

For Better or Worse?

by kimbee73

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Chapter 1: The Pact

Chapter 1 of 4

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A/N I want to thank my beta for her help. I hope you enjoy my story.

Chapter One: The Pact

"Do you believe this?" Ginny asked, holding up a copy of that day's *Daily Prophet*. "You would think after 5 years he wouldn't still be the top story." She was still reeling over the headline *Potter Marries Chang*.

"What happened between you two?" Hermione questioned as she sipped her butterbeer.

"I don't know. One day, we were discussing future plans, our wedding, kids, where to live, and the next moment, he was telling me we are moving too fast and he really isn't sure he loves me. He told me he needed space and time to think things through. Do you think he may have been cheating on me with her?" She looked at the paper again. "I mean, you saw them at work together. Did they seem close?" She wasn't sure she wanted the answer to this question but asked it anyway.

"No way," Hermione answered her. "I swear this came out of nowhere. Well, they do have a history, but I thought they were long over. Maybe she slipped him a love potion or put some kind of spell on him."

"Well, maybe, but I doubt it. She was probably completely enamored by *The Boy Who Defeated Voldemort* or whatever the hell his new title is."

"I know what you are saying. I did notice quite a few women that would hang around hoping to catch his eye, but he paid no attention to them. I thought he only had eyes for you." Hermione was now staring out the window remembering what had happened to her the year before.

"I'm sorry, Hermione," Ginny said. "I don't mean to keep prattling on about Harry especially since this is the same thing my git of a brother did to you."

"Don't worry about it," she said. "I really don't think Ron and I were completely compatible anyway. It just felt comfortable at the end."

"But he still didn't need to be mean about it."

"He wasn't mean. He just told me that he was bored with our relationship and he needed a break. I told him I felt the same way but was sure that we could work it out together. He just didn't think that was a good idea. We were too different."

"That's what made you right for each other. He needed you to get through the hard things. But anyway, he is an arse. If he didn't see you for the woman that you are, then just forget about him."

"I pretty much have. I mean, it has been a year. I don't think breaks last this long. The problem seems to be that every other man out there seems to have no interest either. I think they may feel I am still harboring feelings for Ron. I mean, I still care for him, but I wouldn't go running back if he asked..."

"You wouldn't?" Ginny interrupted. She was shocked by this revelation. She always thought Hermione and Ron would end up married even if she didn't understand why. They were always fighting about something, but would always make up in the end. They were happy for a while. "I guess I thought we would be one big happy family. You and Ron. Me and Harry. Well, this puts an end to that fantasy, doesn't it?" She threw the paper down.

"I don't think there is such a thing as 'true love,' so I am going to stop looking," Hermione said.

"Don't say that. There is someone out there for you, even if it isn't my brother."

"I'm serious, Ginny. I mean, think about it. You loved Harry from the time you were ten years old. He didn't seem to notice you at first. But as soon as you started dating those other boys, his eyes opened fast and he realized what he was missing. Then, just as things seemed to be moving in the right direction for you two, Dumbledore was killed, and he went off chasing Voldemort. He left you high and dry. After it was finally over and Voldemort was dead, he came back to you. The two of you seemed so in love and then what? One day he says 'I don't know if I love you, give me some time.' Three months later he is married to his ex. I don't get it." She was really fired up.

"Well, when you put it that way..." Her voice was shaking. She hadn't realized what this really meant. Harry was not coming back to her. He had made his choice, and she wasn't the one he chose. "I think we should make a pact."

"What kind of a pact?"

"No man is ever going to trap us into thinking that we are in love with him. I mean, it hasn't done us any good so far. Has it?" This was more of a statement than a question.

"You're right. I can't spend my entire life hoping Mr. Right will walk in the door and sweep me off my feet."

"So it's settled, no more love."

"Fine with me."

My prompt is:

2. For whatever reason, Harry has married someone other than Ginny. Ron has told Hermione that he needs a break. Both Ginny and Hermione vow never to fall in love again. What would happen if bets were placed that (whoever was betting) could make a woman fall in love with and agree to marry him in a certain amount of time? What happens when the girls find out it was only a bet?

Chapter 2: The Bet

Chapter 2 of 4

The two suitors make their bet... Who are they?

A/N: I thank my beta for all the help that was given to me during this process.

Chapter 2: The Bet

Draco Malfoy was sitting at the head table in the Great Hall. He was looking at the paper in disbelief *Potter Marries Chang*. He couldn't believe what he was reading. What the hell was Potter doing? Everyone knew he was in love with Ginny Weasley. What happened to cause this? He couldn't suppress a smile. If this headline was true, and the *Daily Prophet* wasn't always the best form of news out there, it meant one thing: Ginny was now available.

He had been secretly in love with her since his fourth year at Hogwarts when he'd seen her dancing at the Yule Ball with that idiot Neville Longbottom. Of course, he'd never told anyone this. In fact, everyone he knew would never have understood. She was, after all, part of the biggest family of blood traitors out there. At least that was what he thought then. Everything had changed since the war was over and Voldemort was dead. He realized how dumb he really had been to believe that magic meant power. Voldemort had done nothing but torture his family since he hadn't been able to kill Dumbledore. Well, that part of his life was over. He didn't judge anymore.

Ron, Potter's best friend, was another reason not to pursue Ginny. He hated Draco. Well, at least before the war. Now they were merely cordial to each other. Ron probably would have killed him instead of saving his life during that Final Battle. Ron and Harry had saved him even after all he had done. Now they were off being Aurors while he was at Hogwarts. Not that he had any problem being Potions professor; he just never pictured his life like this.

Ginny is available, he thought. *I wonder what she would do if I would ask her out. Would she even give me the time of day? Maybe I could send her an owl asking how she is. I couldn't do that*, he continued thinking to himself. *She might find it suspicious* Well, he would have to run into her by chance. But where? He knew she worked with George at the Hogsmeade store; maybe he could go there. He had to think more about this.

"What are you daydreaming about, Draco?" Neville had just joined him at the table.

"As if I would tell you, Longbottom," Draco sneered. They might be colleagues now, but they were still not the best of friends. Yet, they were always cordial.

"Come off it, Draco. I saw you reading the *Prophet*; I know what you are thinking."

"What are you babbling on about now?" He hoped it wasn't it obvious. Maybe Longbottom knew.

"I read the paper as well. I know about Harry and his marriage. Tell me, are you jealous that he made it to the altar first?"

"Me, jealous?" Well, come to think about it, he might be. He had been engaged to Pansy when he'd decided to take the job at Hogwarts. She couldn't handle being with someone who didn't make a lot of money. "No, Neville, I was thinking about Ginny and what this must be doing to her. After all, she was engaged to Potter not that long ago. It's got to be rough."

"What? Wait, you don't have feelings for her, do you? You couldn't, you hardly know her. Anyway, she wouldn't give you the time of day. You don't stand a chance."

"Stand a chance at what?" Dean Thomas had just joined them for lunch.

"Draco here has a crush on Ginny Weasley."

"Really? Well, I can understand; she's a great girl. But I thought she was engaged to Harry."

"You haven't seen today's *Prophet* then?" Draco questioned.

"Nah, I skipped breakfast this morning to sleep in. That's what Sundays are for. Plus, I had some papers to grade. I haven't looked at my copy yet."

Draco showed him the paper.

"Oh, poor Ginny. What happened? Did it say?" he asked.

"All the article said was they got married in a quick ceremony witnessed by a few friends and family," Neville answered him.

"But why, I wonder," Dean said. "Ginny told me that she had loved Harry for a long time but had always been afraid to approach him. Of course, she told me this after she had dumped me for him. I thought they were a couple destined for eternity. Wow, that's something. So, now what, Draco? You want to comfort her?"

"I never said anything of the sort. It seems Neville here has made some assumptions of his own."

"I'm pretty good at reading people, and you had an almost vindictive look on your face as you read the paper. Just admit you are happy that Ginny Weasley is available. You can now have something that Harry does not."

"If you do like her, you won't be the first to fall victim to her," Dean said. "I thought she was beautiful the moment I laid eyes on her. Of course, she was dating that moron Michael Corner."

"Wait, she was with me at the Yule Ball when she met him. She left me to dance with him, and I didn't see her the rest of the night. That was so humiliating," Neville responded.

"As much as I would love to walk down memory lane, gentlemen, I believe Longbottom here told me not to bother anyway because I don't stand a chance."

"I think I concur with Neville," Dean added.

"Would you like to make a wager on that?" Draco asked cunningly.

"You're not serious?" Dean asked, a bit shocked.

"I am most certainly, and I would like to wager that I could get Ginny to fall in love with me faster than you could get Hermione Granger to fall in love with you."

"Whoa," Neville exclaimed. "When did you tell Draco about your feelings for Hermione, Dean?"

"I didn't," Dean answered him with amazement. "But I guess I can't deny it now."

"Sorry," Neville replied.

"Oh, this is too good," Draco said. "I was thinking that I had picked someone Dean would never pursue just to make it harder on him, but you actually like her."

"The problem," Dean answered, "she is still in love with Ron and probably always will be."

"I don't think so," Neville replied. "She was pretty pissed off when I ran into her the other night. She had just run into Ron and some girl. She didn't tell me who. He had told her they were just friends, but Hermione didn't believe him. Especially after the look the girl had given Ron. She may actually be over him."

"Well then, Thomas, what do you think? Do you want to make a bet on this or what?"

"I don't think I like what the two of you are proposing," Neville interjected. "You are talking about two very good friends of mine, and you're making a mockery out of love."

"No we aren't, Neville," Dean replied. "We're just making a friendly bet about who can get the girl he pines for first."

"And what happens if they find out?"

"They won't," Draco answered him. "Unless you let it slip out like you did about Dean."

"I think I should walk away from this so I don't know any more than I already do. Then they won't find out from me." He started to leave the table.

"You can't leave," Dean told him. "We need a witness. So what are we wagering?"

"I say 100 Galleons that I can have Ginny's heart by Easter, Draco told him.

"That's six months from now!" Dean exclaimed.

"What are you, scared?"

"Not a chance, are you?"

"No way, one date with me and Ginny will forget all about Potter. So, we have a bet then?"

"We certainly do. Shake?"

The two men shook.

Chapter 3: The Confrontation

Chapter 3 of 4

Ginny arrives at work and gets a surprise visit from her brother. Was he at the wedding? What happens then?

A/N: Again I want to thank my wonderful beta who will be revealed after voting. Thanks for helping me with all my errors.

Chapter 3: The Confrontation

Ginny arrived at work on Monday morning with a whole new attitude. She couldn't change things, so she might as well try and move on.

"Good morning, Ginny," George greeted her cheerily. "I wasn't sure if you would make it in today. You weren't at Mum's last night."

"No, Hermione and I had a late lunch and spent some time talking. That helped. I figured I couldn't sit around doing nothing, so I came to work. I can't stop my life because Harry chose to marry Cho instead of me."

"Well, that's a good look at things."

"So, what's the plan for today?" she asked him. She hoped they had a busy day.

"The Ministry is sending one of its Aurors to pick up some shield clothing," he told her.

"They don't feel threatened again, do they?" Ginny was a bit frightened.

"No, nothing like that. The new hires need a set. They buy them every year."

"Well, that's a good thing," she said to him, relieved. "I can't imagine going through another war. So, who are they sending?" She was hoping it wasn't Harry.

"I don't think they are sending Harry," he told her, as if reading her mind. "Besides, he is probably on his honeymoon. Oh, sorry..." He was interrupted by the bell at the front door.

"Hey, guys," Ron said as he entered the store. "How are things?"

Ginny looked like she was going to hit him. "You know damn well how things are!" she screamed at him. "You were there, weren't you? *The Prophet* said a few friends and family. You stood up for him, didn't you? You were his best man!"

Ron mumbled something under his breath.

"What was that? Cat got your tongue? Don't bother trying to explain yourself. I can't believe it. You're my brother!" She was on the verge of tears.

"He's my best friend!" Ron yelled, finally getting his voice back. "What was I supposed to say? Sorry, mate, you don't want to marry my sister so find a new best man."

"Maybe you should have," she said to him. She was mad at him, but not as mad as she was at Harry. She just knew that she would never say these things to him, so Ron made a good substitute. "Why did this happen so fast?"

"I guess Harry couldn't wait. I thought he had been put under some kind of spell at first. She only just started back at the Ministry a month ago. Next thing I know, he was telling me that he had fallen for her, and they were going to get married. Then he told me that the wedding was Saturday. I was completely shocked. I asked him 'what about my sister?' He told me you were through."

"And you believed that? Ron, he told me he needed a break, I gave it to him. I didn't know he was going to run off and marry the first girl that came into his life." She was really upset now.

"She isn't the first girl, if you remember; they dated back in our fifth year. They have a bit of a history."

"You expect me to believe that his feelings for her never really changed? Was I a good substitution in the interim? Then why all the talk about weddings and kids, if he was going to mess it all up by marrying her?" She was crying now. "I loved him with every bit of my heart for eleven years, and he ruins it all."

"Ginny, I'm really sorry. I don't know what else I can say. He made up his mind, and I can't change that." Ron looked out the window, avoiding her gaze. "I really thought you two were destined for each other."

"I guess we weren't. Now, what about you and Hermione?"

"We're definitely through."

"How can you say that? I mean, I know the two of you fight a lot, but you always seemed to make up afterwards. Tell her that you've been acting like a complete arse, and you want her back."

"It's not that simple, Ginny."

"Sure it is," George suddenly reappeared. He had conveniently been absent during the exchange. Ginny could handle herself. "Tell her how much you love her and that you've been a complete idiot. It worked for me when I left Angelina."

"You left her for two days, not a full year. Besides, you and Angelina were right for each other. Now look at you guys, ready to have twins any day. Hermione and I were always fighting. It got to be too much. We aren't a good fit. Besides, the way she looked the other night when I ran into her leads me to believe she doesn't want me back anyway."

"Why?" George asked him. "Were you with someone? I find it hard to believe that anyone else would go out with you. Who is she?"

"I've been seeing someone for the last month. It seems to be working out well, although I did almost blow it with her when I saw Hermione."

"Who is it?" George and Ginny asked him in unison.

"If you must know, I've been seeing Luna." He looked at them as if daring them to make fun.

"Luna Lovegood?" George asked.

"How many Lunas do you know?"

"I like Luna," Ginny interjected. "I just didn't think you did. You were always making fun of her at school. You said Hermione saw the two of you together?"

"Yeah, she happened to be coming out of Flourish and Blotts. Luna and I had just had dinner. We were walking down Diagon Alley, and there she was. I tried to explain that we were just friends, but of course that isn't true. Luna almost killed me with her look. Anyway, Hermione stormed off. She was really angry. So, I don't think reconciliation is in the cards. Besides, I'm having fun with Luna."

"Funny, Hermione never said anything to me about seeing you and Luna," Ginny told him. "When did this happen?"

"Last weekend. When did you see her?" he asked.

"We had lunch yesterday. No wonder she was convinced you two were not getting back together."

"Well then, I guess that's settled. I have to get back. George do you have the Ministry's order?"

"It's in the back. I'll go get it."

"Thanks."

"Are you coming to Mum's this Sunday?" George asked him as he emerged from the back room. "She was really disappointed the two of you were not there yesterday. She understood, but she wasn't happy."

"I'll be there," Ron answered him. "I've got to run. Send my love to Angelina."

"See you then," George said to him and disappeared in the back room again.

"Bye, Ginny."

"Bye."

As Ron was leaving the store, Draco Malfoy came in. They nodded curtly at one another.

Chapter 4: Draco's Move

Chapter 4 of 4

Ginny has just learned that Harry married Cho Chang, and Hermione has been dumped by Ron. The two make a pact to never fall in love again. Then two suitors come along. What happens then?

Chapter 4: Draco's Move

Draco entered the store intending to look around for a while before approaching Ginny. He had thought, at first, she may not even be there. He wouldn't blame her. She probably needed some time to think. He remembered when he'd read the announcement about Blaise and Pansy. That had hurt. But there she was, right as she walked in, with a big smile on her face. *Wow, she really is gorgeous*, he thought. *Oh well, Potter's loss*.

"Good morning, Draco," Ginny greeted him pleasantly. "To what do we owe this visit from the Potions professor? Surely you don't have a use for any *diversifying* *Wheezes* in your class?"

"No, not really. Actually, I came by to talk to you."

"Me, why?" she questioned him suspiciously. "Oh, wait, I know. You came by to gloat. Well, sorry, Draco, there is nothing you can say to me that can make me feel any worse. So gloat away."

"That is not why I am here. I have no intention to gloat. In fact, I think Potter is a complete arse for letting you go."

"That isn't saying too much, since the two of you hate each other."

"That's in the past. Hey, Harry saved my life twice during the final battle. I can't forget that. But letting you go, well, that's his loss and someone else's gain."

"What makes you think I am ready for someone else this soon?"

"Because you want to show Harry that this didn't affect you. I know you're pissed off right now, and I don't blame you. Potter really did it to you this time. You have to move on, right? Besides, you don't want Mr. Right to walk past and not notice him?" He hoped she was buying this stuff. He wasn't very good at this sort of thing. He never had to talk his way into a date.

"Maybe you're right, Draco." Oh, what was she saying? She told Hermione that she wouldn't fall for some man's tricks. "I do need to move on, or at least have some fun." This made logical sense. They had not said they couldn't have fun, just no love.

"Well, there you go. So what do say to dinner on Friday night. Pick you up at eight?" Maybe he hadn't blown it after all.

"I knew it! There was an ulterior motive for you coming in here! You want me to go out with you. What, you want to make Harry jealous? I can't believe I didn't see right through you! You haven't changed a bit." She was really angry.

"No, now wait, I said I came to see you. I just didn't say why."

"Oh, a minor technicality. So what makes you think I would want to go out with you?"

"Because you said yourself, you need to have fun. We could have fun together."

"I'm not so sure about that." She was still mad, but was seriously considering it. It might hurt Harry to see her out with his most hated rival. Besides, he said they would have fun. *What would Hermione think?* she thought. *She would probably be okay with this.* They had said no to love, not no to dates.

"Ginny, what are you thinking?"

"I don't know why, but I am seriously considering going out with you. I think I must be mad."

"No, you're not. One date that is all I am asking. If you don't have a good time with me, you don't ever have to see me again. Please just consider this. *Wow, this is harder than I expected,* he thought.

Twenty-four hours ago, she had made a pact with Hermione not to fall in love again. But here she was seriously considering Draco's offer. *Well, what could be the harm?* she thought. *I need to have some fun.* "All right, Draco, I will go out with you."

"You won't regret it. I must be going. My first class starts in 10 minutes. See you Friday night." He rushed out the door.

"So, you're going out with Draco on Friday night?" George had just reentered from the back room.

"You heard?" She asked him. "What do you think?"

"I think you do need to move on and have some fun. Even if it is with Draco," he told her.

"It's only one date," she replied.

"If you say so."