

- Chapter Two -

A Life Beneath Notice

London, 2008/05/03

No one noticed Colby.

No one ever noticed Colby.

He'd brushed the mess of his hair into an indescribable fluff, pressed his dull grey suit and white shirt. The green tie was supposed to add a bit of flair, but whatever life it might have lent another was lost on Colby.

Colby Frey was a loser. Not tied to the more famous Freys, he was from an unremarkable family that did unremarkable things. He'd been playing the odds and losing since before he'd gone to Hogwarts and continued playing the odds and losing all his life afterwards. Somewhere in his thirties, he'd done nothing with his life and knew it. He made bets hoping that one day luck would smile upon him, but he was terrible at understanding odds and he never ever won.

Not anything.

Not ever.

Except when it came to his two special skills, and then he could not lose.

Trisha was kind enough to make his debts square from time to time, and all she asked of him was to use the two things he was good at. She'd done this since Hogwarts, getting him to go after people that owed her things the same way he did in exchange for a little bit of forgiveness. She married his best friend, Peter, too, so she couldn't be all bad.

It was a cold May evening in the muggle parking garage.

Hermione was staying in a muggle hotel, knowing that no one would find her here and her enemies would never think to check a non-magical place. Colby was muggle-born, though, and he knew all about using non-magical means to overcome magical problems. He'd been sorted into Slytherin and survived because he was good at slipping by unnoticed and even better at his own special skills.

And there she was: Hermione Granger, stepping off an elevator. She was accompanied by two aurors and a secretary, just like Trisha said she would be. Hermione Granger, lovely as ever, the subject of much discussion in the Slytherin dungeons back in school and the subject of his fantasies from Hogwarts until now. He looked at her, the subtle curve of her clothing, wondering at the softness of her flesh.

He'd dreamed of her and woken up to nothing but sticky sheets and shame.

To have her so close-!

She didn't notice him as she walked on. Neither did her aurors, or her secretary. He was invisible not through magic but just because he was beneath notice. They were walking to a car and it looked like Hermione would drive, but that wasn't shocking – she would be the only one among them that knew how.

He hadn't known what car was hers, but he'd guessed and was pleased to see that her vehicle was

not too far from his own. She was talking with her secretary, something about her schedule, when Colby nodded to himself.

"Circlus aspectu," he said, waving his wand at the cameras. It was a spell he'd devised to loop cameras – useless in the wizarding world, but muggle authorities would see someone waving a piece of wood and think nothing of it while magical authorities would never think to check muggle cameras.

So far as the world was concerned, Hermione Granger was about to vanish.

The aurors hadn't noticed anything was amiss and the secretary was useless. Hermione frowned, though, looking around. She didn't see him, looked right past him, and he felt a surge of disappointment.

Oh, well.

"Nunc dormi," he continued, waving his wand towards four runes drawn on the parking garage pillars. Thin beams of grey light slid out from them, touching Hermione and the aurors and the secretary at their left temple.

All of them fell in a lump, fast sleep.

The two things Colby was good at was not being noticed and setting ambushes.

He hurried over to the fallen people, ignoring everyone but Hermione Granger. He searched her, hands lingering on her thighs and chest as he searched for her wand. He was almost disappointed to find it in her pants pocket – he had hoped to find it hidden further within her clothing.

Pocketing the wand, he used his to lift her up and bring her to his car. He opened the trunk, used zap straps to bind her wrists together, then her elbows. Her breasts jutted out at him and he spent a few moments fondling the shirt and bra covering them, feeling himself grow hard.

He heard a moan and jumped away from the trunk, looking back at the aurors, but they and the secretary were still asleep. He glanced back at Hermione.

Was that her?

He shook his head and smiled, zap strapped the girl's legs together at the ankle, then above and below the knee. He opened her mouth and stuffed a rag inside, making sure to press down on her tongue, making sure her airway wasn't restricted. He stood over her, thinking about what he might do to her, but he remembered Trisha glaring at him.

"You can do what you want on the way to my home," Trisha glared. *"Dry hump her for all I care, but wait until you're in the countryside. Don't fuck around until you're outside city limits."*

Colby thought about disobeying Trisha and taking his pleasure now. He remembered the look in her eye, though, and thought better of it.

"Stupefy," he muttered, tapping Hermione's head with his wand. He closed the trunk, tracing the borders with his wand tip. *"Silencio."*

He got in his car and started driving, leaving London behind and heading south from Westminster, Beckenham to Bromley, through Orpington towards the North Downs. It was a roundabout way to get to Southampton, but that left plenty of time to look for a private place where he might enjoy his passenger. He took his time, savoring the thought of who was in his trunk, waiting for him.

He pulled over west of Worthing and east of Portsmouth, stepping out into the bracing twilight

air. He hadn't seen a car in a quarter hour, and in the half-light of dusk he popped the trunk open. Hermione was still stupefied inside, but he tapped her temple and cast the spell again just to be sure. No point taking chances.

She sagged in her zap straps, and when he pulled the rag out of her mouth it was soaked in her drool. He fished his engorged self out of his pants and pulled her head up by the hair, sliding himself over her tongue and down her throat. Unconscious, her saliva and tongue still pressed against him, the back of her throat circling his cockhead.

He let himself sit there, enjoying the sleepy touch of her silent tongue, then pushed deeper until she choked and struggled. He laughed as she failed to wake up, sagging again, but he pulled out and let her breathe, rubbing himself on her reddened cheeks. The pushing of his cock against her face made it look like she was smiling.

It looks like she's enjoying this as much as I am, Colby thought, panting, grinning. He felt himself stiffen and shudder, his cum spilling on her face, running down to pool by her eyes and nose and mouth. He took a minute to settle his breath as his seed settled on her face.

He watched, fascinated, as an unconscious twitch forced her mouth open, her tongue slithering out to lick the cum off her lips.

She is enjoying this as much as I am, the slut, he thought. *I should have done this to her back in school.* Smiling now, calm and in control, he cleaned his cockhead off on the rag before stuffing it back in her mouth, duct taping it in place, and closing the trunk.

Another half-hour would see him at Trisha's place, and then he could get something to eat.



Southampton, 2008/05/04

Hermione awoke on a big fluffy bed she didn't recognize in a room that was larger than her husband's family home. She didn't know how she had gotten wherever she was – the last thing she remembered was walking towards her car, surrounded by aurors, and then *nothing*.

She took a deep breath and worked backwards through the day as she knew it. There was a haze over the edges of her mind, which meant someone had used magic to incapacitate her.

A stupefy spell, most likely, she thought. She wasn't bound but there was a weird lingering taste in her dry mouth and her wrists, knees, and ankles hurt. She raised a hand and saw indents in her skin. *Zip ties. So, someone muggle-born or a muggle, or someone that spends time with muggles either nearly grabbed me, temporarily grabbed me, or grabbed me and still has me.*

It seemed unlikely that someone would knock her out, tie her up, and then untie her and let her sleep it off on a bed. She risked looking up but there were no guards – either her own or working for whomever was hosting her. This did feel more like being hosted after a failed kidnapping.

The fact that I think like this probably means I should make an appointment with my therapist, Hermione thought. *PTSD still lingers all this time later. I'll have to check the muggle records and see what therapies they recommend for long term stress and trauma following kidnapping and torture at the hands of a genocidal fascist witch.*

The bed had a canopy. She stared at it for a while, then reached for her wand. It was gone from her pocket, which was a problem. She sat up, her vision swimming a little. She sat on the edge of the bed until the dizziness went away and looked around the room. It was designed, she saw, to show off wealth and power. Old money. Scary money.

She wondered where she was?

The door was unlocked.

She took a breathe, settled herself. Her shoes were gone but she was still wearing the outfit from her speech. Nothing was overly wrinkled, so she didn't think too much time had past, but

The hallway outside was twice as tall as she was and seemed to stretch on forever, a massive corridor that dwarfed her. She could hear people talking down around a corner and, unless she was mistaken, down a stairway. She smelled food and her stomach grumbled. How long had it been since she'd eaten? How long had it been since she'd been taken? She wanted the taste out of her mouth. She wanted to *know*.

She felt like a child walking down the hall, down the stairs, down a courtyard and through a dining room towards a patio. There were people there, drinking tea and eating biscuits and she didn't recognize any of them but they were laughing and seemed friendly and she found herself feeling shy.

"Hermione!" one of them said, noticing her. She stood, walked over, took Hermione by the hand and led her to the table. "I'm glad you're awake. How are you feeling?"

"A little confused...?" she said, accepting the seat. These women were acting like they knew her. Did the stupefy spell have some other effect she had missed?

"Your head must be aching," the leader said, touching her hand with sympathy. Another woman made her tea, adding milk and sugar, a proper English Breakfast. She sipped at it.

"Thank you," she said. They offered her a biscuit and she ate a couple. "Forgive me, but I'm having trouble remembering what happened, how I got here—"

"-where we are?" the leader asked, and Hermione nodded. "My name is Trica, Tricia Buttermere."

"You were," Hermione frowned, leaning back in her chair. "You were the broker, back at Hogwarts. Hufflepuff, right? You helped people make deals with one another."

"I still do," Tricia said, clearly pleased to be remembered. "Our host this evening is the esteemed Cassandra Vole."

"Charmed," Cassandra said, the sharp lilt of an upperclass accent making the single word a weapon.

"Thank you for hosting," Hermione said, gracious, frowning. There was something charming about Cassandra, something that felt like the echo of a veela.

"I imagine you know Laura?" Tricia asked, her voice rotting like sweet poison.

Hermione glared at Laura.

She more than knew Laura Madley. Laura was a frequent rival in the political sphere, standing against all the changes that Hermione fought for. The two had never spoken directly to one another, but Hermione knew Laura by reputation and considered her an enemy. It was clear Laura felt the same way.

"Why am I here?" Hermione asked, not taking her eyes off Laura.

"What, am I not important enough to be noticed?" the last of the woman asked.

"No, you are not," Hermione said, not taking her eyes off Laura. "Eleanor Branstone. You flunked out of arithmacy because you wanted to use it to predict markets. You would have been better off studying with Sybil Trelawny than wasting our time. I ask again: why am I here?"

"Because I wanted to speak with you," Tricia said, sipping at her tea. She put it down, motioned for her friends to sit back and breathe, motioned for Hermione to relax. "I was hoping we could come to a friendly accord, but..."

"Did you kidnap me?" Hermione asked.

"Colby Frey did."

"Who?"

"Colby Frey."

Hermione frowned, thinking. "Like, the werewolves? Those Freys?"

"No," Tricia sighed. "Don't worry about it. No one ever remembers Colby – he's the least interesting person you'll ever meet."

"My uncle calls him a cooler," Cassandra added.

"Your muggle uncle."

"Yes."

Hermione had no idea what they were talking about.

"Are my aurors okay?"

"Yes," Tricia said, silencing the others. "Peter Stone is with them." Hermione nodded. She'd met

the man and she trusted him, though she wasn't sure what to make of these people.

"What about Colby?"

"He's been taken care of," Tricia said.

"Am I," Hermione licked her lips. "Am I a captive?"

"Not at all," Tricia smiled, leaning forward and touching her hand. "Again, I'm glad you're okay. Eat some biscuits, drink some tea, and we'll send you by cab or floo wherever you want to be."

Hermione's stomach grumbled again. She sat, thinking, and then reached for a biscuit. They were good. The women started talking about markets and fashion and a lot of light nonsense that meant nothing to Hermione.

"If you promise to stay with us for a time," Tricia said, extending a hand, "I'll make sure you're properly taken care of."

It seemed like a reasonable request.

"Sure?" Hermione said, accepting Tricia's hand.

It started slow, a tingling in her thighs that spread out into her hips. She bucked, moaned, her legs sparking up with pins and needles, her core thrumming with unexpected pleasure that wrangled up her spine and out her mouth, screaming pleasure, screaming need. She flopped, sweating, twitching on the cobblestone deck while the women talked over her, as if they hadn't just watched her have the most violent orgasm of her life.

Tricia came back as she was moaning on the ground, helped her sit up, helped her back into a chair. She was shaking. Her breathing was ragged. Her legs were quivering.

"Are you okay?" Tricia asked.

"I don't," Hermione's voice was shaking like the rest of her. "You did something. What did you do?"

"We made a deal," Tricia said, prim. "I like to add in a little something extra."

"What do you mean, we made a deal?"

Tricia just smiled. The other women welcome her into their meaningless conversation. Ten minutes went by and then a car pulled up and a man got out, opened a door, waved at their small gathering just outside the walled estate.

"There you go," Tricia said, resting her hands on the table. "It's been a pleasure."

"I wish I could say the same." Hermione stood, shuddered, and then began to walk away towards the cab, but when she reached the edge of the property her vision became foggy, the world vanishing until only the Vole Estate and the women watching her could be seen, could be heard. The car had to be out in the dark but her footsteps got heavy, her breathing short. She fell to her knees, trying to move forward until all she could do was move back.

She flopped on the estate grounds, breathing heavy, lying flat on her back, staring at the sky.

When she had her breath back she tried to leave again but her body refused to move, would only take her back to the estate, to the waiting women.

"What did you do to me?" Hermione hissed.

"We made a deal," Tricia repeated, smiling up at her, all of them smiling up at her. "You and I made a deal. What was it I was called at Hogwarts again?"

"The Broker," Eleanor said.

"We're going to make a number of deals, Hermione Granger, most gifted witch of her age," Trica said. "You're going to sell me every little bit that makes you special and, in return, we're going to put you in your place."

Hermione reached for her wand, which wasn't there.

The women reached for their wands, which were.

Laura grinned.

"Stupefy."