

'Til There Was Nothing Left

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: Thank you to my beta gaeilgerua for their hard work. The 'love to hate' theme for the Dramione Minifest 2017 on LJ really struck a chord with me here. Not quite sure if this is what the prompter had in mind, but it's where my Muse took it.

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'Til There Was Nothing Left

Hermione jiggled her key into the Muggle flat that she shared with Draco, sighing with relief when the lock caught and opened. Walking in, she froze when she entered their living room. Their coffee table was broken in half, the sofa upturned, and the drapes were smoking. She sighed heavily, closing her eyes.

Dropping her things on the floor, Hermione silently pulled out her wand and restored the room back to how it usually looked. She wondered how many times she could use a Reparo on the table before the spell became ineffective...

Every day was the same. The flat, or Draco, was always in shambles when she returned home from work. She did her best to keep things running smoothly, but she could only do so much.

It had been seven months since the end of the war. After Voldemort had been defeated, the two of them had opened up about their secret relationship to the public. They moved in together as soon as Draco's name was cleared as he couldn't stand the thought of staying at the Manor any longer.

Hermione had begged Draco to seek help for his violent outbursts. Hermione was certain that Draco was suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and that his outbursts were proof of that. No matter how much she pressed, even going so far as to get his mother involved, Draco wouldn't budge. It was like a habit Draco couldn't shake. Instead of turning to drinking or gambling, he would keep it bottled up until he exploded.

Of course, after every incident, he would apologise for his behaviour, promising that it wouldn't happen again. *It's out of my system, I swear.* His words haunted her.

Over and over. It was an endless cycle, and quite honestly, Hermione wasn't sure how much more she could take. She loved Draco, but when was enough enough? How long before he hurt himself or someone else? How long before he lashed out at her in anger?

He couldn't control himself sometimes, and it frightened her. A tear slid down her cheek and she inhaled deeply. She quietly made her way through the flat to their bedroom. The door was closed.

Opening it slowly, she poked her head inside. Draco was lying on their bed. He glanced up when she entered the room and turned on the light.

"I'm sorry," he said softly as he sat up.

Hermione nodded. "I know." She stepped inside of their room. "Want to talk about?"

"No," Draco retorted curtly. He lay back down, turning his back on her.

"Draco, we need to talk about this," Hermione pressed, crossing the room and sitting on the edge of the bed. She touched his shoulder lightly. "Please."

"What is there to talk about?" Draco snapped angrily, not looking at her. "You've already got your mind made up, don't you? So go on and judge me."

"Judge you?" Hermione asked, horrified that Draco even thought that way. "Draco, you know I would never judge you." She paused, trying to get past the hurt in his words. "I love you, Draco, so much, but things can't keep going on like this. You can't ruin the flat just because it makes you feel better."

"Why not?" He sat up abruptly, turning to face her angrily. "What's the harm in breaking a few things?"

"Because it's dangerous!" Hermione retorted. "You're not thinking clearly, Draco. You're playing with fire, quite literally, and it's going to burn you or someone you care about!" Hermione stood, pacing the room. "Why can't you see that I'm just trying to help you, Draco?" She paused, a sob escaping her lips. She could feel the tears pouring down her face. "You can't control the Fiendfyre, Draco, oh, don't you look surprised. You've been keeping it contained for now, but that's Dark Magic. You're not in the right state of mind, because the Draco I know would never use Fiendfyre, especially after it killed Crabbe."

"You're going to throw Vincent's death in my face?" Draco's voice was low and full of hurt.

"Of course I'm not!" Hermione cried. "I'm just pointing out that you're messing with things you shouldn't, Draco. You need help."

"I don't need help; I'm doing just fine on my own!" Draco glared at her.

"Fine? Draco, you don't have a job, you barely see your mother or any of your friends. You just stay here in our flat all day. You need to break this habit, Draco. I have a friend who can help you; he's done a lot for me and my nightmares... If you would just let me set up a meeting," she begged.

"Stop it!" Draco yelled, a burst of flames spreading from his body.

"*Partis Temporus!*" Hermione cried, slashing her wand in the air, but she was too late. The last thing she remembered was Draco's horrified face and indescribable pain.

Hermione groggily opened her eyes, pain radiating over her body. She winced, looking to her left. "Harry?"

"Hermione, love, it's all right," Harry said, moving forward. "Shhhh," he muttered when she tried to speak. "You're at St. Mungo's. The curse hit your arm and some of your neck. It'll scar, but you'll be okay."

Hermione drew in a shaky breath. "Harry..." she whispered, tears streaming down her face. "This is all my fault."

"Don't," Harry said quickly. "Don't you dare say that, Hermione. I've already told Draco, and I'll tell you. It isn't either of your faults. It was an accident."

"You've spoken with Draco?" Hermione asked, taking another shaky breath.

"He's outside. He's been a mess, Hermione. Narcissa's here, too. He's been inconsolable." Harry frowned. "He told me what happened, Hermione, and while he didn't mean to hurt you, he did." Harry sighed. "Don't be mad, but I punched him."

Hermione gave Harry a weak smile. "Thank you, but I know. I shouldn't have... I should have... I don't know why I..." She couldn't get the words out.

"Want me to send him in? Or tell him to bugger off?"

"Send him in," Hermione said, her heart aching.

Harry looked at her sympathetically before exiting the room. Draco entered a few moments later.

"Draco," Hermione said, tears pouring down her face.

He dropped to his knees on the side of her bed. "Hermione... I... I'm so sorry." Draco was crying, too. "I hurt you. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry."

Hermione inhaled deeply. "Draco, please."

"You're right, I have a problem," he rambled on. "I'll see someone. I've already told Mother I would. I'll get better, you'll see." He didn't see the look on her face. "I should have listened to you months ago."

"You should have," Hermione told him firmly, yet as gently as she could. She met Draco's gaze and felt her heart breaking. "I should have done a lot of things differently, too."

"Please, don't blame yourself," Draco begged, looking utterly broken.

"But I do," Hermione answered. "You know that's how I am, Draco. I think... I think that's why we aren't working out."

"Don't say that," he whispered. "Please, don't say that."

"But it's true," Hermione said, knowing that she was going to lose her composure completely soon. "We both have habits, Draco, but I'm not strong enough to help you through yours. I knew there was a chance that things would get worse, that you would hurt yourself or someone else. I should have pushed you more. I should have spoken with Blaise or Greg... someone who would have been able to help you."

"Hermione, no," Draco whispered, reaching out and taking her hand. His eyes travelled up her arm, taking in the white bandaging for her burns. "I never meant to hurt you."

"But you did," Hermione whispered. "And I want to believe you when you say it won't happen again, but I know that's not true. You have a difficult road ahead of you, Draco, but it's not one that I can go down with you. My path leads elsewhere."

"Don't say that."

"Please, you must understand, Draco," Hermione said shakily, crying heavily now. She paused, trying to catch her breath. "I love you so damn much, Draco, but I just can't do this anymore. I can't watch you like this, not when I'm struggling with my own issues."

"You never brought up your issues," Draco countered. "How could I have known?"

"How could I have brought them up?" Hermione retorted. "You've been destroying our home! When you lose control so easily and fall back into the spiral of destruction, how can I confess to you that I don't sleep well at night? That I'm afraid to walk down the street on my own sometimes?" She drew in a shaky breath. "I can't do this, Draco. You need someone who can help you, and that clearly isn't me."

"It is you," he insisted quietly. "I love you, Hermione. I know I messed up, but please, give me another chance." He looked at her pleadingly. "I love you."

"I love you too, Draco, but that's why I can't do this anymore. I'm sorry." She closed her eyes, crying fully now.

Draco stood, opening his mouth to say something, but he couldn't. He turned, bolting from the room.

Hermione felt her world come crashing down around her. How could she have let things fall apart so easily? How could she have fooled herself into thinking that she could fix Draco's issues?

"Miss Granger?"

Looking up, Hermione was startled to see Narcissa by her bedside. "Mrs Malfoy," Hermione said through tears. "Please, look after him."

Narcissa looked at her sadly. "I will, dear. I am so sorry, Ms Granger, for both you and my son." She turned, pausing near the doorway. "It isn't the war that destroys us, but the aftermath."

Hermione felt her heart break even more as she pondered Narcissa's words and how true they were. The war was over, but it felt as if the battle had just begun.