

Only In My Dreams

by blue artemis

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Chapter 1 of 1

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"Yes, it does matter. I believe if *Draco had* told Bellatrix who we were that day in the manor, she would have done even more damage. He tried to save his friend from the Fiendfyre when they found us looking for Ravenclaw's diadem in the Room of Requirement, and he never really cast anything harmful at us. Oh, that. Well, the Weasleys may be on the side of the Light and have always been, but Ronald certainly has his prejudices and never could see that there could be a 'good' Slytherin. I wonder what he would say if he realized that you were a Slytherin, Minister?"

That was the final statement made by Hermione Granger on behalf of Draco Malfoy during his trial shortly after the end of the war. Once the laughter in the courtroom died down, Draco was found not guilty of most of the crimes and had to spend six months in the Ministry holding cells, five of which were time served since he had been under house arrest until the trial.

Narcissa Malfoy sought Hermione out after the verdict was read.

"You did not have to do that, my dear girl."

"Yes, I did, Mrs. Malfoy. I could feel the hatred building. Harry and I agreed that we needed to stand up for what was right, not what was easy."

"It seems to have lost you the Weasleys."

"Ron, Ginny, and Percy, yes. Molly and Arthur have been very supportive as have been Bill, Charlie and George. I'm certain they wouldn't have been if we had defended your husband, but even I couldn't find something to defend there." Then Hermione remembered who she was speaking to. "Oh! My apologies. I shouldn't have said that."

"It is all right, my dear. My husband made a bad choice and is paying for it. Even though his sentence was reduced for not having fought during that last battle, two years is more than enough time, I believe. As you and Mr. Potter so eloquently said, we want a functioning society, not one based on revenge. You will have many converts to your cause with that."

"We weren't asking for any, Mrs. Malfoy. As I said, we were just looking for justice instead of a repeat of the prior regime in reverse."

"I have an offer for you, my dear."

Hermione looked up at the patrician witch with a question in her eyes.

"Yes, truly. I will tutor you in the magical traditions. You already seem to have beautiful manners, so it will truly be just a way to fine tune yourself so that those who wish to align themselves to you will not have any reason to look down on you."

"What about Harry?"

"What about me?" Harry had just walked up to Hermione, accompanied by Neville and Luna.

"Mrs. Malfoy was offering to tutor me in magical traditions. I was asking if she was willing to tutor you."

"Yes, I am. And Mr. Longbottom and Miss Lovegood are always welcome to accompany you if you wish."

"Yes."

"Harry!"

"Hermione, I keep being told that I don't know anything about the Wizarding world. And you know, they are right. If Mrs. Malfoy is willing to tutor us, then I am willing to be tutored. After Draco gets out, then we can also do more schoolwork so that we can take our NEWTS in January."

"I agree, Harry. Thank you, Mrs. Malfoy. When do you want to see us?"

"Monday morning at ten. I think that will do, and then we can decide what works best for us after that."

The four friends walked out of the Ministry, heading for Grimmauld Place. On the way, they ran into Molly, Arthur, Ginny and Ron.

"You traitorous bitch! How dare you say I'm just like a Malfoy! They are slimy Slytherins."

"Ronald!"

"It is all right, Mrs. Weasley. First off, I'm not a bitch, nor a traitor. I was up there telling the truth. Secondly, what did you think, Ronald, that I would happily fall into bed with you? I may not know too many Wizarding traditions, but even I know that there is a lot of power in a witch's first time. I wasn't about to give you a boost when I know for a fact you are shagging anyone willing."

"How did you find out about that, you slag?"

Hermione snorted. "I just told you I'm a virgin, and you call me a slag. Honestly, Gin, the reason I found out about that was the horror that all the purebloods had when they found out you had slept with Michael Corner. I asked why it was horrible, other than the fact that you were a third year, and they told me. I looked it up, and it was true. It was why you lost all respect from the purebloods. There is a reason Harry always puts you off, you know; he's never liked riding the school brooms."

Molly was aghast. "You mean you gave up your power just like that, you stupid girl? You know you are never going to get it back, right?"

"Oh, come on, Mum. You know when I get bonded I will get it back."

"Only if you are bound to Michael Corner, my dear. Otherwise, it is gone forever."

Ginny went white. "But I thought you said I would get it back!"

"I never thought you would use that as a reason to become the school broom. Yes, you can give up your virginity, but only to the man you are going to marry if you want the power back. And every first took a bit more of your power. Just how many were there?"

Ginny looked at her mother, horrified.

"And you, Ronald! I thought I raised you better than to sleep around like that."

"Bill and Charlie do."

"Bill only slept with Muggle girls or other wizards before Fleur. Charlie prefers boys; it has never been a problem. But honestly, if Hermione wants to behave like a proper witch instead of a Muggle, who are you to disparage that?"

"My apologies to you both. Remember, loves, even if these two have forgotten their upbringing, Arthur and I will always consider you family."

All of those present in the Ministry corridors were impressed by the strength of character shown by Hermione Granger that day. When it became known that she was accepting tutoring from Narcissa Malfoy, well, even more doors opened for her, even if she didn't realize it at the time.

Draco was dreaming again. It was lonely in the Ministry cells. There may not be Dementors, but there were certainly nightmares. He had one solace from that; most nights he usually managed one dream about Hermione. *Hermione*. He couldn't wait until he could actually say that out loud with the affection apparent in his voice. She was his angel, his conscience. Ever since the day in third year when she had slapped him, he used her as a gauge for his actions. Usually he would dream a memory of her, watching her in the library, seeing her hair glow when she would read under a tree by the Black Lake, her hair streaming in the wind up on the Astronomy tower. One day he even saw her get caught in a light spring rain, which was something he truly wanted to see again. These thoughts, these dreams, they kept him sane and hopeful. Azkaban may be for those who truly sought to cause harm, but any prison is difficult for one who loves to fly.

"Hello, Draco!" A chorus of voices greeted him in the drawing room at the manor. The usual suspects were there...Daphne, Pansy, Astoria, Theo, Blaise...but then there were the surprises: Hermione, Harry, Luna, Neville, and a couple of Weasleys. That was so surprising; Draco was certain he was still dreaming.

"Oh, love, welcome home! This is to be your study group. I know you only have two full months to study, but if you all are diligent about it, you should all do well on your NEWTs come January."

"Thank you, Mother." Draco's voice creaked with disuse.

Hermione smiled at everyone. "Here you go! I have study schedules."

Pansy smiled. "Color-coded, right?"

"Of course and cross-indexed as well."

The laughter that greeted this statement spoke of affection from the entire group.

"How did this happen?"

"This what, Draco?"

"Potter, Harry, when did you start calling me Draco? And this. You are friends, you are having fun, color-coded and cross-indexed? I'm confused."

"Your mother invited Hermione over for tutoring in Wizarding traditions. I joined her, and Luna and Neville came along to give us their perception. Well, soon after that, your little group joined in because, well, because they wanted to, I guess. We did save the schoolwork for when you returned, though."

Draco took his color-coded, cross-indexed study schedule from Hermione with a confused nod, then sat with the group to begin their studies.

Most of the group was playing a quick game of Quidditch on the pitch. Hermione and Draco had stayed behind because she did not want to play and because he had an appointment at Gringotts. Draco arrived home, only to come upon Hermione watching the game from a small knoll.

"Do you want me to teach you to fly, Hermione?"

"I don't think so, Draco."

"Why? I know you are afraid of heights, but I won't let you fall. Don't you trust me?"

"It isn't that. I don't like brooms because I didn't do the spell work. What if it fails? I can't control something when I don't know how it works. That is what terrifies me."

Draco smiled. "Come with me."

"Weren't you going to join in the Quidditch game?"

"No, I think you are more important. Now come with me." Draco held his hand out to Hermione imperiously.

He was taken aback when she flashed him one of her joyous smiles, the ones that could light up the Great Hall.

"What was that for?"

"What?" Hermione was confused.

"The smile."

"Oh, that. Well, no one has ever told me I was more important than Quidditch before. I really liked it."

"See, that is what you get for hanging out with losers instead of me."

"I'm hanging out with you now, aren't I?"

"True."

"So, Mr. Malfoy, where are you taking me?"

"You shall see, my dear. It is a family secret."

Hermione smiled bemusedly at the determined wizard who had yet to let go of her hand. Draco led her into the manor, past the house-elves preparing tea, past his mother, who smiled knowingly, and past many family portraits that had become quite taken with the little witch. They went into the older part of the manor until they came to a small room. Draco held his hand up to the door, and it opened, letting him and his guest into the room.

"Oh, Draco! This is amazing! Thank you so much for showing me!" Hermione was astounded. There, in the middle of the room, was an old broomstick. She certainly didn't know if it was a commercial model, but what really got her were the arithmantic breakdowns of the charms on the broom, displayed around the broom, the same way antique cars were occasionally displayed with a set of schematics. She drew close and studied them carefully.

"I see how this works now! All right, Draco, you can teach me to fly."

The Quidditch players were astounded when Hermione mounted a broom with Draco behind her teaching her the proper way to fly. They were even more astounded when a week later, she beat them all in a race due to a few modifications she made to the broom she was riding. After Blaise made a comment about it to his brother who worked for Firebolt, all the broom companies were after her. They didn't care if she completed her NEWTs or not. But she did.

The NEWTs came, and the group, as Narcissa had predicted, did well. All of them passed all the tests they took.

Draco told Hermione that a few of their experiments had not been completed, so he expected her back at the manor on Monday in that imperious manner that Hermione now knew covered up his insecurities.

"You could just ask me to visit, you know. You don't have to make it a production."

"How Gryffindor. Please let me retain some of Slytherin tendencies, my dear."

After that, Hermione was a regular visitor at the manor. She spoke with Narcissa many times over her opportunities. She decided she did not want to be part of the Ministry, not yet. The day she got the research and development contract from Nimbus, the one that put everyone else's to shame, she came bounding into the manor.

"Draco!"

"Missy Hermione, the young Master is out in the garden."

Hermione had just gone out to find him when the skies opened up with a light spring rain. She headed for the gazebo and found Draco there waiting for her. When she told him of her success, he picked her up and spun her around, delighted that he was the one who opened this avenue for his witch. As they kissed for the first time, Draco was reminded of his dreams.

"I was right."

"About what, Draco?"

"The rain on your skin smells like perfection."

Many thanks to my beta, Southern_Witch_69.

Prompt: Rain on her skin smelled like perfection...