

Inheritance

by Bambu

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: The wondrous world of J.K. Rowling's imagining does not belong to me, nor to I financially profit from it I simply borrow some of her characters and a venue or two on occasion to decorate my fancy. I will return them, I promise.

I wrote this piece in honor of SnarkyWench's birthday the year before *Deathly Hallows* was published, and it remains strictly AU.

As always, many thanks to Bambumom for stepping in to give this a once (or twice) over.

~o0o~

I was so focused on the report I was finishing for the Minister I paid no attention to the shadow darkening my cluttered desk until, simultaneously, his shadow blocked the light and my office door slammed shut. There were only two men in all of wizarding Britain who did that, and I knew for a fact Ron was on his honeymoon.

Without looking up, I snapped, "Go away! I haven't time for your games today, Malfoy. I have to get this scroll to Level Twelve before noon."

I charged the dripless quill Harry and Ginny had given me the previous week for my twenty-sixth birthday, and only after I'd written another two sentences did it occur to me that Malfoy hadn't replied. A spark of foreknowledge assailed my senses, and I shivered before looking at my impromptu visitor.

It was Malfoy. He looked more fey than ever before, and I wondered what was wrong. He was never one to keep his mouth shut when a drawing insult could provoke attention. But he just stood there, staring at me.

"Malfoy?"

He didn't respond. He was breathing hard, his chest heaving as if he'd been chased by a wild Bludger. Normally the fringe of his moonlight pale hair draped across his brow in a dramatic sweep, drawing attention to his most spectacular feature: his eyes. But not today. Today, his hair was disheveled, sticking wildly in all directions. And his eyes -- they weren't their normal Nordic grey. They were glowing.

Malfoy opened his mouth to answer me, but suddenly, he turned his head to the side as if to listen for something beyond the range of normal hearing. Every muscle in his body tensed and he drew his wand.

That unnerved me.

I rose from my chair and groped for my own wand. Malfoy paid no attention to me; instead, he turned to face the door. I could hear loud voices, a number of them shrill with excitement, the words indistinct.

Alarmed, I asked, "What's going on?"

He whipped his wand in a complicated motion, and with a non-verbal spell, locked the door. Another swish of his wrist and the cacophony beyond the door was silenced.

He still hadn't said a word.

"Malfoy?" I stepped from behind my desk, and he finally turned to look at me. His head was cocked at an odd, almost bird-like angle.

In the five years since the war ended, Malfoy and I had found a way to work together amicably, even harmoniously. If he was in my office because he was in trouble, then I would offer my assistance. Just as I would help any friend.

Honestly, I had come to admire Malfoy. When I first learned about the task Voldemort had set a sixteen-year-old wizard, tendrils of sympathy had wrapped around my heart. Knowing he stood little chance against Dumbledore, Malfoy had nonetheless been desperate to save his parents, and during the course of that fateful year, his entire paradigm began to erode.

Malfoy's parents had been killed in those first hours after Dumbledore died, and Snape was barely able to save his own life, let alone Malfoy's. The Unbreakable Vow tethered Snape to his charge, and a more vicious defender one couldn't find. While the two recuperated at Snape's run-down home at Spinner's End, they had provided the Order of the Phoenix with information. Lots of information. Details of Snape's relative innocence had been plastered across the *Daily Prophet* for weeks after Voldemort's demise, and I remembered feeling nothing but relief when he was pardoned. Because Malfoy had been a minor and his participation coerced during that horrific year, he ended up paying a rather hefty fine, but retained his freedom, his fortune, and his home.

Malfoy had worked to redeem his family's reputation ever since. On several occasions, his efforts dovetailed my own duties as Director of Charitable Contributions for the Ministry of Magic, but now he was barricaded in my office, wild-eyed and disheveled. Adrenaline such as I hadn't felt in years pumped through my body, prompting me to ask our code question, "What's Tonks' natural hair color?"

Imperiously, he threw up one hand to halt my progress, and pressed back against the door as if he was afraid. Of me.

I stopped as if hit by a Stunner. I may have faced Death Eaters from the time I was a little girl, but Malfoy's behavior was scaring me. I dropped my voice to a soothing tone and asked, "Are you all right?"

He moaned, and a visceral wave of desire shot through me. My nipples tightened and my knickers grew damp. I wondered what the bloody hell was happening.

Malfoy's nostrils flared as he inhaled a ragged breath.

Thinking he'd been hexed, I flicked my wand in his direction. *Finite Incantatem!*

Nothing changed.

"Tell me what's going on, Malfoy." I couldn't keep the quaver out of my voice. This didn't fit any scenario I had ever envisioned, but my brain raced for answers.

He opened his mouth as if to speak, and at that second, the door behind him began to buckle from an external force attempting to gain entrance. Lightning fast, Malfoy cast an impregnable Mongolian Shield. Nothing would enter, or depart, my office without his permission.

"Draco?"

When he turned back toward me, he uttered a low, predatory sound. I didn't fully understand what was happening, but my nipples furled so tightly they ached, and it seemed as if each molecule in my body was attuned to his every movement, his every breath. Somehow, my vision sharpened, and I could make out the individual strands of hair falling across his face. My fingers itched... no... needed to touch him.

I reached toward Malfoy at the exact same moment he said my name. My name. Not my father's, but the name I'd never heard cross his lips in all the years I had known him.

"Hermione."

It was needy. It was possessive... and I was instantly ready to lay down my life for him.

I trembled. It was obvious that whatever was affecting me, was also affecting him. His breathing changed; it was in perfect synchrony with mine. Flicking my eyes at his entire body, I noticed a slight tenting of his dress robes.

I inched closer to him, and whispered, "Draco, what's happening?"

"Hermione." It was hungry ... almost desperate.

I almost orgasmed on the spot. The sound of his voice hit every erogenous zone in my body. Heat raced up my chest, my throat, flushing my cheeks.

"I have to..." he said, "I must touch you."

My knees buckled. Malfoy caught me, and the second he touched me, I ignited in a release as sweet as any I had ever experienced. I sucked in my breath, memorizing his scent: woody with a peppery undertone, fresh cut grass, and the musk of his arousal. I clung to him, deciding we were the victims of a malicious prank involving Amortentia or some other aphrodisiac. I asked again, "What's happening?"

"My inheritance," he said. "My many times great-grandmother was a Veela."

My eyes widened. I had heard rumors. Of course, there were rumors about every influential family. The Malfoys had been at the pinnacle of wizarding society for generations, and with their allegiance to a pureblood agenda, no one had ever given credence to the speculation. And yet, the signs had been there: Draco's meteoric re-ascendance to prominence within the wizarding community; the ease with which people were willing to work with an ex-Death Eater; the smiles that almost universally greeted him. My inescapable attraction to him.

"You shouldn't tell me this," I said, glancing at the window ledge, at my beautifully manicured and maintained bonsai.

I bit my lip hard enough to draw blood, and I reminded myself Malfoy had never shown that sort of interest in me. There was a crowd chasing him; he wasn't here for me. He was here to hide. Unexpectedly, tears welled in my eyes and I tried to back away from him.

"No," he growled and pulled me against his body.

The evidence of his need pressed hard against my stomach. I looked at him in confusion, even as my pulse fluttered and my back arched.

"You don't understand, Granger." His eyes were luminous, a whirlpool of quicksilver, and he dipped his head toward mine.

When his lips pressed mine, I made a choice, with enthusiastic support from every fibre of my being. Veela were known to be prodigiously sensual, and he was probably driven by his inherited genetics. Even if this was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, I would willingly suffer the heartbreak later.

He nuzzled me, playfully, and then suckled on the raw part of my lower lip. He made that noise again as he cleaned the blood I'd drawn moments earlier.

Magical energy pulsed along my spine, enhancing my awareness: the sound of our ragged breathing rasped in my ears, and the texture of his skin was as smooth as the finest Acromantula silk; starbursts of light flickered on the inside of my eyelids, and his taste marked itself indelibly in my psyche. Malfoy tasted of tea and toast and some ineffable quality that was distinctly him.

A throaty groan caressed my ears as our tongues mated. Heart pounding, I raised a shaky hand and threaded my fingers through his baby-fine hair before stroking my hand along the sweep of his spine. His muscles were taut, rippling and lean, and if he wasn't naked within seconds, I was going to combust like Fawkes on a burning day.

Without waiting for assent, as he was currently in the process of removing my skirt, I ripped his formal robes open. Like many traditional wizards, Malfoy was nude under his robes, and I rubbed my thighs together in anticipation.

Hot, slightly calloused fingers gripped my waist, and our hips met in a grind of blatant intent. Liquid desire raced through my veins, and the rigid length of his erection throbbed against my skin. He made a guttural sound, half panting breath and half groan, and it reverberated through the connection of our tongues as they swirled around one another, advancing, retreating.

Rocking my pelvis against him, I calculated how fast I could have him inside me.

His hands on my hips stopped me, barely, and he broke the kiss. His chest heaved as he dragged air into his starved lungs. "Not yet," he gasped. "You have to listen."

I nipped at his neck, and one of his hands pinched my suddenly naked nipple. "Ah, god!" I moaned the words. "Do that again."

His erection jerked against my abdomen.

I wanted that hard, pulsing muscle where it would do the most good, and I whined impatiently. He was almost hot to the touch when I rubbed against his body. His hips bucked in reaction, and I imagined him cradled between my thighs. But still Malfoy held back.

One long-fingered hand splayed between my shoulder blades, holding me in place, and he angled his head in an attempt to force me to meet his gaze. "Granger." A beat. "Hermione. You must... listen. I can't wait... much longer."

I suddenly realized he sounded as if he was in pain. How I wished to ease his suffering. I bent my head and licked his throat, feeling the rapid thudding of his pulse, and tasted the salt-tang of his skin. "Then don't wait."

He sounded desperate. "If we do this, you're mine."

"All right," I agreed. I would have agreed to almost anything. I *needed* him. My hands slid to his hips, to pull him to me, but Malfoy grabbed them, and his tone was more urgent than before. "Granger, look at me!"

I looked at him. If I'd drunk an entire bottle of Old Ogden's I couldn't have been more inebriated. "You have beautiful eyes, Malfoy. Did you know?"

He almost chuckled, but he pressed his brow against mine: every synapse in my body fired. My eyes locked onto his. I'd never known *he* was so beautiful. It wasn't just his eyes, or the external trappings, but inside, in that private place we all protect, he was breathtaking.

"I'm listening now, Draco. But can you hurry, please. I really want to shag you rotten!"

He did laugh then. It rumbled in his chest, and I arched into him, my breasts pressing against his smooth unblemished torso.

"We'll get to that in a minute." His grip tightened around my hands. "You can't imagine how much I want you right now..."

"Good. Me, too. No more talking." I pulled one hand free, and snaked it around his waist, pulling him more tightly against me.

"Unh. Hermione. Don't. Do. That... yet. You have to consent."

"I already said yes." I began to nibble on his neck again, and his skin prickled in goose flesh. In his distraction, he released my other hand, and I began to explore.

"But you have to understand," he said. Then his body jerked to attention. "Bloody hell, woman! Where did you learn that?"

I smiled. "Um... around."

His eyes narrowed but he didn't look away from me; he did grab my hands again, halting their mission to map Malfoy's body. "There won't be any more 'around' after this, Granger. You will be mine."

"Fine." I said quickly. "But..."

"But?" His jaw clenched.

I stared at the play of muscle under his stubbled skin, and my mouth watered in anticipation of licking along that strong jawline. With some effort, I dragged my attention back to the conversation. "But," I said, and then shook my head as if to clear it, attempting to control the pheromones urging me to shut up, "you will also be mine. There will be no more 'around' for you either."

Dimly, I knew what was happening. I hadn't taken Care of Magical Creatures for six years without picking up odd tidbits of information from Hagrid. If my assumption was correct, the possibility of Malfoy's straying was nonexistent.

"Agreed." Malfoy sounded smug. He'd gotten his way... again. Although it looked as if I would thoroughly enjoy his way as well. His smile lit his face. Quite literally. It was very much the same sort of light that had radiated from his eyes when he entered my office. Only now, his skin was glowing.

I stared at him, mesmerized. He was so close.

Then he bit me.

It hurt.

The sharp pain of his teeth rending the flesh of my throat was nothing to the searing heat of a magical branding being initiated. The branding of a Veela and its mate. And I *burned*.

Malfoy sucked the bite mark, lapping at my blood, and then he demanded, "Bite me."

"Bite you?"

He practically growled. "Do it."

I acquiesced. I bit down at the juncture of his throat and shoulder.

"Harder." It was a command. "You have to draw blood. And then we seal the bond."

As overloaded with sensation as I was, my academic curiosity was never entirely dormant. "Really? How?"

"You're about to learn *how*." The husky timber of his voice traveled my body like fire upon the surface of cognac, and that little nodule of flesh sheltered at the base of my mons tingled. His stare was intense. "Now bite me hard."

The coppery, salty tang of fresh blood filled my mouth when my teeth broke his skin. Its rich scent assaulted my nostrils, and my head swam with an overload of sensation.

"Don't swallow," he commanded.

"Hmmm-mmm."

"Look at me, Hermione." I did. He lit my office more brightly than the faux landscape glimmering beyond the Charmed window above its ledge. When our eyes met, the connection sizzled between us, and I felt the heat of it in his mark ... and mine.

Malfoy lowered his head and suckled at the mark he had made on my skin, then he raised his head. His lips glistened with the sustaining elixir of my life, and he lowered his mouth to devour mine. Our tongues met and our blood mingled. I think we could have cast a wandless, non-verbal *Incendio* with the smoldering heat radiating from our bodies.

At that moment, he lifted me off my feet and strode to my desk where, with one impatient swipe of his arm, all the stacks of parchment, quills, memoranda, and ink went flying to the carpet. Suddenly, I was face down, atop the cool walnut of my desk.

Our kiss had been broken when he had placed me on my desk, but I turned my head and twisted to look up at him. He was standing between my thighs, almost where I wanted him to be; his erection jutted out from his body, encircled at the base by a nest of flaxen curls. I dragged my eyes upward, skimming his pale goodie trail, the indentation of his navel, and the sleek dip and swell of lean muscles. Up past the sluggishly dripping bite mark and the rapidly fluttering pulse in his neck. Up past his swollen mouth, reddened from the commingling of our blood, and up to meet his hooded grey eyes. I licked my lips, and somehow, I felt his heart begin to race.

Our need consumed us.

There was a savage joy in his tone and his words were oddly formal. "Hermione Jean Granger--," he positioned himself between my thighs, "...you are mine from this moment until the end of time." I opened my mouth to speak, but he covered my lips with a finger, turned my head, and held me in place while he leaned over and grasped my neck. He inhaled raggedly, and shouted, "I, Draco Black Malfoy, seal this bond -- Now!"

He latched onto my bonding mark with his teeth.

For a moment I was disconcerted. I wanted to face him for our first time, but then I remembered that in their most feral state, Veela resembled birds. Birds mated in this position, male dominant, latched to the rough of the female's neck with their beaks. At a later time, I would be thankful Malfoy hadn't fully transformed into a Veela, complete with beak.

My extraneous thoughts were abruptly ended when, with a single thrust, Malfoy impaled me. I cried out. I wasn't terribly experienced despite my rather insouciant comment of 'around,' and it had been a long time since my previous lover. Malfoy wasn't exceptionally sized, but he was thick, and I felt every centimeter of his erection as he slid past my nether lips.

Briefly, he released his hold on my neck to grunt a satisfied, "Merlin, you're tight!"

I paid scant attention. All my focus had shifted internally. Awash with need, the sensations arcing between us were remarkable. I could feel him, what he was experiencing, what I was experiencing. Our pleasure. It was a catalytic forging of our life forces, and the final stage of the mating ritual.

I wrapped my legs as best I could around his thighs and pushed against him, timing my thrusts with his. He snaked a hand around my hips, finding room between me and the desk, until he found and exploited the throbbing nubbin of flesh at our conjunction. When he released my neck to suckle my earlobe, I snapped into a rigid orgasm, crying out my ecstasy.

Malfoy grunted, "Oh, fuck!" With a convulsive thrust of his hips he climaxed in great, shuddering spurts of ejaculate.

Seconds later, he dropped his head onto my desk, his brow thudding against the wood. After several moments, when his breathing was more under control, he licked my mating mark clean, sealing it magically, and then, he withdrew from my body.

I felt as limp and boneless as Harry's arm when Gilderoy Lockhart had tried to mend it during our second year at school. I didn't want to move, but I didn't like the fact that Malfoy was no longer touching me, and I managed to roll over. He hadn't gone far. He was perched at the end of my desk. My eyes were drawn to the mark I'd made; the mark now sealed in a permanent reminder that he was bonded to me.

My sucked in my breath, and looked at him. He was watching me, but when our eyes met, he offered his hand. It was the courtliest gesture Malfoy had ever made toward me, and it shocked me more than anything else in our encounter.

This was real.

It wasn't some torrid fantasy come to life, or a one-off.

Draco Malfoy was my mate, for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, 'til death we do part. And maybe beyond.

With trembling fingers, I accepted his hand, and he tenderly helped me to rise from the desk. If he wasn't so gentle, I might have suspected the entire experience was something of an elaborate hoax. His expression was wary, as if he expected me to deny the bonding. Carefully, I raised one hand to cup his cheek. The stubble of unshaven skin prickled my palm. "What happens now?" I asked.

He sucked in a litre of air and exhaled sharply. He managed a shaky, but entirely charming, smile. "I don't really know. I haven't the benefit of asking my father or grandfather, and male Veela are rather the exception than the rule."

My mind whirled with ideas and practicalities. Such as where we would live. Would we get married in a legal capacity as well as merely being bonded? Did he want children? The questions seemed to multiply as fast as I could formulate them.

His low chuckle brought me back to awareness. "You're thinking too much, Grange... no... Hermione. We can address all those questions undoubtedly clamoring in your head over lunch."

It was a testament to the profundity of our bonding that I didn't even consider the mess of my office, or that report I was supposed to deliver before noon.

Malfoy retrieved my torn blouse from the back of my guest chair before finding his wand. The distinct ebony wand had fallen under a corner of my desk where it had lain unheeded until now. He then flicked a spell restoring the buttons on my blouse, and turned to help me put it on.

"Malfoy! I'm not going braless." When he didn't move, I looked at him. Color had risen on his pale cheeks. "What?" I asked. "Did you pocket it?"

"Er... no." He turned to gather his robes, and began to put himself to rights.

"Then where is it?" I scanned my office. There was no trace of lilac lace. "Draco?"

His flush was higher, but a smirk curved his lips. He was adorable, and I wanted to kiss him. "I was in a hurry," he said.

I blushed. "Me, too."

"I'll get you another one."

He held my wand toward me, and as I accepted the slender length of vine wood, I asked, "Why would you need to?"

"I er -- *Evanescio'd* the one you were wearing."

"You didn't!" It would have been funny if I wasn't the one who would be braless under a thin silk blouse in the Ministry's corridors. When he handed my skirt to me, our fingers touched and my nipples tightened. The Veela bond was alive and well and pulsing through our fingertips. "Oh!" I exclaimed.

He grunted. "Oh, is right."

"Will this always happen, do you think?"

The smirk evolved into a wicked grin, and Malfoy leaned toward me. "I don't know, but I look forward to finding out."

He brushed my mouth with his, and I threaded my fingers into his silken hair. I said in a breathy voice, "I hope it takes a lifetime."

"At the very least. I think..." He broke off the kiss I anticipated, and straightened to his full height. I pulled back, looking around quickly. Aside from the mess on the floor, nothing seemed out of place. Still no glimpse of my bra, it really had disappeared.

"When did you put *that* there?" His voice held a note of something... perhaps amused wonder.

I looked around to see what he was talking about. "What? Mal... Draco, what are you on about?"

"*That, Hermione.*"

I looked to where his finger was pointing. Oh. That. "Erm... what?"

He snorted. "You're appalling at obfuscation."

"Erm..."

He leaned forward, his breath tickling my ear, and a shudder wracked my spine. When he chuckled, a freshet of moisture gathered between my legs. "Try again," he said.

I tried to stay on topic, but, really, all I wanted to do was snog him senseless. "It's been there for awhile."

"And just how long is that?" This time I couldn't identify the underlying quality of his voice.

"Since your birthday in June." I dared a quick glance. He appeared gobsmacked.

"Since..." He choked, stepping toward the wide ledge next to my window. "Since June? I've wondered for months why you would waste your time to get approval for a window this deep in the Ministry."

I didn't say anything. I couldn't. I didn't know how to confess what I had done. It wasn't really significant, considering recent events, but I ducked my head. Nevertheless, I watched him from through my lashes.

Malfoy fingered the bounty of white Crape Myrtle blossoms on the miniature tree. His touch was light, the astonishment on his face still his dominant emotion. "How is it that I've never noticed this before?"

"I don't know, Draco. I did nothing to hide it."

Quicksilver eyes met mine. "What about the fruit and nuts?"

The last of the Malfoys fingered a deep red pomegranate nestled amongst an offering of apples and persimmons. The fruit rested on a wide, intricately carved rosewood platter which was sheltered by the branches of the large bonsai. A small wooden bowl filled with an assortment of nuts completed the triadic display.

"They've been there as well. The types of fruit and nuts have changed with the season, but I always have some." My cheeks heated, and I waved my hand at the small display I'd worked so diligently to maintain. I refused to start our relationship with deception. "It's the closest approximation to a woodland glade I could create in the Ministry."

He turned to face me fully then, cocking his head in what I finally realized was a typically Veela mannerism, and comprehension dawned on his face. "How long have you known?"

Blood rushed to my cheeks. "I never really knew... until today. At best, it was an educated guess, based on the flimsiest of evidence."

When he laughed, I knew everything would be all right between us. He gathered me close. "How Slytherin of you, Hermione."

Our kiss was a hint of things to come, and I hummed with rising interest, drawing his hand to my breast. "I never had any real expectations... it was more like wistfulness. You're not angry?"

Malfoy fingered my nipple through the silk of my blouse, and mused aloud, "No. I'm rather pleased I don't have to explain it all to you."

My smile could have rivaled his earlier luminescence, but the mischief was all my own. "Well, some things, Draco, I'll be more than happy to let you explain."

"Such as?" His brow arched playfully.

"That thing you do with your tongue."

This time, our kiss was sweet and tender. It was a beginning, and I met my future as I welcomed his kiss, with all the joy and enthusiasm of my nature. It seemed that my

Veela had accepted all the traditional offerings of courtship I had carefully cultivated for his benefit.

~o0o~

Fin