

Green Ice



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Title: **Green Ice**

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Rating: R

Pairing: Draco/Hermione

Summary: Hermione's a successful crime writer, looking for a subject for her next book.

Written for **dramione_advent** 2010. The prompt was *Ice sculpture*.

The main characters in this story were created by JK Rowling. No offence is intended and no profit is being made by borrowing them for use in this story, which is intended as a transformative commentary on the original.

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At the end of the war, when judgement was being passed upon the losers, and the winners were carving up the spoils, Hermione Granger might have chosen virtually any job in any department of the Ministry of Magic. But the years of struggle had taken their toll and, disillusioned with the Magical world, she instead fled to Muggle London, where she found fame and fortune as the author of a series of best-selling crime thrillers.

...

"Well," says her editor, patting the printout lying on his desk, "it's good."

Hermione breathes a sigh of relief; each book seems harder to write than the last.

"I've made a few suggestions here and there,"—he neatens the stack of paper—"and noted a couple of *tiny* plot holes—"

"Okay..."

"—and I've marked a few missed opportunities for you-know-what."

Hermione sighs again, this time in frustration. Writing sex scenes is the bane of her life, and her publishers insist on a minimum of five per book.

"But overall,"—her editor looks up at her, smiling—"I think this one's going to be your biggest yet."

...

A few months later, the Muggle newspapers begin reporting the exploits of a cat burglar, whom they quickly name the 'Phantom'.

With a series of spectacular jewel robberies, including that of the Grantham diamonds, taken from a wall safe whilst their owner was sleeping in the same room; the DuBarry tiara, lifted from its owner's head whilst she was going down to dinner; and the priceless Diadem of Meretankhamun, spirited from its display case in the Museum of Antiquities despite state-of-the-art electronic surveillance, the Phantom soon captivates the British public.

The tabloids, aware of their readers' contempt for old money, dub him a modern-day Robin Hood, though there isn't a shred of evidence that anything he's robbed from the rich has ever found its way to the poor. But the quality papers take a more sober view—no one, they say, has been hurt so far, but it's surely only a matter of time.

The Phantom proves them wrong, however.

Disturbed mid-robbery by the owner of a particularly fine gold and ruby necklace, he simply binds her to her bed with silken scarves, and blindfolds her, before making his daring escape.

"He was a perfect gentleman," she later tells the Television News.

...

"I've *decided*," says Hermione, unfolding her napkin, and laying it on her lap.

"Good," breathes her editor, clearly very relieved.

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"I'm going to write about the Phantom."

Her editor glances round the restaurant, quickly making sure that no one can overhear them. "Go on..."

"Well... *My Phantom* will be a man driven to crime by some terrible injustice in his past," she says, "though I'm not sure what, as yet. But he'll be sexy—very sexy—and he'll sweep poor Abigail,"—her heroine, Detective Inspector Abigail Bristow—"right off her feet."

Her editor snatches up his pen, and starts making notes.

"His terrible secret," Hermione continues, warming to her story, "will excuse his actions to the reader, but it won't work with Abigail. She's far too moral and upstanding to overlook his crimes, even though she loves him, so it'll all end in heartbreak. I'll have to do a lot of research first. I want to get the MO absolutely right—the climbing, the breaking in, all the electronic stuff—and the slang—the language must be perfect—because I want to describe the robberies from his point of view..."

"Basically, I need to know everything there is to know about the real Phantom before I start writing."

...

Hermione's police contact in the Met, in exchange for the vague promise of a date, introduces her to a whippet-thin ex-con-turned-security consultant, who takes her on a tour of his clients' premises, showing her all the places where an agile man can gain access, and demonstrating how it's done. He also tells her, in very general terms, how to obtain the necessary equipment without leaving a paper trail behind.

Hermione takes volumes of notes.

Then a reporter friend on the *Daily Comet* lets her search through several terabytes of unpublished material about the Phantom, which she finds very useful, especially the mobile phone number of the only person who's ever seen him.

...

The Phantom's lady victim is a well-preserved older woman.

"Thank you for agreeing to talk to me," says Hermione, settling herself on the sofa, and taking her notebook from her bag.

"Well, I'm such a fan of your books," says the woman. She smiles, nervously, and her hand rises to her chest. "So, of course..."

It never ceases to amaze Hermione how readily people will open up to a well-known writer. She smiles back, reassuringly. "As I explained on the phone, Mrs Fitzsimmons," she says, "what I'm looking for is deep background, those precise little details that make a book come alive. Everything you tell me will be held in the strictest confidence—anything I use will be altered so that no one but you can recognise its source, though I will list you in the Acknowledgements, if you consent to it."

The woman blushes. "What do you want to know?"

Hermione starts off simply. "What was the Phantom like?"

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"He was a gentleman."

"What makes you say that?"

She shrugs. "The way he dressed, the way he moved, the way..." She stops suddenly, and looks away, biting her lip.

Hermione's curiosity's piqued, but she deliberately takes a step backwards: "Tell me how he was dressed."

"All in black. A black hat—one of those little woollen ones—"

"So you couldn't see the colour of his hair?"

"No."

Hermione makes a note of that, marking it with a large star. "Go on."

"A black polo-neck—cashmere; black trousers—very well-cut; black shoes—hand made—"

"Hand made?"

"Yes."

Hermione makes a few more notes. "Was he wearing any sort of harness? For climbing?"

"No." The woman frowns. "No, he wasn't,"—and they both look out through the windows of her fourteenth-floor apartment—"I never thought of that..."

"Did you see his face?"

"Only his mouth. He was wearing a mask, you see. He had a beautiful mouth, though, with full lips. Maybe a little cruel, but—"

Cruel? Hermione's spider senses tingle. "Are you saying he hurt you, Mrs Fitzsimmons?"

"Oh, no!" The woman's genuinely horrified. "No, of course not! He was a gentleman!"

"But he *did* tie you up?"

"Yes, but only after,"—her eyes widen; she looks from Hermione to the door, and back again, as though hoping that someone might materialise and rescue her—"I mean—I'd rather not—"

"Please," says Hermione. "I promise that no one will ever know what you've told me, but *you* may have the satisfaction of seeing it in the book..."

There's a long pause. Then, "Yes, he tied me up. Afterwards."

"*Afterwards?*"

There's an even longer pause. "He was a perfect gentleman," she says, at last. "He took me in his arms and—and he seemed to know exactly what I wanted—what I've always dreamed of. He carried me to the bed, and made love to me like a virgin bride, Miss Granger. He made me feel beautiful. It was,"—again, her hand rises to her chest—"oh, it was magic, Miss Granger."

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Absolute magic.”

...

Three days later, the Phantom strikes again.

A magnificent diamond pendant, recently photographed upon the equally magnificent bosom of a certain celebrity, is taken from the woman’s suite at the Winchester Hotel and, this time, the thief is seen by one of the hotel staff, though—suspiciously, Hermione thinks—exactly what the witness saw isn’t reported, either on television or in the newspapers.

Hermione phones her police contact, and lets him invite her to dinner.

Over the coffees, she learns that the witness’s statement is officially being ignored—it seems that the girl’s story’s crazy.

Early the next morning, Hermione checks herself into the Winchester.

...

Her third book, *A Time to Every Purpose*, had been set in a snow-bound hotel and, in order to get the details exactly right, Hermione had spent a month working as a chambermaid. So she dresses in dark, nondescript clothing, and tames her distinctive hair, and lurks near the service lifts, waiting for the maids to finish their work and head back to the break room, for a cup of tea and a smoke.

When they do, she follows.

Naturally, they’re hostile at first but, once Hermione’s introduced herself and, luckily, one of the girls has pulled a copy of *Far Above Rubies* from her handbag and asked her to sign it, the maids are soon chatting with her, excitedly.

Hermione explains that she wants to talk to the chambermaid who saw the Phantom.

The poor girl’s reluctant, but her co-workers push her forward, and urge her to tell her story and, eventually, she’s persuaded to take Hermione up to the room, and show her where it happened.

“Mrs Willis,”—the hotel’s codename for the celebrity—“had asked for clean sheets,” she explains. “I came up whilst she was at dinner. The window was open—I noticed the draught—so I put the linen down over there,”—she gestures towards one of the sofas—“and went to close it, and—and that’s when I felt him.”

“He touched you?”

“Oh, no! No, he was just looking at me. You know how you can sense it, when someone’s staring?”

Hermione nods. “You must have been frightened.”

The girl frowns. “No, he wasn’t frightening. He was... Beautiful.”

“You saw his face?”

“No, he had a mask on. But he wasn’t frightening. He was tall and graceful—like a dancer...”

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Hermione opens the window and leans out, trying to see the building through the Phantom's eyes, looking for chimneys and ledges, for anchor points and footholds—all the things she'd learned from her security consultant—but, to her, the place looks impregnable.

How in Merlin's name does he do it?

She turns back to the maid. "So, you said you were face-to-face with the Phantom. What happened next?"

The girl bites her lip.

"I know the police don't believe you," Hermione coaxes. "But I'm not the police, Amy. And I've seen things the police—"

"He disappeared," the girl blurts out.

Hermione gasps. "How?"

"I don't know!" the girl cries. "That's what they kept asking me—again and again and again—and I don't know! I just... I just... I just know what I saw!"

"Of course you do," says Hermione, soothingly. "Here..." She coaxes the maid onto one of the sofas, assuring her that, if the floor manager catches them, she'll take the blame, and sits down beside her. "Now I want you to think hard, Amy," she says. "Did he disappear gradually, as if—say—he was draping a cloak around himself, or did he disappear suddenly, as if—"

"Suddenly," says the girl. "Pop!"

"You heard that sound?"

The girl nods. "Yes," she says, firmly. "He disappeared with a *pop*."

...

Back home, Hermione climbs up to the attic.

Her school trunk is sitting in a corner, covered in dust. She kneels down beside it and, with a wistful smile, brushes the dirt from her carved initials...

I should have known, she thinks, for the hundredth time. The Phantom gets in through fourteenth-storey windows, he has no trouble unlocking doors or wall safes, he makes himself invisible—I should have put two and two together!

She opens the trunk.

Her wand—ten and three quarter inches of carved vine wood with a dragon heartstring core—is at the very top, lying upon her folded school robes. She picks it up and, for the first time since she left the Wizarding world, she feels the warmth of magic in her fingers, and—almost without thinking—she flicks it at a nearby dust bunny, saying, "*Wingardium Leviosa*."

The dust rises into the air, and hovers about four feet from the floor.

Hermione regards it, thoughtfully.

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Whoever this Phantom is, she thinks, he's broken my ban on magic.

"Finite Incantatem."

She slides the wand into her sleeve, and turns back to the trunk, lifting out her robes, and various text books, and a framed photograph of Harry and Ginny, and one of Ron and George, searching for her copy of *Hogwarts, A History*.

...

A few hours later, she sits down at her desk, and turns on her computer.

She's trawled through the pages of *Hogwarts, A History*, and scoured her own memory, and has drawn up a list of ten possible suspects, though the physical description that both women have given her—tall, elegant, aristocratic—keeps bringing her back to one wizard in particular.

But why would he be stealing from Muggles?

She remembers how, back in school, Harry and Ron had thought him the Heir of Slytherin, Voldemort's Golden Boy, a miniature Death Eater.

And it wasn't true, she thinks. Not really. He was just a child—and even more out of his depth than we were.

She knows she has a responsibility, both to the Magical and to the Muggle worlds, to report her findings to Harry (as Head Auror), but she decides she'll tell him only what she knows for certain—that the Phantom's a rogue wizard. She crumples up her list of suspects, throws it in the waste bin, and opens her email program. She hasn't seen Harry in almost five years, but they've stayed in regular contact, using email—

She notices a mail from her publishers, marked 'Important', and clicks on the link.

It seems that her most recent book, *The Heart that Envied Sinners*, has been nominated for a Golden Knife Award. The winner will be announced at a televised gala, to be held at the world-famous Ice Hotel, a week before Christmas.

Hermione leans back in her chair, smiling.

It's an honour, of course—though she's already been nominated three times, and won twice—but, much more than that, it's an opportunity, and she already has a plan, though she knows she'll need to work on some of the details.

...

The next few weeks rush by in a whirl of preparation.

Since the event's being televised, she has no difficulty borrowing a daringly low-cut designer gown of sea-green lace nor, more importantly, a fabulous emerald necklace, with matching earrings and tiara, from Fürst of London.

"How much are they worth?" she asks.

The jeweller looks insulted.

"I'm always collecting that sort of information," she explains, "for my books."

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"The ensemble's insured for a million pounds, madam," he says, frostily, "but, in truth, it's priceless. The stones in the necklace could never be replaced."

Good, thinks Hermione.

He goes on to explain the security arrangements—how the jewels will travel to Lapland under armed guard, how they'll be stored in the hotel vault overnight, and transferred to a state-of-the-art safe in Hermione's own room on the day of the gala.

"What's to stop a thief simply melting the ice and stealing the entire safe?" she asks, wearing her crime writer's hat.

"First, madam, the safe is in your 'warm room', mounted on a steel frame, which is buried in a conventional wall. Secondly, the safe itself is completely secure."

Hermione doubts that any burglar worth his salt would be impressed.

"The locking mechanism," the jeweller continues, "is controlled by a timer. The door will open thirty minutes before the gala starts, to give your hairdresser time to arrange the tiara..." He eyes her unruly hair; Hermione, who'd been intending to plonk the thing on her head herself, revises her plans. "After the event," he adds, "you are required—as a condition of the loan—to return the jewels to the safe at the earliest opportunity."

"Of course." Hermione signs the contract. "But I shall also need them," she says, "for a photo shoot on Tuesday week. The *Sunday Comet* is putting me on the cover of its *Style Magazine*—it seems I'm the odds-on favourite, so they want to do a feature beforehand."

The jeweller nods, trying—and failing—to hide his glee.

She's giving Fürst of London the sort of publicity money can't buy.

...

A week before Christmas...

It's a pity, thinks Hermione, as she settles into her seat on the plane, *that I won't be able to use any of this in my book, unless I move into the fantasy market.*

And who would want to read a story about a wizard?

She pulls out her notebook, and goes over her notes again, wondering whether the Phantom will take the bait.

The more she thinks about it, the more she's sure he will.

How could he resist?

First, there's the exceptional quality of the jewels. If he's watching the Muggle news—and his previous robberies convince her that he is—he's bound to have seen them in the *Sunday Comet*.

Secondly, there's *her*. If the Phantom really is who she thinks he is, then the pair of them have unfinished business. And, though neither the hotel vault nor the room safe would give him any trouble, she thinks he'll strike immediately after the gala, when she returns to her room with

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the emeralds dripping from her ears and cascading down her cleavage.

And, if she happens to be carrying the award as well, that'll be the icing on his cake.

...

The Ice Hotel's a work of art, its frosted walls built from frozen snow, its transparent columns and jewel-bright chandeliers carved from delicately-tinted blocks of ice. Hermione will be sleeping, beneath a glittering ice-canopy, upon a faery snow-bed, covered with reindeer skins.

And heated with the odd warming charm, she thinks.

The gala itself is to be held in a conventional Ballroom but, afterwards, the guests will be invited to climb into their thermal gear and move to the Ice Bar where, amidst a forest of ice-sculptures glowing in blue and green light, they'll be plied with vodka cocktails, which they'll sip from frozen ice-glasses.

Hermione walks into the hotel foyer, and grins.

Suspended from the ceiling there's a huge, flying ice-dragon, embarrassingly rampant but, she notices, breathing nothing but cold air.

How very appropriate, she thinks.

...

The next thirty-six hours are frantic.

Hermione's ears are bent by other writers, anxious to share their highs and lows without giving too much away; by publishers, hoping to snap her up when her current contract expires; and by film producers, competing for the rights to her books.

And all the while, she's scanning the fringes of the crowd, looking for the tall, elegant blond she's convinced will be lurking somewhere nearby.

...

The gala itself is a personal success. Hermione's hairdresser and stylist have, between them, made her look astonishingly good and, when she climbs onto the podium to give her acceptance speech, and the flash bulbs of the world's press almost blind her, she's confident that the caption writers will be complimentary.

The after party in the Ice Bar's fun—now that the pressure of competition is off, and anyone worth knowing is genuinely pleased for her—but Hermione's anxious to catch her thief and, pleading exhaustion, she slips away soon after midnight.

At the door to her room she pauses and, in the softly reflective surface of the ice, she checks her hair, and adjusts her neckline before she slips inside.

She isn't disappointed.

Starkly black against the frosty-white walls and the glassy-green columns, his tall, lean figure reminds her fleetingly of Dracula. His back's turned towards her, and his woollen hat's pulled low, hiding his long, pale hair, but there's still no mistaking the aristocratic bearing and natural grace of Draco Malfoy.

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He turns, and regards her with that insolent gaze that had made him so annoying at Hogwarts. "Granger," he says, appreciatively, "you *have* cleaned up well." And, acting as though he has a perfect right to do whatever he wants, he stretches out a hand, and draws his finger round her throat, just above the top strand of emeralds. "Green ice," he murmurs. "Isn't that what Muggle thieves call them?"

Something in Hermione's body flutters, exactly when it shouldn't. "How should I know?" she says, a trifle breathless, and very annoyed with herself.

Malfoy chuckles. "You're a best-selling crime writer, Granger."

His hand moves downwards—she realises she's lost any chance of stopping him—ghosting over her breast, lingering at her waist, caressing her hip...

He moves closer, bending in to kiss her neck, and his hand continues down, insinuating itself beneath her skirt, and sliding up her leg, until his fingers reach something unexpected—her wand holster, strapped to her thigh.

He looks down and, before he can finish saying, "Kinky, Granger," she's pulled herself together, drawn her wand, and pressed its tip to his throat.

"Back off," she growls, somewhat belatedly.

He steps away, raising his hands.

"Now," she says, "I'm making a citizen's arrest."

"What am I supposed to have done?"

"Supposed to have done? You've stolen millions of pounds-worth of jewels!"

"It's a victimless crime, Granger."

"Malfoy," she snarls, letting righteous anger distract her from her mission, "just because they're Muggles—"

"Insurance, Granger!" He smiles, annoyingly. "They have something called insurance. I take their jewels, and they're given the money to buy more."

"They *pay* for insurance, Malfoy. The more you steal, the more we *all* pay."

"Knuts and Sickles," he says.

"It's still a crime."

"Well I'd like to see you explain to the Muggle police that their Phantom's a real live wizard. And Potter won't be interested, because there's no Dark Magic involved."

"There's magic in front of Muggles involved," Hermione counters. "There's the small matter of Apparating from the Winchester Hotel, in full view of a chambermaid, involved. And there's whatever potion you used to seduce poor old Diana Fitzsimmons involved."

Malfoy's beautiful mouth curls in contempt. "I don't need a potion to satisfy a woman, Granger. Especially not a frustrated woman."

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"She was old enough to be your mother!"

"So? Once she'd relaxed, she was fabu—" He breaks off, with a knowing smile. "Oh. You're jealous."

"Don't be ridiculous!"

"Yes you are. She got what *you* didn't have the nerve to take when it was offered to you."

"You're so full of yourself!"

He grins, and she knows exactly what he's thinking.

"Don't you dare say anything about filling *me*!"

"You've said it for me." He moves closer, and Hermione's forced to step back. "Put the wand away, Granger," he says, silkily, "and let me give you what you so obviously need."

Hermione takes another step backwards. *A look like that, she thinks, should be a one-way ticket to Azkaban...*

Malfoy follows. "Go on, Granger," he purrs, reaching out again and, this time, tracing the low-cut neckline of her gown across the swell of her breasts. "Let me make love to you in your green lace and emeralds."

His voice is like velvet, his touch electric. Hermione closes her eyes...

And he takes her wand.

"You bastard!"

"I told you I didn't need a potion," he says, slipping it up his sleeve. "But, how about it, Granger? Hmm? You do owe me one, after the state you left me in last time. And it'll be hot." He slides his hands around her waist, and pulls her close. "There's nothing like a bit of breaking and entering," he murmurs in her ear, "to get a man going—"

"—going off half-cocked?"

"You know me better than that!"

He brings her closer, and Hermione's world suddenly shrinks to nothing but the empty ache inside her, and the ample promise of relief pressing into her belly, and when Malfoy lifts her into his arms, and carries her to the ice-bed, she doesn't even think to resist.

...

She wakes, still cocooned in Malfoy's warming charm, in a state of delicious arousal, her body throbbing to the teasing rhythm of his tongue, but he—apparently realising that she's awake—suddenly raises his head, and grins wickedly.

"Oh...!" She doesn't hide her disappointment.

Malfoy laughs, and kisses her stomach with a finality that tells her she won't be getting any more until something's been settled between them.

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"I thought you'd be gone when I woke up," she sighs. "Why are you still here?" Her hand moves to her throat. "Why haven't you taken the emeralds?"

"You look good in them." Malfoy rolls onto his back. "And I have a proposal for you."

"What?" she says. "Hand them over and we'll split the money two ways?"

"No," he replies. "Marry me."

"What? Why? Why would I—why would you—*why*, Malfoy?"

"Because, as things stand, I can't touch it."

Hermione tries to decipher what he's saying. "No," she says. "Translation?"

"The money from the jewels," he explains, with a touch of exasperation. "I've got enough to rebuild the Manor, Granger, but I can't start work without the Ministry getting suspicious—they, technically, control my assets. So what I need is a way to disguise where the money's coming from. And that's where being married to the second richest female author in the Muggle world would come in really handy—very impressive, by the way."

"So you'd be using the proceeds of the robberies, but you'd pretend that *I* was footing the bill?"

"You're quick," he says.

"I know," she replies.

"What do you say?"

She's thrilled at the thought of the Malfoys' being reduced to telling the world they're rebuilding the Manor with Mudblood money, but, "What would I get out of it?" she asks.

"Me."

"No, seriously."

"You'd get me, Granger." He shrugs. "A centuries-old name..."

"Somewhat tarnished."

"Adorable blond kids..."

"Pale and pointy."

"Amazing sex, twice a day—"

"*Twice?*"

"Well, I could probably manage three times, if you were desperate and didn't expect too much else from me—*ow!*"

Hermione nurses her hand; his muscles are hard. "What would I really get out of it?"

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"Me."

"So—nothing at all! I thought as much."

"I'm a catch, Granger. *Witch Weekly* says so. And I think it would work—in a lot of ways we're well-suited. Besides, your love life is just *sad*,"—he quotes from the *Sunday Comet*—"It's hard to believe that such a vibrant young woman lives alone, but that's what she maintains.' They think you're a secret lesbian, Granger. Marry me, and prove them wrong."

I must be going crazy, thinks Hermione. "I'd never stop writing."

"Of course not."

"And you'd never have access to my money."

"We'd discuss that."

"In your dreams, Malfoy."

He sighs. "All right. You'd help out if I got into difficulty with the Manor, but I wouldn't touch the rest—I'd sign a pre-nuptial agreement if you wanted."

"That's not Wizarding law."

"You're Muggle-born. We could use a Muggle lawyer."

She looks into his eyes, and is startled by what she sees there. "Why, Draco?" she whispers. Then, "I mean, apart from the money laundering?"

He shrugs. "I've had girlfriends—lots of girlfriends—and even the best of them was boring. It takes brains and imagination to be good in bed, and you have those in spades." He slides his arms around her, and draws her close. "If I try to remember a time when I felt happy, Granger, I think of you—of *us*—sitting in that holding cell at the Ministry, disagreeing over my defence."

"Getting more and more angry," she says, snuggling against his chest, "until we nearly ripped each other's throats out. You and me in a marriage, Draco, we'd kill each other."

"Nah... That's what sex is for, Granger—hot, angry, make-up sex."

He nuzzles her neck, and her entire body responds. "We'd work ourselves up into a frenzy," he murmurs, shifting her onto her back, and bringing his leg over, "and then we'd set the bed alight."

Hermione's innards melt.

"Oh, damn," she gasps.

Because, in that very instant, she knows she's going to accept his proposal.

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One year later...

Hermione sets a magnum of the finest Muggle champagne and two crystal flutes on a silver salver. She's about to inaugurate what she hopes will become a regular tradition in the Malfoy

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household.

She draws her wand and, levitating the tray, guides it out of the wooden chalet, across the frosty lawn, through the front doors, and into the Entrance Hall of the Manor, where her husband is in his element, supervising the builders restoring the marble staircase, and the house-elves cleaning the smoke damage from the walls.

Hermione's heart warms at the sight of him.

He senses her presence, and turns, smiling. "Finished?"

"Yes." She sets the salver on a work bench and, with a flick of her wand, removes the cork and pours the champagne.

Draco touches his glass to hers. "To many more."

"Many more."

They both take a sip.

"Now," he says, putting their glasses back on the tray, and drawing her into his arms, "isn't it about time you let your muse *read* the damned thing, Granger?"

THE END