

A New Beginning

by Sorceress_Sarah

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: These are not my characters, and I am not J.K. Rowling. The plot, however, is mine, but that is all. Thanks to Heather, my beta, and my friends who helped me on a few small decisions!

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A New Beginning

The war was over. Harry had killed Voldemort, but he had been killed afterwards. Bellatrix Lestrange had stood in the shadows, and when she saw Harry kill her master, she crept out and hit from behind with a Killing Curse.

Neville had also been watching the duel from the safety of the shadows; he had followed Harry. Upon seeing Bellatrix kill his friend, he revealed himself and shot an Unforgivable Cruciatus Curse at her.

She keeled over in pain as Neville's curse had been extremely powerful due to his hate of this woman. She had not only killed one of his best friends, but she had destroyed his family and childhood by torturing his parents to insanity.

The two enemies duelled, and after a very short time, Neville shouted "Avada Kedavra!" and hit Bellatrix Lestrange square in the chest.

Everyone knew what Draco Malfoy and Severus Snape had done and that Malfoy was supposedly the Dark Lord's most trusted servant, but what they didn't know was that Draco had had enough. He wanted out. So just before Harry's duel with Voldemort, he ran. He ran to the only place that had ever felt like home, Hogwarts, but he stayed in the Dark Forest with the help of a trusted servant.

"Kreacher!"

"It's young Master Malfoy!" The house-elf cried, going into a very low bow. "What is it that Master wants?"

"Kreacher, I need you to bring me a bit of food and water everyday. But you can't tell anyone what you're doing or where I am or that I'm even alive, okay? If you disobey me, it means clothes."

"Yes, Master. Kreacher must go now, Master, for us house-elves need to start making dinner, sir."

"Very well, go. But no one must know, Kreacher." And Kreacher took another low bow and disappeared with a 'pop.'

Earlier that year there was another mass breakout from Azkaban, which involved twenty Death Eaters, that caused Rufus Scrimgeour to run. Everyone had wanted Harry to become the new Minister for Magic, but he had declined the offer to trace down Voldemort.

After his death the Wizarding community voted for Hermione Granger to be the first witch to become Minister for Magic; she also became the youngest Minister at 19.

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It was Hermione's 21st birthday. She had woken up at 2 a.m. due to a car backfiring and could not get back to sleep, so she decided to go into the office to get some work done before the party. At 4:30 a.m. an owl flew in through her open window.

"That's strange," she said to herself. "No one I know would even be up at this time. Hang on. . . I recognise this owl!"

She saw a letter in the eagle owl's beak, took it, and offered the bird some water and bacon that she always kept handy. She ripped open the letter and read:

Granger,

I need your help. And I know what you'll be thinking, but I've changed my ways, honestly.

I've forced myself to live in exile for the past three years, and I have only just heard of Potter's defeat and unfortunate death. I also want to congratulate you, as I've heard that you became the first female Minister for Magic. Again I know what you're thinking. "Why does Malfoy want my help, and why is he congratulating me?!" right?

Just before the war finished, I realised that I was different from my family. I didn't want to kill Muggle-borns. (Notice my wording; I know you will.) I don't want the Wizarding community to be 'pure.' I wish that Severus hadn't killed Dumbledore, and I wish that I could have been myself at Hogwarts, for the Draco Malfoy that you knew was not truly me.

My father had raised me to believe that Muggle-borns were scum and that they didn't deserve a place in our community, but when I came to Hogwarts, I thought, "Why?" So you may well ask me, "Why did I still have a go at you for your parentage?" Well, I have an answer for that, not an excuse because I believe that there isn't an excuse for someone's behaviour, but I knew that if I was nice to you, Harry or Ron, then Crabbe and Goyle would report back to my father, whom I know would have severely punished me.

I know that it is your 21st birthday, and you will be angry at me for even thinking of, let alone actually contacting, you. Actually, you're probably disappointed that the rumours of my death are not true, but like I said, I need your help. I'm desperate, and you're the only one who can help me now. Can I see you? Please write back.

Sincerely,

Draco

"I did notice his wording; he was right," Hermione said aloud to herself. "He's caused me so much grief and pain over the years. But I can't leave him stranded." Finally the better part of her mind won this mental battle, and she replied to his letter.

Draco,

I will help you. You're right on almost everything, but I did not want to believe that you were dead.

At the moment I am residing at 6 Godric's Hollow. And yes, it is my 21st birthday today; how did you know? I am having a party tonight, so if you wish to come, please do; if not, I understand. Please come at 3 a.m. tomorrow morning as everyone will have gone, and I will still be up.

I look forward to seeing you either way.

Yours,

Hermione

"There, quick and to the point," she thought. And it was true; she was looking forward to seeing Malfoy, for she had liked him ever since their first day at Hogwarts and in their sixth year her feelings towards him became even stronger as his looks and attitude matured.

"Brilliant!" Draco whispered to himself when he had read Hermione's reply, and he made up his mind, there and then, to go to her house at 3 a.m. after the party, as he didn't want to arouse suspicions.

Mrs Weasley had given Hermione the night off and had cooked up a marvellous feast for the party, though it wasn't going to be anything big. Just Mr and Mrs Weasley, Bill and Fleur, Charlie, Percy, Fred and George, Ron, Ginny, Neville and Luna Longbottom, Lupin and Tonks, Mad-Eye Moody and Professor McGonagall. Though Hermione regretted that five people weren't there: Dumbledore, Harry, of course, Draco and her parents, who had been murdered by Death Eaters during the war.

Everyone had left by 2 a.m., so Hermione started to tidy up the kitchen and living room the Muggle way, as it was a favourite past time that she enjoyed doing with her mum.

At 2:55 a.m. Hermione heard a soft tap on the front door. She opened it to see none other than Draco Malfoy. But he was not the same handsome Malfoy that he had been at Hogwarts; his skin was paler than ever before, his face was gaunt and scarred, his hair hung lank and greasy, his eyes showed no emotion whatsoever and he had huge black bags under his eyes.

When Hermione saw him her eyes grew wide with shock, and her hands flew up to her mouth as she gasped.

"May I come in?" he asked politely, and she opened the door wider and stepped aside so that he could enter.

"What happened to you?" she cried.

He did not answer her immediately, but thought, "*God, she's hot!*" He had realised in their fourth year...when he grew insanely jealous when Krum asked her out...that he really liked Hermione, and seeing her now, after four years, made him see that it was more than just a crush.

"Er...It's a long story."

I like long stories," Hermione said with a hint of flirt in her voice. "And I have the day off tomorrow... Today even." She laughed.

"Well, I guess it starts with you in our fourth year at Hogwarts."

Hermione raised her eyebrows in surprise. "Me?"

"Yes, you. You see, I realised in our fourth year I that liked you, and not just as a friend either. I knew that in our sixth year when my mother forced me to become a Death Eater to please my father that you would end up hurting because of me. When I realised just how much hurt and trouble I had caused you, maybe not personally, but by actions, I couldn't live with myself, and so I ran away, exiling myself. I ran to the Dark Forest and realised that I had to keep myself alive." He paused for a breath, but Hermione interrupted him.

"But why are you telling me? You hate me," she said, hurting as she spoke the last three words.

Draco noticed her hurt and decided to get to the point straight away. "No."

"No, what?" Hermione asked confused.

"No, I don't hate you. In fact it's the complete opposite."

"What you talkin' 'bout?"

"I love you, Hermione."

"W... Wh... What?" she asked, completely bewildered.

"I love you, Hermione Jane Granger. I love you!"

"When?"

"Well, I s'pose it all started back in our fourth year. I saw you walking into the Great Hall at the Yule Ball on Krum's arm, and I didn't want to admit it to myself, but I was jealous. You looked so beautiful. I found out in our fifth year that you felt the same way; I wanted to tell you that the feelings were mutual, but you were never alone. I knew that I could never ask to talk to you alone because Harry would have cursed me into oblivion on the spot, and I could never get Parkinson to leave me alone!"

"Why?"

"I don't know. I can't help my feelings..."

"...No, why are you telling me this now? What makes you think I still have feelings for you? I mean that was five years ago Draco!"

He laughed when she said his name. "Well, for one you called me Draco, not Malfoy, and I guess that I just hoped that you would and that you deserved to know the truth."

"I'm sorry, but I gave up on you four years ago, and this is just too hard to believe," she said, shaking her head. "I mean, Voldemort's most trusted servant, who is supposedly a dead Death Eater, is in my living room telling me that he loves me! It's just so unreal!"

"I'm not a Death Eater. Look..." He pulled up his left sleeve and showed her a Dark Mark-less arm. "I finally managed to find a spell that removed his Mark, and I told you that I left before the Final Battle. No way I wanted to end up like my father." Throughout him saying this, Hermione had been searching his eyes, but all she saw was truth and emotion. Then she did something that he most certainly had not expected. She kissed him.

"I love you, too!" she said when she finally pulled away from him.

"Oh, I got you something." He took out a small red and gold box from his robe pocket. "Happy Birthday, Hermione."

"You shouldn't have," she pressed.

"Just open it!" So she opened the box to reveal a pair of star shaped gold earrings with a small diamond in each center.

"You really shouldn't have. They must have been so expensive! Oh, they're lovely, thank you!" And she hugged him with thanks. "Would you like some cake?" At this suggestion his eyes glowed, and he nodded thankfully. "I guess you didn't eat much. You're as thin as a stick!"

"Yes, well, Kreacher only brought me stale bread once a week."

"Kreacher?"

"Yes, why?"

"When Harry died, he left me Kreacher. Kreacher told me that he was helping someone I knew, who wanted to stay alive for me. I couldn't think of anyone, but knew that if they asked him for help then they must be really desperate. So, I gave him lots of food to give to you, and he only gave you stale bread, once a week? No wonder you look this bad!"

"Gee, thanks for the compliment, Granger." he commented sarcastically, having just shovelled down a huge slice of lemon cake.

"Would you like a shower whilst you're here?" Hermione offered. "And what robe size are you?"

"Please, and six. Why?"

"Oh, nothing. Shower's on the second floor, first door on your right. I've just got to pop out. I'll be back in ten."

"Okay, thanks." And she Disapparated, leaving Draco standing in her kitchen.

Hermione entered the shop called 'Anything You Could Think Of' and picked out a set of midnight blue male robes, some bread, slices of ham, butter, beer, vodka and a packet of Muggle Wiggles chewing gum.

As she walked up to the counter, she whispered, "Damn it!" to herself as she recognised the red-haired witch. "Hey, Gin. Just these 'n' a pack of fags, please."

The woman sighed and turned around to get the packet of cigarettes. "Hermione, since when did you smoke?!"

"Since Harry died. Wait, no, since my heart was ripped to shreds."

"When was that?"

Hermione hadn't told anyone about smoking, or her feelings, but she had managed to stop smoking. Then Harry died, and she got really depressed and needed something to take her stress away and to distract her without resorting to drugs. "Sixth year." She handed over the money, said a quick goodbye to her friend, and rushed out outside to the Apparition point.

She Apparated to her kitchen and lit up when she saw Draco in her dark blue, silk dressing gown.

"Er, hope you don't mind me borrowing this?" he asked embarrassed. "Hang on, is that a cigarette? Since when do you, a goodie-goodie know-it-all, smoke?!" He was simply amazed that Hermione was just casually standing there, shopping bags in her hand, smoking.

And she casually answered him. "Since I found out why Dumbledore died," then added rather spitefully, "but it's really none of your business what I do, Malfoy. Oh, and here, I got these for you." And she threw him the bag with the robes in.

"You didn't have to get me these."

"Yes, I did," she spat. "How could a Malfoy go round in tatty, ripped robes?" But then she said, "Do you have anywhere to stay?" in a soft tone of voice.

"Well, there's a place on the other side of London that was my mum's aunt's house."

"You're not going there," Hermione said sternly, and when Draco looked confused, she explained. "You're mum was a Black."

"And?" He was still confused.

"And, Sirius gave Harry that house, which he gave to me. It is the Order headquarters."

"Oh. Well, I'm guessing that the Malfoy Manor was taken over by Aurors and destroyed." Hermione nodded a reply. "So then, no. I don't have anywhere to go."

"I have a spare room. You may stay here," she offered.

"You sure?"

"Yes," she said softly. "Oh, and Draco. I'm sorry."

"What for?"

"For having a go at you."

"Don't worry 'bout it. I deserved it, and more."

"No, you didn't. I guess I just didn't think that I would ever see you again. No, I knew I wouldn't see you again; this doesn't make any sense!"

"What doesn't?" Draco asked, once again confused.

"We found your body," Hermione slowly stated. "We buried you. How are you here? Are you some evil, twisted hologram?"

"Hermione," Draco reasoned. "I've been away from civilisation for four years; it wasn't me. What's a hologram?"

"An image, sent by a computer." And when Draco threw her a quizzical look, she added, "A Muggle electrical device. Hang on, if it wasn't you, then who did we bury? Who hurt me so much?"

"Hurt you? Who hurt you?" he asked, shocked and worried.

"You. Well, obviously not you because you're here. Alive. But then, yes, you. You did hurt me; you broke my heart. Hang on..." It suddenly dawned on Hermione what Draco had said earlier. "You knew? You knew in our fifth year that I liked you?" Draco slowly nodded his answer. "So, you knew, and yet, you did nothing. You did absolutely nothing at all. You trampled over my heart and then ripped it to shreds, and you knew? How could you do that?" Hermione almost whispered, tears welling up in her eyes.

"I don't know. I guess my reputation got in the way of my big head. You know what I was like..."

"That's not an excuse!" Hermione interrupted.

"I know. I'm sorry. I really am. I love you," he apologised.

As he said that, Hermione stared into his eyes, searching for truth, and after a while, she said, "I know. I love you, too. But what should we tell people?"

"What d'you mean?"

"Well, if I go round all happy, people will either think that I have a great sex life and ask who or that I'm on drugs, which isn't like me, so they'd guess that about the sex life. And I can't go round pretending that you're dead. Oooh! I have an idea! Do you know any information on the whereabouts of any Death Eaters?"

"It sounds like you want to interrogate me!" Draco guessed, pretending to be offended.

"Well, yes, that was the idea. You see I can tell people that you handed me information to help capture Death Eaters who still believe that the Dark Lord shall rise again." She giggled a bit at this, as she had spoken then last six words in a mystified voice like Professor Trelawney, her ex-divination teacher.

Divination was the only subject...or thing...that Hermione had ever quit, and that was because she believed Professor Trelawney to be an old fraud. That is until she heard about the prophecy Trelawney had made: *'The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches... born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies... and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not... and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives... the one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies...'* She knew it by heart. It was the prophecy that would determine Harry or Voldemort's fate. Well, it didn't have to, but Harry...being himself...could not ignore the prophecy.

"Yes, I can give you names, but can we do it another time please?" he asked.

"Yes, sure," Hermione agreed.

"Thanks." And as Hermione turned to go upstairs, he added, "Oh, and Hermione, thanks for the robes."

"You're welcome. Think of them as a Christmas present."

"Christmas?"

"Yes, it's Christmas tomorrow. Gosh, where were you not to notice?"

"Er, um, I was in the Dark Forest."

"As in the Forbidden Forest, Dark Forest?"

"Yes, well, you see Hogwarts was the one place that I felt truly at home..." but Hermione cut him off.

"Me too! Oh, no!" she added, amazed that she could forget something this big.

"What?"

"I've just remembered. Christmas. Most of the Order members are coming over for dinner!"

"And..." he slowly said.

"And... how am I supposed to explain the reason why a dead Death Eater is in my house?!" She cried out all in one breath, "Not to mention the fact that they all know that it was you who should have killed Dumbledore! This is just brilliant!" she screeched, exasperated.

"Well, I could stay in my room all day or go back to the forest," Draco reasoned

"Don't be so stupid!" Hermione snapped. "No, I'll just have to cancel. Er, I could say that it's too much after Harry's death, but that was two years ago..."

"...And they would know it was a lie. Just let me leave," Draco finished her sentence.

"No," Hermione argued firmly. "This will be the best Christmas that you have ever had. We will have a proper Christmas dinner, we will listen to the Queen's speech, open presents, maybe get drunk and have fun."

"Can I give you your present now?" Draco asked surprising Hermione.

"M... My present?"

"Yes. I just remembered that I still have one thing that I need to give to you. So can I?"

"Um, sure."

"Kay, wait here." And he ran upstairs.

When he came back down, it looked as though he didn't have anything, but then something caught the light.

As he came up to Hermione, he held a gold ring with nine small diamonds in the shape of a flower between his thumb and forefinger.

Hermione gasped at the sight of this beautiful ring. "Hermione," Draco said in a very calm voice. "This ring has been in my family for five generations. Every Malfoy male has given it to the woman that he loves. My mother gave it to me at the beginning of our sixth year at Hogwarts. I already knew who I wanted to give it to." And bending down on one knee, he started to as, "Hermione Jane Granger, I want to spend the rest of my life with you."

But Hermione interrupted him. "Oh, my gosh. You're going to..." But she couldn't finish her sentence, so Draco carried on.

"Will you give me the chance to make you and I truly happy by becoming my wife?"

Hermione fell to her knees to be at the same level as her one true love. Tears of happiness gently rolled down her cheeks as she nodded. "Yes. Yes! Of course I will!" And she threw her arms around his neck.

This was going to be the best Christmas ever!

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A/N: Hey, everyone. That was my first Hermione/Draco story. I wrote it over the Christmas holidays, so I made the time of year the same, I also changed Hermione's birthday from September to December, to fit in. Hope you liked it. Please R&R as I want to write more HG/DM stories and would love opinions on how to make my stories better!

Sorceress_Sarah xoxo