

Familiar Magic

by blue artemis

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Chapter 1 of 1

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The denizens of Diagon Alley were quite perturbed five years after the war when there was a very loud disturbance in front of Weasley Wizarding Wheezes.

"You evil *bastard!* How dare you! You cannot say you were putting him out of his misery however old he was. You had no right! What did you think, that I was going to be so overcome with grief that I would fall into your arms, Ronald Weasley? I am so glad I actually listened to your mother when she was talking about sex and wizarding traditions. You are so amazingly two-faced, talking about the evil of the Slytherins, when they were raised to their beliefs! Your parents are such good people, I have no idea how you managed to exist! I HATE you!" Hermione's rant was heard all across Diagon Alley and even at the Burrow because George had just called his mother on the Floo when the whole thing happened. As soon as Hermione stopped shouting, Molly quickly stepped through. She then had George call his father at the Ministry.

Molly raced through the store, hoping to stop Hermione from doing something that would get her put into Azkaban, beloved war heroine or not. What she witnessed was, to her mind, almost worse.

All the on-lookers flinched and ducked into any available storefront when Hermione raised her wand. "I, Hermione Granger, declare that due to the unforgivable actions of Ronald Weasley, I hereby shun him. In addition, I will never permit any of my bloodline to marry any of his issue, legitimate or not. May his genetics die out; he is a pestilence on his family name!" She wasn't sure where the words came from, but when she finished speaking, she was filled with magic and was glowing. She also felt a modicum of peace, the first since her discovery.

Molly was the first to break the silence. "You idiot boy, what did you do? A magical shunning? Don't be surprised if other families decide to make your children taboo as well, considering her tremendous influence." She turned to Hermione, who was standing there, breathing heavily. Unbeknownst to her, there were more than a few wands being taken into hand, ready to defend the young witch. "What did he do, Hermione?" She realized the girl was about to break down and held her arms out to her.

Hermione rushed into Molly's outstretched arms, then mumbled into her shoulder, "He killed Crookshanks!"

Molly gently pushed Hermione back by both arms, making her feel like a very young girl when her mother wanted to see her face. "What? Why?"

"Crooks never liked him... I couldn't bring myself to marry someone my familiar didn't trust. So I told him to befriend Crooks before we could do anything more than snog, you see. I just couldn't. But instead of trying to befriend him, he poisoned him! Crooks had been getting sick, and I realized that he must have been eating something bad because there wasn't anything else wrong, and during my half-day yesterday, I found Ron giving him a can of tuna, but I had seen him putting something on it. It was an extract of cacao beans! That is poisonous to a cat, but it is natural, so it doesn't register as a poison. Crooks was right, I'm so glad I went with my instincts," sobbed out the distraught witch.

"Ronald Bilius Weasley, how dare you! I know you were reacting to me saying that I would like to have Hermione officially in the family, but not by force or coercion. Anyone with eyes could see that you two had grown apart. Are you truly that much of a spoiled child? I thought I had raised you better than that... Well, better late than never." That last comment was said with a smile that would put fear into most people who had ever met the Weasley Twins. As Ron started to back away, his mother whipped out her

wand and swirled it in a complicated pattern. Ron was suddenly naked from the waist down, bent over a paddling bench and bound, hand and foot.

"Mum?" Ron asked, his voice trembling.

"The Prewitts have had many a troublemaker, dear. I was so proud of the fact that I never had to use the family magic on you, but here we are. Brace yourself, dear, this is going to hurt," she replied.

Another wave of her wand and Molly had a large wooden spoon in her hand. She began to swat him. As the fascinated crowd stared, Ron's rear turned red, then purple, then welts started to appear. As much as he begged and pleaded, nothing seemed to stop his mother. In fact, most of his pleas seemed to enrage her. After 100 swats, she turned to Arthur, who had left his desk in a hurry when George called him. "Arthur, did you hear him? He's not sorry. He seems to think Hermione is beneath him and should be treated as property; and he is so disparaging of women. He's only unhappy that he got caught!"

"I heard, Molly-wobbles. You aren't the only one with family magic that hadn't had to be used," responded Arthur sadly. He waved his wand, releasing the bonds, and then grabbed Ron by the ear. In a voice that frightened everyone present, and practically made George wet his pants, the Weasley patriarch said, "You have disappointed me in a way I never thought possible from one of my children. You are going to find out just how wrong you are about many things. Don't think I didn't hear what you were saying about Harry last night, either." He then dragged the half-dressed idiot back through WWW's door and straight out the Floo, back to the Burrow.

Molly turned back to Hermione. "I'm so sorry, sweetheart. I'm going to ask you to stay away from the Burrow for a while, not because I don't love you like a daughter, but I have no idea what Arthur is going to do. The Weasley family magic can be a bit...wild...I believe. I want you safe and happy. May I drop by your flat some time?"

Hermione nodded tearfully.

"All right, dear. Did you already take care of Crookshanks?"

Hermione nodded again. Molly gave her a long hug and then turned to follow her husband and wayward son home.

Hermione sighed, completely overwhelmed by the turn of events. She turned to leave, only to bump into an unknown male chest.

"C'mon, Granger. Other than the tear streaks, you are uncommonly well-turned out. I will take you to lunch at The Gilded Harp, all right?"

Hermione backed up and looked straight up, ready to tear whoever it was into shreds. Instead she found she was gazing at Draco Malfoy's concerned face. They had become friends of a sort because she wouldn't ignore him at the Ministry like so many others.

"You really never have learned to be properly kind, have you? That sounded like a warped pick-up line." She shook her head. "OK, Malfoy. Maybe you can help me understand what just happened," she replied.

"If he can't, then we will," said Theodore Nott, gesturing behind him. There were Marcus Flint, looking like a rock star, Blaise Zabini, handsome as ever, and Gregory Goyle.

All the Slytherins were pleased when all she did was nod and take Draco's proffered arm. No one noticed when Ginny Weasley came flying out of WWW and took a hold of Theodore Nott.

After all of them were seated for lunch, Draco turned to Hermione. "What in the world made you shun him, Granger?"

"You all know I've been researching pureblood traditions, trying to design a curriculum for Muggle-borns, right?"

Everyone nodded.

"It was and is taking up quite a bit of my time. Ron felt that the girlfriend of a war hero shouldn't be working. He has let his fame go to his head. I wouldn't give him what he wanted, so he got really verbally abusive. I was chalking it up to the war and trauma, but we actually hadn't gone out in over two years. I've been too busy to really socialize outside of work and research, so there didn't seem to be any harm in letting him think we were still together," she said. "It isn't like it stopped him from living like he was single. He figured I was staying a virgin so he would get that power burst and have some potions ingredients to sell after we married while he went out and slept around. Every time I walked past his bedroom, I could smell the cheap perfume. Every once in a while, he would comment that he was tired of waiting and that he had 'needs' that I wasn't meeting. If I would call him on it, he would say he was only kidding and that I was worth waiting for; but I knew he didn't mean it," she said.

"Ron said he kept asking you to move in to Grimmauld Place with him and Harry, but you wouldn't. He said he was afraid you were cheating on him," said Ginny.

"This from the wizard who spent most of his nights in either in Madam Delia's in Knockturn or a couple of Muggle places. I know for a fact he went to the apothecary and got a potion to cure a couple different sexually transmitted diseases. If he didn't want me to know, he should have gotten rid of the vials," Hermione said.

Ginny blanched. "Do you have the vials, Hermione?"

"Yes, at home; why?"

"Dad once said that Weasleys only caught those diseases if they impregnated a witch out of wedlock. I have to tell him. You *will* talk to me later?" Ginny asked, distraught.

"I didn't shun your whole family, Gin. If your mum is willing to keep me, I'm willing to keep you," answered Hermione.

Ginny hugged her thankfully and then left quickly.

"Merlin! Well, I'm going to have to taboo that idiot's seed as well," said Theo.

"We all are," rumbled Marcus. "It isn't bad enough he was trying to pressure an adult virgin, but to think he would be acceptable after that kind of pestilence is disturbing."

The four men at the table raised their wands and, echoing Hermione's words, made all of Ron's children taboo to their bloodline. That caused all the rest of the patrons to do the same, most thinking if the country's foremost Muggle-born and the purest of the purebloods agreed, then it must be the thing to do.

After lunch, when Hermione had calmed down sufficiently, she thanked the men prettily and prepared to head home.

"I will walk you home, Hermione," said Marcus.

Hermione looked up at the dangerous-looking man and smiled. "Only if you want to help me pack. I'm not going to stay in a place that idiot has access to for anything. I will contact the goblins tomorrow to readjust the wards."

Marcus didn't even blink at the fact that Hermione had goblin wards on her flat. "Of course. Do you have a place to stay? It won't be improper, not since everyone knows you are still a virgin. My mother is home, she can be the chaperone," he said as he offered her his arm.

"Granger's staying at the manor, Flint. She and Mother are working on a project, and the little miss was supposed to commute, but we had a room ready for her anyway," said Draco.

Hermione smiled at him in gratitude. "Not that I would mind staying with you, Marcus, but I think I need to find a successor to Crookshanks before I'm willing to totally trust anyone again. I need to know whomever I date will get along with my familiar. Before you ask, I brought Crooks to work once, and he adored Draco."

"I understand," said Marcus.

After helping Hermione pack some things and escorting her to Malfoy Manor, Marcus Apparated home. He was hoping that the little Muggle-born's new familiar liked him because he intended to court her.

He went to Gringotts to look through the family vault for a few things that Hermione might like. He had come upon a trunk full of old books and diaries from one of his great-great-grandmother's when he heard a rather distinctive "Miaow!"

He looked around and saw the ghost of what looked like a half-Kneazle sitting on the pile of Galleons next to the trunk, assiduously licking its rear.

"Crookshanks, I presume? I hope that isn't an indication of what you think of me," Marcus said to the ghostly familiar.

"Prtrp! Shiihss, shiihss, prtrprt, miaow!" responded Crooks' ghost. It then hopped into the trunk Marcus was looking through and started to pull certain items out. There was a journal, three books, a silver hair clip, an old-fashioned hair clip with what looked like fae ivory-tree sticks, and a voucher.

Marcus grinned at the cat. "Excellent taste, mate! That journal was from the Muggle-born that last married into the family. I'm sure she'll love it. Those books are all about elemental magic, old runes and potions, good choices. The hair clips are classy enough not to offend her, well done." He noticed that the ghostly cat had a piece of parchment between his paws. "What's this? Where in the world did you find it? Thank Merlin they don't expire."

The ghostly cat rubbed up against Marcus and disappeared.

Marcus gathered up his booty and returned home, getting ready for the next day when he would ask the little witch for permission to court her.

Bright and early the next morning, Marcus Apparated to Malfoy Manor. After the elves let him in, he asked after Hermione.

"Missy Hermione and Mistress Malfoy are in the solarium, Mister Marcus!" Bippy exclaimed. She could sense that this wizard had good intentions toward the curly-haired witch. She also sensed that their magic was very compatible. She decided to go inform Draco about it.

"Compatible? Really, Bippy?"

"Oh yes, Master Draco, sir. Not family compatible like yous and the Missy, eithers," declared the little elf solemnly.

"Well, let's see what we can do to help that along, shall we?" Draco asked as he headed for the solarium.

Draco's complicity made the match-making elf very happy. She kept hoping for babies to care for.

Hermione and Marcus were sitting rather close on the settee when Draco walked in. He smiled. "So, Granger, what did Flint bring you this morning?"

Hermione beamed at him. "He asked for permission to court me! He also brought me this voucher to Gato's Kneazle farm! Even I've heard of them. I know they have the best familiars out there, but they only sell them by voucher, and they are all distributed. This is such an amazingly thoughtful gift!"

Draco knew Marcus well enough to realize that the slight uplift of his lips was tantamount to most men dancing around the room chanting, "She likes me! She really likes me!"

"So, when are we heading out there?"

"We?" asked Hermione.

"Draco is saying he is willing to act as chaperon, Hermione. Is this all right with you?" asked Narcissa, who had been watching the proceedings in amusement.

"Yes, that is wonderful. I know I've given my approval, but I'm Muggle-born. I know Marcus needs to contact someone on my behalf. I hate to ask, but Arthur and Molly usually act as my parents in the magical world. Would you please let them know about the courting?"

"I have no problem with that, Hermione." He would do just about anything for the little witch. "May I use the Floo, Mrs. Malfoy?"

While Marcus informed Hermione's magical parent figures that he was pursuing a formal courtship, and they approved it, especially after hearing about the six gifts he had set aside for her, Hermione dressed to go pick out a new kitten.

Draco, Marcus and Hermione took a hold of the voucher and read it together. "I am in need of a new partner in crime, and I am prepared to turn in this voucher!" As they finished the last word, the voucher turned into a Portkey and whirled them away.

The three of them landed gracefully at the gate of an old farmhouse.

Marcus looked at Hermione, who was trying in vain not to stare at him. "Yes, love? What is it?"

"You're so graceful! Not that, well, oh, the heck with it. You are such a big man, you terrify pretty much anyone except your friends, but you move so deliberately, and all I feel is safe with you. That's what," Hermione blurted out, then pouted.

Draco laughed delightedly. "Don't worry, sweet. That was a lovely declaration. And look, you made the big guy blush!"

"Enough, Draco. Let's go find my lady a new familiar," Marcus said when he noticed Hermione studying his cloak. She brushed her fingers against something, picked it off, smiled, then put her hand in his.

Together they walked up toward the house where they were met by a whole cavalcade of Kneazles. One big spotted one took one look at the group and disappeared.

As the group got as far as the porch, the lady of the house came out, followed by the large spotted Kneazle holding a small white Kneazle kitten with orange spots on its hindquarters and orange stripes everywhere else. It also had a slightly squashed face, very reminiscent of Crookshanks.

"So, you've come for a familiar, then?" said the woman.

"Yes, ma'am. My ex-friend poisoned my last familiar, and I don't feel complete without one. That little guy's face kind of reminds me of him," Hermione answered.

"Was his name Crookshanks, by any chance?" the lady asked.

"Yes! How did you know?"

"The little squashed-face ones are all from his line. For a half-Kneazle, he was very powerful. Anyway, Hopscotch there is yours, it seems," responded the lady.

The large Kneazle had placed the kitten on Hermione's shoe, and it was currently dangling from the hem of her robes, trying to climb up. He managed to get himself up and climbed slowly until he was sitting on her shoulder. He purred in her ear, then fell asleep. It was a long climb for a little kitten.

Hermione tried to hand over the voucher, and the lady just laughed. "Put it away somewhere, dear, and forget about it. It will turn up when it is needed."

The three nodded at the mysterious witch who had not introduced herself, then Apparated back to Malfoy Manor.

"Was that a satisfactory first gift, my lady?" asked Marcus.

"Absolutely," Hermione said, then threw her arms around Marcus and kissed him.

When they broke apart, Marcus looked at her questioningly.

"Were you talking to Crookshanks at some point, Marcus?"

"I think his ghost came to the vault to help me pick out your gifts. How did you know?"

Hermione held up the orange hair she had picked off his robe at the farm. "This is what I picked off your robe. I know his hair anywhere."

Six weeks, and five more gifts later, Hermione accepted Marcus' proposal. As soon as she said yes, Hopscotch ran into the room, followed by the ghost of his ancestor and predecessor. The pair of Kneazles did an intricate dance around the two, weaving a bit of magic. They knew the humans would have to do things the human way, but according to the familiars, they were bound.

"Did they just marry us?" asked Hermione.

"I think so. My mum used to say that was very good luck."

As he walked her out of the door, he bent down and left something on the floor. Hermione was delighted to see it was a catnip mouse. "Those were always Crooks' favorites," she said.

Marcus smiled. "I know."

Prompt from jamies_lady: Marcus Flint (looking like Joacim Cans), Ron getting a real bashing after being an idiot, and Crookshanks (ghost or his successor) finding Hermione a proper mate.

OK, so I had to look up Joacim Cans, and I can see the long-haired, very alpha male look for Marcus.

Many thanks to kyria of delphi and rose of the west for the beta. They are the best!