. His father would never do that. It was at that moment when Snape made his presence known to the two Malfoys.

"Lucius would never do something like that. What did you do, Narcissa?" Snape asked.

"I did not do anything, Severus. If you don't mind, this is a private matter that concerns my son and I."

"I think not. The Aurors are on the way here. They are very interested in your husband's disappearance. I believe they have been searching for you. They have some questions for you."

Narcissa glanced at the entry. She did not want to speak to the Aurors today. There were still things she needed to handle in order to secure her future. She looked at her son who had not said a word since Snape had joined them.

"Draco, I expect you to come home for the holidays. There are parts of your father's estate you will need to handle. If you will excuse me, I have things to do," she said.

As she reached the doors, Draco broke his silence. "Mother, I... are you sure? I want to see him. I need to see him."

"We will discuss this more when you return home. I must go. Good day to you both." With that, she hurried out of the castle, hoping to leave before the Aurors came.

Draco moved to the doors to watch his mother leave. When she reached the gates, the Aurors were waiting for her. He could not hear what was said, but it looked like she was unwilling to do what they asked at first. After a few minutes, one of the Aurors grabbed his mother and disappeared. It was then the tears began to form.

He had no idea what was going on. His mother had shown up, after missing for weeks, and told him his father was dead. It just didn't seem real to him.

"Draco."

It just couldn't be true; he needed to go. He needed to find someplace to think. He headed out to the grounds.

"Draco."

His mother was wrong. He would know if his father was dead, wouldn't he?

"Mr. Malfoy."

The stern sound of the headmaster's voice finally broke through his thoughts. He turned to find the man had followed him. Just behind him were Hermione and Harry. He wondered if they had heard everything that had happened.

"If you would stop and listen to me, I have a few things you should hear," Snape said quietly to him.

"Sir, he can't be dead. She is wrong. This is not happening," Draco sobbed. He didn't care who saw him. It was all just too overwhelming.

"She is wrong. He is not dead."

"How can you be so sure?" Draco asked.

Snape looked at the young man. The events of the last few weeks had made him act much younger than he was. There had been so much hatred towards him and his family directly after the war. At first, it seemed Narcissa had saved Harry Potter in hopes of saving her son. But he wondered now what her true motive was.

The stories of how the family came together during the Final Battle had always bothered him. The Narcissa he had known had always been a bit more like her sister Bellatrix. Cold and hateful.

"If he were dead, the Malfoy family ring would appear on your hand."

"But, sir, why would she come here and tell me that if it was not true?" Draco asked. For the first time in weeks, Snape saw a bit of life flash in the steel grey eyes.

"I am not sure. We will have to wait and see. Hopefully the Ministry will be able to figure out what is going on."

"Yes, sir."

"You should go rejoin your classmates. We will speak again when I know more."

Draco knew better than to question him further. He would get nothing else from the stern man until he was ready. Many people had hoped that without the threat of being a spy, Severus Snape would begin to relax. Draco knew those people would be waiting a long time for that to happen.

"And Draco. I think it would be best if you remained in the castle until the matter is settled."

"You don't trust my mother, do you, sir?" Draco asked.

"No. I do not."

With a nod, he turned and joined his friends waiting for him by the doors. Hermione was quick to embrace him.

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The headline of the *Daily Prophet* the next morning told Draco all he needed to know.

Narcissa Malfoy Held on Charges of Attempted Murder

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Attempted murder. That meant there was still hope. He looked up to the high table and saw the headmaster heading towards him. He was not surprised when Snape asked him to join him in his office before classes.

He had barely sat down when the fireplace behind him flared to life. Arthur Weasley stepped through, followed by his usual escort of Aurors. Snape greeted the newcomers and offered them seats.

"Draco, I am assume you saw this morning's headlines?" Snape asked.

"Yes, sir."

"The Minister is here to explain the findings from your mother's interrogation. Once he is finished, we will decide what to do next."

Arthur turned his chair so he was facing Draco before he began to speak. "The war taught all of us many things. For your father, I think he learned tolerance and that being a pureblood did not automatically make him a better wizard. Many like to think he learned a hard lesson during those last few months. He has become a better person. Just like you.

"It was thought your mother felt the same way. She did not. She hid it well, for nearly everyone thought she had also changed. Apparently, she was worried more about losing her heir and her house than she did about what was right. She felt that Voldemort was correct in many of his ideals. She wanted your father to start using his contacts and money to push through certain changes in the government. Your father has been refusing her requests.

"Are you following what I am saying so far?" Arthur asked.

"I am. I know what my mother was like, sir. She wanted Voldemort to win. Even before He came back, she was doing similar things. Father always gave in to her."

Snape snorted. "I had wondered about that. I remember in his youth that he was fascinated by Muggles. I could never figure out when he began to hate them."

"I think that was my mother's influence on him. Once, when Mother was off on holiday, he told me stories of Muggle places he had seen. We never spoke of it when she was home."

Arthur laughed. It was hard to imagine Lucius Malfoy visiting with Muggles. When Draco and Snape looked at him, he apologized. "Sorry. I have come to respect your father in the last few months. I just never imagined we would share a common interest. When we find him, Draco," he said as he looked at the young man, "I shall have to remember to tease him about it."

Draco's heart began to beat faster. "So, he's alive then?"

Arthur glanced at Snape and then answered. "Your mother was not very forthcoming with information. It was decided that we should use Veritaserum on her. Your mother admits to causing him harm. She claims she is not sure if he has died from his injuries yet or not. She has done something that prevents her from telling us the full truth, even with the potion. Also, we are unable to determine his whereabouts. She said she left him in some woods."

Draco was going to ask more questions when the headmaster interrupted him. "Remember, Draco, until you have the ring, he is still alive. The Ministry is doing the best to find him."

"Yes, sir," Draco said softly. "Sir," he said, addressing the Minister. "What is going to happen to my mother?"

"She has been charged, as you saw in the *Prophet*. Her hearing is scheduled for Monday. We hope to find a way around whatever she using to protect herself from telling the truth by then. Either way, there is enough evidence to convict her of the current charges. She will most likely be sentenced to Azkaban."

"And if the..." he broke off, gesturing to his hand.

"The charges will be amended if and when that happens."

"Thank you, sir."

Snape stood up and handed Draco a pass back to class. "I believe you still have some time left before this class is over. If anything changes, I will let you know."

Draco looked at the two men before nodding. "Yes, sir."

At lunch that day, Draco told Harry and Hermione everything he had heard during his meeting with Arthur Weasley and Headmaster Snape. They both tried their best to support him. Harry even changed his holiday plans so Draco would not be alone in the castle.

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Hermione was enjoying her first day home from Hogwarts. Her mother had surprised her with breakfast in bed, and now the whole family was enjoying a picnic in the backyard. She was glad that neither of her parents were upset with her for sending them off to another continent during the war. They both said they understood, but wished she had talked it over with them first. They both talked about their time in Australia as if it had been an extended holiday.

When her father asked how things with Ron were going, Hermione was unsure of how to respond at first. She knew she loved Ron. She just was not sure if she loved him enough to spend the rest of her life with him. When she expressed her doubts to her parents, her mother said, "Maybe it's for the best. It would harm both of you to get together now only to figure out years later that your feelings are not what they should be for a married couple. You are still young. There is no need to go rushing in to a lifelong commitment."

"But you and dad were young, and look at the two of you now," Hermione said.

Monica Granger laughed. "Your father tried for months to get me to notice him. I have to admit I noticed him in our freshman year. I played hard to get for a long time. Then one day there was a party in his dorm that everyone was invited to. One his friends spent hours just trying to get me to talk to him. He kept going on and on about how perfect we would be together. After a while, I let his friend introduce us, and we hit it off. The rest, they say, is history."

"Oh, I remember that fellow. Can't seem to recall his name," Wendell Granger said.

"Weren't you friends with him? Shouldn't you know his name?"

"Well, he wasn't really a student at our school. At least I don't think he was. You see, one afternoon I was trying to get your mother to go to dinner with me, and she just kept shaking me off. I sat down and there he was. He listened to me moan on about her and then offered to help.

"It was his idea to throw that party and to make sure your mother and her friends were invited. I remember watching him throughout the night, and for a while there, I wondered if I had made a mistake. He was very handsome and suave. I'm surprised to this day your mother didn't run away with him instead." Wendell laughed.

Monica swatted her husband playfully on the arm. "Honestly, the man barely knew what dentistry was. I think I spent the first hour just explaining to him what we were studying."

Hermione laughed at her parents' antics. It was good to have them here and safe.

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That night Hermione was woken from a sound sleep by a loud 'pop.' She sat up and quickly grabbed for her wand. Looking around her room, she realized she was safe at home and not stuck in a tent in the middle of nowhere.

Uncertain if what she heard was a car backfiring or the sound of Apparation, Hermione crept slowly down the stairs. Looking out the front windows, she saw that there were no cars about. She walked to the back door and peeked out. At first, she did not see anything unusual, but then a strange shadow caught her eye.

She was about to turn on the outside lights when the clouds shifted and the moon shone brightly down into the yard. What she saw was the crumpled form of a man lying in the yard. She rushed outside, her wand held firmly in her hand.

As she got closer to the body, she noticed the distinctive pale blond hair. Her first thought was something happened to Draco. She dropped to her knees and reached for her friend. When she rolled him over, she was surprised it was not Draco lying in her yard, but his missing father.

With a quick flick of her hand, the silver otter appeared. A few quick words and it was on its way to Harry and hopefully help.

Her hands shook as she felt around the man's neck for any signs of life. A sigh of relief escaped her lips when she felt a faint pulse. She levitated the man and brought him into the house where she placed him on the sofa. She called to her parents to wake them, and her father came rushing down with a cricket bat in his hands. She could hear her mother behind him telling him to put it away.

"Well, what if there was a burglar?"

"I am sure your daughter can handle a simple burglar. Besides, you can barely swing it," her mother said as she appeared from the hall, tying the sash around her robe. "Hermione, is everything alright? Why are you screaming at two...? Oh, my, it was a burglar."

"No. Not a burglar, Mum. He is actually the father of a friend, though I don't know why he is here. He's been missing for a few weeks. I thought I should wake you as I sent for help."

"Is he de..." her father asked, pointing the bat towards Lucius.

"No. He seems to be unconscious and has several cuts and bruises. I'll explain when Harry gets here."

"If you're sure he will be fine, I will just go put on some tea," said her mother.

Just as Monica reached the kitchen, several loud 'pops' were heard from the backyard. Monica screamed, and Wendell went rushing into the kitchen with his bat.

When Harry burst through the door, followed closely by Headmaster Snape and Draco, Hermione was glad her father really did not know how to swing the bat. Snape strode passed Harry, pushing his wand arm down. Hermione did the same to her father, grabbing the bat from him. "Miss Granger, your message said Mr. Malfoy was here."

"Yes. He just appeared in the backyard," she said and then told them all what had happened as they walked into the sitting room.

Snape ran his wand over the elder Malfoy before looking over at Draco. "He is exhausted, both magically and physically. It does not look like there are any life-threatening injuries. I do not know how he managed to Apparate here of all places. Once we get him to the hospital, I think he will be fine."

Draco nodded.

"Miss Granger. I imagine Mr. Weasley and some Aurors will be here soon. You will need to show them exactly where you found him. I will take him and Draco to St. Mungo's. Have Mr. Weasley meet us there."

"Yes, Headmaster."

Draco went over to stand next to the headmaster as he pulled out his emergency Portkey. He had Draco hold it as he bent down to pick up Mr. Malfoy. Once the three Slytherins were gathered around each other, Snape activated the Portkey with a word.

Nothing happened.

The three of them remained standing in the Granger's sitting room. Snape furrowed his brows and tried again.

"Uh, sir," said Harry. "Maybe it's broken."

"Nonsense, Potter," he sneered. "This Portkey was designed by St. Mungo's specifically for the headmaster's use, in case the children do something stupid and injure themselves beyond what can be repaired in the infirmary. It cannot just break."

"Maybe his magic is too badly damaged for it to recognize," Hermione said.

"It does not require his magic to work. It has its own. Do you have wards up around this house?"

"None that should interfere with a Portkey, sir."

Snape was about to say something else when a pained groan from the man in his arms stopped him. Snape gently laid him back on the sofa and checked him again with his wand.

"He appears to be waking up."

They all looked at the man who was struggling to speak. "Where... who are you?" he rasped out.

"Father," Draco said and rushed to his side.

Lucius tried to speak and began coughing uncontrollably. Monica took that moment to hand Snape a glass of water which he helped the injured man drink.

"Father? I don't think I have a son. Do I?"

Snape pulled out his wand and began another scan. "Do you know who you are?" he asked.

"Yes. Of course I do. I am Lucius Malfoy, and you look like that little twerp Severus Snape. Only you are much older," Lucius said, his voice becoming stronger.

Harry tried to disguise his laughter as a cough. Snape glared at him, and then turned to Lucius who was trying unsuccessfully to sit up. "You should realize that I have a wand pointed at your head, and I am now taller than you."

"Yes. How is it possible that you are so much older?" Lucius asked.

Instead of answering him, Snape asked, "How old do you think you are?"

"Seventeen, but that's wrong because this boy," he said, gesturing towards Draco, "looks at least that. If he is my son, then I must be older."

"His name is Draco, and he is indeed your son."

"Who?"

Most everyone in the room looked confused at the question. Snape seemed to understand and answered. "Narcissa."

"Oh, Merlin. What was I thinking?" Lucius sighed and put his head in his hands.

"I tried to stop you. You said you had to uphold the family honor."

"So, Draco is the result?"

"No. He came later."

"Siblings?"

"None. She had several difficult pregnancies before him though."

Harry and Hermione were having a hard time keeping up with the very Slytherin conversation taking place. Wendell looked like he was trying to reason out a puzzle, and Monica was still gathering tea for everyone.

Lucius was going to say something, but Harry interrupted him. "Family honor? You mean he married her because she was pregnant?"

"Don't looked so shocked, Harry." Draco said. "It happens more often than you think."

Lucius spoke up at that moment. "He looks like that pain-in-the-arse Gryffindor. Are they related?"

Snape nodded and replied, "Harry is his son."

They were all startled when Wendell jumped up from his seat. "I remember now. He's that man."

"Man? What man?" Hermione asked her father.

"The one your mother and I told you about just today. The one who helped us get together. Monica," he called to his wife, "it's him. Come look."

"What is this about, Miss Granger?" asked Snape.

Hermione quickly explained how her parents met, while Monica came in the room and confirmed that Lucius was indeed the man who spoke with her at the dorm party.

"The party is actually the last thing I remember," Lucius said, glancing at the Grangers.

"Oh no," cried Hermione as she sank down into a chair. "Oh, no, no, no. It's the Benefactor Contract. Oh, Merlin."

"Benefactor Contract? You mean that charm you were researching. What's that got to do with why Mr. Malfoy is here?" asked Harry.

"Because when I met..." Lucius paused for a moment. "I am sorry, your name escapes me."

"Wendell Granger."

"Yes, that's it. When I met him, I had just finished up my N.E.W.T.-level Charms project. The Magical Benefactor is the charm I did my paper on. Funny thing though, I didn't think it had worked."

"Why is that?" Snape asked at the same time Wendell piped in with, "What charm?"

"Well, all I did was get them to talk to each other. I did not even have to perform magic. Monica, that's your name right?" At her nod, he continued. "Monica, it seemed, was already interested. She just needed reassurance that his intentions were honorable. It seems that Wendell had quite the reputation on campus."

Wendell blushed and tried to duck his head. Monica laughed.

"Will someone please tell me what charm?"

"I'll explain later, Daddy. Sit down."

"So, does this mean that Hermione is Mr. Malfoy's heir?" asked Harry.

Lucius and Snape looked at each other and then over to Hermione.

"No. I don't think so. His heir is still Draco in everything that counts. Hermione was only gifted with a small part of his magic. I remember looking over Lucius' project for him. If I remember the principle correctly, if and when he required aid, his magic would search for any fragments it could find. Whatever Narcissa did to him depleted his magic levels. Once this happened, his magic started searching for his heir. Since both his blood heir and his magic heir were within the wards of Hogwarts, he was unable to access them. When Miss Granger returned home, it was the magic that brought him here."

"Sir," Draco asked, directing his question to the headmaster, "why is it that he can't remember any of this?"

"His magic levels are very low, although he seems to be getting better every minute. I think the combination of his injuries and the low levels may have something to do with it. The amnesia should resolve itself."

"Why didn't the Portkey work?" Hermione asked.

"This is just speculation, mind you, but I believe it's you keeping him here."

"Me. Why would I do that? He can leave anytime he wants."

"You misunderstood me. He needs to be around your magic until he is better. It is your shared magic he needs to heal."

"Why me?"

"You have been researching this charm. What does your research tell you?"

"Honestly, sir, I am still covering the conception and history of it."

"Hermione! You have almost eight feet of parchment written and you're not done! The requirements are only four!" exclaimed Harry.

"At least I have it started. The two of you have yet to pick your topic."

"Children, if we can please get back to the current topic," Snape called over the bickering.

"So, we just have to wait until his magic is restored and then he and Hermione can be separated?" Harry asked.

"It may not be that simple. I do not know what repercussions there will be from Lucius' magic activating the bond formed by the contract. It may require them to be in close proximity for quite some time until his magic is healed and stable. It is probably a good thing this happened at the beginning of the holiday break."

"Bond!" Hermione exclaimed.

"It may just be temporary. I will need to do a little research on my own about the charm to determine the extent. Miss Granger, I assume you have books here that you were planning to use for your project." At her nod he continued. "I recommend you start looking into other aspects of the bond than just the conception and history."

"What should we do? Do we all stay here then and help?" Harry asked.

When no one spoke up right away, Snape answered his question. "No, I think Lucius needs some time to recover, and the Grangers, I am sure, do not want to host a sleepover. We shall return to the castle once the Minister arrives and I explain what is going on. Draco, do you wish to stay here with your father?"

"Father. Would you like me to stay?"

"It's probably best you return to school. Maybe by morning my memory will be clearer, and we can address whatever there is that needs to be discussed." Draco nodded. He remained standing next to his father for a moment before bending down to hug him. Lucius was momentarily surprised but then held on tight to his son.

"Lucius, when the time comes, the Ministry is going to ask you to testify against Narcissa. I may not be able to tell you the exact details of what has happened in the last few weeks, but you should know she is most likely responsible."

"Yes, I figured as much. She was... I'll save my comments until I regain my memories. I would hate to say something I will regret in front of my son."

Hermione looked around the room at all the people standing there. Her mother and father had given up trying to figure out what was going on. Once the Minister had arrived, they excused themselves and returned to bed, after making her promise to explain everything to them in the morning.

It would be another hour before everyone left to return home. Arthur was pleased to see that Lucius was alive and mostly well. He still wanted Lucius to come to the Ministry and give a statement, but he said it could wait until they had all had more rest.

No one could say for certain what effects the bond would have on the two of them. After Lucius doubled over in pain when Hermione excused herself to use the loo, Arthur promised to have some of the Ministry researchers look into it. For now, they had to remain in view of each other. Snape assured them that this would probably ease over

time.

Lucius was slowly regaining his memories. Some things were still foggy, but for the most part he remembered his son and that the Dark Lord was no more. He had vague memories of the torture Hermione had suffered at his house during the war. When he tried to apologize, she told them they had already discussed it. As far as she was concerned, it was best left in the past.

"It's interesting that you are researching the same topic for your project as I once did," Lucius remarked.

"So it is. Almost as if it was meant to be," Hermione said as she settled down into the fold-out bed of the sofa. She found it was not quite bad to sleep next to the man and wondered what other revelations the bond would bring them.

A/N: This was written for LM/HG Exchange as a gift for Curia_Regis. The prompt I chose for this fic was: Post-Hogwarts. Lucius loses his memory and turns up at Hermione's doorstep. What does she do?

Thank you, luvsev, for the awesome beta job.