

Grey

by Savva

It's hard to be jolly when everything around you coloured in grey. Literally.

One

Chapter 1 of 1

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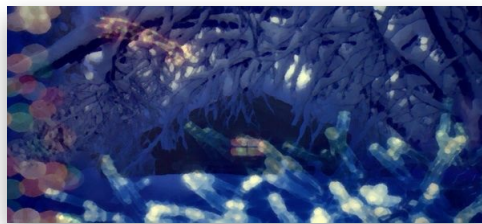
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Gift For: Nathaniel Cardeu.

Prompt: A wish upon a Christmas star, made with sight that didn't see far, an error of judgment, a tryst unforeseen, a man comes to save her and make her his Queen (After a wish, hastily made on a falling star, backfires dramatically a Malfoy saves Christmas for a desperately unhappy Hermione).

Kinks: Angst. Convoluted plots are always a laugh but generally happy endings, for at least someone, is a must. I say generally happy cos it can also be the hint of a happy ending.

Thanks so much to my wonderful beta AmyLouise.



Grey

Christmas Eve

Hermione snuggled into a corner of the worn plush sofa, hugged her knees, and said, "Go."

"Are you sure?" Harry said for the umpteenth time. She could almost feel the heat of his gaze on her face.

"Yes," she said, deliberately paying close attention to the grey blanket that covered her legs. As much as she loved him, at that particular moment she wanted him gone. She just couldn't bear his over-attentiveness.

He sniffed indecisively, made one unsure step toward the Floo, and stopped. "I can't just leave you here."

"Yes, you can," she said wearily, "and you should."

"What are you going to do here, in the middle of nowhere, all alone on holiday?"

Harry's voice hit an uncharacteristically high note, making him sound melodramatic. Surprised, she gave him a quick glance from under her hair. He did indeed look somewhat theatrical, and she felt a wave of annoyance beginning to form somewhere inside. "Don't worry, I won't sit in the dark and cry. I have a book and food. I love this cabin, and I can certainly use some time alone."

He sighed. "I dunno, it doesn't feel right. Maybe you'll" he began again.

"Harry, stop, we've been through it a hundred times. I am not going," she said, unable to keep her irritation from showing. Focusing her eyes on a faded, ashen version of her best friend and seeing that he was about to interrupt her, she hastily continued, "I *will not* reconsider. Go. Ginny's waiting."

Harry let out a resentful grunt, muttered, "Why do you have to be so bloody stubborn?" and reluctantly shuffled toward the fireplace.

"You're every bit as stubborn as I am. That's why you're still here, wasting your time and mine," she hit back, still in the heat of the moment. She regretted it instantly as her gaze fell on his retreating back. "Have fun and kiss the kids from me," she called, feeling guilty for snapping at him like that.

"I'm still not convinced that I'm doing the right thing, leaving you here. I'll set Ginny on you," he threw at her over his shoulder, before stepping into the Floo.

Her annoyance flared again, and she shouted, "Don't you dare, Harry James Potter. Do you hear me? I'll ward the Floo and add something nasty for good measure. I don't think that Ginny would appreciate her hair turning green for the rest of the holidays." She was too late with her threats, though. The grey flame had already swallowed her friend, and she was alone, just as she had wanted.

Hermione sighed and drew her knees closer to her chest. She was a mess, and she knew it. Sometimes, it seemed surreal that one's existence could change so utterly in a few months. This time last year, she had been as content with her life as a person can be. It had been absolutely picture-perfect. Everything had been going just as she had planned: her career had been at its crest, she had been engaged to a man she loved, her voice had been respected, and her opinion had mattered. And she had been healthy. Alas, that wasn't the case any more. Thanks to one insane twist of fate, her career, love, respect, and plans for the future had all gone in the blink of an eye: vanished, disappeared into thin air.

Of course, she still mattered to some people: Harry, for instance. The horrifying truth, however, was that nowadays she was pitied more often than not. And oh, Merlin, did she hate it, even though, at times, she too couldn't help wallowing in self-pity, and the only thing she wanted was to shout into a grey sky, "Why? What have I done to deserve this?"

It started like something insignificant, something that would definitely get sorted out very quickly. She became violently sick on New Year's Eve, and everyone, herself included, assumed that she'd simply had too much to drink. The twins even joked that next time she should be more careful mixing drinks. When Molly's usual remedies didn't help, Ron took her to St. Mungo's, hoping they'd return to The Burrow before twelve. They didn't, and Hermione met the New Year in a hospital room. It was at that moment, while she and Ron were watching the clock on the hospital's wall, that her life was turned upside down.

Early in the morning of the first of January, after running a dozen diagnostic tests, Healer Dickenson told her that she most likely had a well-known Muggle illness. The serious one. The one you can easily die from. Then, with Gryffindor directness, he confessed to her that he hadn't a clue how to deal with it. Apparently, wizards hadn't developed the way to fight that particular disease just yet.

Bewildered and scared, she and Ron returned to The Burrow, and she went to a Muggle hospital the very next day. Alone. Ron couldn't make himself go. After a dozen tests, this time Muggle ones, she received her diagnosis. Having been warned by the Healer in St. Mungo's, she took the news well. She didn't even cry. The doctor felt optimistic, and she tried to be, too. They agreed on a plan, and she started on the gruelling road to health.

Thank Merlin, she didn't have to do it alone. True to their friendship, Harry was there for her every step of the way. Together they went through her surgery, and then through her treatments. Not even once did she go to the hospital without him. Poor Harry would have missed Albus Severus' birth because of her, if it hadn't been for Fred's Patronus. They had had to 'Oblivate' the poor nurse, though.

The healing wasn't easy, and there were bumps along the way, but eventually they did it. She went through it all and after a six-month nightmare, she was declared disease-free.

That was supposed to be her moment of triumph. She had beaten the beast. She was healthy again. She had to go and reclaim her life, and perhaps she would have done it. Alas, those long months of pain, worries, and loneliness (because she couldn't really tell Harry everything) had taken their toll. Something broke in her. That inner magical strength, that had kept her buoyant for years suddenly let go and, without its support, she crumbled. Her lamentable state chose to manifest itself in an odd way...the day she was going to celebrate her comeback, she woke up to a grey world. Literally. All the colours were gone, washed out for good. Even white and black disappeared, leaving everything at the mercy of different hues of grey.

Once again, at the beginning no one took it seriously. She was healthy and that was what mattered. Who needed those stupid colours, right? Wrong! When, after weeks of trying to heal her, the St. Mungo's Healers confessed their failure, she began to panic. They said it was a side effect of Muggle medication, but this little piece of trivia wasn't even remotely useful and didn't help her in any way. Day after day, dull, mouse-coloured reality seeped into her soul, swallowing every happy thought, corrupting every bright memory, and painting everything in grey. She lost her appetite, her will to work, and her love for everything new. Slowly but surely, apathy was consuming her, and she was succumbing to it, little by little, more and more, every day.

It was bizarre how the mere lack of colours could change one's perception. Hermione couldn't make herself look at Ron. Without his bright blue eyes and ginger hair, he looked disappointingly bland. His words and caresses seemed insincere. He wasn't her Ron any more, just an insipid impersonator. She couldn't force herself to want him, and he, for his part, couldn't get over that fact. Their poor love didn't stand a chance against the dullness of her world.

Her career suffered just as much. Apparently, new ideas didn't look so great in grey. New projects lost their appeal. Changes didn't seem so necessary. Without noticing it, she became inert, unmotivated. As a result, she was soon moved from her position. They voted her out by nineteen against one, that one being Harry, of course. It stung. Badly. Even though she understood that they were right. They found her a quiet spot...she was a patent officer now. "It's only temporary," said Kingsley, "just until you get better." That was complete bullshit, of course, and she despised him for giving her that little white lie. Here comes the pity, she thought. She could read it in his and other people's eyes, she could hear its rustle behind her back, she could sense it in Harry's smile, and she couldn't stand it. She absolutely loathed ... no, she simply refused, to be pitied.

So here she was, alone at Christmas. She had been invited to The Burrow, of course. But she just couldn't make herself go. The last thing she wanted was to become someone's Christmas charity case. Luckily, books still held some kind of attraction.

She looked around. It was twilight, which was now her favourite time of the day, the only time when everything around her looked somewhat normal. She stood up, threw her coat over her shoulders, opened the door, and sat down on the steps. The evening was quiet and cold, but not bitterly so. A few solitary snowflakes circled around her, glistening in the dim light of dusk.

She sat on the steps until the darkness enveloped her. Automatically, she tilted her head up, and was met with a dark grey sky covered with light grey stars. "God," she muttered, feeling thoroughly disheartened. "Why? What the hell did I do to deserve this?" Staring at the sky, she noticed that one of the stars had begun to move towards the Earth. Her heart fluttered with a childish hope, and she shouted into the frozen air, "I want ... I want my colours back!" She felt foolish the very next instant. Reprimanding herself for her stupidity and feeling empty and defeated, she added, in a whisper, "I want my life back." One tear emerged from the corner of her eye. She wiped it away with a quick, angry movement, stood up, and went inside, not waiting for the falling star to reach the Earth.

She had only taken a few steps when her Floo suddenly lit up in an array of grey shades, and someone was forcefully spat out of her fireplace and landed in a heap in the middle of her living room. The slumped figure moved, groaned, and then muttered, "Fuck!" in a husky baritone. The small room quickly filled with the stench of Firewhisky, which that someone had obviously been consuming not so long ago. "What the fuck?" the man muttered again, and Hermione realised that she definitely knew that voice. She also realised that she knew only one person with hair that light. Even through her dodgy eyes, his hair seemed to possess the lightest tone of grey possible...almost white. And that draw! After a quick deduction, it became absolutely clear for her that the man was none other than Draco-bloody-Malfoy.

"Merlin help me," she muttered and frowned.

Meanwhile, after a few awkward acrobatics, Malfoy managed to stand up, though not without a groan. Swaying, he hiccupped, focused his dazed eyes on her and slurred, "Hmm, Gggrangerr. Whatch you doooooing here? Huh?"

"The right question would be: what are *you* doing here, Malfoy?" she said. She really wasn't in the mood for his antics.

Malfoy attempted to sneer but failed. Lifting an unsteady finger and pointing at her, he said, "It's too early. I should see you next week. I have a number, you know. They said I had to wait. You're very busy, they said. Are you really that busy, Granger?"

"What are you on about?" Hermione asked, trying in vain to make some kind of sense of what was happening.

Ignoring her question, he looked around and frowned. "Where am I? Are you really here? Why? I don't understand." He tried to take a step toward her, but got caught in his long, light grey overcoat and collapsed on the floor with a muffled thud.

For a moment, she cherished the hope that he would get up again. No such luck. Bewildered, she knelt near him and checked his pulse. His heart was thumping steadily, even though he was out cold. *Too much Firewhisky*, she thought and levitated him onto the sofa, contemplating her next step. Should she shove him back into the Floo, or try to talk to him? Even in her state of acute misery, she was intrigued. What number had he been talking about?

The moment Malfoy's body met the plush surface of the sofa, he turned on his side, put his hands under his cheek and began to snore drunkenly, looking ridiculously innocent. Watching him, she couldn't comprehend why on Earth an utterly inebriated, nonsense-talking Draco Malfoy had appeared in the living room of her family cabin. *Bizarre didn't even cover it*, she thought. In all honesty, though, she had an idea that this development was somehow connected to her stupid wishing upon a falling star. She just couldn't grasp how.

Deciding that she had had enough adventures for one Christmas Eve, she threw a blanket over his sleeping form *Maybe by morning, the situation would resolve itself*, she thought while dragging her feet to her bedroom.

Christmas Day

Alas, when she stepped into the living room the next morning, it became clear that the situation hadn't resolved itself. If anything, it had got worse, because instead of an anticipated pile of Christmas presents, she was met with the sight of Malfoy, already sober and cleaned-up, but obviously highly irritated, pacing in front of her fireplace.

Well, at least he found the washroom, she had time to think, before he heard her footsteps and fixed his gaze on her.

"Could you please explain to me, Granger, why the hell I can't leave this hole? Have you blocked the Floo? Do you have anti-Apparition wards here?" In three long strides, he swooped on her, his pale grey eyes burning with a malevolent glint. "Why am I here in the first place? What are you playing at?"

"Anti-Apparition wards" echoed in her head. *Christ*, she thought, *what have I done?* She blinked and instinctively backed away from the wizard. Alas, she hit the wall way too soon for her liking. Cornered, she drew a long breath and confessed, "I don't know."

"What do you mean, you don't know?" he snapped, now looming over her. "Isn't it against your nature?"

His scathing tone reignited yesterday's annoyance, and she spat, "Ugh, shut it," shoving both of her fists into his chest.

He, however, didn't budge and, pushing even closer to her, snarled, "Open the Floo."

"I can't, you stupid sot. I didn't close it!" she shouted. "At least not consciously."

That seemed to work, because he stepped back, suddenly looking tired. Sitting down on the sofa, he raked his fingers through his hair and, with a weary sigh, said, "Explain."

At first, she tried to feed him an edited version of events. It didn't work. Draco Malfoy had never been stupid, and that hadn't changed. Quickly realising her intent, he began asking questions, skilfully manipulating her into telling him the whole story. Apparently, he already knew bits and pieces from the press and was just interested in the missing parts. It was probably a pleasant surprise for him...a Christmas present of sorts...to hear the story of the crumbling life of Hermione Granger.

However, what surprised her most was the willingness with which she answered his questions. She couldn't explain why words were suddenly tumbling out; why was she so eager to tell it all to him, of all people. Maybe it was the fact that he was surprisingly easy on the eyes in her grey world. His naturally pale skin, which was almost devoid of colour, his white hair, his grey eyes, even his light grey dressing shirt and dark grey trousers...everything looked normal. Only his light grey lips stood out, but she was ready to overlook that little detail. Or, possibly, it had nothing to do with his look, but more with the complete lack of pity in his eyes. She was so damn tired of unsolicited sympathy that his indifference and detached curiosity felt like a refreshing change, and so she talked, though somewhere deep inside, she was certain that she would regret her openness very soon. It was Draco Malfoy in front of her, after all.

She was right, of course. When she finished explaining why she was there, in the cabin, alone at Christmas, something sparkled in his eyes. He took a deep breath and, for a moment, it looked as though he was about to say something friendly, but he seemed to catch himself. His eyes narrowed, and he said, his scathing tone already in place, "So, let me get this straight. Your friends ditched you, and you wished for me upon a falling star? That's rich, Granger. Brava!"

"I told you, I didn't wish for you," she said, internally cursing her foolishness.

"Why am I here, then?" he mocked, once again advancing toward her.

"I don't know. Maybe because you're the only person on Earth who looks equally obnoxious with or without colours."

He smirked and said, "Perhaps. But I'll always come second to you. Look at yourself...so miserable, so unhappy...it's pathetic. I bet even your friends can't stand you. Poor little Granger was sacked. Ai-ai-ai, let's all cry a river about it. So tell me, how long did they wait before they fired you? Three months? Four months? Not very long, I'd say. How does it feel to be dismissed? Hu..."

He didn't get to finish. She slapped him. Hard. His words had hit so painfully close to home that she just had to silence him. Massaging his bruised cheek, he stared at her

speechlessly, and she shouted, suddenly feeling furious and more alive than she had felt in months, "Get out! I don't have to listen to your nonsense, you arrogant, condescending bastard!"

Her words broke his daze, and he snapped, "I would love to, but I can't. I'm stuck here, in this bloody middle of nowhere, all thanks to you. Has it occurred to you that I may have had plans for today? That someone may just possibly be waiting for me on Christmas Day?"

His words caught her by surprise...she hadn't really had time to consider such a scenario. 'I...' she began, but he was still talking.

"Of course it hadn't. You're so bloody fixated on how unfortunate you are. How you did nothing to deserve it. Well, here's a newsflash for you. It doesn't matter if you deserve it or not. It hurts the same. Every fucking day, I tell myself that I deserve every drop of misery I'm in right now, and it doesn't make it any easier. So bugger off, Granger. I have no pity for you whatsoever," he said wearily, and once again sank on the old sofa, dropping his head into his hands.

'No pity!' Of course! An epiphany dawned on her, and she exclaimed, "I think that's exactly why you're here! You don't pity me." *And you look normal in grey* she added in her mind.

Not lifting his face from his hands, he uttered his distinctively nonchalant "Hmm" and shrugged. Somehow, the sight of him, slumped and decidedly unhappy, made her feel guilty. What if he really needed to be somewhere? What if someone was waiting for him? A mixture of compassion and curiosity forced her to recall everything she had heard about his life after the war. He had lost his father; that she remembered well. Three years ago, a severe outbreak of dragon pox in Azkaban had taken the lives of a dozen Death Eaters, including Lucius Malfoy. She recalled his very public break-up with Astoria Greengrass. There was also something about Narcissa Malfoy being sick, but she couldn't quite recollect the details.

"Do you need to be somewhere today?" she said softly.

He straightened up, gave her an incredulous stare and, after a pause, said, "Have you got any food?"

Hermione blinked. Her sympathy was clearly unwelcome. Oh, well. "I have eggs and toast," she said and shuffled to the kitchen. Soon, breakfast was ready, and he appeared in the kitchen with a mask of tired disgust on his face. It didn't stop him from eating his share, though.

"So, how long do you reckon I'm stuck here?" he said when he had finished his eggs.

"I can't be certain," she said, after a short contemplation. "But since I made that wish on Christmas Eve, I hope that tomorrow everything will return to normal."

"Un-fucking-believable!" He abruptly sprang up, slammed down his teacup and stormed out of the kitchen. "I am not sleeping another night on this ratty sofa of yours," she heard him shouting from the next room. "Do you hear me, Granger? My neck suffered enough last night for a lifetime."

With a shrug, she decided to ignore him. She wasn't going to waste her time on reasoning with an irate Malfoy. When, after a quick clean up, she returned to the living room, she found him plopped on that same ratty sofa and staring at the ceiling. Sighing, she summoned her book and settled in the armchair in front of the fire. About an hour passed in silence. She tried her best to read but couldn't focus, and her eyes kept returning to his reclining form. He either breathed too loudly, or his hair, caught in the sunlight, reflected shiny flecks right into her face. Deliberately? At times, she thought that he had fallen asleep, but the steady movement of his light-grey eyelashes indicated that he was wide-awake.

"What exactly did you wish for?" he asked unexpectedly.

Caught by surprise, she blurted, "I ... I asked for my old life back."

Draco propped himself on one elbow and peered at her. "That's stupid," he said. "I should have thought that with all that brainpower of yours, you would have asked for something more constructive." He lay back again and muttered, "Wasted opportunity. You can't step twice in the same river."

Not knowing how to react to that fusion of a compliment and an insult in a single phrase, she glared at him and huffed, "And what would *you* ask for, mister smart-arse?"

"It doesn't matter," he said in a bored tone, studying the ceiling again.

"Of course," she said, "that's extremely constructive." She was going to add more, but his next words left her speechless.

"I would ask for a cure for my mother," Draco murmured, so quietly that she could barely hear him.

The way he said it ... Of course, she couldn't stay cool and detached. She closed the book and sat on the sofa near him. "What's wrong with your mother?"

"Sick," he said. "In St. Mungo's, for the last three years."

"In St. Mungo's," she echoed. "I'm sorry. I didn't know. Oh, God, is she waiting for you?" The guess knocked the breath out of her, and her eyes became watery. *Merlin, what have I done?* she thought once again, now feeling overwhelmingly guilty.

"No! Don't you dare," he growled, abruptly sitting up and narrowing his livid eyes on her. "Don't you dare look at me like that. I don't need your sympathy. Do you understand? You can shove your little bleeding heart right up your tight arse. No one, do you hear me, no one is waiting for me today!" He let out a short, bitter chuckle. "My mother doesn't even recognise me, so she definitely doesn't expect me."

The words 'No pity' bolted through her mind again. "Goodness," she exhaled sharply as sudden understanding struck her. Fixing her eyes on the wizard, she said, "I get it! *get it!*"

"Do you?" Draco didn't sound convinced.

"Yes, yes, I understand you perfectly. I know how it feels. Believe me. *know.*"

"Well." He raked his hand through his hair and took a deep breath. "We're on the same page, then." There was a moment of awkward silence, and then he stood up, extended his hand to her, and said, in a surprisingly calm and steady voice, "Come on. Let's go and find ourselves a tree. *It is* Christmas, after all."

Dumbfounded, she stammered, "A-are you sure?"

He snorted. "Yes, I'm sure. Come on." He flexed his fingers in an inviting gesture, and she took his hand.

They didn't find a tree. It had been snowing overnight, and there was too much snow around the cabin. His elegant oxfords became wet in the first ten minutes, and they both turned into snowmen when they tried to reach the trunk of a small pine. Defeated, they settled on a few bushy branches and hurried back inside. On their return, she put the branches in the vase, and soon the air in the cabin was filled with the scent of pine needles. It took her a while to find a perfect spot for their Christmas composition and, when she was done, she found him standing in front of the fireplace. Watching his solemn face as he stared vacantly at the fire, she decided to say the words that had been spinning in her mind for the last hour.

"I don't believe you deserve any of it," she said.

"What?" He turned to her, his eyes glassy and unfocused.

"I don't believe that you deserve any of those terrible things that happened to you," she repeated.

He muttered, "Yeah," and shook his head. "It doesn't matter. They happened. By the way, I have an appointment with you. On January fifth. Apparently, you're still a hot commodity, even in your new position. 'Miss Granger is very busy,' they said at the register office."

"Why do you need an appointment with me?" she said, now recalling his drunken nonsense from yesterday.

"There's an application for a new potion stuck somewhere in your department. One of the Healers told me that it could help. You have to approve it. It's been six months since they sent it."

Remembering the big folder that had been lying on her desk for months, and which she had been steadily ignoring, she blushed. "Merlin! I ... I felt so unmotivated lately. I'll look into it as soon as I get back. I promise." By some odd chance, her stomach decided to grumble right at that particular moment, and her face reddened even more.

He grinned. "I think it's time for our holiday feast. Have you got anything stashed in that Muggle apparatus?" he said, pointing at the old fridge.

Hermione opened the door of the fridge, quickly looked over its insides and announced, "I have half of a roasted turkey, and gherkins."

Meanwhile, Draco reached for his overcoat and, after rummaging through its many pockets, fished out a silver flask. "And I have this," he declared with a triumphant smile.

"What is that?" She narrowed her eyes with suspicion.

"That, Granger, is our salvation," he said and placed the flask in the middle of the table, on which, a moment before, she had put the turkey and the gherkins. "This bird looks dead," he added, wrinkling his nose.

"It is dead," she said, sat down and began to eat. "If you want to starve yourself, be my guest."

He harrumphed, but sank onto a chair as well. Once seated, he summoned two glasses and filled them up to the brim. Thrusting one of the glasses into her hand, he said, "To us and our misery," and downed his own in one go.

Hermione hesitated...the light grey liquid didn't look very appetising...but eventually decided *what the hell*, emptied the whole contents of the glass into her mouth, and swallowed. For a moment, she thought that she was going to die...her throat was on fire.

"Eat the gherkin," she heard him laughing. She did, and it helped with the burning sensation. Thank goodness! Only, somehow, her vision had become inexplicably fuzzy...or was it really that foggy in the cabin?

"Granger, are you all right?" he asked, watching her with a grin.

"Yes." She nodded, then snorted, then giggled.

"Granger?" He peered into her eyes. "Oh, come on, are you kidding me? You can't be drunk already. Really, Granger, *really*, just from one glass?"

"I am not drunk. It's just funny that you, Draco Malfoy, and I, Hermione Granger, are getting drunk together on Christmas. Don't you think it's funny?" She snorted and giggled again.

"Yes, yes, hilarious," he said and, getting a hold of her arm, pulled her to her feet. "You need a breath of fresh air." With that, he wrapped his arm around her waist and hauled her toward the door.

"But ... but, it's dark," she muttered, dragging her feet in protest.

"So what? We aren't going beyond the steps." He opened the door and, with her in tow, went outside. The grey darkness swallowed them, and either a giant pile of snow had accumulated right in front of the door, or they both lost their footing but, the next second, they found themselves up to their thighs in a snowdrift. And it was bloody cold, too.

It took a while for them to dig themselves out. At last, wet and half-frozen, but laughing and hiccupping, they stumbled back into the cabin. "Fuck, I'm bloody freezing," he muttered, trying to get rid of his wet garments as quickly as possible. She, on the other hand, couldn't talk at all, because her teeth kept chattering. Too cold to think, she was also hurriedly taking off her clothes. Only when she heard a sharp intake of air and then a muffled 'fuck' did it dawn on her exactly what she had done. It was too late to play coy...she was already down to her knickers and a tee. Even with her back to him, his stare was almost palpable. It was burning her skin. Still, she went further and turned to face him.

The intensity of his gaze didn't scare her. On the contrary, it made her feel so alive that she wanted to scream from exhilaration. She chose not to, though. Instead, she silently pulled her tee over her head and threw it aside. The confirmation that she had managed to get her message across came instantly. He reached her in three long strides, and his lips collided with hers, locking together in a bruising kiss. All sharp angles and rough, demanding hands, he hoisted her up from the floor, said raspily into her ear, "Tell me to stop, Granger; stop me now," and attacked her lips again.

"No," she breathed, clawing his shoulders. "No. I want it. I want to feel."

"You'll regret it in the morning. I know you well enough," he whispered into her ear, his lips moving against it, sending electric shivers right to the most sensitive parts of her body.

"I don't care, Malfoy. Just ... don't ... stop. Don't you fucking stop."

He didn't.

Boxing Day

She couldn't remember how and when they had made it to the bedroom, but they had. She opened her eyes, and the first thing she saw was the hair, the colour of confectioner's sugar, that covered half of his face, almost reaching his pale pink lips. Pink. PINK.

Hermione sat up abruptly, looked around and let out a happy cry. Once again, the world around her had colours. And, oh Merlin, it was beautiful.

"I take it that you're back to normal again." Propped on his elbow, Draco was watching her with an amused smile.

"Yes! Yes! Yes!" she shouted and knocked him down, covering his body with hers and pressing a feverish kiss to his lips. He readily wrapped his arms around her and turned them over, pinning her beneath him.

"So, tell me. What colour do you see now?"

Staring into his eyes, she whispered, "Grey."