

Woman's Magic

by blue artemis

Hermione finds a way to cleanse the Dark wards at Malfoy Manor and helps redeem the entire family.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: This was written for week three of the Malfoy Manor one-shot weeklies contest in October. Prompt at the end.

"Bloody bugging hell!"

"What happened, Granger? You mean you weren't supposed to cause the wards to turn to sparkly dust?"

"It wasn't the wards, Malfoy. You are the lord of the manor while your father is incarcerated. You know damn well they are still up. It was my bloody, bugging spell."

"At least you started early, Granger. Could you imagine if the Head Unspeakable showed up? 'What an awful time for her spell to turn to dust,' he would say, right before dismissing you."

Draco realized he had gone too far when he saw the tears glittering in Hermione's eyes before she turned away from him.

Hermione took a deep breath. "Well, Malfoy, I guess you were right. Without blood-magic, there is no way for me to cleanse your wards. Since you are forbidden to either use or employ blood-magic while you are on probation, you will have to forfeit your manor. My apologies."

"No, Gran--Hermione, please. Don't give up. I didn't mean to upset you."

"Yes, you did, and I've had enough, Malfoy. I knew it was bad when Daphne and Pansy told me that you wouldn't appreciate anything I did for you. But I thought you might appreciate the fact that I took a leave of absence from work to try to figure out a way to cleanse your wards and help you meet the final requirement of your probation. I hope you like a life with a tagged wand, because I'm done."

"Please, please, don't go, Hermione. I'm begging you. And I'm a Malfoy; you don't know what that means."

Hermione turned around and looked at an oddly sincere Draco. "Malfoy, for Merlin's sake, why would you pick at me like you do? Not even your friends were willing to help you. I'll stay, but if you do that again, I am not going to stay, not even if you end up in Azkaban."

Draco nodded at the little witch, then turned and walked out of her workspace.

What the hell am I doing? She's not kidding. She is the only one willing to even try to help me. I need to stop that antagonism. It is so easy to fall into my old patterns with her. Damn. I better treat her well if she is to succeed.

Hermione shook her head ruefully at the departing wizard. He had done so much to redeem his name in the few years after the end of the war. He and Ron became friends after Ron and Hermione's relationship died an amicable yet heartbreaking death. Harry was not functional, Neville was busy with Hannah, Luna was Luna, and yet, Draco, also there for their "eighth" year, noticed that the red-head was despondent and wouldn't leave him alone, challenging him to chess matches and one-on-one Quidditch. When Ron asked him why, he just told him that he could never forget that Ron helped care for him after the horror of Crabbe's Fiendfyre in the Room of Requirement, and he was paying him back. Ron told Hermione this late one night, after they had regained their comfortable friendship. Draco helped Harry babysit Teddy, he checked on Andromeda, he helped "defuse" many Dark objects, he aced his NEWTs, second only to Hermione herself, and he managed to make friends where he only had antagonists before. But he would revert to form when nervous or worried, and the cleansing of the Malfoy wards was a huge worry for him. The very last act necessary to clear him from probation, it was seen as a huge act of redemption by the scion of a Dark family. The only problem is that generally the way to change the nature of family wards was for the current lord to spill blood on the land in a sacrifice. Hermione had not found a way around it, so they were currently stuck. As much as she understood Draco's behavior, though, she certainly wasn't going to give him a free pass.

"Draco!"

"Yes, Hermione?"

"Oh for--just stop, would you? Act like yourself, please. You are being way too polite, and I keep waiting for the other shoe to drop!"

Draco gave Hermione a true smile, the one that made her insides flutter. "All right, Pinky, what do you need?"

"We should have never shown you the Animaniacs. It worries me that you are planning to take over the world. But back to my original thought... What do you know about blood sacrifices?"

"C'mon, love, they said we couldn't use blood-magic. Don't make me go there!"

"I was reading."

"Stop the presses! Granger was reading."

Hermione smacked Draco on the shoulder. "No, really, I was reading a book on Light blood sacrifices. There are a few, usually involving a witch giving up her virginity as part of a ritual."

"Hermione, those are REALLY Dark. You can take a witch's magic like that."

"Yes, if she is frightened and unwilling. You need to see this book I found. It is ancient, Draco, like from the Founder's time. I think it is the way the original wards at Hogwarts were raised. I don't think it was a coincidence that there were two witches and two wizards."

"I want to see this book. I'm not even going to consider anything like that unless I think we can get past the Ministry watchdogs. If I have to go down, love, I'm not taking you with me."

"Draco, why do you keep calling me love?"

"Because I forgot your name?"

"Draco?"

"It's better than Mudblood?"

"Draco!"

"I thought you would like it better than pet?"

"I can live with that as a reason."

Hermione smiled as she went to her room to get the book. She took it back to the wizard who was slowly growing on her.

"Here it is, Draco. You can read it while I'm gone this weekend."

"Where are you going?"

"Don't tell me you forgot already?"

"Of course I didn't. So where are you going?"

"It is Pansy's hen weekend. Food, spa, strippers... "

"You are not having strippers."

"Why not?"

"I will go and strip for you before I let you look at a strange man taking his clothes off for money!"

"Really?"

"For Merlin's sake, Hermione, if you want to see my bits, all you have to do is ask!"

"I'll have to think about that, Draco. Enjoy the book this weekend!"

"Remember, no strippers!"

Hermione smiled as she turned and Disapparated away from Malfoy Manor.

"What has that grin on your face, 'Mione?"

"Oh, Draco offered to show me his bits if I forego the strippers this weekend, Gin."

"What strippers?"

"The imaginary ones."

"Finally got him to admit that he wants to show you his bits, did you, Granger?"

"Yes, Parkinson."

The girls laughed at Hermione's snotty tone.

"Are you going to be able to re-set his wards for him?"

"Yes, Luna."

"Just make sure you use a spell to rid the lawn of Nargles. Getting them up your orifices isn't any fun."

Hermione goggled a bit at Luna's insight, oddly worded as it was, and just thanked her.

"What does she mean?" asked Daphne.

"She means Hermione found a way around the Ministry's prohibition on blood-magic."

"How do you know that, Pansy?"

"I'm starting to speak here."

"Explain for us peasants, would you, 'Mione?"

"Of course, Gin. Dark blood-magic all requires an unwilling sacrifice. Light blood-magic, which the Ministry recognizes, even if they don't know it, is a willing sacrifice."

Ginny's eyes lit up. "Marriage contracts, right? They are more powerful if the witch is a virgin because of the blood spilled willingly."

"Yes, exactly. But there are many rituals that use willing virgin's blood, one being to completely cleanse and re-set the wards on a property. I found a book that says that the base wards at Hogwarts were set by the Founders in a ritual involving Ravenclaw's and Hufflepuff's virgin blood being spilled on the grounds."

"That is true, Hermione. It is part of Ravenclaw's diaries that the girls can read in our Common Room."

"Same for Hufflepuff, Luna. But I thought those rituals were lost to time."

"No, I found a book that detailed them."

"You FOUND a copy of *Women's Magick and Rituals*?"

"Yes, Pansy, I did."

"Where, woman? Do you know what that is worth?"

"In an old pawnshop in Muggle London. I also found a birthday gift for Draco there."

"What did you find him?"

"A Michel Malfoy Rune Puzzle."

The uproar that followed that revelation was loud enough to bring Winky to ask if the girls needed anything.

"What did you pay for that?" asked Daphne.

"I paid ten pounds for the trunk. I could feel that it had magical objects. That wasn't all I found, and it was such a deal."

"I guess you will tell us what else you found when you are ready."

"Of course I will, Luna."

The girls all smiled fondly at each other and got ready to leave for their weekend of relaxation.

Hermione returned to Malfoy Manor ready to convince Draco that the ritual they needed to use to cleanse the wards would not trigger any of the Ministry watch-spells.

"Hermione, love, you do know what using this ritual on Malfoy land will mean, don't you?"

"It means you will be off probation, and you won't have done anything Dark to cleanse your wards."

"If I weren't a Malfoy, yes. But we have a few traditions that go back to the days when the lord and lady were tied to the land. Any woman willing to spill her virgin's blood to aid a Malfoy on his land became his bride. I went to ask Ron why you would think this would work, and he said you two never got that far, so I know you were going to sacrifice yourself."

"How do you know I didn't have a fling with some muscular Muggle one summer?"

"Because I know you. You wouldn't find this ritual and expect another witch to be the sacrifice. You meant to do this yourself. But I care about you too much to tie you to me and to this land. I know we aren't in love yet, but I think we could get there easily. I don't want you to lose your good name for me."

"Draco, those people that matter to me all know how I feel about you and would not think I was losing my good name. Everyone else can go bugger themselves!" Hermione took a deep breath. "Before I forget, I found you a birthday gift."

"Really? Give it to me!"

"Draco, you can be such a little boy sometimes."

"Well, are you going to give it to me, or not?"

"Of course. Come up to my room."

Draco followed Hermione to her room, where he saw an ancient trunk in the middle of her sitting room.

"Where did you find that? It has been lost for ages!"

"The trunk isn't your gift, Draco."

"It isn't? But that is Elizabeth Malfoy's trunk! It is a family heirloom."

"Which I bought for ten pounds, so it is mine. But your gift is inside of this."

Draco pouted until he realized Hermione wasn't going to give up the trunk or its possessions easily. He sighed. "Fine." He closed his eyes and held his hands out.

Hermione smiled at the child-like display. She took the Rune puzzle and placed it in his outstretched hands.

Draco opened his eyes and whooped in delight. He put the puzzle down on the table and pulled Hermione close to him in a tight hug, then swung her around.

"I guess you like it?"

"Hermione, my love, you are the only witch in the world that would find an ancient trunk in a Muggle store, then turn around and give away the most valuable thing in it."

Hermione smiled at him. "I think I like you calling me your love. Now, do you want to look through the trunk?"

The two sat there, slowly going through the trunk and found everything they needed for the ward ritual, as well as Elizabeth's diary and the traditional white cotton dress. There were also a few minor pieces of jewelry, obviously more sentimental than valuable, but they seemed to suit Hermione perfectly.

"Tell me the truth, Draco, please."

"I'm a Slytherin, love. That is a big request!"

"Why don't you want to do the ritual, really?"

Draco sighed. "Hermione, in order to make that ritual work the way you want it to, we would have to have a bonding ceremony, then do your ritual in a bower set up on the magical center of the property. It would be forever, do you understand? You would be tied to me as my spouse, and to the property as the center of the wards. When you pass, you would be buried in a place of honor, among the Malfoys instead of the spouses. How could I ask you to do that? How could I ask anyone? I'm not worth that type of sacrifice." He had ended up on his knees on the floor by the end of his speech.

Hermione sank to her knees next to him and gently turned his head with her hands so that he faced her. "Yes you are, and having read many of the histories of the various families, I truly understand the honor it would be to be your wife in these circumstances. Draco, do you really think I would offer myself to any of my friends? Blood, yes. Magic, yes. Knowledge, yes. But myself? You are the only one. Think about that for a while, would you?" She walked out of the room, leaving Draco to his thoughts.

Two owls left the Manor a few minutes after that. One to Italy, to the villa that Narcissa was vacationing in, and one to Azkaban. The owl sent to Azkaban had a letter sealed with the ancient crest of the Malfoy family, which prompted the warden to turn it over to Lucius sight unseen. For any of the noble families to seal their correspondence in this manner meant that it was private and between either the lord and his heir or the lord and his father.

Lucius read the letter, his eyebrows raised into his hairline. He asked for a quill to respond and wrote across the back of the letter. "Yes, of course. You do not need my permission or blessing, but yes. She is a treasure, and this will preclude any other contracts or commitments; a Malfoy always has to be loyal to the land first." He could not believe that *any* witch would be willing to do what Hermione was, and what better way to begin the rehabilitation of the Malfoy name than to tie one of the Golden Trio to them permanently and in such a spectacular fashion.

Half an hour later, Narcissa appeared with the warden. "Oh, love, is it true?"

"He wrote to me, Cissy. And a bonding like that, with the wards visibly changing, will show the worth of the witch, as well as her innocence. The purebloods that are left even remotely intact will be wanting to find someone to aid in their rituals, but once again the Malfoys will be first. We cannot ask for more."

"I will ask for permission for you to be allowed to witness the bonding and the changing of the wards."

Lucius nodded, already planning for a future made brighter by one curly-haired Gryffindor.

Dinner that night was tense, and Hermione, although she knew why, was annoyed. Draco's comments were stilted and uncomfortable. He seemed to be waiting for something that she could not provide.

"If you want me to leave, Draco, I will."

Draco raised pain-filled eyes to Hermione. "No, love. I'm just waiting for a response from my parents. I would have thought the owls would have arrived already."

"I thought maybe you would like our answer in person, Draco."

"Mother!"

Hermione was bemused.

"Here, my son. Your father has responded. And I was a bit later than expected because I had to go to the Ministry to get permission for him to witness the binding ceremony and the cleansing of the wards."

Draco smiled, then turned to Hermione. "Hermione Jean Granger, would you do me the great honor of binding yourself to me, my land, and the house of Malfoy?"

"Yes, of course I will. As I said before..."

Whatever she was going to reiterate was lost in Draco's hug, followed shortly by Narcissa's.

"Draco, dear, I do wish you had decided this earlier. You only gave us two weeks until the solstice to prepare."

"Oh, Mother, you know you can work miracles."

The day of the binding, it seemed as though half the British Wizarding World had turned up on the grounds of Malfoy Manor. In a traditional ring around the gazebo, they watched Lucius sprinkle a mixture of salt and herbs in a circle for his son while Arthur, shadowed by Hermione's father, followed him with dirt from their homes in Britain and Australia, as well as a bit from the Burrow. Narcissa, Molly and Jean, Hermione's mother, walked out, sprinkling petals from flowers in the path that both Hermione and Draco would take. Draco was next, wearing a traditional circlet made from the grasses grown on the grounds, white cotton trousers, and a belt embroidered with dragons that he and Hermione had found in Elizabeth's trunk. A hush fell over the crowd as they waited for Hermione, who walked out in a two-piece white cotton gown, a cascade of flowers in her hair, and around her hips, a sash, again from the trunk, embroidered with books, cauldrons and wands. The Minister of Magic, Kingsley Shacklebolt, presided over the event, wearing his eye-catching colorful robes. He bound the two: magic, bodies, minds and soul, as dictated by the ancient Malfoy rituals. When he was done speaking, a bright glow surrounded the couple, and their sashes joined together, binding them physically, as the vows had bound them magically.

The guests were led to the adjoining garden while Draco and Hermione went to the bower prepared by the oldest of the Malfoy elves, which was protected by their magic, so that none could interfere.

Once in the bower, Hermione giggled.

"What is making you laugh? Is it the grass in my hair?"

"Oh, no, darling. You look like some sort of wild warrior, part of the earth. I love it. No, it was Luna. She told me to make sure I cast a spell in the bower to keep away the Nargles because getting them in any orifices wasn't a good idea."

Draco almost went cross-eyed at the thought, then laughed, pulling Hermione even closer. He ran his hands through her hair, smiling at her, then touching his lips to hers. She responded, and they sank to the ground, disregarding the flowers and grasses that fell from their hair and combined their fragrance as they were crushed under the couple. Draco undressed Hermione reverently, making her self-conscious with the way his eyes were devouring her.

"All of you is going to be mine. All this beauty, mine forever. I'm the luckiest wizard in the world."

Hermione smiled up at her husband, then slipped her hand under the waist of his trousers, and squeezed his bum. She started to explore, and he impatiently pushed the offending clothing off of himself. They lost themselves in a haze of exploration, hands and lips and tongues finding new places to savor as they learned each other for the first time.

"I have bound myself to you, mind, magic, body and soul. Now I ask of you, wife, are you willing to bind yourself forever to the land, bosom of the House of Malfoy?"

"I am willing. I sacrifice the blood of my innocence to renew the wards and revitalize the land, the bosom of the House of Malfoy. May this forever change the way that my lord is regarded."

Draco was not certain where the last bit came from, but he trusted Hermione, and so as she finished, he thrust into her, there at the center of his land. For Draco, it was the most amazing sensation, not only the pleasure of feeling Hermione surround him, but a feeling of homecoming and peace that he had not felt for years. As her body became accustomed to his intrusion, she began to move against him, and he did the best he could to make certain that she enjoyed herself. He could feel her body tensing up, and he reached down and rubbed her nub, sending her over the edge, which caused him to follow her with a shout. When they finished, they lay there together, and he slowly pulled out, causing a small drip of his seed mixed with her virgin's blood to land on the ground beneath them. From that small drop, a ripple of magic was felt throughout the land belonging to the Malfoys, startling the guests, who had been unaware of the practical reasons behind the binding. The ripple moved outward to the edges of the property, then flowed back, bringing with it something that sounded like melodic chimes and a sparkle of color. All the guests watched in awe as the wards flared to life, changing from deep greys and burgundies to a sparkling opalescence.

The silence was overwhelming, broken by a cry of delight from Narcissa. "Oh, Lucius, it is gone!"

The Minister came to look and saw that the black outline of the Dark Mark was completely gone from Lucius's arm.

Hermione and Draco chose that moment to enter the garden to the cheers of the crowd, and upon examination, they saw that Draco's mark was gone as well.

Draco turned to Hermione in surprise. "That was the last line you used, love, wasn't it? It removed the Dark Mark."

Hermione smiled at her new husband in response.

Anything else Draco wanted to say was lost when the Minister walked over to them. "Well done, children. Draco, your probation is over. Let me see your wand."

Draco handed his wand to Kingsley, who with a word, removed the tag from it. He nodded at Hermione, then turned to the crowd. "Let it be known that Malfoy Manor has been cleansed. The binding here today has renewed the family's honor. Lucius, I grant your release from Azkaban. You are under probation for the rest of your sentence, woe betide you if you stray."

"You have no worries, Minister. I would not sully the gift that Hermione has given us in that way."

Lucius turned to Hermione and bowed over her hand. "Welcome to the family, my dear."

Many thanks to Southern_Witch_69 for the beta!

Prompt 3: What an awful time for her spell to turn to dust.