The Undeniable Power of Fairy Magic

by mcal

Summary

Hermione Granger has been turned into a fairy. Will her partner in the Care of Magical Creature Department, Draco Malfoy, be able to turn back into a human, or will she remain a fairy forever?

Notes

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See the end of the work for more notes.
“Granger!” Draco Malfoy choked, incredulous. “This is—”

A pitched buzzing interrupted him, and he shook head.

“Sorry, I have to ask: Did you provoke—?”

The buzzing took on an angry shrill, effectively discontinuing his query, though not giving a direct answer…

“And…” His mouth snapped shut as he tried to formulate a follow-up question. “How did this happen?”

The slight feminine figure no more than four inches tall, hovering in mid-air over a large ornate desk, pitched herself forward, transparent wings flapping feverishly, stopping when she was mere inches from his face, flashing her teeth as she chomped on air with her jaw.

He blinked several times, swallowing in disbelief. “One of the fairies bit you…?”

She nodded in vigorous affirmation, wild brown ringlets tumbling around her shoulders and…and…her wings…

“Salazar, Granger…” he breathed, conjuring a chair before plopping down unceremoniously. “This is really…” He shook his head as the tiny Granger form folded her arms over her chest, foot tapping like mad in mid-air.

He could only stare in bewildered and gobsmacked silence.

Hermione Granger—professional, subdued, monotonous wardrobe, imposing and fearless in spite of her usual slight frame—now fluttered in front of him with fairy wings.

He swore loudly, raking a hand through his signature Malfoy pale blond hair. Five minutes prior, he’d been looking for a fairy colony on the other side of the library, he’d rushed at the sound of a crash, and now…

Hermione Granger had been turned into a fairy…

Her hands had migrated to her hips while her foot continued to tap furiously in the air.

He lifted his chair, shuffling closer to better observe this nightmarish conundrum that was now his reality.
She looked to be a wood fairy exactly, if the green curve hugging cloth of a dress that only just covered her modesty was anything to go by.

That, and the flower buds blooming on her shoes, shedding petals, and said petals dissolving into shiny dust, and then vanishing before making contact with any surface.

He released a long puff of air as she started off again with her new form of pitchy communication, flittering dizzyingly here and there across his vision…

“You have to stop moving around like that Granger,” he groaned, pinching the bridge of his nose. “We need a plan, we need…oh, Merlin! This is a disaster, a problem, and this is so very not good!”
Granger seemed to catch the distress in his voice, and immediately stopped her helter-skelter movements, allowing herself to slowly descend to sit on the edge of the desk, crossing her ankles as they dangled. She tugged at the short skirt of her dress before folding her hands over her lap.

She inclined her head in consideration as he leaned forward for a better inspection, his mind racing faster than he’d ever flown before…

“Ok, Granger,” he started, taking a deep breath. “First things first, we need to see if we can communicate—will you mind if I try casting a translation charm over us?”

She shook her head in the negative, curls flouncing across her shoulders as she did, which must have irritated her, because her creamy skin reddened and she released a loud huff as she shoved large sections of her hair behind her ears.

He nodded and moved his wand back and forth between the two of them muttering the incantation as he did.

“Alright, Granger,” he said when he was done. “Can you try to say something to me?”

“What would you like me to say?” she asked, looking at him with expectancy and hope.

His eyebrows shot into his hair. There was a little bit of a lag, and he would have to tune out the buzzing sound, but… “Again,” he urged. “Say something else.”

“Alright then.” Her wings fluttered and flapped behind her, lifting her from the desk and moving her closer to his face. The narrowing of her tiny brown eyes was unmistakeable. “How about, I didn’t want to come here in the first place.” Her hands positioned on her hips again, skin and aura reddening by the second. “I knew,” she jabbed a furious finger for emphasis of her foresight, “something bad would happen if we took this assignment.”

“Well, sorry Granger, but in my defence…” he trailed off, his mind drawing blank as she fluttered closer…

He dropped his eyes and started to rub his left forearm, detecting an itch from under his long sleeve that he knew was psychological. “Actually, I’m sorry Granger; I’m so very sorry,” he apologized, lifting his eyes again, trying to not be too excited as the red in her colouring faded.

He sucked a breath through his teeth. “You’re the one who’s been working for the Beast, Being and Spirit Division for the last two-and-a-half years, and in the Care of Magical Creature Department for six months before then. I should have deferred to your judgement. I thought fairies…it wouldn’t be that hard to deal with. I let the nostalgia of this house cloud my judgement, and I manipulated your emotions so you’d go along with it. I’m sorry, Granger. This…” He waved over her miniscule form. “This is all my fault.”

He waited as her hands slowly moved to her sides and the last traces of red faded from her skin. Her mouth twisted as her wings slowed into a controlled and rhythmic beat.

“Well, you wouldn’t have been sorted into Slytherin if you didn’t have a way with words,” she offered, a crooked smile forming across her face. “And I wouldn’t have gone along with this if I hadn’t felt bad for being late to work, or if I didn’t believe deep down on some level that you were right…”

He blinked at her. “What?”

She shrugged a shoulder, turning a delectable pale pink all over as she descended again, settling this
time on the arm of his chair.

He stiffened and his heart lurched as the bottom of her shoe skimed the top of his hand. Merlin, this wasn’t going to be easy…for so many reasons…

“You were right,” she admitted, so soft he had to strain to distinguish between the translation and her buzzing.

“I’ve been afraid of Malfoy Manor,” she continued. “It haunts my nightmares still, even four years later.”

He winced as she wrapped her arms around herself and inclined her head at him.

“I thought in coming back here, I could face the last of my demons once and for all,” she confessed. “Then, maybe it could all be laid to rest…”

He bit the inside of his cheek as he considered this, observing that even though she was currently too small to see the spattering of freckles across her nose and cheeks, he could clearly tell when she was making a face at him.

“Well, that makes two of us then, Granger,” he said, offering a consolingly wry smile. “And not to shatter this moment of bonding, but we are in quite the predicament here.”

“Yes. Yes, we are,” she agreed, flapping her wings slowly while sitting on the arm of the chair. “I suppose we ought to start with facts and basis, so, what do you know about fairies, Malfoy?”

He furrowed his brows, and stroked his chin, mentally reprimanding himself for not shaving over the weekend. “Not much, to be honest. I know they’re different from Cornish Pixies, and I know enough to distinguish you as a wood fairy…”

He trailed off, cheeks flaming at his incompetence. Merlin, he should have turned down this job, no matter that it was his last available option…

Granger nudged his hand with the toe of her shoe, offering him that encouraging smile that made his insides beam. “Go on,” she urged.

Draco cleared his throat, feigning an expression of deep concentration. “Truly Granger, a lot of what I may know is from myths and stories. I’d never even encountered a garden gnome until that dinner at the Burrow last month after subbing for Weasley at the pick-up Quidditch match last month.”

“Well, start with the obvious then; tell me what you’ve observed from me already.”

“Very well,” he sighed in faux lassitude as she toed his hand again.

He cleared his throat, taking in her delicate frame and features. “You’re probably about four inches tall, which makes you taller than the average fairy—highly ironic considering your usual stature…”

He smirked in response to her eye roll.

“And…?” she probed, indicating she maintained high expectations of him still, regardless of her current witch-fairy state…

“You have a humanoid body,” Draco added. “But all your professional work apparel apparently vanished with your transformation, and your hair fell loose, so I would surmise their clothing and hair is part of the fairy magic somehow.” He gave her a questioning look. “Maybe part of their
magical distinction…”

A happy sort of soft tinkling sound came from where she sat as she moved her legs in a playful swing, and it had a fuzzying effect on his brain…

Flowered shoes…

Oh!

“Like I said, you’re a wood fairy, which I’m basing off the fact your…erm…dress is green, your shoes have magical flower buds that bloom and then shed their petals, but they dissolve into fairy dust before making contact with a surface.”

“Right,” Granger acknowledged, pointing back to her wings. “And what colour are my wings?”

“They’re transparent,” he answered, reaching for far back memories of stories in forgotten recesses of his mind. “Water fairies are blue, then?”

“I’d say more blue-green,” she shrugged. “And they look more like Pixie wings, to be honest.”

Draco nodded in acknowledgment. “It makes me wonder if your magic is now fairy magic, or if your magical core is still the same…”

“Which I’m not ready to test,” Hermione cut in with a sharp yank on the hem of her dress skirt. “At least, not yet anyways,” she admitted in a softer tone.

Draco considered her request, it seemed reasonable enough for now, all things considered, and he could understand her hesitation…Fairy magic was minimal in comparison…

“You could understand me,” he added, letting the witch-fairy know that the magic question had been dropped, for now… “I couldn’t understand you without the translating charm, which worked, by the way. I hadn’t entirely expected that to work,” he confessed.

“Neither did I,” she agreed, perking up and crossing one ankle behind another. “To be honest, I’m not sure how much of that is from me already being a human, or if more domesticated and docile fairies have a system of communication with neighbouring humans.”

“I’ll be sure to jot that thought down for us the soonerst opportunity I have, Granger,” he teased, rubbing his left arm again, an action that hadn’t gone unnoticed by her, he observed.

She’d yet to say anything about it anytime she’d caught him in the six months of working with her, though, and he hadn’t decided yet if he was more grateful or felt almost slighted by her silent ponderings…

“You change colours,” he blurted, startling her into the air. “Sorry, sorry…just popped into my head. You seem to change colours according to your feelings.”

That shade of pink shone from her form again as she dropped back to the arm of his chair, and he could see that she had started chewing on her bottom lip.

It was a very appealing colour indeed, but it couldn’t lead to anything good to question if it was from simple embarrassment at this new level of self-exposure, or…

“Yeah,” she breathed. “I’m having to fight off a lot of instinctual urges. It seems I’m only able to process limited range of emotions at a time.”
“How limited?”

Granger shrugged a shoulder. “Maybe two?” She didn’t sound fully certain. “One emotion or overwhelming thought defers, or surrenders I guess you could say, if the emerging one is strong enough.” She sighed. “It feels like I’m at war with myself as to which emotion is stronger.”

He considered her before deciding to lift a tentative hand to her, revelling in the silk of her hair as he rested a finger on her shoulder. “I can’t apologize enough, Granger,” he murmured, hoping to convey all the empathy possible in this simple act.

“It’s not your fault, Malfoy,” she said, shifting her shoulder to nudge his finger. “You didn’t know where the fairies were hiding, same as me, and you didn’t order him to bite me, right?”

“Right,” he chuckled nervously, pulling back his finger. He carded the now unoccupied hand through his hair, noting it couldn’t compare in silkiness… “How did this happen, Granger?” he asked, forcing himself to focus on the massive problem…

She sighed. “Well, when you gave me the brief from the Aurors about the fairy infestation, my first hypothesis was that it would be wood fairies, looking for places darker and cooler with the coming of the summer months…”

“And you didn’t think it important to inform me of your assumptions before we left the office?” he demanded, arching a brow at her.

The witch-fairy turned a deep shade of pink, and this time he knew it was for shame that she’d withheld something from her partner. They’d made it their practice to share any theories with each other before setting off on assignments—at Hermione’s own insistence.

She fluttered her wings, ascending to look him directly in the eye. “I sort of tunnelled in my thinking when you started arguing for us taking the assignment. Didn’t think more about the types of fairies until I thought I heard something on that bookshelf.” She pointed right, then looked back at him. “And when I started moving books around, I felt a sharp clamp on my finger, then…” She snapped her mouth shut, waving her hands up and down, indicating her form.

“And they still back there?” he asked, urgency flooding his senses as he rose from his conjured seat.

“Afraid not,” Hermione answered, shaking her head. “They must have scattered while I transformed, I searched the bookshelf just after, but couldn’t find anything.”

He nodded, sitting back down, folding his hands over his lap. “What was the crash?”

Her entire form flushed that deep pink again, and he found himself very keen to make note of it later.

“A vase on your shelf,” she murmured, flushing deep pink down to her feet. “White and blue with gold crowing, looked suspiciously Elizabethan…”

“Probably because the infernal thing was.” Draco arched a brow and gave a dismissive wave, cupping his hands out, as a dark grey overcame the pink in her skin, her wings slowed and she descended.

“Granger.” He brought his hands inches away from his face when she sank dejectedly into his open palms. “Hey, hey,” he soothed. “There’s no need for this. The vase was an ostentatious effort to pacify the first Lucius Malfoy for rejecting his hand in marriage, and, frankly, I think he should have blown it to pieces when it first arrived more than four centuries ago,” he quipped.
She sniffed and met his eyes, allowing him to take in the full measure of devastation she couldn’t hide, much as he knew she would have liked to.

“I can assure you, Granger, it’s nothing so important it merits you fretting like this,” he tried again, giving her a playful poke in the ribs.

Something in her expression upturned and he chuckled, poking her again.

“Come on then, Granger, grey isn’t your colour. Silver’s better,” he countered. “You know, because of all the silver linings you’re famous for finding and all that…”

The grey faded in her aura, lighting a wicked spark in Draco’s mind.

He poked her again. And again. And again, in rapid succession and in different spots until she was a radiant gold, protecting her midsection with arms wrapped tightly around her waist and her fairy laughter reverberated all around the manor library.

Her wings beat rhythmic and happy, lifting her from his cupped hands, seemingly beyond her control. “Thanks, Malfoy,” she beamed. “This emotional thing is going to be arduous to say the least,” she finished with a slight furrow of her brow.

He gave a dismissive wave to keep his hands from clenching at the loss of warmth from her touch. “Speaking of, Granger,” he deflected. “Anything you can add to our wealth of knowledge?” he clipped, shoving his regrettably unoccupied hands into his pockets. His heart sank as her brows furrowed even tighter. “Anything like why you changed in the first place, or how to change you back?”

“Nothing comes to mind immediately,” she confessed, absently drumming her fingers against the bare skin of her legs, where there would usually be coverage in the form of pants, a dress or a skirt...

Draco swallowed hard, missing the first of it when she spoke again.

“...but, L…” she stopped short, pressing her lips into a thin line, as was her way of communicating displeasure with herself. “The thing is,” she finally resumed, once again turning that deep shade of pink. “Newt doesn’t say all that much about fairies, and I personally haven’t given them much more than a passing thought beyond the fact they exist. I’ve certainly never come across any case studies like this in my readings prior—you?” she queried, a hopeful lilt in her face.

Draco shook his head. “Not even in fairy stories or myths,” he added as he grinned and gestured around the room. “But, the Malfoy library rivals that of Hogwarts, so, I’d say we’re in a good place to start looking for some answers—probably how we should have started this day in the Ministry archives to be honest,” he supplied sardonically.

He raised his wand and cleared his throat, preparing to take full advantage of the blood magic that so deeply ran through every vein of this ancient mansion, when a golden beaming caught his attention.

Granger stared at him in such wide-eyed wonder, he couldn’t help the chuckle even as he proffered his available hand to her.

“Books are about to start flying, Granger,” he murmured, leaning his head to give the impression of sharing a secret as she allowed herself to drop in his hand. He moved his appendage back and level to his shoulder and kept his voice low. “You should have a front-row seat to a fantasy come to life.”

She tossed a look back at him, flapping out of his hand, but to his extreme pleasure, she kept close, hovering just over his shoulder.
He cleared his throat again and with a booming command, called out for books with any reference to fairies. He kept his bold stance beside the desk as books and tomes pulled and flew from the shelves, swirling and twirling in the air to avoid collision with the Malfoy heir, arranging and stacking themselves on the large desk.

When this enchanted dance had completed and the books now lay in several stacks on the desk, he turned to give Hermione a side look, and proceeded to chuckle at her gobsmacked expression.

“Wow,” she breathed, sinking to his shoulder, awestruck gaze tracing over the shelves of the vast library, before she seemed to recover, flush deeply and tuck several curls behind an ear. “How shall we do this?” she asked, the insinuated question of how this would work with her current status hanging in the air between them.

“Well, I suggest we divide and conquer,” Draco volunteered. “I’ll shrink books down to your size and you can be looking for cases of fairy transformations and undoings, and I’ll research what to do about fairy infestation...”

She threw him a questioning look that he merely shrugged his shoulders at.

With an indignant huff, she lifted herself from his shoulders, changing from red to pink. He swallowed a laugh, continuing to explain.

“We still have an infestation problem to take care of,” he said, pulling a few tomes from the first stack, jerking his head to a large table with chairs in the centre of the room. “So, that’s what I’ll be focusing on, since that’s the problem that go us in this mess to begin with.”

He conjured a size-proportionate desk and stool for Granger (being mindful of her wings), shrinking one tome, several parchment rolls, and a self-inking quill as she sat primly, pressed her knees together and crossed her ankles. He chortled to himself as he opened his first tome, drawing some optimism from the simple act of Granger doing something so incredibly...Granger...as they started their separate research topics.

Draco slammed another tome closed, releasing an angry growl, throwing himself back in his chair, and burning metaphorical holes in the ceiling with this glare.

“Nothing again?” Granger queried, disappointment heavy in her question.

“No! Bloody buggering sh—”

Granger start speaking, making nonsensical sounds, obviously attempting to blare out his irritated rant.

He snapped upright, throwing his glare across at her, waving at the stacks of untouched volumes on the desk in the corner. “I didn’t know this many books mentioning fairies even existed! A magical being I’ve not so much as given more than a passing thought to in my entire life, and there are this,” he jabbed the air in the direction of the desk, “many books referencing this infinitesimal being?!?”

Granger soared from her desk, closing the distance between them, stopping to hover right in front of his face. “Malfoy, I...I know...” she started, voice low and soothing, skin its usual shade of cream, but something about it glowed, emitting an intangible and inexplicable warmth. “It’s discouraging, I haven’t found anything either. We can’t give up yet—there are still so many volumes to search through.”
“Exactly, Granger. ‘So many volumes’…” He rubbed his left arm, feeling that itch again. “We could have weeks of research ahead of us, and I have no idea how this is going to be explained to… everyone in your life.” He willed her to understand with the depth in his gaze. “You have people Granger, and this will be taken as my fault for accepting the assignment in the first place, which is true, so they’d be right. Salazar, I’ll be fired and that will be it. This was the only place I could get hired in Britain, and I’ll have to relocate, again. I can’t go back to France, so I’ll have to find something in Italy or Spain, or…”

He trailed off, heart racing, no longer able to refute the pull of the downward spiral.

He was sinking. Down-down-down…

Warmth pressed into his neck. Like warm silk.

Nuzzling and pressing.

And there was a muffled tinkling.

He blinked several times as the warmth pressed and started to travel.

Tracing up his jawline until reaching his hair, and he finally released Granger had been embracing him, the best that she could with her current stature.

Granger was how threading tiny, delicate fingers through his hair with feather-light touches, whispering indistinct words, as the melody of her voice was drowned out by the buzzing of her fairy voice.

He turned his face, an unspoken question to see her and she fluttered back to the front of his face.

“I was actually getting ready to suggest an idea,” she ventured, offering him a half smile as she waited for confirmation to proceed.

“Right,” she started, clasping her hands together as he nodded. “I think we can buy ourselves about a month by writing Harry and Ron separate letters saying there was an incident involving Polyjuice Potion, and I really don’t want any visitors.”

He made a face. “That’ll work?”

She shrugged a shoulder, turning that dark pink again. “It’s happened once before, and I think… well…it’s worth a shot, Malfoy.”

“Allright,” he straightened in his seat, stroking his chin. “You write the letters, I’ll get them back to normal size and…” He canted his head, biting the inside of his cheek. “There’s an owl at my flat. We could send them off there.”

He released a long, nervous puff of air while she considered the wording of his sentence.

“We?” she asked, allowing the implications to dangle.

He grasped at the invisible tendril. “Yes, ‘we’,” he affirmed. “You probably shouldn’t stay in your flat where anyone you’ve usually allowed can get through your wards. You definitely can’t adjust them, because that will only raise suspicion. And we’re not sleeping at the Manor.”

“Well, let’s get to it then,” she murmured, nodding and turning to flutter back to her conjured desk.

That Granger glow radiating from her creamy skin again.
Chapter 2

One week slipped by.

And then another.

Potter and the weasel had actually and unbelievably bought that Polyjuice Potion story. When Hermione told him the full extent of the story he’d been too dumbstruck to even laugh at the conjured mental image of a partial feline Granger, tail and all.

“You lot actually thought I was the heir of Slytherin?!” he’d finally managed before dissolving into an undignified fit of cackling. “I was nattering and whinging to Potter and Weasley that whole time…” (another round of laughter) “They must have thought I was the most repugnant little git…” (wheezing and grasping his sides) “And then, they’re off, running to meet up with only that Father wouldn’t tell me anything about the Chamber of Secrets, and you’re…you’re… (fist banging the table, the other waving over the witch-fairy) “Merlin, did you have the fur, the ears, and the tail?”

Granger had turned the deepest of reds, vanishing behind a stack of books, bellowing that he shouldn’t follow her.

He’d managed to take control of himself after that, and sat watching the desk, rubbing his left arm for what felt like hours, until Granger resurfaced, fluttering to him, her skin back to its usual cream.

She apologized for that emotional scene, and explained very clinically that was the reason for her absence of classes the beginning of the school year after Christmas holidays, and yes—she did have a tail, and she’d become so used to the swishing and flickering, she persuaded her parents she needed a cat with her at school for fall term third year.

She had gone a light shade of grey at the mention of her parents, and Draco quickly turned the subject back to their research. He’d learned during the first month of them working together that it was a strained and work-in-progress relationship to this day because of her life-saving actions before the war. He had, in turn, shared with her that he still hadn’t visited Lucius in Azkaban, but he had seen his mother from time to time since their trials at the end of the war…There had been the unspoken agreement to talk of parents as little as possible after that day.

What had been surprising about their current…situation…was the apathetic and unquestioning acceptance of their boss, regarding their absence from the office. Granger’s letter had been vague on the details, only stating the situation was ‘more involved than anticipated’ and she would send a daily or weekly tally of the hours they were devoted, however he preferred it. The response had been a simple order for weekly updates and hour tallies, well wishes in their work, and to contact him if further assistance was necessary.

Granger had seemed pensive over that, but then said something about gift horses and mouths that he hadn’t understood and resumed reading one of her shrunken volumes, so Draco considered the matter dropped.

There were other, more pressing issues to be dealt with.

Some that Draco was allowing himself to brew over, and others that were filed away to be dealt with at a later date.

Or possibly never.
The issue of near daily mail from Potter had been an annoyance handled easily enough—he’d sent out for more owl treats to compensate for all the extra post Athena had been most aggrieved to be in charge of.

The issue of Granger’s magic had been and continued to be an obstacle that needed daily consideration.

They hadn’t been confident in Apparation and fairies, so Granger had latched herself to one of his sleeves before they Floo’d from the library to his flat. There, they had spent hour after fruitless hour testing any range of spells, charms, hexes and jinxes they could think of. It had been a slow process, as Granger would turn varying shades of greys and reds, finally needing to take breaks when she’d turned a definitive shade of slate.

The final devastating blow had been when Draco offered for her to try rudimentary spells with his wand that only required pointing and an incantation. That had backfired, actually shooting Granger across the room, with and Draco sprinting to catch her before she caught herself with her wings.

She hadn’t been able to talk after that. Her colouring went completely ashen and she shook her head at him - or no one in particular - like a wounded dog, barely managing to keep herself airborne.

Draco didn’t bother with useless, sedative encouraging phrases. Instead, he’d proffered his hand, palm up, which Granger wasted no time sinking onto, and walked them to the guest room across the hall from his room.

He conjured a fairy-sized bed and other furniture pieces easily enough, but a properly functioning toilet, bathtub and shower had taken a bit more effort, and in the end, he was quite pleased with what he’d come up with for her. For a final addition of cheer and privacy, he set decorative panels around the bathroom elements.

She didn’t say anything in acknowledgment, only placed a light kiss on his uplifted thumb before flittering to the bed, her aura a lighter shade of grey.

Draco had decided that night her embracing of his neck earlier and that kiss on his thumb had only been reactions to situations where words weren’t enough. Nothing more. No need to catalogue those occurrences for later…

Hermione continued to have the occasional overwhelming outbursts of sorrow or anger at her loss of magic over the next couple of weeks, but she was quick to work herself through the emotional storm, and even quicker to take cues from Draco, who found himself in the unique position of trying to be encouraging, for the first time in his life.

That someone was depending on him. Needed him. And his soul wasn’t being torn in two during the process, or he wasn’t spending sleepless nights in fear of a dark wizard invading his dreams, haunting him with threats.

This was uncharted territory, but he drew strength from her, and she from him in the following days.

And in its own unbelievable way, it had been relatively easy adjusting to living with a witch-transformed-fairy.

There had been the brief informative conversation the second day that no one would be coming by. “I’m certain of it, Granger,” he’d assured her. “Theo and his new bride are off on a long honeymoon, Blaise is playing for the Italian National Quidditch team, and I don’t keep up much with Goyle.”

When she’d inclined her head with an uplifted brow, flushing that deep pink, he’d been quick on the
uptake, flashing a salacious grin. “Feeling territorial already, Granger?” She’d sputtered and flown from his presence, but not before the pink had faded into that delectable pale shade that left him feeling very satisfied indeed (although, he still wasn’t thinking about it…)

They found her taste in foods gravitated towards fresh fruits and vegetables. Draco had gone through every type of tea he had to offer her some variety other than plain water—Earl Grey, peach, raspberry, white, green, chamomile, vanilla, lemon, apple cinnamon, blackberry—with the same choking results from Granger every time. And so, she resorted herself to sniffing and watching while he luxuriated in a good strong cuppa every morning and afternoon. He decided it’d be best to not tease her about the tinge of envious green in her skin as she watched…

Some evenings they took volumes back to his flat, continuing their research after a quick meal. Other times, they would settle the evening with a game of Wizards chess (Granger had been delighted to find the chess pieces understood her voice commands and moved accordingly…).

There were evenings of just talking. And there was one evening when Granger asked if he would conjure a piano for her, and she’d sat and played for hours, long into the night, lulling him to sleep on the couch with wistful and haunting melodies he’d never heard before.

The first evening of the third week, they’d come back to his flat in a discouraging silence, having come to the halfway point in the trunked up Polyjuice story, no nearer to answers as they’d been on the first day.

Granger had tossed something about not being hungry over her shoulder before flying off to her quarters in the guestroom with three shrunk books. Draco brewed himself a pot of strong Earl Grey and sank into the couch with a tome that he was certain would be as useless as all the others that had come before…

Halfway through the repetitive volume, he bolted upright, eyes reading and rereading a handwritten comment in a margin. “Could be a spell,” he mused aloud. “Or could be nothing at all…”

Unthinking, he rose from the couch and padded to the guestroom, face still buried in the large book. He pressed his hand against the door, delighted to find it not fully shut so he wouldn’t have to fumble with the handle, and slipped across the threshold…

Stopping short at the scene before him.

The blurred silhouette of Granger in the bathtub behind the decorative panels.

Everything inside him blanked, and submitted to this all-consuming mantra flashing through his mind, “She’s taking a bath-she’s taking a bath-she’s taking a bath…”

He sucked a sharp breath through his teeth as a single leg lifted from the water, and impossible still, she leaned up and forward to start scrubbing.

Jerked from his stupor, he ducked his head, hastening out the door, almost pulling it to, until the translation charm finally caught up to his brain.

She was singing.

It was one of those wistful tunes she’d played for him over and over again, turning that pale pink and shaking her head whenever he’d ask if it had lyrics…

But now she sang.
About kisses and sighs, moonlight and love songs. About woman and man, and do or die. About the world and lovers, and the passing of time.

The torturous melody plagued him until he fell into a restless sleep that night.

“Find anything Granger?” Draco asked, waltzing back into the library.

Granger didn’t acknowledge she heard him.

He chuckled to himself that it looked as though she’d taken her wandering-thought stance of leaning over to one side, one hand drumming the edge of her table, and the other buried in her curls (after three weeks of living with her, he’d determined they were no longer simply ‘brown’; rather, they were a delicious combination of chocolate, hazelnut, and cinnamon).

“Granger,” he whispered when he’d settled right behind her.

“Malfoy!” she yelped, bolting from her stool, wings pounding the air as she whirled to face him.

He was disappointed to find she’d managed to war off that luscious pale pink from overtaking her colouring as she lowered herself back to the stool.

“I’m sorry, were you asking me something, Malfoy?”

“Only if you’d found anything,” he answered, breezing by her corner of the table to fall back into his chair.

She looked back down at the open tome on her miniature desk and back up to him. “Nothing of much use for the moment,” she deadpanned, drumming several fingers over the pages of the book. “Have you been successful in your efforts?”

“Indeed, I have,” Draco grinned, rubbing his hands together in a gleeful manner. “Every last room in the manor, including the unused elf quarters has been de-fairied, with the appropriate wards set in place to keep them from invading again.”

“That really was a lucky find of yours earlier this week.” Granger beamed at him. “You should have told me right away, we could have celebrated with, well…” She giggled to herself. “I suppose you could have had the drink while mine could have been simply metaphorical…”

Draco swallowed hard, fighting off memories of that evening earlier in the week…thinking of Snape using Daphne Greengrass as an example dance partner in Yule Ball preparation. Thinking of his Mother, furious at garden gnomes for ruining her flower bed. Thinking of Weasley stuffing his gob every single meal…

That did it.

He breathed out a long breath. “It wasn’t anything we could test out until the next day, so I thought you deserved an uninterrupted evening, Granger. And now that all fairies save one -” he fixed her with a pointed smirk “- have been driven from the manor and back to the surrounding woods, we can double our efforts in finding a solution to the lingering problem.”

Granger gave him an absent looking nod, gnawing on her bottom lip, hands twisting in her lap. “Actually,” she murmured, fluttering up from her desk and up to his face. “I fancy a music break. D’you think you could conjure a piano for me here?”
Draco blinked in surprise. “Um, sure…” he agreed, waving his wand over a free spot over the table, considering the witch as she fluttered over to the nearly appeared instrument and stool. It wasn’t an unreasonable request, after all, and she hadn’t taken much of a lunch break, but she was usually so singularly focused, almost fixated, when it came the task at hand.

Any and all tasks they’d been assigned to over the last six months, not just the current situation…

Any doubts or questions melted away as her delicate, nimble fingers took up that mesmerizing, haunting melody. She wasn’t singing, but he could make out that she was humming along.

Draco lifted his chair and carried it a few paces left, so that she could see her admiring audience. “What’s that song you keep playing?” he asked, leaning forward and resting his elbows on his legs.

“It’s from an old Muggle film,” she responded vaguely without looking up.

Draco waited as she continued to play, counting the number of breaths she took. He made it to ‘seven’ when she spared him a side look.

“It’s a black and white film. Considered to be a classic and must-see for anyone with an interest in cinema.”

“Does it have a happy ending?”

Granger’s fingers faltered. “A widely debated answer, actually,” she said, resuming as if she hadn’t missed a beat. “Some argue that because the heroine sacrificed a life of love and happiness for honour, duty, and the greater good, she was happiest in the end.”

He swallowed as she offered him a wry smile. “Others argue that the couple reconciled, and they’d always have the memories of their true and undying love, and that would carry her through. And then others debate the heroine should have stayed, and not boarded the plane…”

She trailed off as the tune came to its wistful conclusion, even as Draco found it difficult to breathe...

“What do you think, Granger?” he murmured, low and contemplative.

“Changes every time I watch it,” she shrugged, flowing seamlessly right into her next piece.

“What about this one?” he queried, finding something peaceful and serene

“This is Debussy, a French composer.”

She let the simple answer rest, and he chose to listen, letting the music wash over him until he’d absorbed the underlying serenity of the notes...

“Why did you go to France, Malfoy?” It was little more than a whisper, but the question was so abrupt, so unexpected, he felt as if he’d been clipped from behind while riding his trusted Nimbus.

“I…” he scrambled, uncertain of what he should divulge… “I was running away,” he answered, deciding on the truth.

She nodded, and made no further inquiries or comments as she finished out the song. Gracefully lifting her fingers from the glossy keys, she repositioned herself on the stool, piercing him with those full brown eyes.

He shifted and sat upright, absently rubbing over his left arm. “I mean, you saw how it was that eighth year, Granger. I was the failed Death Eater to some, but to most I was still the one who killed
Dumbledore at worst. At best, I was the coward who only just allowed Death Eaters and Greyback into Hogwarts.”

He grimaced but kept her steady gaze. “The year after was somehow worse. I couldn’t get hired, refused service unless I was with Mother or Aunt Andromeda. One witch accused me of kidnapping Teddy one time…”

“I remember that article,” Hermione nodded slowly, sorrowfully.

“Well, after that, Mother suggested a change of scenery; that there were still family properties in France...And to France I went.”

“But… you came back…” It wasn’t a question, but the unspoken inquiry hung delicately in the air.

“I did.” He pursed his lips to keep them from curling into a sneer. “Seven months of casual meet-ups, lazy days, it-means-nothing-Draco nights, and I thought maybe she’d change her mind…”

“She didn’t.”

Draco shook his head, continuing to rub his arm. “Astoria was true to her word—it really meant nothing to her. I was just the every-other week for three or four days at a time guy. I saw her with one of the others. The next time we met up, I asked if she’d ever thought about making this more permanent. She just laughed at me. Went off on we were just having fun. I said I wanted more than just fun forever. And she collected her purse and shades, gave me a final kiss and waltzed out of the hotel room and my life without looking back.”

Granger had become that melancholic grey, surprising him by swiftly covering the distance between them and setting herself on his shoulder.

“You really meant it when you said I was your last chance for a job?” she asked, although she already knew the answer.

“Yep.” Brief, but to the point—why mince words now? “My applications to bookstores, Apothecary or potion shops, all a toss-up if they’d even allow me to leave one. Gringotts actually gave me a ‘We will be in touch, Mr. Malfoy,’ and then I never did. Department of Mysteries, Magical Law Enforcement, Accidents and Catastrophes, International Magical Cooperation…”

“I have the idea, Malfoy.” The grey colour deepened, and her eyes seemed to take on a life of their own. It was like finding the open door to the source of all the pity, regret, sorrow and commiseration in the world.

Merlin, he needed a drink…

“Malfoy.”

Her voice drew him back, like a wave returning to the rocks.

Waves break upon the rocks though…

“I thought someone was playing a joke on me when you first were assigned to me,” she said, pensive and humourless. Perhaps even…tentative… “My previous two partners requested transfers. I took the job too seriously, cared too much about the results and outcomes. Wasn’t able to just let things go one the assignment was done. I had to follow through all the way to the Wizengamot. And they just wanted a plush nine-to-five, with an hour for lunch…”
The sincerity in her voice pulled at him…called to him…drew him in…

“My parents still won’t let me bring my wand when I visit,” she went on, twisting her twined fingers over her lap. “They ask me at least once a year to give up my magic and just come back and find a job in the Muggle world. Zoologist or Animal Rights Attorney, or something of the like.”

He was heading for the rocks, swift and sure. Embracing the inevitable, he said nothing so she could continue.

“But the thing is, even though my first couple of months at Hogwarts were some of the hardest and loneliest I’ve ever know, it was the first time in my life, I felt truly at home. I was of magic. I wasn’t crazy. I didn’t have to hide this deep dark secret anymore. I was free to be me…”

She paused, a gentle smile at the corners of her lips and he was undone. He would allow himself to be broken on the rock of Hermione for all eternity.

Just as long as it was her.

“And the irony is that I’m stuck in the form of a magical being, with minimal magic capabilities,” she scoffed, kicking her legs out irritably.

He didn’t blink before reaching out and nudging her cheek with a fingertip. “We’ll get you out of this, Granger,” he said, boring into her eyes. “On my word and my life, we’re getting you back.”

She flapped her wings, giving him a curious sort of look before lifting up from his shoulder. “Call it a day, Malfoy?”

“Sure,” he agreed lifting himself from his chair. “I know you can’t enjoy anything but water for the moment, but I could really use a drink tonight, Granger.” He cast her a thoughtful look. “Care to let me disillusion you and we head to a pub?”

“That’s alright,” she shook her head in the negative. “You enjoy a night away. I’ve some more reading I can do.”

“Suit yourself,” he shrugged, as she collected the open tome and two others from her desk, as he gathered up three volumes of his own. “The offer still stands until I leave the flat.”

She chuckled as they made their way to the fireplace. “Where will you be going?”

“Knockturn Alley,” he answered, alarmed as her eyes suddenly blew wide. “Hey, it’s alright, Granger. Not for anything nefarious. It’s just, the pub there never turns away anyone, and I know I can just have a quiet drink there.” He watched her swallow, gaze still uncertain. “Two drinks tops and I’ll be home. I promise.”

And with that pledge, she took a firm hold of his sleeve before he threw down a handful of Floo powder and they disappeared into a world of green and grey.
Chapter 3

If he were being honest with himself, Draco didn’t covet the idea of having a drink in Knockturn Alley. It was a short distance from Borgin and Burkes, which didn’t hold particularly fond memories for him. There the younger years of being a spoiled little prick, observing and admiring dark artefacts before he’d seen what they were truly capable of. And then…

He wasn’t too keen on the alternatives though.

With Hogsmeade or Diagon Alley there was the risk of bumping into one of Granger’s people, which meant lying through his teeth and have to answer a host of questions, spend the evening keeping up with falsehoods.

Muggle London...not an option. He’d yet to pub crawl in Muggle London without Blaise or Theo, and he was in no mood for flirty conversation.

And he just needed to see anything other than the walls of his flat and the Manor...

“Granger, I’m heading out,” he sauntered down the hall from his room, adjusting the clasp of his black robe.

He found her sitting on the arm of his couch, face buried in the book on her lap, radiating pale pink. “How do I look?” he asked, fighting back a smirk, crossing distance to the couch in three steps, arms out in for an inspection.

Almost tentatively, Granger set the book aside and flapped slowly up to him, taking her time in what he imagined to be careful scrutiny. “Your hood’s crooked in the back,” she noted. “And, I think I’ve seen you wear a black tie, so you may want to grab that from your closet before heading out, just to complete the handsome vampire look you have going,” she clipped, chuckling and ducking back to eye-level as he muttered under his breath.

“Grey and black scream ‘serious’ and ‘bugger off’,” he scoffed, narrowing his eyes in mock irritation. “And my hood is not crooked.”

She gave a soft snigger before her face fell flat. “You will be careful, won’t you? It’s...well, it’s Knockturn Alley, and,” she hesitated, chewing her lip, paling to a snowy white as she fluttered nearer his face. “Just be careful.”

“Two drinks, Granger.” He held up his hand in oath. “And I’ll only drink what the barkeep pours himself.”

“Alright,” she conceded. “I think I’ll just do some things in my room while you’re gone. Enjoy your drinks, Malfoy.”

She flew off, disappearing from view before he could respond. “Odd,” he muttered, feeling at his hood to make sure it was, in fact, lying flat and straight...

And with that, he pulled his wand from the folds of his robe and Apparated on the spot...

Landing in a puddle in the middle of an empty cobblestone street. He swore as he pulled the hood of his cloak over his head and moved from the middle of the street. He cast a drying spell over his trousers, socks and shoes. His gaze narrowed at the dilapidated shop signs, the street vendors having already closed up in favour of a drink.
Moonlight reflected off puddles as he veered left, stiffening as he passed the ominous glass window. A brief look told him Mr. Borgin appeared to be in the back of the store...probably counting the days profits...

Sucking a chilly breath through his teeth, he steadied on, fixing his attention on the dingy hanging wood sign just ahead, advertising the pub. He pulled his hood closer to his face, set his jaw and passed through the creaking door.

Silent patrons were scattered throughout the establishment, no more than two occupying a booth or a table at one time. There was a lone wizard on one end of the bar, with a fat, balding, and grungy looking wizard wiping down glasses behind the bar.

Draco shifted his gaze for a second look over the patrons before sauntering to the other side of the bar and setting himself on a stool.

"Firewhisky," he absently drawled, watching carefully as the barkeep poured the fluid into a crystal tumbler.

He slowly sipped the burning fluid, his thoughts settling to a lazy crawl as he neared the bottom of the first tumbler.

One final week left before time would be up on the Polyjuice charade. (sip) What if it took longer than a week to break this? What if searching stretched to a month...a year? (sip) What if they never...??

He drained the glass.

"Another," he summoned, staring unfocused at the shelves behind the counter.

The first sip from his second glass sent his reflections off in a different, but not altogether unexpected, direction.

What of those pretty blushes of hers? What of her almost shy behaviour at times?

What if her entrapment in this fairy state was the universe telling him he would never deserve...more...

Never get to see where this near territory of familiarity and...more could lead to.

Never get to see what would happen if he kissed those full lips before she had a chance to purse them.

He drained half the tumbler in a quick gulp, relishing the burn.

It couldn’t last, this arrangement they’d set up.

If she remained a fairy for...a very long time (shudder, sip), something else would get arranged, effectively ending this new familiar and companionable realm they’ve entered.

When she was free (sip, because he would not rest until she was), would he still have a job? If so, would stolen looks and the occasional flirting continue? Would they be enough?

Or would this uncharted, albeit exquisite, path continue further? Could she brave the potential fallout of being with a failure former Death Eater? Would she even want to?

He sighed and finished his drink with one final sip. “Thanks,” he nodded to the barkeeper, laying
more than enough galleons on the table.

“‘ave another, boy. No charge,” the wizard called out as Draco made for the door.

Draco looked back. “Pardon?”

The grubby wizard lifted a bottle and swirled it. “Not enough in ‘ere for a full drink,” he explained. “May as well finish it off...”

Draco considered him and then pivoted, making back for his empty crystal tumbler. “Thanks,” he said, lifting the glass as a toast when the wizard had emptied the dregs of the bottle into Draco’s glass.

Draco breathed deep, preparing to drain the contents in one gulp...

And became very confused when something wholly unexpected made contact with his lips instead of the glass.

Something suspiciously like...sodden hair?

He spat at the unknown substance on his lips, and several things seemed to happen all at once.

The gold and creamy aura of fairy Hermione stuttered and staggered, crashing down to the bar before Draco had a chance to respond...

The barkeeper roared and snarled, snatching for his wand...

A wizard’s voice from behind Draco yelled “Incarcerous!”

Draco ducked, bracing for the magical binding and gagging...that never came...

“I thought it was my turn, Harry!”

“Sorry, Ron, you’d just taken a swig and it seemed like the right time.”

Draco rose cautiously, looking behind, and finding two unfamiliar looking wizards marching around disturbed tables and chairs from seconds before when the pub emptied in surprise.

“What are you doing here, Malfoy?” an unfamiliar looking wizard with a white beard and glasses asked him.

Draco’s mind whirled, only just realizing his hood must have fallen back at some point. “Having a dr —”

“Hermione?!”

The witch’s name uttered with such familiarity silenced Draco, and his attention snapped back to the bar.

He threw himself forward.

Because it was Hermione Granger laying in a heap atop the bar. Clad back in her usual work apparel, the exact clothing she was wearing three weeks ago, brown curls bound back in one of her long braids.

“What the bloody hell is going on here?" the second unknown wizard asked as Draco checked the
witch, his witch, for a pulse.

“Heart rate is low and breathing shallow,” Draco snapped. “Which means she needs to get to St. Mungo’s now!”

He bent himself to gather her in his arms...

“Out of my way, Malfoy!”

The second unknown Draco now assumed was the Weasel King shoved at him hard, snatching Hermione in his arms, Apparating away as Draco was reaching for the wizard’s robe.

“Awfully nice of you, don’t mind if I do...”

The white bearded bespectacled wizard snagged Draco’s outstretched hand, lacing their fingers together, gripping alarmingly tight.

Draco snarled “What the—”

“Exactly, Malfoy,” the wizard cut-in, wand trained at Draco’s chest. “I have a feeling Hermione hasn’t been honest with me these last few weeks,” eyes narrowed from behind the glasses, “and I’ve a feeling you have some answers.”

“There’s no time for this, Potter!” Draco yanked and pulled for his freedom. “We have to make sure she’s alright, we have to—”

“Yes, we sure do,” Potter interrupted again, swinging their hands back and forth. “But, unfortunately for you, you’ve been caught in the middle of a stakeout, and so, right now, you’re stuck here with me until back-up arrives to take him,” Potter gave a dismissive wave over the counter, “into custody. And until then, I don’t trust you as far as Hermione will fly a broomstick without screaming.” He smirked and pointed to their hands. “So, you’re stuck like this, with me for the time being, Malfoy.”

Draco yanked and shoved, cursing and growling before deciding some magic must be involved in Potter’s grip. He sneered at his captor, recalling the days of his entitled youth and hatred of said wizard. “Does your wife know you still harbour feelings for me, Potter?” he leered, almost wincing at the unoriginality of that low blow…

Potter’s smirk only broadened, eyes gleaming behind their frames. “All the girl talk I’ve caught around the house lately, I think it’s safe to say Mrs. Potter will be jealous of me tonight, actually,” he retorted. “Now shut up, and have a seat,” he nodded at an undisturbed bar stool. “Just don’t be having any more drinks tonight…”

Draco ground his teeth, deciding to be the better wizard and say nothing more. He set about forcing his heart to beat normally again, knowing he was fighting a useless battle until he knew Granger was safe from all danger.

XXXXXXXXXXXXX

“Bloody hell!”

Draco rolled his eyes at Weasley, Polyjuice potion long since worn off now. “Is your vocabulary still so limited that you insist upon such plebeian expressions of alarm and disbelief?”

“Oh, shut it, Malfoy,” Potter snapped, obviously still quick to defend his friends, even such dim-witted ones…
Potter rested his arms on the table in the food hall of St. Mungo’s and leaned forward. “You’ve got to admit, it’s a bit funny to take in.”

Draco arched a condescending brow. “Not exactly the word I would have used, Potter. Granger’s been very down, missing her magic and her regular life and all that…”

“Yeah, Harry,” Weasley shoved his elbow into Potter’s ribs, and to his credit, Potter’s face flamed as he winced and rubbed his side.

“I didn’t mean it like a joke, I just…” he trailed off, looking justifiably embarrassed. “I laughed out loud for minutes when Hermione said she’d gotten herself into another Polyjuice predicament.” He shook his head, looking back and forth between the wizards.

By this time, Weasley had cracked a smile too. “She ever say what animal this time?” he asked, betraying the underlying humour in his tone, which Draco did not appreciate at all.

Potter bit down on his bottom lip as he nodded his head vigorously. He ran a hand through his ridiculously unruly hair, pulling his glasses from his face. “A niffler!” he burst, as if he were a child that couldn’t keep a Christmas present a secret any longer.

Draco groaned, sinking back into his booth, as Potter and Weasley went off chortling and nattering like a couple of first year Hufflepuffs.

“A niffler?” Weasley squawked.

Potter nodded.

Weasley’s eyes widened. “Huge yellow-orange bill and all?”

Pottered sniggered, nodding still. “Said she kept fighting the urge to collect shiny things…”

Which sent the idiot duo over the edge and into a fit of roaring laughter.

Keenly aware of glaring attention they were getting, Draco straightened in his seat. “Oy!” he yelled, snapping his fingers, as if vying for the attention of two untrained puppies. “Really not the place for this, gentlemen.” He glared over his nose as the two wizards settled and resumed upright positions again.

“Come on, Malfoy,” Potter said first. “Hermione’s had the antidote, and out of the woods.” He set his glasses back on his face, adjusting until they sat straight. “All we’re waiting on now is for them to finish with the tests and then we’ll get to see her.”

“Correction,” Draco waggled a finger at the wizards. “I’ll be seeing her first.” He pointed back to himself. “She’s my partner, and I—”

“Yes, Malfoy,” Weasley sneered, jabbing a finger of his own across the table. “And just how is that your partner ended up as a fairy for the last three weeks, hmm? She sent letters to us with a story she knew we’d actually believe, which means she was biding the two of you some time…”

Weasley and Draco glared hard, cold stares at each other across the table as Potter jumped in.

“Which we know Hermione wouldn’t do if she didn’t feel she had good reason too,” he offered, laying a hand on Weasley’s arm. “So nobody hex anyone, and let’s just wait until we’re summoned.” He nodded at the large fake galleon in the middle of the table, set to vibrate as soon as Grangers tests were complete.
“Fine,” Weasley huffed, throwing himself back in his chair, running a hand down his face. “Was it Yaxley after all?” he asked, presumably to Potter.

“Yep,” Potter affirmed. “We should be thanking Malfoy,” he arched his brows, levelling Draco with a look. “Who knows how much longer we would have been staking out the pub otherwise, and if he would have gotten away before he had enough of anything.”

“I think it’s fair that the two of you,” Draco jabbed the air, releasing an irritated huff, “begin talking now. Granger apparently put her life in jeopardy saving mine, and I’d like to know how she knew it was in danger in the first place.”

He crossed his arms over his chest as the pair across the table paled and squirmed at the harsh reality of Draco’s words.

Potter scratched the back of his neck. “To be honest, Malfoy, I was hoping you would know how Hermione was on the scene, or knew what was about to happen…” He trailed off, looking sheepish.

“Not a clue Potter,” Draco clipped. “I told her I was going to have some drinks, she said she was going to read in her room, and that was the last I saw of her until I spat her over the bar in the pub.”

“Why were you in Knockturn Alley for a simple drink?” Weasley accused, eyes narrowed again.

Draco huffed again. “I don’t particularly care for your tone, but I really wasn’t in the mood to run into a friend of Granger’s and have to keep up with all sorts of little falsehoods about where she is and how she’s been. I can’t navigate Muggle London on my own, and frankly, I think it’s rude to sit down with a drink when the lady is only able to have water.”

Potter’s brows shot up and Draco back-peddalled. “Merlin, not like that!” he hissed. “It appears that fairies can only tolerate drinking water…We’ve tried all sorts of flavoured teas over the weeks, and they all make her ill.

Weasley began muttering something not quite as under his breath as he believed, but Draco chose to ignore the ginger idiot, spreading his hands across the table, deciding to ask Potter point-blank, almost dreading to know the answer…

“Did Granger know that Yaxley had been Polyjuicing himself as the pub barkeeper in Knockturn Alley?”

Potter didn’t answer, even went so far as to silence Weasley when the git started to jump in. Potter studied Draco over with those famous green eyes before he finally shook his head. “We didn’t tell her, if she did know, because not even we knew,” he vaguely offered.

Draco sat unblinking. “Are you—”

Pottered lifted a hand. “I’m not getting into what Hermione did or didn’t know. There may be some fairy magic involved in all this we don’t know about.” He lowered his hand, twining it with his other over the table as he leaned forward. “What I am saying is that in my letters to Hermione, I’d mentioned it was a good thing the two of you weren’t out and about for the time being. That there was the possibility of a still-loose Death Eater residing in or frequenting Knockturn Alley.”

Questions swirled like memories in a pensive as Draco allowed this information to sink in. “So…”

The galleon unexpectedly went off, with such a force that all the wizards jumped from their seats, wands drawn.
Potter laughed and collected the irritating summons into the folds of his robe.

They marched in silence until they were stopped by the Medi-Witch standing guard outside Granger’s door.

“One visitor at a time,” she started mechanically, eyes landing on Draco. “And she’s asking to see Mr. Malfoy first.”

Draco silently cheered, slipping by the Medi-Witch, not envying her current position of having to deal with the loud and objecting Aurors.

Silence ensued as Draco closed the door behind him, and he had never been more grateful St. Mungo’s covered their rooms with silencing charms. He blinked a few times, adjusting to the dimmed lights in the room.

“I’m not contagious, Malfoy,” Granger chuckled from her hospital bed, staring at him with a bemused tilt of her head.

“Of course not!” He found himself standing at her bedside before he even realized he’d moved. “Salazar, Granger! I don’t understand. How did you...I mean...why would you, and how...”

Granger lay a silencing tiger over his lips, whispering, “Shhhhh. It’s alright, Malfoy. I’m alright. It’s over; it’s alright.”

He wrapped his hand around her wrist, pulling her hand back slowly, releasing his hold to hesitantly press his palm to hers.

Granger beamed as she threaded her fingers through his, squeezing his hand twice.

He drew the joined hands to his face and pressed a kiss to her fingers, marveling at how large and full her eyes were. And the many shades of brown he could further name now that they were their usual size.

“You’ve no idea how terrified I was when I saw you in the pub, Granger,” he murmured, savouring her name as a blessing, a prayer. “First when I almost swallowed you,” he paused to allow Granger the freedom to flush and snort at herself.

“And then,” he resumed, “when you were this,” he waved his free hand over the length of her body, “and dying and I didn’t know anything, or...”

“Hey, hey,” Granger soothed, squeezing his hand again. “Shall I explain?”

“Please do.”

Granger grinned and looked just beyond Draco, raised and waving her hand. “Have a seat,” she offered, an excited twinkle in her eyes.

He chuckled as water misted in his eyes. He was sitting in a chair, that Hermione Granger conjured wandlessly.

“So...” Hermione tentatively began, resting their twined hands on the edge of the bed, as he scooted his chair closer. “I found something...this very afternoon actually. Just before you came back from the last of the de-fairying and setting up the wards...”

She paused to chew her lip, drumming her fingers over his knuckles...
Merlin, she was so beautiful...even when acting nervous...

His heart inexplicably quickened at that realization, and he tapped her fingers, encouraging her to continue.

He was the wave to her rock, needing the pull to all she offered.

“It was a journal of sorts,” she resumed, pressing her fingers into his knuckles. “The published recordings of a wizard who’d been captured and imprisoned by Muggles. A fairy found him, and they had worked out a form of communication. Fairy magic, although weak in comparison to witches and wizards, is more elemental and of the earth.”

She paused, canting her head, asking with her eyes if she’d lost him yet...

“Go on,” he urged, keeping his voice low.

“They can see through magic meant to deceive, because they see down to the elemental form...the fairy was able to alert the wizard one day that one he thought was another Muggle there to torture him, was actually someone under the guise of Polyjuice Potion...it ended up being the wizard’s wife, there to set him free...”

“So, you could see...”

“Yeah,” Granger breathed, as if it was painful to admit. “I swear I had no idea it was Yaxley or that he was working in a pub until we walked in—Harry had only written information that there was a Death Eater out and about, and he’d been seen in Knockturn Alley...”

“Merlin, why didn’t you tell me?”

She flinched at his question, though there had been no malice or anger. He wasn’t even hurt…

He shifted to angle himself even more towards her. “I’m…it just seems like something you’d say or warn a person about.”

She offered a weak shrug. “Well, you’re a grown man, fully capable of taking care of yourself. I mean...y-you...” She stuttered and snapped her mouth shut, squeezing her eyes before looking at him and continuing. “You survived Voldemort and Bellatrix living in your house...” She looked as if she was in physical pain bringing up the past... “I mean, I didn’t want to sound a nag or worrier. Especially when I had nothing concrete to tell you, and when I didn’t really have a place to...”

Something in her admittance struck him, lighting a fuse of hope.

“A place?” he queried, blinking innocently.

“I mean, I know we’re work partners, but, you’ve been working non-stop almost for three weeks, why shouldn’t you have a break from me for an hour or three?”

“And yet, you came with me anyways?” he countered, enjoying that familiar pale pink flush tinge her cheeks.

She nodded, looking as if it were a strain to meet his gaze. “I stopped when I knew I’d flown out of your line of vision, and lucky me, you needed to check on your hood...”

He rolled his eyes while she sniggered lightly.

“I just grabbed ahold of the bottom of your robes before you Apparated—”
“Merlin, Granger—the puddle!” he exclaimed. “I landed in a sodding puddle! Is that why your hair was wet?”

She nodded again. “Dries slow, even as a fairy.”

“Why act like you weren’t coming with me?”

“Again, I just wanted you have your space.” She left it at that, but he drew hope and strength in all she didn’t say.

“Why drink the bloody thing, Granger?” he deadpanned. He hadn’t decided if he was more angry or grateful at her Gryffindor stupidity...

“Gryffindor,” she supplied with a nonchalant shrug, clearly reading his mind. “I saw him slip something in the bottle when you were making for the door...and you broke your promise, by the way!” She pulled her hand out of his, shoving him in the shoulder.

“And you decided to drink what you assumed was poison instead of me...” He narrowed his eyes, even as he fisted the sleeve of her hospital gown, tugging her close, dropping a kiss to her hair.

There was elation he’d never know before when she didn’t pull away, nuzzling closer in his embrace.

“How is it you’re here as you?” he breathed into her hair.

“Don’t know for certain,” she admitted softly, as if afraid anything too loud would break this moment... “My Healer is Muggle-born, and his theory is it’s something with the simplicity of fairy magic, like in Muggle fairy stories...”

She stopped herself, and he could feel her breathing exhilarate.

He swallowed hard. He’d read some of those Muggle stories to Teddy before... “Hermione?”

“Mmm?” she shifted, lifting her eyes to his.

He sucked a breath before closing his lips over hers. Waiting for her to respond...

And she did. Without hesitation.

She moaned and slid one of her hands up his arm, tracing his neck and over his ear before threading her fingers through his hair.

It was all the answer he needed. He settled a hand at the nape of her neck, tilting her head, pillowing her lips.

He was no longer a crashing wave. He was now the constant strength, drawing her open. He shushed any sense of urgency she tried to force, instead calming with her with his lips. Taking his time to suck and pry and lavish her mouth with his. Slow and languid and lazy.

Each kiss flowing and leading to another and another. As effortless and natural as the songs she would play, one after the other.

“What the bloody hell is this?!”

A low growl emitted from the back of Draco’s throat as he wrenched his lips from Granger’s...It’d be worth losing his job to hex the ginger git into next month...
Granger’s fingers tightened in his hair before he could pull back, pressing their foreheads together. “This is snogging, Ronald,” she clipped, breathless and husky, shooting thrills down Draco’s spine.

She nuzzled her nose to his, and Draco resolved the kissing needed to be resumed.

Immediately.

“Very uncouth of you to interrupt, Weasley,” he added before capturing Granger’s lips again, without waiting for the door to close. There would be time to ask all those detailed questions of when and why and how later, but for now…

Now, he basked in the sound of her contented sigh as their lips moved to a rhythm entirely their own. With the promise of more.

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End Notes

This story/art is part of an anonymous fest. Reveals of authors and artists will be posted on 1st of November. Follow us on TUMBLR.

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